Public discourse about South African farm violence on Facebook

by

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Abstract

Farm attacks have become highly politicised in South Africa. According to certain groups, the attacks are racially motivated, constituting hate crimes, whereas others sense they represent a larger crime predicament in the country and do not deserve special treatment. Research on farm violence in South Africa approached it from a criminological, sociological, and psychological angle. In these studies, farm violence is explored as a crime category and as part of the larger concern of settler colonial rhetoric. The psychological effects are explored in psychology. Dissertation-level publications directing this topic as critical discourse analysis are in media studies and not linguistics. These studies allude to linguistic elements, complimentary to the overarching theme of how information is shared about farm violence online. One of these studies addressed some of the specific lexical items used to address farm attacks on Facebook; however, these items were explored within a framework of encoding and decoding, and the intention of their exploration was to observe how audiences read and interpret media content. Neither of these studies specifically addressed the emotive language of farm violence. The research conducted in this study therefore adopted a different approach to farm violence discourse by employing evaluative theory. This study is substantiated in systemic functional linguistics and explores South African farm violence discourse on a semantic level by focusing on evaluative language. It investigated the evaluative language across three Facebook pages with polarised stances on farm violence. The two major stances identified are 1) farm violence is a part of the larger crime problem in South Africa and is not racially motivated, and 2) farm violence is racially motivated, indicating a White genocide in the country. Two instances of farm violence were explored, indicating the Senekal and the Mkhondo incident. In the Senekal incident, the victim of the farm violence was White. In the Mkhondo matter, the victims were Black. The study adopted an adapted evaluative framework to explore the evaluation parameters within these texts. Evaluative theory was chosen as a research method, allowing for the tackling of the finer, especially emotive, nuances of meaning in language, which is crucial when exploring online language. As expected, across the posts, the GOOD-BAD parameter was utilised the most at 54.63% in total, followed by the IMPORTANCE parameter at 20.37%, the CERTAINTY parameter at 17.13%, and the EXPECTEDNESS parameter at 7.87%. As expected, across the comment sections, the GOOD-BAD parameter was also utilised the most at 41.19% in total, followed by the CERTAINTY parameter at 24.75%, the IMPORTANCE parameter at 17.31%, and the EXPECTEDNESS parameter at 16.74%.Two main themes were explored, indicating ethnicity and role players. The subthemes involve hate, fear, and a call to defend the 'greater good'. As evidenced by the hostile comments towards individuals with differing stances, the discourse about South African farm violence on Facebook is emotional, racial, and polarised and calls for violence towards the other side. Within these stances, larger South African

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issues, such as land reform and identity, are discussed. The Facebook page adopting the stance that farm violence is a sign of a larger crime problem in the country, implicated the farmers and the legacy of apartheid as the cause of farm violence. The Facebook page adopting the stance that farm violence is racially motivated implicates the government and the Economic Freedom Fighters as the cause of farm violence.

Keywords: Evaluation; evaluative theory; farm violence; farm attacks; discourse analysis; Facebook; South Africa

Opsomming

Plaasaanvalle het hoogs verpolitiseerd geraak in Suid-Afrika. Volgens sekere groepe is die aanvalle rasgedrewe haatmisdade terwyl ander meen dit verdien nie spesiale aandag nie omdat dit verteenwoordigend is van die misdaadsituasie in die land. In navorsing oor plaasgeweld in Suid-Afrika is plaasaanvalle reeds vanuit 'n kriminologiese, sosiologiese en psigologiese hoek benader. Kriminologiese studies ondersoek plaasgeweld as misdaadkategorie, sosiologiese studies beskou dit as deel van die wyer retoriek oor kolonialisering deur setlaars, en psigologiese studies fokus op die sielkundige effek daarvan. Publikasies oor kritiese diskoersanalise is gebaseer op tesisse in mediastudies en nie linguistiek nie. Die doel met dié studies was om linguistiese elemente te bestudeer as komplementêr tot die oorkoepelende tema van aanlyn inligtingoordrag oor plaasgeweld. Een studie is spesifiek gerig op die leksikale items wat op Facebook gebruik word om oor plaasaanvalle te berig. Die items is binne 'n raamwerk van enkodering en dekodering ondersoek om vas te stel hoe gehore media-inhoud lees en interpreteer. Nie een van die studies het spesifiek op emosionele taal oor plaasgeweld gefokus nie. In hierdie studie word 'n evalueringsteorie gebruik wat heeltemal verskil van die benaderings wat tot dusver in studies oor die plaasgewelddiskoers gebruik is. Dit is gegrond op die sistemies-funksionele grammatika/linguistiek en verken die Suid-Afrikaanse plaasgewelddiskoers op 'n semantiese vlak deur te fokus op evaluerende taalgebruik. Die evaluerende taal op drie Facebook-blaaie met gepolariseerde standpunte oor plaasgeweld is ondersoek. Die volgende is die twee belangrikste standpunte wat geïdentifiseer is: 1) Plaasgeweld is nie rasgedrewe nie; dit is deel van die algehele misdaadprobleem in Suid-Afrika. 2) Plaasgeweld is rasgedrewe en dui op volksmoord op wit mense in die land. Een geval van plaasgeweld in die Senekal-distrik en een in die Mkhondo-distrik is ondersoek. In Senekal was die slagoffer wit; in Mkhondo was die slagoffers swart. 'n Aangepaste evalueringsraamwerk is gebruik om die evalueringsparameters in die tekste te verken. 'n Evalueringsteorie is as navorsingsmetode gekies omdat dit voorsiening maak vir die evaluering van die fyner, veral emosionele, betekenisnuanses in taal wat deurslaggewend is in aanlyn taalgebruik. Soos te verwagte, is die GOED-SLEG-parameter die meeste gebruik, in totaal in 54,63% van gevalle. Dit is gevolg deur die BELANGRIKHEID-parameter in 20,37% van gevalle, die SEKERHEID-parameter in 17,13% van gevalle, en die TE VERWAGTE-parameter in 7,87% van gevalle. In die kommentaarafdelings is die GOED-SLEG parameter ook soos te verwagte die meeste gebruik en wel in altesaam 41,19% van gevalle, gevolg deur die SEKERHEID-parameter in 24,75% van gevalle, die BELANGRIKHEID-parameter in 17,31% van gevalle, en die TE VERWAGTE-parameter in 16,74% van gevalle. Die twee hooftemas wat ondersoek is, is etnisiteit en rolspelers. Die subtemas is haat, vrees, en 'n oproep om dit wat tot voordeel van die gemeenskap is te verdedig. Soos blyk uit die vyandige opmerkings teenoor individue met

verskillende standpunte, is die diskoers oor Suid-Afrikaanse plaasgeweld op Facebook emosioneel, rassisties en gepolariseerd, en dit stook geweld teen die ander kant. Groter Suid-Afrikaanse kwessies soos grondhervorming en identiteit word teen die agtergrond van hierdie standpunte bespreek. Die Facebook-blad wat die standpunt inneem dat plaasgeweld deel is van die groter misdaadprobleem in die land, beskou die boere en die nalatenskap van apartheid as die oorsaak van plaasgeweld. Die Facebook-blad wat die standpunt inneem dat plaasgeweld rasgedrewe is, impliseer die regering en die Ekonomiese Vryheidsvegters (EFF) as die oorsaak van plaasgeweld.

Sleutelwoorde: Evaluering; evalueringsteorie; plaasgeweld; plaasaanvalle; diskoersanalise; Facebook; Suid-Afrika

Declaration

I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.

I declare that this **Dissertation** is my own original work. Where other people's work has been used (either from a printed source, Internet, or any other source), this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements.

Full names and surname of student: **Daniella Amy van der Horst**.

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Topic of work:

Public discourse about South African farm **violence** on **Facebook**

August 2023

SIGNATURE   **DATE**

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Ethics statement

I, **Daniella Amy van der Horst**, have obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval.

I declare that I have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.

Approved: **28 October 2021**

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1   Chapter introduction

This chapter summarises the research concerns. The background, context, and analytical frameworks of this study are introduced. The problem statement, research questions, and objectives are elucidated. This research focused on farm violence, often understood as farm attacks or farm murders. Farm Attacks [1] is a topic of major racial tension in South Africa (Akinola, 2020a). Research on South African farm violence[2] is approached from a criminological, sociological, and psychological angle. In these studies, farm violence is explored as a crime category, and as part of the larger issue of settler colonial rhetoric, the psychological effects are also explored in psychology.

Some recent dissertation-level studies addressed the discourse of South African farm violence online (Barraclough, 2021; Sheik, 2022); however, these studies CDA and media studies, excluding linguistics. While these studies allude to linguistic elements, these elements are complimentary to the overarching theme of how information is shared about farm violence online. Limited published linguistic research exists on the matter. This research explores South African farm violence discourse on a semantic level by focusing on the evaluative language employed across three Facebook pages with polarised stances on farm violence. While Barraclough's (2021) and Sheik's (2022) focus is on how information is shared about farm violence, this study's focus is on the language used to convey individuals' stances on farm violence. This study, therefore, adopted a macro-linguistic approach.

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[1] According to Clack and Minnaar (2018), the **'farm attack'** refers to various crimes committed against persons, specifically on farms or smallholdings. They further elaborate that the concept of a separate crime category for farm attacks and murder of largely White farmers in the category of commercial farms, has become highly politicised. They explain that detractors of using the blanket term **'farm attacks'** point to the lack of a similar focus concerning other sectors of the farming community, such as similarly serious cases of assault or murder of Black people on the same farms.

[2] The phrase **'farm violence'** is, therefore, used in this study when analysing the data surrounding the specific Facebook posts as it does not hold the politicised weight of **'farm attack'**; however, the term **'farm attack'** remains in the data.

Facebook was chosen as the source for this research as it offers direct communication among people and organisations from diverse socioeconomic classes and backgrounds on prominent issues (Kolhatkar et al., 2020). A linguistic analysis was conducted on certain posts on these pages and the corresponding comment sections. These texts were organised using corpus linguistics but analysed from a Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) angle. This research focused on Hunston and Thompson's (2003) evaluation while employing Bednarek's (2006) new theory of evaluation to elucidate the discourse.

A need exists to provide background to South African farm violence before evaluative language can be addressed. Context is crucial in determining which lexical items are classified as evaluative (Kolhatkar et al., 2020).

1.2   Background and contextualisation

Understanding why farm violence is a major point of racial tension in South Africa provides a background for understanding farm violence discourse on Facebook, the focus of this study. Certain groups suggest that farm attacks are racially motivated, constituting hate crimes, whereas others suggest that they are part of the larger crime problem in the country (Pretorius, 2014). Farm violence is a multifaceted issue, exploiting South Africa's racially tense past and affecting Black and White South Africans raising questions of identity and belonging (Akinola, 2020a).

The racial tension behind farm violence in South Africa plays a crucial role in how discourse on the topic is shaped online and offline. The farm violence incidents explored in this study involve three victims—one White and two Black persons. Because of the historical racial tension of farm violence, it proved to be an interesting origin for comparing evaluative language across the two incidents.

This study explored two instances of farm violence. Incident one's victim was a young White farm manager. Incident two's victims were two young Black farm workers. The first incident occurred in Senekal, Free State, in October 2020. Brendin Horner, a young White male who managed the De Rots farm, was gruesomely murdered—his body was found tied to a gate. The incident led to nation-wide protests. The incident is referred to, throughout this study, as "the Senekal incident". A few months later, in April 2021, a second farm violence incident occurred in Mkhondo[3], Mpumalanga. Mgcini and Zenzele Coka were murdered on the Pampoenkraal farm. The brothers were allegedly gunned down following a violent

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[3] Previously known as Piet Retief.

confrontation with White farmers; according to some reports, they were jobseekers, while others say they were evicted farm workers. The incident is referred to, throughout this study, as "the Mkhondo incident".

As Clack and Minnaar (2018) explain, several discussions surrounding farm attacks exclude assaults being perpetrated by the farm owner (s) and manager (s), or even farm watch patrollers/security offices of private security companies. Two contexts of farm violence must be explored in this linguistic analysis to discover how evaluation is employed across differing overarching stances.

While context plays a crucial role in understanding which lexical items should be marked as evaluative, a general understanding of meaning-making in language, or how language users use language to develop an understanding of the surrounding word, is also critical. The background and context of farm violence in South Africa and the concept of meaning-making helped to explore prominent stances within Facebook discourses.

1.3   Analytical framework

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL)—a theoretical linguistic framework observing language as a social semiotic, functioning in a context to produce meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). As an extension of SFL, language and meaning are explored through evaluation. Evaluative language is an umbrella term describing various phenomena, including sentiment; opinion; attitude; and appraisal (Benamara et al., 2017). Evaluation is a framework that can be used for analysing the linguistic features of written and spoken texts, reflecting involvement, attitude, and affect towards the entities and the described events (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). It is especially useful when exploring emotive language. Farm violence is a sensitive topic; therefore, it was anticipated that posts by the page's admin and users in the comment section would express their observations emotively. Facebook is a social media platform; therefore, users need not adopt formal and more neutral language.

Evaluation can be split into four main parameters, indicating GOOD-BAD; CERTAINTY; EXPECTEDNESS; and IMPORTANCE (Hunston & Thompson, 2003); however, evaluation is a standalone rather than several concepts (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). In this research, however, the evaluation parameters are useful for classifying instances for further analysis.

1.4   Problem statement

Research on farm violence in South Africa approached it from a criminological, sociological, and psychological angle. In these studies, farm violence is explored as a crime category, and as part of the larger issue of settler colonial rhetoric, the psychological effects are also explored in psychology.

While there are dissertation-level publications that address this topic as a CDA, they are in the field of media studies and not linguistics. These studies allude to linguistic elements, complimentary to the overarching theme of how information is shared about farm violence online. Limited publications, specifically linguistic research, exist on the matter.

A need exists to explore this topic from a linguistic angle, specifically through evaluative theory. This study adopted a macro-level linguistic approach and is grounded in SFL. It explored South African farm violence discourse on a semantic level by focusing on evaluative language.

1.5   Research questions

The research questions are as follows:

1   How is the evaluative language employed in posts by the Facebook page admin and in the comment sections?
2   How does evaluative language vary across the Facebook pages, based on the farm violence incident?
3   What does evaluative language on the selected pages and their corresponding comment sections suggest about the public discourse of South African farm violence on Facebook?

1.6   Objectives

The study objectives were as follows:

1   To establish how evaluative language was employed in posts by the Facebook page admin and in the comment sections
2   To establish how evaluative language varied across the Facebook pages, depending on the incident
3   To uncover what evaluative language on the selected pages and their corresponding comment sections suggest about the public discourse of South African farm violence on Facebook

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1.7   Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative design. A qualitative design focusses on collecting information through social meaning instead of numerical data (Miller & Brewer, 2003); however, some corpus methods, typically observed as quantitative, were an instrument to collect, organise, and analyse the instances of evaluation within the text.

The text from Facebook was overseen as a corpus with eight subsections. The study used the *Facebook posts* by the page's admin. Facebook posts are public messages posted to a user's entire audience or on a specific person's profile page (or "wall"). Businesses use posts to continually provide a presence to their audience and potentially attract new followers (Big Commerce, 2021). The post could even be a link to an external news article. This study was only interested in the admin's (user) post to the page's entire audience.

Evaluation instances were organised and listed; this allowed for further tagging across the evaluative parameters, as proposed by Hunston and Thompson (2003) and Bednarek (2006). The study also observed the comment sections on the pages' posts. A comment section contains the comments by Facebook users on a particular post. A Facebook *comment* is a response or a remark by a user on the platform in response to a post. It is typically made below the original post or content. (Rocket Marketing, 2021). Comments can be split into two categories, indicating *comment threads* and *isolated comments*. More comments and replies follow a comment thread. It is a discussion of one comment commenting on a comment. (Kolhatkar et al., 2020) This study labelled a comment under a post but not a reply to another comment—an isolated comment, so it is not confused with a comment thread. (Kolhatkar et al., 2020). An isolated comment usually responds to the post, whereas a comment thread responds to the post and other users.

Instances of evaluation were classified using a combination of Hunston and Thompson's (2003) definition of evaluation and through intuitive discussions with peers on classifying the suspected instances of evaluative language. Each instance of evaluative language was checked. An example of an evaluative instance established within these texts is the term "White genocide". "Genocide refers to "the deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular race or nation" (United Nations, 2023); therefore, a term such as "White genocide" would be tagged as an instance of evaluation along the GOOD-BAD parameter. Kolhatkar et al.'s (2020) corpus approaches to online news comments using the appraisal framework offered further insight into how to embark on classifying, organising, and analysing comments on online news platforms which operate similarly to Facebook. While this study did not use the appraisal framework, as the appraisal framework engages evaluative language, this study still offered valuable insight into how to approach a text similar to the texts in this study.

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1.8　　Data collection

The corpus of this study contained text obtained from Facebook. Two instances of farm violence were explored across three pages. The fist chosen page adopted a stance that observed farm violence as a part of the larger crime problem in the country, whereas the second two adopted a stance that observed farm violence as 'evidence' of White genocide.

The Facebook pages in this study were chosen by searching the keywords "Farm Attacks", "South Africa", and "White Genocide". Once potential pages were established, it was ensured that the pages featured similar activity levels and a similar following. The pages also needed to address the Senekal and Mkhondo incidents. This selection process was similar to the approach used by Makombe et al. (2020). The criteria for identifying the stance of the Facebook pages depended on how the Facebook pages observed the concept of White genocide.

Posts about the Senekal incident and the Mkhondo incident were searched for on these pages, and while it would have been ideal to only feature posts from two pages for consistency. The Mkhondo incident was not addressed on the page that observed farm violence as 'evidence' of White genocide; therefore, this study established an alternative page for the Mkhondo incident that adopted the same stance as it was more important to keep the incidents and stances consistent than it was to keep the pages consistent.

1.9　　Data analysis

The following course of action was pursued:

- Two Facebook pages were identified—one adopting a stance that suggested farm violence was not an indicator of White genocide; the second page adopted a stance that suggested farm violence was an indicator of White genocide.
- Two posts were then selected from the chosen Facebook pages—one that addressed the Senekal incident and the other the Mkhondo incident (this equated to four posts).
- The posts were divided into two sub-categories, indicating the main post and the comment section.
- Texts were closely perused, and instances of evaluative language were tagged by hand. This step was repeated; therefore, two close perusals of the text were conducted before the researcher proceeded to Step 5.
- Concordances were formulated, using WordSmith Tools as an instrument, for each body of text (posts and comment sections). There were eight concordances.

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- The evaluative items were then categorised according to the evaluative parameters using a combination of Hunston and Thompson's (2003) and Bednarek's (2006) approaches.
- This was followed by extracting the evaluative items from each body of text and formulating a word frequency list for each text. There were eight-word frequency lists.
- The instances of evaluation were then analysed across:

   a) the Facebook pages' posts

   b) the Facebook pages' comments

1.10 Ethical clearance

The respondents' identities were concealed. The ethical clearance reference number for this is 17067716 (HUM032/0921) (Appendix A: Ethical clearance form).

1.11 Limitations

This study focused on the discourse of South African farm violence on Facebook and, therefore, only a small part of the South African population's stance could be observed. The focus was on evaluative language in the discourse on Facebook only; therefore, the findings only concluded this angle. This discourse was drawn from three Facebook pages and addressed only two specific instances of farm violence. It cannot offer general remarks on the public discourse on farm violence in South Africa.

1.12 Contribution of the study

While this study could not offer general remarks on the discourse of farm violence in South Africa, it offers valuable insight into the discourse about South African farm violence on Facebook. These findings can help elucidate discussions about South African farm violence, especially from a linguistic angle.

1.13 Chapter division

Chapter 1: Introduction

This section focuses on introducing the research topic.

Chapter 2: Background and contextualisation

This chapter explores how the topic fits into the larger discourse about farm violence in South Africa and explains the complex background.

Chapter 3: Literature review

This section focuses on secondary research and explores literature regarding farm violence, discourse analysis, SFL, and evaluation. It also explores the nuances of language on social media.

Chapter 4: Methods and methodology

This section focuses on the steps to conduct this research. Identifying evaluation and conducting an analysis are elucidated in greater detail.

Chapter 5: Findings and analysis

The findings and results are presented and analysed here. These findings are discussed and explained while exhibiting what these findings indicate about public discourse on South African farm violence.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter concludes the study by summarising its main points and findings. It also includes recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Background and contextualisation

2.1   Introduction

Farm violence in South Africa is a major point of racial tension and exploits the country's tumultuous racial history. Certain groups feel that farm violence is racially motivated and, therefore, constitutes hate crimes, whereas others suggest that they are a part of the larger crime problem in the country (Pretorius, 2014). The term *White Genocide* is used regarding farm violence, but it is controversial and has been linked to the "far-right political wing" (Ward, 2018). This chapter elucidates the background of the Facebook discourse explored in this study. The chapter, therefore, defines 'farm violence' as it is used in this study, elucidates the official 'farm murders' figures presented by South African Police Service (SAPS); it explores, in greater detail, the farm violence incidents addressed in this study. This chapter also discusses South African history and questions of land, identity, and belonging in South Africa.

2.2   Elucidating farm attacks

Farm attacks are, according to Nkosi et al. (2020), becoming an uncontrollable issue on South African farms, but the reason behind farm attacks remains elusive. The crime of 'farm attacks' is "mostly committed by indigenous citizens, which adversely affects the landowners, and it negatively paints the entire system of South African land reform" (Nkosi et al., 2020); however, several agricultural unions and farm owners proclaim that the violence against farm owners is explicitly motivated by the political and racial agenda to steer White farm owners out of the land (Nkosi et al., 2020).

This ties into Akinola's (2020a) opinion that farm attacks are not an illusion but a reality; however, the issue's complexity remains a highly politicised and racialised concern. As Clack and Minaar (2018) explain, enlisting farm attacks into a separate crime category (as opposed to the types of crimes the blanket term covers) could contribute to the politicisation. Before elucidating the farm attacks, defining what they are is crucial. This is a challenging task, as there are multiple definitions for the term.

According to Swart (2003), a farm-attack is a situation where the inhabitants of a farm are physically attacked with a specific objective in mind. Swart (2003) explains that the objective may be murder, rape, rob, or inflict physical harm. The SAPS (2003) defines farm attacks as "acts aimed at the person of residence, workers, and visitors to farms and smallholdings, whether with the intent to murder, rape, rob, or inflict bodily harm". This opinion is expanded on, suggesting that "in addition, all actions aimed at disrupting farming activities as a commercial concern, whether for motives related to ideology, labour

disputes, land issues, revenge, grievances, racist concerns, or intimidation, should be included" (SAPS, 2003).

AfriForum (2022) explains that farm attacks are characterised by extreme brutality and torture, remarking that the South African government largely ignores the phenomenon. Strydom and Schutte (2005) explain that these crimes are defined by their "calculated military precision".

These definitions emphasise the same major common concerns—the brutal and the calculated nature of such crimes; however, the term "farm attack" has become politicised, presenting a point of racial tension, as it is often used to imply a "White victim', as expressed in Clack and Minnaar (2018). As Akinola (2020a) explains, "in South Africa, large-scale farming is associated with the White race, and so any issue relating to such farming would involve the White group". This simple statement is already disagreed upon within various population groups in the country (Roets (2017) in Section 2.2).

For this study, and as suggested in Chapter 1, the term 'farm violence' is preferred when discussing specific instances of brutal and seemingly calculated crimes committed against the individuals who found themselves on the specific farm or smallholding at the time of the crime. It is still, however, worthwhile to clarify the figures collected regarding 'farm attacks' over the period of this research.

2.3   Observing the figures

A 2020/2021 AfriForum report remarks that 395 confirmed farm attacks occurred, and that there were 59 confirmed farm murders. Concerning the larger crime problem in the country, a report for 2020/2021 by SAPS confirms 4 286 murders in South Africa from January to March 2021 alone. The report also indicates that 11 people were murdered in 10 farm violence during the same period (SAPS, 2021).

Of these 11 murders, four victims were farm dwellers; four victims were farmers or farm owners; two victims were farm employees; one victim was a security guard (SAPS, 2021). By November 2021, SAPS reported an increase of 20.7 % in murders, bringing the figure to 6 163 from July to September 2021 (SAPS, 2021). This indicates that 1056 more people were murdered from July to September 2021 compared to the same period in 2020 (SAPS, 2021).

SAPS (2021) credits this drastic increase to the civil unrest[4] experienced in July 2021, which is alarming. The figures for the July to September 2021 period indicate 15 murders on farms and small holdings and are classified under the category 'Farm Attacks'.

These figures indicate a general crime problem in the country, but it is important not to dismiss discussions about farm violence based on these figures alone. As mentioned in Chapter 1 and in Section 2.2 of this chapter, the term 'farm attacks' is limited and often used inconsistently. In the SAPS reports, 'Farm attacks' refers to what other sources call 'Farm murders'. The first report mentioned (January to March 2021) classifies farm-attack victims, whereas the second report mentioned (July to September 2021) only offers an overall figure.

The focus of these figures is that 'farm attacks' are occurring—enough to instil fear—regardless of how these attacks are defined and divided or how the victims are classified. The discourse about South African farm violence on Facebook is worth exploring as it offers some, albeit limited, insight into how South Africans observe farm violence, identifying a general fear in these Facebook discourses.

2.4   Instances of farm violence

This study compared evaluative language surrounding farm violence on Facebook depending on certain factors, emphasising the importance of context; therefore, two instances of farm violence were explored. In the first incident, the victim of farm violence was a young White farm manager (the Senekal incident). In the second incident, the victims of farm violence were two young Black farm workers (the Mkhondo incident). As Clack and Minnaar (2018) explain, several discussions surrounding farm attacks exclude assaults perpetrated by the farm owner (s)/manager (s) or even farm watch patrollers/security offices of private security companies; therefore, this study must offer two contexts of farm violence to establish, using evaluative language, how Facebook admins and users respond to various instances of farm violence.

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[4] In July 2021, South Africa experienced violent protests and socio-political unrest, characterised by widespread looting of shops and businesses, and burning and destruction of public facilities and private properties, mostly in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and Gauteng. The socio-political unrest and violence were largely sparked by initial low-intensity and sporadic protests in parts of KZN against the arrest and imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma.

VHUMBUNU, C. H. 2021. The July 2021 Protests and Socio-Political Unrest in South Africa: Reflecting on the Causes, Consequences and Future Lessons. *Conflict Trends,* 2021**,** 3-13.

2.4.1   The Senekal incident

Brendin Horner was a young White male who managed a farm in Senekal in the Free State. His gruesome murder in October 2020 led to nation-wide protests (deVilliers, 2020). His body was found tied to a gate on the De Rots farm outside Paul Roux (deVilliers, 2020). It is assumed that he was tortured with a knife and possibly clubs before being murdered (Ngam, 2020). The murder led to local White farmers storming the magistrates' court, vandalising a police cell and "roughed up a female warrant officer" to reach the two males accused of the murder "to undoubtedly exact revenge", according to Ngam (2020). This event led to several weeks of tense confrontations among interest groups in the country (Ngam, 2020). According to Jess de Klerk, a local agriculture association representative, social media messages began circulating a few days before the court proceedings, calling on people to gather in protest on the day of the court proceedings (deVilliers, 2020).

According to de Klerk, a group of farmers met with the local police to inform them of their intent to gather, and accordingly, the encounter was positive; they were supposedly granted permission to proceed (deVilliers, 2020). Things quickly escalated on the day of the court proceedings; however, a smaller group stayed behind after the larger group dispersed and made their way past the police station and attempted to enter the holding cell (deVilliers, 2020). AfriForum's Roets suggests that this emphasised people's frustration with farm attacks (deVilliers, 2020). In November 2021, the two males accused of Horner's murder were found "not guilty" (Bhengu, 2021). AfriForum has since been considered a private prosecution (Bhengu, 2021). A few months after the Senekal incident, in April 2021, another farm violence incident occurred. In this incident, two Black males were killed—the Mkhondo incident.

2.4.2   The Mkhondo incident

In April 2021, Mgcini and Zenzele Coka were murdered on the Pampoenkraal farm in Mkhondo, Mpumalanga (Mabena, 2021). The brothers were allegedly gunned down following a violent confrontation with White farmers; according to some reports, they were jobseekers, while others say they were evicted farm workers (Mabena, 2021; Malinga, 2021). According to reports, they were part of a larger group armed with sticks and steel pipes (Mabena, 2021). The accused claimed that the killings were out of self-defence (Mabena, 2021). Again, this led to nation-wide uproar and tense farm violence discussions, and protests were held outside the Mkhondo Magistrate's court (Mabena, 2021).

The incident garnered ample attention and led to the resurfacing of the murder of cousins Musa Nene and Sifiso Thwala, beaten to death on the same farm in August 2020 alongside Sthembiso Thwala, brother of

Sifiso, who survived the attack (Mabena, 2021). Three of the accused in the Coka brother's murder were also named as suspects in the murder in August 2020 (Mabena, 2021). This led to discussions about the treatment of farm workers and local community members within these settings. The accused were released on R10 000 bail each by the end of April 2021.

The aforementioned incidents demonstrate how violence on South African farms includes White and Black groups; however, as observed in the results, these incidents are often met with polarised responses and a definitive 'good' side and 'bad' side are often identified. The comment section of the chosen pages are polarised and leave little room for constructive farm violence discussions. This polarisation results from South Africa's racial past. While farm violence affects more groups than White farmers, it is often racialised and instead facilitates discussions, focusing on the past. A brief exploration of South African history is, therefore, critical for understanding public discourse about South African farm violence on Facebook. This aspect is addressed in the subsequent section.

2.5   South Africa: A history of tension

A major point of socio-political and economic discussion in South Africa is land and land ownership (Akinola, 2020b). Farm violence ties into the larger issue of land. Land and land ownership have been debated (Akinola, 2020b). This research focused on the history of agrarian land and its related issues. These issues are largely debated concerning two leading groups, indicating White South African land owners, or rather farm owners, and Black South African farm workers (Akinola, 2020a), but the issue is more complicated than this.

First, there is colonialism and apartheid, which unfairly separated Africans from their land (Rugege, 2004). Second, the divide among White South Africans (English-speakers versus Afrikaans-speakers) and the ramifications this divided past has on the present day cannot be ignored (Giliomee, 2003). There is land and its importance on the livelihood of the rural population, whether White or Black (Akinola, 2020b).

The Natives Land Act of 1913 is often credited as the origin of land dispossession in South Africa (Beinart & Delius, 2014), but land dispossession occurred long before the land Acts were enacted (Letsoalo & Thupana, 2013). Debates surrounding land also often credit colonialism as the beginning of the tumult (Yanou, 2009); however, this historical tension pre-dates even colonialism (Yanou, 2009). Before colonialism, various groups of people competed for the land that now constitutes South Africa (Jankielsohn & Duvenhage, 2018); however, the main reason most discussions about land issues begin with colonialism

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and the Natives Land Act is owing to the consequences that these issues still have on the country today (Beinart & Delius, 2014).

Dispossessions characterised land issues during colonialism and the apartheid regime and land inequality, hunger, and conflict in postapartheid South Africa (Akinola, 2020b). Some scholars contend that the land reform processes are an example of recolonisation (Kepe & Hall, 2018).

South African history is far too expansive to cover in a single chapter; therefore, the study focuses on relevant aspects—specifically land and identity. Scholars comprehensively guide South African land history (Changuion & Steenkamp, 2012, Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007, Berger, 2009, Davenport, 1991, Davenport et al., 2000).

2.6 Land as identity

Land is integral to the identity of Africans (Akinola, 2020b). For the African[5] people - land represents community and the extension of oneself (Akinola, 2020b). As the 2011 *Green Paper on Land Reform* explains, "if you [deny] African people access to land, as has been the case in colonialism and apartheid, you have effectively destroyed the very foundation of their existence" (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2011).

Similarly, the Afrikaner has a deep emotional attachment to the land, especially agrarian, as it represents new beginnings and the birth of a new identity (Giliomee, 2003). It is simply to emphasise that issues of land are issues of identity, especially within the South African context; therefore, an understanding of the concept of identity is integral to the discussion of land.

According to Fukuyama (2018), identity centres around dignity and belonging. Fukuyama (2018) suggests that modern identity comprises three main parts, indicating *thymos*—the universal aspect of human personality that craves recognition; the distinction between the inner and outer self; the raising of the moral valuation of the inner self over outer society; an evolving concept of dignity, where recognition is owing not just to a narrow class of people but to everyone.

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[5] This definition includes the San and the Khoi people.

DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND REFORM 2011. Green Paper on Land Reform. *In:* REFORM, D. O. R. D. A. L. (ed.).

Similarly, Burbaker and Cooper (2000) describe identity, understood as a collective phenomenon, denoting a fundamental and consequential sameness among members of a group or category. From a more socio-political perspective, identity is a product of social or political action invoked to emphasise the interactive development of the collective self-understanding and solidarity that can make collective action possible (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). According to Burke and Stets (2009), identity is a cognitive and emotional process, functioning at conscious and unconscious levels. Because of this phenomenon, much of human behaviour centred around identity is deliberate and conducted with conscious awareness (Burke & Stets, 2009).

As Fukuyama (2018) explains, people resist being homogenised into larger cultures; instead, they want to remain connected to their ancestors and cultural roots. While diversity is important in shaping broader, more inclusive, voluntary, and flexible concepts of identity—it can also cause issues, such as violence and conflict (Fukuyama, 2018). The author explores identity from an identity politics perspective. Burbaker and Cooper (2000) attempt to define identity more analytically.

Concerning this study, identity and collective identity are explored mainly from Fukuyama's (2018) approach; therefore, threats to identity would centre around threats to recognition, moral valuation, and dignity. As mentioned in Section 2.5, land represents a physical manifestation of identity; therefore, threats to this land could be observed as threats to a collective and individual identity. The following sections explore land meaning of two interest groups, most associated with farm violence in South Africa.

2.6.1 The White landowner's identity

The White landowner takes two main forms in South Africa, indicating the English-speaking landowner and the Afrikaner (Gibson & Gouws, 2003). Afrikaner 'Whiteness' particularly interests this study. While Afrikaner identity is not hegemonic or singular, it is the specific construction of a nationalist, Afrikaner identity of interest. This identity is prominent in the Afrikaner sociocultural sphere as a visible and culturally pervasive performance of White identity (Marx-Knoetze, 2020). The farm is an integral part of this identity (Giliomee, 1987). The farm represents more than a body of land; it represents belonging and the new 'fatherland' (Giliomee, 1987).

The Afrikaners were the first colonial people to abandon their family and community ties with Europe to develop a distinct sense of self-consciousness and to make the land their 'own' (Giliomee, 2003). The Afrikaner culture begins on African soil (Le May, 1995). The British occupation in the Cape colony threatened this identity, and how the British observed the Afrikaners set the tone for years of hostility and

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conflict between the two groups (Giliomee, 2003). This conflict would cause the Afrikaners to abandon the Cape permanently and journey inland in search, once again, of land to make their 'own' (Le May, 1995).

One of the major myths circulated during this era was that of 'empty land' (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). According to this observation, the Voortrekkers of the 1830s arrived in empty land depopulated by the Mfecane, a series of wars between 1816 and 1840 between the Zulus and other Nguni groups (Davenport, 1991). On these grounds, false claims ensued, asserting that White people had as much right to the land as Black people—a claim widely disproven since (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

South Africa, from 1850 to 1910, was unique in colonialism (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). It was not a self-sufficient, White society, nor a society where White people played limited roles (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Instead, it was a society where White people steadily gained dominance but remained dependent on Black people as labourers and sharecroppers (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). What made South Africa unique further still was that it was one of the few European settlements where the dominant racial minority was ethnically divided between the Dutch and the English, and the political rivalry that this presented was only suspended where White supremacy was jeopardised (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Dutch 'Whiteness' was observed as an inferior 'Whiteness' (Marx-Knoetze, 2020).

The English-speaking landowners of South Africa are not necessarily descendants of the British, but the British influence has shaped their presence in the country (Gibson & Gouws, 2003). The English-speaking South Africans leaned more towards liberal ideals and were often better educated and wealthier than the Afrikaners, a trend that continued throughout the days of Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid (Giliomee, 2003). The English-speaking South Africans were not innocent bystanders during the apartheid era but played somewhat of a passive role. They enjoyed the White privileges bestowed upon them by the separatist regime without having to face the blame and criticism the Afrikaners encountered on the global stage (Giliomee, 2003).

The conflict between the British and the Afrikaners led to two major wars—*The First Boer War* and *The South African War*[6], where the Afrikaner and African people suffered greatly (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Both the British and the Afrikaners employed the services of Black males during this war, but this did not influence race relations on either side (Boje, 2015). As Boje (2015) explains, the success of any military occupation centres around three "critical variables": 1) the total devastation of a country that compels it to

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[6] Also known as the Second Boer War or the Anglo-Boer War.

acknowledge its need for help in reconstruction, 2) the perception of a common threat to both parties, and 3) credible guarantees of the occupying power's intention to withdraw. The British had divested the Free State and left the Afrikaners destitute and dependent on them. The Black population was observed as a common threat to the British and the Afrikaners. The British signalled an early withdrawal (Boje, 2015). This war would, however, further cement the Afrikaner identity and is often credited as a major driving force towards Afrikaner nationalism as there was a need to rebuild the Afrikaners' confidence (Giliomee, 2003).

The difference in land importance to the various groups is important. For the British, land represented commodity and political power, but for the Afrikaners, it represented the pillar on which their entire identity was built (Marx-Knoetze, 2020). The ability to farm and own agrarian land represented the successful establishment of the Afrikaner culture (Marx-Knoetze, 2020). The story of the Afrikaners is characterised by a constant struggle to prove their identity and claim somewhere as their home (Giliomee, 2003). Literature involves a well-rounded exploration of what 'Whiteness' means in postapartheid South Africa (Merrett et al., 2019; Verwey & Quayle, 2012) and a comprehensive exploration of the Afrikaner identity specifically (Giliomee, 2003).

2.7   Anticipating the British and the Afrikaners

Land and African identity are inextricably linked. While the Afrikaner identity is built on the land that now constitutes South Africa, at the earliest, this identity dates to 1652 (Le May, 1995). Land, specifically the land of modern-day South Africa, has been a critical part of African identity for centuries and well before colonialism (Tafira, 2015).

For most African cultures, land historically represents community, or *Ubuntu*, rather than commodity (Letsoalo, 1987); however, this definition experienced a shift in colonialism and apartheid (Akinola, 2020b). This is because land was used to exert dominance and power over the Black population. Land now represents somewhat of a middle ground between these two concepts (Akinola, 2020b); most importantly, it represents the dismantling of oppressive regimes (Tafira, 2015).

Precolonial South Africa is a loose term, provided that the earliest presence of homo sapiens in the area known as South Africa today is assumed to date over 125 000 years ago (Davenport et al., 2000). The first White settlers only arrived in South Africa in 1652 (Thompson, 1996), which makes this an expansive period.

Established groups lived in the area before the White settlers arrived (Thompson, 1996). During this era, the Khoi pastoralists and the San hunter-gatherers engaged in frequent wars—largely over territory (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Tension was rife between the Khoi and the San, but even they banded together when encountering a common enemy – this would become more prevalent when the European settlers arrived (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

South Africa's history was generally only documented from the mid-seventeenth century until recently (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). It was not until 1969, in Wilson and Thompson's *Oxford History of South Africa,* that the precolonial history of South Africa was addressed in major literature (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). This meant that a large portion of precolonial Southern African history was not taught to the population pre-1969 or the history taught was presented in such a way as to showcase Africa as a land in need of "civilising" (Heleta, 2018). This caused a large amount of misinformation to circulate about South Africa (Heleta, 2018). Misinformation would justify several atrocities at a later stage (Heleta, 2018).

While there is far more to the tension that arose during the colonial era, the point of the most interest and referred to most often is that of the Land's Act of 1913 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Upon colonisation, areas deemed suitable for European settlement were alienated (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Through misinterpretation of the African landownership system or a deliberate capitalisation on the functional nature of the system, Africans were dispossessed of unoccupied or vacant lands. Africans were then reduced from landowners to land tenants (Letsoalo & Thupana, 2013). Initially, the dispossession still allowed Africans to use some land, but this was slowly weaned away (Letsoalo & Thupana, 2013).

This Act is assumed to have been pushed into action due to pressure applied by White farmers from the Transvaal[7] and the Orange Free State[8] - to prevent further land purchases by Black South Africans in what was considered White areas (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). This practice was facilitated when Black South Africans would pool their resources, and it was presumably on the rise; this was then observed as a threat to White dominance on the land (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). It was also largely an attempt to secure cheap Black labour (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

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[7] **The Transvaal** was a province made up of what is known today as Limpopo, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and a part of the North West province. GILIOMEE, H. & MBENGA, B. 2007. *New History of South Africa,* Tafelberg, Cape Town.

[8] The Orange Free State is now known as the Free State province.

It is commonly suggested that 13% of the land was reserved for Africans through this Act; however, Letsoalo and Thupana (2013) suggest that this figure was closer to the 7.3% mark, with the land Act of 1936 meaning to release another 5.7% of the land to Africans. The major takeaway from Letsoalo and Thupana (2013), and the accepted figure, is that Africans were excluded from over 87% of the land in South Africa, and this number surpassed 87%.

While the Land Acts are a crucial part of South African history, they are too extensive to elucidate here in explicit detail for more detailed explanations of the Land Acts and their intricacies (Changuion & Steenkamp, 2012, Akinola, 2020b, Akinola, 2020a, Beinart & Delius, 2014, Letsoalo & Thupana, 2013).

Under the apartheid regime, Africans experienced even stricter land laws, and while the land allocated to the Black population increased slightly – the stricter land laws made owning land a difficult attempt (Changuion & Steenkamp, 2012). Under this regime, Black people (a definition which includes Africans, Coloureds, and Indians according to the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act of 2003) could not live in White areas and own land there (Changuion & Steenkamp, 2012). During this era, the Bantustans[9], or homelands, were established (Evans, 2012). The Bantustans were a major administrative mechanism for removing Black people from the South African political system under the several laws and policies created by apartheid (Evans, 2012). The Bantustans were established to remove the Black population in White South Africa permanently (Evans, 2012).

Black people suffered greatly under colonialism and apartheid (Heleta, 2018). Among several atrocities committed against the Black population, losing land—and, as a result, a feeling of losing identity—still significantly affects the nation today.

Land issues affect more than the two identities discussed in this section; however, provided the Facebook discussions explored – these two identities support the polarising stances and are, therefore, discussed in greater detail within this chapter.

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[9] A **Bantustan, or homeland**, refers to a partially self-governing area set aside during the period of apartheid for a particular indigenous African people GILIOMEE, H. & MBENGA, B. 2007. *New History of South Africa,* Tafelberg, Cape Town..

South Africa has been a democracy since 1994. Significant changes occurred; however, several issues from the past remain prevalent in today's South Africa.

2.8 The postapartheid era and the political landscape of land in South Africa

Since the collapse of apartheid and the birth of South Africa's democracy in 1994, land reform has been a central issue (Nkosi et al., 2020). Although aimed at rectifying the injustices imposed by the Land Acts and the ramifications of apartheid by returning land to African ownership, the process has been riddled with criminal activity and errors in implementing its policies (Nkosi et al., 2020).

This has been inflamed in recent years with the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) push for Expropriation Without Compensation (EWC[10]), which came to a head in 2018 (Akinola, 2020b). This has publicly forced the African National Congress (ANC) to consider radical land reform, an idea that they have been turning over since 2012 (Akinola, 2020b). Another contributing factor to the inflamed EWC issues is the Bell Pottinger scandal, state capture, and the "springing up" of "radical groups, such as Black First Land First (BLF) during a similar frame (Segal, 2018). The Bell Pottinger scandal is addressed as an act of diversion in Chapter 3, Section 3.7. Section 25 of the South African Constitution addresses land reform and states regarding expropriation:

> "Property may be expropriated only in terms of law of general application —
> (a) for a public purpose or in the public interest; and
> (b) subject to compensation, the amount of which and the time and manner of payment
> of which have either been agreed to by those affected or decided or approved by a
> court".
> (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

An amendment to this section of the Constitution, in the form of EWC, would allow land to be expropriated without compensation through two proposed methods (BusinessTech, 2019). The first is adding a proviso to the effect that only a court may determine that no compensation is payable in the event of land expropriation for land reform (BusinessTech, 2019). The second is that land may be expropriated without

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[10] While Akinola (2020b) refers to this phenomenon as **Land Expropriation Without Compensation (LEWC)** it is referred to as **Expropriation Without Compensation (EWC)** on the South African Government's website, and on the Expropriation Bill; therefore, EWC is the preferred term in this study.

the payment of any compensation as a legitimate option for land reform to redress the results of past racial discrimination (BusinessTech, 2019).

Initial policies on land reform were divided into three components: land redistribution; land restitution; and land tenure reform (Cliffe, 2000). The land redistribution component aims to reallocate land to the landless poor, labour tenants, farm workers, and emerging farmers for residential and productive uses to improve their livelihoods and life quality (Cliffe, 2000). The land restitution component aims to restore the land to those dispossessed of their rights in the land since 1913 through racially discriminatory laws and practices (Cliffe, 2000). The objective is to promote justice and reconciliation (Cliffe, 2000). The land tenure reform component deals directly with the means through which land is owned (Cliffe, 2000). It addresses the insecure, overlapping, and disputed land rights resulting from the previous governance systems, especially in the former Bantustans (Cliffe, 2000).

While initially created to help address social, political, and economic inequality without damaging the economy, land reform has not accomplished its goals and has only agitated Black and White South Africans (Akinola, 2020b).

Ernst Roets, AfriForum's leader, and as an extension, AfriForum[11] oppose EWC. The Democratic Alliance (DA) has also opposed amendments allowing EWC to commence (Gerber, 2021). On 7 December 2021, the National Assembly could not pass the amendment to Section 25, as the ANC failed to acquire the required two-thirds majority vote in favour of the amendment (Gerber, 2021). The EFF decided not to vote in favour of the Bill as it did not place all land in state custodianship (Gerber, 2021). The DA voted against the Bill because "creating uncertainty around property rights goes counter to the rule of law" (Gerber, 2021).

Most interesting regarding this study is EFF leader Julius Malema's strongly worded dissatisfaction towards the proposed amendment, calling the ANC "sell-outs captured by White monopoly capital[12]" (Gerber,

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[11] **AfriForum** describes itself as a non-governmental organisation that protects the rights of minorities in South Africa. The organisation was founded in 2006 and has been described as a White interest group, often receiving criticism that it is tied to the far right. AfriForum (2021) denies this and states that they condemn all forms of racism.

[12] **White Monopoly Capital** can mean everything from an oligopoly owned by a super wealthy White elite that dominates of large sectors of the economy consisting of colluding monopolies. *OLIFANT, N. 2017. What exactly is 'White monopoly capital'? Mzwanele Manyi offers a definition. Times Live*

2021). The negative portrayal of the ANC in favour of the EFF, and as an extension, Julius Malema, is a reoccurring theme in the study findings.

Malema called on "South Africans to know that it is now in their hands" (Gerber, 2021). According to Gerber (2021), "[South Africans] must stop trusting that the ANC can do anything in its power to give them the land back". "They must take it upon themselves to reclaim that which was stolen from them, and the EFF will be fully behind them when they engage in that struggle of taking back the land that was stolen from them by children of criminals" (Gerber, 2021). This statement strikes a familiar chord with statements made by Zimbabwe's former president, Robert Mugabe, during the *Fast-Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP)* of the early 2000s—which led to widespread farm violence (Pilossof, 2012). This violence is often used as an example of the dangers of land reform; however, the issue is more complicated than one might assume, as discussed in Section 2.9.

On 28 September 2022, the Expropriation Bill was endorsed, despite the initial vote (Merten, 2022). This verdict has left several land-owning South Africans feeling uncertain, but Public Works Minister, Patricia de Lille, clarifies that "the bill makes explicit what is implicit in the constitution and will not allow the arbitrary expropriation of property" (Gerber, 2022). As de Lille explains, it is wrong to "instil a fearmongering" about the issue as it "distorts the facts in a land debate" (Gerber, 2022)). To explore the South African government's official stance on land reform (South African Government, 2022).

2.9 Observing Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean land struggle is often referenced in discussions about South African land issues (Marx-Knoetze, 2020). These discussions largely centre around the *Fast-Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP)*, often colloquially called the "land grabs", "land invasions", or "land occupations", which occurred in the early 2000s (Pilossof, 2012). This was the first instance of radical land redistribution since the end of the cold war (Moyo, 2013). The dominant narrative about the *FTLRP* was that it was characterised by violence and chaos (Pilossof, 2012).

However, several scholars contended that the *FTLRP* was necessary to reverse racial land ownership patterns and broaden access to land across ethnically diverse provinces while replacing most private agricultural property rights with land user rights on public property (Mkodzongi & Lawrence, 2019).

As Deumert (2019) explains, by referencing Fanon (1963), "decolonisation never takes place unnoticed". This is something that Murisa (2011) affirms, suggesting that the *FTLRP* was the most significant challenge

to the neo-colonial state in Africa under neo-liberalism. The radical nature where the land redistribution was conducted, however, was widely condemned by the global North, especially by the former colonial power, the United Kingdom (UK) (Mkodzongi & Lawrence, 2019).

This caused Mugabe to call on the former colonial power to "pay for agricultural land" that they had "compulsorily acquired for resettlement" and remarked that if they failed to pay for this land, then Zimbabwe was under no obligation to pay for the agricultural land they had compulsorily acquired for resettlement through the *FTLRP* (Pilossof, 2012). The UK agreed to a land deal under the condition that Zimbabwe re-establish a rule of law instead of the "illegal" land occupations, and while this was initially agreed to, it was short-lived, and the violence increased (Pilossof, 2012).

These land struggles, while successful in their mission of redistributing land, disappointed concerning government support and funding (Mkodzongi & Lawrence, 2019). As Moyo (2013) explains, land reform is insufficient for realising national or rural development. It is also worth noting that the backlash the *FTLRP* received caused major world powers to withdraw from Zimbabwe – something that would be detrimental to the country's economy (Mkodzongi & Lawrence, 2019).

The *FTLRP* caused an array of issues within an already turbulent nation (Pilossof, 2012). The case of Zimbabwe is often used to heed caution to the dangers of radical land reform. It is this radicalisation and violence that several South Africans fear (Moyo, 2013). Note, at this point of departure, that Zimbabwe has its own unique political history and a complicated relationship with colonialism and the struggle for land. This topic is too expansive to elucidate in this chapter for a more detailed exploration (Moyo, 2013, Pilossof, 2012, Murisa, 2011, Thomas, 2003, Stoneman, 2018).

Since the abrupt removal of Mugabe in 2017, the new Zimbabwean president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, expressed that land reform was irreversible and that former White farmers would be compensated for the improvements on their former farms rather than for the land—illustrating a shift towards a more neoliberal approach than before (Mkodzongi & Lawrence, 2019).

The new Zimbabwean government called on White farmers to apply to reclaim the land seized during the *FTLRP* (Reuters, 2020); this notion has been met with mixed responses – with some arguing it would undo the redistribution procedure and place the marginalised groups it meant to empower on a worse footing than before (Mkodzongi & Lawrence, 2019). The future of agrarian land in Zimbabwe remains uncertain and demonstrates that land issues are not easily rectified.

2.10   The politics of fear: White genocide and Dubul' ibhunu

Issues, such as farm violence, especially regarding White farmers or landowners, approach two themes central to the settler colonial ideology: land (and its feared loss); and bodies (and their feared disappearance) (Deumert, 2019). This "apocalyptic fear" of the "imagined eradication" of 'Whiteness' is made visible through a range of sensational signs that circulate online and offline (Deumert, 2019). While this research focusses specifically on the evaluative language about farm violence online, it is still worth exploring studies, such as Deumert's (2019), which emphasise the dramatised ways where the issue is addressed – especially online. One cannot deny the existence of "extra-lethal violence" in South African rural violence (Holmes, 2020); however, as Holmes (2020) explains, the brutality of extra-lethal violence provides an opportunity for mobilisation not only by perpetrating populations but also victim populations, even when it is infrequent. This occurrence can be noted in using "farm attacks" to justify "White genocide" (Marx-Knoetze, 2020).

White genocide is a complicated term to define, as it is a relatively new term and only gained traction in the early 2000s (Ansah, 2021); however, all attempts to define the notion centre around one main theme – the eradication of 'Whiteness' through issues, such as immigration, declining birth rates, or the South African farm attacks (Ansah, 2021). It is difficult to ignore the similarities this term draws with earlier notions, such as that of "race suicide" – a popular idea from the early 1900s that the White race is dying out and that it is self-destructing – "race suicide" was often used as a justification for several atrocities during such times (Ansah, 2021).

The eradication of 'Whiteness' plays into Deumert's (2019) and Holmes' (2020) notion of White victimhood and cannot, therefore, be trusted as concrete evidence. As mentioned in Section 2.9, Zimbabwean land issues are complex, and while there may be similarities between South African and Zimbabwean land reform, these issues are different in so far as the Zimbabwean political landscape is different.

South Africa is inevitably at the centre of these discussions. This is likely owing to an array of reasons, including with the legacy of the apartheid regime and its highly publicised collapse (Marx-Knoetze, 2020).

The notion that White people (especially White Afrikaners) are being targeted and murdered has reached several parts of the globe and has amassed the attention of influential people - from the likes of far-right activists, such as Katie Hopkins (Deumert, 2019), to former US President, Donald Trump (Holmes, 2020), to Australian MP, Peter Dutton (Piccini, 2018). These studies include a more detailed exploration of this

topic (Falkof, 2021, Holmes, 2020, Marx-Knoetze, 2020, Zulu, 2019, Ward, 2018, Akinola, 2020a, Perry, 2003, Andrew, 2018).

The 2010 AfriForum vs. Julius Sello Malema case, for instance, is a prime example of this heightened emotion in action. The controversial case saw Malema accused of hate speech after singing the apartheid-era struggle song Dubul' ibhunu, which has commonly been translated to "kill the boer" or "kill the farmer" (Geldenhuys, 2017). In a controversial judgement, it was established that the song was hate speech and could not be justified by arguing its historical significance (Geldenhuys, 2017).

Deumert (2019) contends that the song is not a political statement of intent or a call to kill people but instead expresses a commitment to bringing down the system of White supremacy and settler colonialism, therefore keeping the spirit of resistance alive; however, AfriForum leader Ernst Roets (2017) contends that the song encourages farm attacks. The ruling of the song as hate speech was overturned when the constitutional court ruled on a similar case in 2018 and carefully distinguished between offensive language (protected by freedom of speech) and racist hate speech (Deumert, 2019).

In 2020, AfriForum submitted a complaint to the equality court about the song after it was sung by Malema and the EFF at the Senekal protests in October 2020 (Senekal is an instance of farm violence explored in this study (Section 2.4.1)) (Stoltz, 2022). The song was once again not deemed racist hate speech, but AfriForum has indicated that it will appeal the outcome. The song and its significance are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

While a "White genocide" may not be a reality, farm violence remains prominent in South Africa (Akinola, 2020a). It is also worth noting that several farm-attack victims are White, but scholars, such as Akinola (2020a) and Aliber et al. (2013), explain that this could largely be credited to commercial farming being a historically White-dominated field (Aliber et al., 2013).

It is also worth noting that farm violence also affects Black South Africans (Clack & Minnaar, 2018); however, as discussed in Sections 2.2 and 2.4 of this chapter, the term farm attacks have become somewhat politicised and alludes to crimes committed against White farmers. The politicisation of farm violence is discussed thoroughly in Brodie (2022).

2.11 Chapter conclusion

Land and identity are interwoven concepts that have long shaped the political landscape of South Africa. Land issues are, therefore, undeniably identity issues. This is a major contributing factor to why land and

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its related issues, such as farm violence, are so polarising. For this study, two major identities were explored: the White farm owner and the African farm worker. The White farm owner identity mainly comprises Afrikaner farmers (or Boers). The African farm worker identity is largely composed of Black South Africans.

Both groups have inextricable emotional ties to the land; however, remember that the Afrikaner identity only began taking shape after the first White settlers arrived in the country during the 1650s, whereas the African identity had always existed on the continent. Both sides feel strongly about the land being theirs, but only one side has, historically, unfairly been dispossessed of their land. Land reform aims to rectify this issue but has been riddled with complications. In October 2022, the Expropriation Bill was endorsed. This will allow for nil compensation of land in specific instances. EWC is alarming for several White South Africans, especially those in the farming community, but the reasons are not always as clear as expected.

Notions of losing White land (such as with EWC) and losing or damage to the White body (such as in farm violence) can be tied to settler colonial ideals. White victimhood also plays a significant role in how issues, such as farm violence, are communicated; therefore, it is challenging to uncover a clear picture of the true severity of such crimes.

People are being violently attacked on farms. Whether the crimes are calculated and racially motivated or rather a depiction of the larger crime issue in the country, is where most opinions begin to differ. The idea of White genocide in South Africa is largely associated with the 'far-right' evidence of a global attempt to eradicate 'Whiteness'. The stance on White genocide was, therefore, chosen as a background for comparing South African farm violence discourse across the Facebook pages.

Farm violence is a significant issue often dramatised to push various political agendas from various political and personal standpoints, but one cannot forget that there are real people and real lives attached to it.

This chapter explores the background and context of farm violence and, as an extension, approaches land and identity concerns. This context is necessary to understand the evaluative language regarding farm violence on Facebook.

Chapter 3: Literature review

3.1   Chapter introduction

This chapter summarises the literature on farm violence language. Finer nuances of social media platforms are elucidated. Studies focusing on similar issues, employing similar methodologies to approach their data, are explored. How evaluation, expansive farmwork of SFL, could be a useful tool for identifying problematic language online is demonstrated. Problematic language is employed as an umbrella term in the study, including terms, such as offensive or abusive language, racism, propaganda, hate speech, and, more recently, "gaslighting". The objective of this chapter is to gain a comprehensive understanding of language usage online, particularly the language types present in a Facebook post regarding farm violence.

3.2   The landscape of research on South African farm violence and similar issues

As addressed in Chapter 2, "farm attacks" in South Africa are not an illusion, but a reality (Akinola, 2020a). The language used to elucidate this reality is often murky, with terms such as "farm attacks" and "farm murders" often used interchangeably for instance (Clack & Minnaar, 2018); however, the language of more relevance to this study is the public discourse that occurs because of farm violence.

"Farm attacks" are characterised by their grotesque nature, and this grotesque nature is often cited as evidence for an entrenched fear of White lives, often expressed as a "White genocide" (Clack & Minnaar, 2018). The concerns discussed in Chapter 2 must be reiterated, suggesting that farm violence exists, that farm violence instances are often gruesome, and that there are several White victims. It is also important to reiterate that South Africa occupies a larger problem with crime and that several South Africans are exposed to extreme violence, regardless of where this violence occurs (Clack & Minnaar, 2018). While this may be true, it does not detract from the real and valid fear the farming community expresses (Akinola, 2020a).

According to Beukes (2012), a culture of violent language exists in South Africa; this can be noted in the xenophobic, gender-based violence, and racist discourses. As clarified in the discussion above, a growing need exists to explore problematic and abusive language in South Africa, especially regarding an issue such as farm violence.

Deumert (2019) suggests that an issue, such as farm violence, often catalyses panic; therefore, the controversial, apartheid-era struggle song "Dubul' ibhunu", which directly translates to "shoot the boer", is an interesting place to start when exploring the language of farm violence.

In Roets' (2017) "Kill the Farmer", it is contended that the struggle song has direct ramifications for the South African farming community, with Roets (2017) providing evidence of an increase in "farm attacks" a month after the song was sung by former South African president, Jacob Zuma, at an ANC rally in 2012; however, Deumert (2019) contends that the song "is not a political statement of intent or a call to kill people, but instead expresses a commitment to bringing down the system of White supremacy and settler colonialism, thus keeping the spirit of resistance alive". Deumert (2019) contends that the moral outrage expressed towards the song indicates interpellation (an injurious speech act) not because it is an actual call to violence in the present but because it destroys White innocence and forces one to remember and acknowledge the past; however, as Pretorius' (2014) psycho-political analysis of farm attacks demonstrate, there appears to be excess meaning beyond interpellation not accounted for in the perpetration of this violence and discursive responses to it.

Beukes (2012) contends that the song is dehumanising. She initially refers to former ANC Youth League leader and deputy minister Peter Mokaba's use of it at political rallies in the 1990s to "allegedly incite violence against the Afrikaner minority" and then by referring to EFF leader and former ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema's singing of it in 2010. The song was then declared unconstitutional and unlawful that same year, while Malema and his supporters maintained that the "Boer" reference was a metaphor for apartheid and, therefore, a part of the struggle and history of apartheid (Beukes, 2012). Beukes (2012) then refers to the brutal murder of White supremacist leader Eugene Terre'Blanche a few weeks after the events, drawing a correlation between the song and the murder.

3.2.1 The farm and the farmer in South Africa

While the major stances surrounding "Dubul' ibhunu" have been approached above, perhaps it is worth exploring the narrative of the farm and the farmer in South African discourse.

Marx-Knoetze (2020) suggests that the farm, as an entity, is increasingly referenced in discourses and cultural texts focused on Afrikaners. The reoccurrence is connected to current and perceived threats to White hegemony in South Africa and that it inevitably ties into narratives of White victimhood (Marx-Knoetze, 2020). Marx-Knoetze (2020) further suggests that references to farms and farming in these types of discourse notably manifest in various forms of the nostalgic appropriation of the platteland. Marx-Knoetze draws from Coetzee's (1986) analysis of the "plaas roman" or "farm novel", which longs for the past. The nostalgic appropriation of the platteland ties well into the sensational signs that Deumert (2019) uncovers. Deumert (2019) established that signs centred around two themes central to the ideologies of settler colonialism: land and its feared loss; and (White) bodies and their feared disappearance.

Steyn's (2019) exploration of the 2015 film "Treurgrond" suggests a similar pattern, suggesting that the narrative about "twin horrors", land expropriation and farm attacks, is used to "conjure up" apocalyptic images of Afrikaners no longer welcome in Africa. Steyn (2019) contends that these images fit into the larger narrative of Afrikaner victimisation in democratic South Africa and the "purported attack on their lives, culture, heritage, and language". He further contends that while the film captures violence inflicted on White victims, it ignores the physical and structural (specifically, the colonial dispossession of land and apartheid's forced land removals) that shaped South Africa's past (Steyn, 2019). Steyn (2019) emphasises the "mythologisation" of farm attacks in South Africa and how these "mythologies" inspire "collective fear" used to mobilise Afrikaners as an ethnic community.

3.3 Media representations of farm violence from a language perspective

While farm violence was not researched from a linguistic angle specifically, there have been interesting media studies focusing on how the discourse surrounding the issue is shaped. Jacobs (2000), Barraclough (2021), and Sheik (2022) address the discourse thoroughly in their studies.

Jacobs (2000) focuses on how "farm killings" are represented in a newspaper, whereas Barraclough (2021) and Sheik (2022) specifically explore the discourse of farm violence on Facebook. While Jacobs' (2000) study was conducted over twenty years ago, it remains an important source; this is largely owing to the minimal research conducted on the language of farm violence. While these sources offer an important contribution to the discussion of farm violence, they do not elucidate the language of it in as great detail as in this study.

The aim of Jacobs' (2000) study, for instance, is more concerned with the overarching ideological structuring of these discourses in the *Eastern Province Herald* newspaper than the specifically emotive language employed. Jacobs (2000) is also largely concerned with the overall objectivity and truthfulness of the newspaper discourse being observed.

Barraclough (2021) is interested in how Facebook users engage with farm violence discourse on Facebook. She is concerned with how problematic information about farm violence is engaged with, shared and socially corrected (Barraclough, 2021). While Barraclough (2021) explores farm violence in her study, the focus is on how farm violence is used to perpetuate a "White genocide". Sheik (2022) focuses on the Facebook pages of news sites around the reporting of farm violence.

Sheik (2022) uses a corpus and elucidates specific lexical items in her study (such as noun phrases, adjectives, and pronouns, for instance) similar to how this study is approached; however, she approaches the linguistic element of her study from a CDA perspective (Sheik, 2022). This aligns with Barraclough's (2021) approach; therefore, her approach is more concerned with the power dynamics of language (Sheik, 2022). Sheik (2022) does not explore lexical items through evaluation and instead employs Hall's encoding/decoding theories. Sheik (2022) also focuses on news reporting, whereas this study focuses on public discourse.

Both approaches differ in this study, where the choice of emotive language, specifically, is the focal point. The findings of these studies, particularly in Barraclough (2021) and Sheik (2022), provide invaluable insight into the landscape of farm violence discourses in South Africa.

Jacobs (2000) confirmed inadequate neutrality, balance, or objectivity in the August 1998 "farm killings" discourse in the *Herald*. Jacobs (2000) suggests that the newspaper creates a "picture of innocent, hardworking, economically productive but defenceless Whites, being killed by savage, senseless Blacks in circumstances of lawlessness and anarchy". Jacobs (2000) suggests that the discourse "orchestrates a racist theory that 'Black' equals crime, thoughtlessness, savagery, while 'White' is associated with productivity, family values, and civilisation". It is suggested that the discourse of this newspaper (language, focus, and style) constructs and legitimises, perhaps even perpetuates, a "particular historical, social reality, indicating that Black life is cheap, and White lives matter" (Jacobs, 2000).

The South African socio-political landscape has changed since Jacobs' (2000) research was conducted. The newspaper discourse, he observes, occurred in 1998, only four years after South Africa had held its first democratic election. This starkly contrasts with Barraclough (2021) and Sheik (2022), who explore farm violence discourse on Facebook from 2017 to 2020, over twenty years after South Africa's first democratic elections. Apart from the shift in the socio-political landscape of South Africa over the past two decades, the news media landscape has also shifted dramatically with the rise of social media (Bergström & Jervelycke-Belfrage, 2018).

Where themes of reconciliation and political metaphors, such as "the rainbow nation" (van Rooy & Drejerska, 2014), were largely still prevalent in 1998, in recent years, South Africa has witnessed a shift towards a more decolonial approach (Marschall, 2019). Marschall (2019) explains that while apartheid ended a generation ago, South Africa still has a long way to go to overcome its shadow and create an equal society with equal opportunities.

Barraclough (2021) adopts Marwick's (2018) sociotechnical model of media effects as the guiding framework for her study. This framework attempts to understand why people share "fake news" by exploring social and technical systems (Barraclough, 2021). The model centres around three main factors: actors, messages, and technological evidences (Barraclough, 2021). The second suggests that media messaging is often structured in particular ways to further various agendas (Marwick, 2018 in Barraclough, 2021). To address this premise, Barraclough (2021) conducted a CDA on the comment sections of "farm attack"/ "farm murder"- focused Facebook posts. CDA allowed Barraclough (2021) to elucidate the qualitative inter-textual and inter-discursive relationships in defences against "social corrections". According to Barraclough's (2021) interpretation of Vraga and Bode's (2017) popular term, "social corrections" refers to "corrections provided by social sources in social media where peers are usually a primary source of information".

Barraclough (2021) uncovered twelve major discursive themes in these comment sections; however, the following seven are the most relevant to this study: (1) Black people are inherently criminogenic (to suggest that they are likely to cause criminal behaviour); (2) the government or political parties are orchestrating, or are at least complicit in the White genocide agenda; (3) the fake details of one instance do not matter because the overarching narrative is undeniably true; (4) highly documented gory details of farm attacks and victims' personal stories prove the extraordinary severity of the crimes; (5) dissenters must be sympathetic towards the ANC/EFF/communism/liberalism; (6) nostalgia for apartheid, and selective amnesia about the past's role in SA's current issues; (7) dissenters must acknowledge SA's path towards becoming Zimbabwe.

Barraclough (2021) does not elucidate or explore specific lexical items in her analysis but focuses on the overarching themes expressed in these comment sections. Barraclough's (2021) study explores farm violence as part of a larger theme of "White genocide" and "problematic information", but her discursive themes provide valuable insight into the overarching discourse on farm violence in South Africa. Her focus on Facebook also offers a glimpse into the landscape of farm violence discourse on the social media platform, providing this research with a clearer frame of reference.

Sheik (2022) adopts a combined approach in her research and uses Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding theory of reception and CDA. Sheik's (2022) study, however, is largely a CDA. The corpus of Sheik's (2022) study comprised the Facebook posts from BBC News and IOL and their corresponding comment sections; the articles featured these headlines: "#Black Monday: BLF slams 'racist' farm murder protest", "Hofmeyr: Government not doing enough to protect citizens", and "farm attacks, social justice and our food security"

(Sheik, 2022). Sheik (2022) established an extreme degree of racial polarisation between Black and White in the BBC News and IOL news reports about "farm attacks". The comment section of Sheik's (2022) study revealed rhetorical tropes of "card stacking, plain folk, euphemism, slippery slopes, ad hominem responses, pathos, propaganda and emotional stereotyping in the discourses of exaggerated victimhood and Afro pessimism by White farmer interest groups". These discourses were recognisable by positive self-representation and negative representation of the other (Sheik, 2022).

Sheik (2022) refers to the Facebook comments explored in her study as an instance of "citizen journalism" while this term lacks a single clear-cut definition, how Sheik (2022) uses the term aligns with Wall's (2015) interpretation, "news content (text, video, audio, interactive, etc.) produced by non-professionals". This content may capture a single moment (witnessing an event, for instance), be intermittent (a social media feed, for instance), or be regularly produced (such as by hyper-local news operators, for instance) (Wall, 2015). According to Sheik (2022), these Facebook comments "decentred" the role of BBC News and IOL in communicating hegemonic ideologies and messages to consumers.

Barraclough (2021) and Sheik (2022) adopted similar approaches to those in this study; however, they focused on overarching themes represented through language. This study concerns the specifically evaluative lexical items within similar datasets and, therefore, adopted a more macro-level approach to the analysis.

3.4   Discourse online

This study aimed to explore public discourse on the social media platform Facebook. Owing to the rapid development of social media technologies and their constant change, it is difficult for scholars to understand what these media is exactly and how to analyse it (Zappavigna, 2012). Broadly defined, social media is an umbrella term that refers to web-based services that facilitate social interaction or networking (Zappavigna, 2012). Facebook is a microblogging platform and allows users to share short messages about thoughts, feelings, or actions with users who can read and respond (Buechel & Berger, 2017).

Zappavigna (2012) explains that social media and its technology have placed an interesting semiotic pressure on language and that a need exists to explore the interpersonal dimension of meaning-making in this new media. Buechel and Berger (2017) explain that a major appeal, for users, of microblogging is its undirected nature. This means that a user can share a message, as a status update or post on Facebook, without there being a need for forced communication (Buechel & Berger, 2017). This study concerns the opposite. This study aimed to explore interaction as opposed to a lack thereof. It is still worth noting, though,

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as undirected communication could explain the emotive nature of Facebook interactions instead of face-to-face communication.

A platform like Facebook allows direct communication among people and organisations from diverse socioeconomic classes and backgrounds on critical issues (Kolhatkar et al., 2020). The appeal of exploring a microblogging platform, such as Twitter or Facebook, from a linguistic angle specifically remains in the diversity of individuals that gravitate towards these platforms (Kolhatkar et al., 2020).

How social media platforms operate from a technical perspective can significantly affect what information is shared and how this information is shared.

3.4.1 Nuances of the online space: echo chambers, algorithms, filter bubbles, and confirmation bias

As Kitchens et al. (2020) explain, there is a growing concern that social media and other information discovery platforms promote information-limiting environments. This results from these platforms shielding users from opinion-challenging information, therefore encouraging users to adopt more extreme ideological positions (Kitchens et al., 2020). Concepts such as *echo chambers* and *filter bubbles* are controversial metaphors for this phenomenon, but they are important in understanding the nuances of the online space (Kitchens et al., 2020).

The concept of an echo chamber can be confusing, especially when other words, such as *"algorithm"* and "filter bubble", are included in the discussion. Note that the accuracy of the concepts of echo chambers and filter bubbles is a topic of major debate (Bruns (2021), Zimmer et al. (2019), Wolfowicz et al. (2021). Before these concepts can be discussed, it is important to define them properly.

Algorithms are rules defining operations sequences and can be implemented as computer programs in computational machinery (Zimmer et al., 2019). For this study, as in Zimmer et al. (2019), an algorithm is only discussed in computer programs running in this computational machinery. As Bruns (2021) explains, both echo chambers and filter bubbles are metaphors for the sameness of information. Bruns (2021) does not agree with these terms; however, while imperfect and somewhat "confusing", they are used broadly to describe these issues and have, therefore, been included.

This study adopted Vydiswaran's et al. (2012) description of an echo chamber, exploring the issue as "bad user behaviour" or "biased users". These are loosely connected clusters of users with similar ideologies or interests whose members notice and share only information appropriate to their common interests. The

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information behaviour of this user combined with other users' behaviours (for instance, and especially relevant to this study, commenting on posts or replying to comments) exhibits special patterns, which may lead to the echo chamber effect (Bruns, 2021).

A "filter bubble" focuses on "bad algorithms" or applications of personalised information retrieval and recommender systems (Zimmer et al., 2019). This means that users receive only an excerpt of propositions (potentially false) instead of the entire spectrum of information (Zimmer et al., 2019). The more users focus on a topic in their online searches, the more the algorithm adapts to present them with information that matches their "interests".

With the echo chamber, the user searches for information that suits their interests. With the filter bubble, the algorithm has adapted to the user's search history and is only presenting them with parts of information on certain topics – the parts that they indicated the most interest in – rather than the entire picture (Bruns, 2021). The two concepts present an overarching issue of a lack of diversity of voices regarding the content explored. Whether this is the fault of an algorithm or a biased user is a topic of much debate that remains primarily unsolved (Zimmer et al., 2019).

The basic notion of an echo chamber is that when users become more polarised about certain issues, arguments from the "opposite side" appear less often, and instead, they are surrounded by sources that openly express only the opinions they agree with (Garimella et al., 2018). The users, therefore, find their opinions to be correct, as several individuals seem to agree with their thought processes.

As Garimella et al. (2018) explain, there are two parts to an echo chamber: the opinion shared by the user and the "chamber". The "chamber" refers to the social network around the user and allows the opinion to "echo" back to the user as it is also shared by other users - the opinion corresponds to the content shared by the users and the underlying social network allows for their propagation (Garimella et al., 2018).

As one can deduce, this presents a problem for controversial topics. Whether it is the user's fault or the algorithm's fault is not the most crucial point of this discussion – rather, it is users pursuing to validate their opinions with similar opinions and deducing that if several individuals think the same way, their observation must be correct. This phenomenon is not new. It is somewhat of a *confirmation bias,* which Nickerson (1998) defines as "the seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs, expectations, or a hypothesis in hand".

Regarding echo chambers, Garimella et al. (2018) explain that these exist if the political leaning of the content a user receives from the network agrees with the content they are sharing. This notion ties in well with Nickerson's (1998) indicating the major difference between impartially evaluating evidence to come to an unbiased opinion and building a case to justify a conclusion already drawn. While confirmation bias can adopt several forms, it can become especially evident in social media interactions with political issues (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2020).

Various phenomena centre around pursuing information that "proves" a preconceived conclusion; however, this study focused on the for-concision purposes and their alignment to this area of research specifically.

While the central focus of this study is on the evaluative language employed by users on social media, it is still important to understand the dynamics of information sharing, particularly on social media. How information is shared and what information is shared can be especially about on social media, as false information often finds its way onto these platforms. It is, therefore, worthwhile to conceptualise terms, such as information, fake news, misinformation, and disinformation.

3.4.2 Conceptualising information, fake news, misinformation, and disinformation

There are three definitions of information for understanding fake news: *information*—communication in a social context; *misinformation* —false information; and *disinformation* —information deliberately false to affect the audience's perceptions (Torres et al., 2019).

Fake news is a challenging concept to define, as countless definitions exist. One of the central features of contemporary fake news is its circulation online and people's acceptance of stories of "uncertain provenance or accuracy" as fact (Bakir & McStay, 2018); (Olan et al., 2022). Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have been heavily criticised for their role in spreading, facilitating, and even encouraging "fake news". (Marwick, 2018). This is often associated with anxieties about the democratic ramifications of the shift from consuming news from broadcast television and newspapers to consuming news on social platforms (Marwick, 2018). While fake news initially included references to satirical news outlets, its popularity online has shifted this definition in recent years (Wasserman, 2020).

The term "fake news" gained popularity online during the 2016 US presidential election campaign of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, but has been circulating in the academic field for much longer than that (Bakir & McStay, 2018). Bakir and McStay (2018) define the term as either false information

(disinformation) or information that contains deliberately misleading elements incorporated within its content or context (misinformation).

"Fake news" as a concept is deficient; Marwick (2018) suggests the term "problematic information" as a more accurate alternative for the information ecosystem. Marwick (2018) explains "fake news" is too broad while simultaneously too narrow; this is because it ignores that hoaxes, memes, YouTube videos, conspiracy theories, and hyper-partisan news sites are equally common ways of spreading problematic information (Marwick, 2018).

Other terms, such as misinformation and disinformation, are often used similarly to "fake news" in that these terms focus on information that lacks truth; however, these terms are unique. Misinformation refers to information unintentionally incorrect, such as a newspaper printing an erroneous fact and subsequently issuing a correction, whereas disinformation refers to information intentionally incorrect (Marwick, 2018). Misinformation and disinformation emphasise that information is untrue, but the term misinformation is agnostic regarding the motivation of falsehood, whereas disinformation assumes that inaccuracy stems from deliberate intention. (Shin et al., 2018). Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) go a step further than these two terms and suggest the term "malinformation" to describe information based on reality and used to inflict harm on a person, organisation, or even country.

The language of false information concerns more than these categories, especially in the age of social media. There are also relatively new terms, such as "trolling", that focus on the source's deliberate motivation to provoke controversy and emotional responses online, similar to that of fake news (Shin et al., 2018); however, "trolling" concerns posting offensive messages to online communities to incite conflict, while fake news is about creating and disseminating false stories disguised as a credible news source for political or financial gain (Shin et al., 2018). Fake news differs from troll posts because fake news is almost always false or misleading, yet troll posts are not necessarily false (Shin et al., 2018). One thing remains the same across the terms discussed - they rely on understanding the intent of the information creator (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

The rise of unsubstantiated claims online is imperative in a postmodern political context (Harsin, 2015, Shin et al., 2018). Shin et al. (2018) illustrates this by referring to a Pew Research survey conducted in 2016, which indicated that: 32% of adults in the USA indicated often seeing made-up political stories, but this number jumped to 51% about somewhat inaccurate news. Perhaps more concerning, 23% of these individuals have shared false stories with others - either knowingly or not (Shin et al., 2018). While some

studies display that the influence of false information is not dramatic, most research paints a different picture and suggests that this information could have dramatic real-life consequences (Shin et al., 2018).

Janowski (2018) explains that the concern around fake news revolves around what is or is not true and can serve as the basis for public discussion. This can be observed particularly during periods of elections. Journalists and traditional media's contributions to these discussions are countered by those who contend for what is often called "alternative facts" that denounce these media as "fake" (Jankowski, 2018). The foundation of public discourse in a democracy is disputed by this conflict (Jankowski, 2018). The increasing reliance on social media for everyday news, especially platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, exacerbates the importance of news accuracy. It elevates concern about the functioning of democracy when misinformation on these platforms becomes widespread. (Jankowski, 2018).

Aside from the several interpretations of what the term "fake news" means, it is commonly applied to phoney news stories maliciously spread by outlets that mimic legitimate news sources (Torres et al., 2019). Fake news affects trust, shapes individuals' perceptions of one another, and influences the opinions of serious news and political debates (Torres et al., 2019). The gist of this explanation is that "fake news" has real-life consequences. For instance, if people are primarily exposed to fake news, they may perceive it as more realistic than legitimate news (Torres et al., 2019).

Another factor to consider is that a distinct cognitive process is involved in whether someone believes this information; therefore, even if they are told it is not true if it resonates with them, it's likely that they will still believe it (Torres et al., 2019). This aligns with Shin et al. (2019) and the studies that they explored, which established that individuals are more likely to believe in dubious statements that match their partisanship than statements that run counter to their beliefs. Some studies reported that corrections usually work in experimental settings where individuals must read random debunking messages; however, their efficacy is challenged in a social media environment where people selectively share corrective messages (Shin et al., 2018).

Some contend that misinformation gains its power when repeated and passed down from person to person (DiFonzo & Bordia, 2007, Shin et al., 2018). Misinformation is defined by its dynamic mode and collective process that unfolds slowly (Shin et al., 2018). Another potentially dangerous factor to consider when exploring news of this nature is that unconfirmed news often gets re-noticed, as in Zhou and Zafarani (2020), where unconfirmed news exhibits multiple and periodic discussion spikes. In contrast, confirmed news typically has a single prominent spike. False news spreads faster and more widely than true news, and

political false news spreads farther, faster, and more widely than false news within other domains (Zhou & Zafarani, 2020).

Digital media has the potential to be a tool for democratisation, but its empowering of individuals to plant and spread false information on a large scale presents a major issue (Shin et al., 2018). Once this false information is launched into the web, even untrue claims can cascade through networks of like-minded individuals and partisan organisations. (Shin et al., 2018). The widespread concern about "fake news" is a "moral panic" of sorts (Walsh, 2020).

Moral panic refers to a response to a perceived threat to societal values, driven by the media, representing a reaction disproportionate to the threat (Cohen 2002, Wasserman, 2020). While the case of panic about fake news is not a response associated with a subculture of violence or anti-social behaviour (according to Cohen's (2002) classic definition), it is perceived as presenting a social problem, deviance from norms, and arguably most important, the media's moral indignation that may leave behind a diffuse feeling of anxiety about the situation (Wasserman, 2020). The term "moral panic" was linked to reactions to the emergence of particular media formats (such as tabloids, for instance), which were suspected of having a deleterious influence on public debate and social norms; however, more recently, it also refers to the influence of digital media, especially on young people (Walsh, 2020).

There has been a rapid rise in the spread of fake news websites and fake social media accounts in South Africa (Wasserman, 2020). This complicates an already murky picture regarding the media landscape in the country. As Willems and Mano (2017) explain in Wasserman (2020), the experiences of African audiences and the engagement of users with media "are always grounded in particular contexts worldviews and knowledge systems of life and wisdom".

Specifically, fake news in South Africa must be read against larger issues, such as the relationship between journalism and audiences in the country (Wasserman, 2020). For instance, the distance between mainstream media and the large sections of the population that continue to experience social and economic marginalisation is an issue that cannot be ignored (Wasserman, 2020). Several South Africans, for instance, do not have the tools to differentiate between true and false news pieces (Wasserman, 2020).

In this section, the information shared also plays a critical role in shaping public opinions and often creating "moral panic". It is worthwhile to take this observation further and break down the specific language used to share this information online. Problematic language, therefore, plays a critical role in sharing problematic information.

3.5   Problematic language

The digital era has created a space for everyone to share their opinions with the public on a scale unfathomable in the past (Burbach et al., 2020). Users are no longer passively receiving information online but are also spreading their own opinions; therefore, an increasing and broader range of opinions are voiced in this space (Burbach et al., 2020). As Matamoros-Fernández et al. (2021) note, social media often acts as a space where race and racism evolve in interesting and sometimes disturbing ways. As social media dominate socio-political landscapes globally, new and old racist practices increasingly occur on these platforms (Matamoros-Fernández et al., 2021). There is, therefore, a need to monitor these types of language online (Matamoros-Fernández et al., 2021); however, racist language is not the only offensive language that plays out online (Hughey & Daniels, 2013), this phenomenon can be noted in the study findings.

Offensive language is largely considered speech that targets disadvantaged social groups in a manner potentially harmful to them (Davidson et al., 2017); however, as explained further in this section, there are often levels to how offensive language plays out online (Poletto et al., 2021); therefore, the study used "problematic language" as a blanket term of sorts to cover the types of offensive language and language that could be deemed more dangerous, such as propaganda and hate speech.

While people are more familiar with terms such as "propaganda" or "hate speech", in the digital age, further problematic language is traditionally used. Public concern about the term "gaslighting", for instance, has observed a surge in recent years (Shane et al., 2022). The term describes a form of manipulation that causes the victim to doubt their perception of reality (Shane et al., 2022). While originating from a 1938 play titled "Gas Light", the term only gained popularity and became a crucial cultural encounter in the 2010s when it was reinterpreted as a political metaphor (Shane et al., 2022). Understandably, the term has become an increasingly popular idea in scholarship and popular culture (Shane et al., 2022).

Comparing political leaders' relationship with their public to abusers' romantic relationships with their partners vividly casts citizens and electorates as victims in a story of abuse, providing a strong moral case for resistance (Shane et al., 2022).

One of the most interesting uses of the term can be credited to discussions surrounding the United States 2016 election, where Donald Trump's opinion-sharing tactics are often compared to an abusive partner (Shane et al., 2022). Gaslighting is an increasingly common way of understanding electoral disinformation and "post-truth" deception, its use rises dramatically in response to political events, and it is common in

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mainstream and conspiracy-rich online spaces (Shane et al., 2022). Any claim of gaslighting presents a risk –it calls for a radical doubt about what is true and how one is forming their judgements about what is true (Shane et al., 2022). These qualities help to stimulate the suspicion and isolation critical for conspiracy theories, suggesting that echoing may be an important part of how conspiracy theories emerge and spread (Shane et al., 2022); this ties in with the issues of echo chambers as expressed in Section 3.4.1of this study.

The term propaganda, for instance, once referred only to the state-sponsored dissemination of untruth (Hobbs, 2020). Propaganda functions through short phrases or slogans. He explains there several reasons for this, and that the propagandist attempts to persuade people; he furthers this point by suggesting that emotional appeals more easily move people than rational arguments; this tactic is something rhetoricians discovered early on (Boardman, 1978). This definition has changed over time and is now used to describe several forms of expression and communication designed to manipulate public opinion by activating strong emotions, simplifying ideas and information, attacking opponents, and responding to the deepest hopes, fears, and dreams of the target audience (Luckert & Bachrach (2009) in Hobbs (2020).

Propaganda operations in today's landscape can easily masquerade as entertainment or news, provided they exist side by side on social media platforms (Napoli, 2018, Hobbs, 2020). The manipulation of strong emotion has been noted as a key feature of propaganda because it compels attention (Hobbs, 2020). Hobbs (2020) explains, "propaganda can be an effective tool for demagogues who simplify information and appeal to audience interests, influencing them by commanding and colonising human attention".

Regarding a slogan, Boardman (1978) explains that by paring syntactic structures to the bones of whatever is being communicated, the reader or listener is forced to decide based on simplistic emotional appeals rather than facts or arguments. In these pared-down syntactic structures, relationships, and qualifications are not stated: qualification would complicate matters by causing discomfort and doubt in the reader (Boardman, 1978). The propagandist prefers a clean response, predictable and uncluttered with doubt (Boardman, 1978).

According to Boardman (1978), propagandists focus on dividing and defining through the logical fallacy known as "false disjunction ". Here, people are divided into two groups—one on "each side", and a label is placed on each group (Boardman, 1978). These labels often become the slogans used in a propaganda campaign (Boardman, 1978). They make issues appear *black and white* (explicit) and must "load the decision in favour of the side placing the labels" (Boardman, 1978). Concerning the general language used in propaganda texts, while the various linguistic elements collaborate to achieve the aim of the propagandist, nouns prove to be a valuable linguistic tool for propagandists (Maritz, 2022). Maritz (2022) remarks that

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because subjective nouns can be true representations of reality, one is likely to find similarities between how subjective nouns are used in propaganda texts and non-propaganda texts; however, subjective nouns are often used in non-propaganda texts as part of paraphrasing or quoting external sources, therefore, not as directly representative of the author's voice in the text (Maritz, 2022).

While understanding propaganda is useful regarding the bigger issue of problematic language online, it is an expansive topic that features several of its own finer nuances. Owing to the time constraints of this study, these finer nuances could not be elucidated in greater detail; for more information on propaganda, see Boardman (1978) and Hobbs (2020). What is worth noting about propaganda in the digital age, however, is that it appears to have exploded with the rise of social media (Bjola, 2017).

Hate speech is another complex and multifaceted notion that has proven difficult to recognise by humans and machines (Poletto et al., 2021). As Irimba et al. (2021) explain, hate speech is characterised as a social misdemeanour perpetrated primarily through language; therefore, it is difficult to analyse contemporary online hate speech independent of the language structure, conventions, and contexts enabling possible linguistic violence (Bardici (2012) in Irimba et al. (2021).

Poletto et al. (2021) also explain that issues complicating this identification process stem from the blurry boundaries between hate speech and broader concepts, such as abusive language, offensive language, and toxic language, and among more specific focus-driven labels, such as racism, antisemitism, sexism, misogyny, and homophobia. Linguistic theory is a crucial tool for revealing how hate speech is hurtful, even if identifying these instances is automated through Natural Language Processing (Irimba et al., 2021). The linguistic analysis allows researchers to understand the attributive, performative and interpretive role of language central, not only in understanding how hate speech plays out but also in explaining how the target can perceive it as hateful (Irimba et al., 2021).

The generally accepted definition of hate speech (as presented by Sanguinetti et al. (2018) in Poletto et al. (2021), is "Content defined by its action—generally spreading hatred or inciting violence, or threatening by any means people's freedom, dignity and safety—and by its target—which must be a protected group, or an individual targeted for belonging to such a group and not for his/her characteristics".

Poletto et al. (2021) acknowledge that the diverse terms for these complex types of language can be overwhelming and confusing; therefore, they developed a functioning framework that attempts to illustrate the relations between hate speech and its related concepts. Poletto et al. (2021) also define the concepts (pg. 483). There is, unfortunately, inadequate capacity in this chapter to explore the detailed descriptions, even

though they are of great value; however, the framework (Figure 3.1) offers a significant visualisation of the multi-dimensionality of the concepts and their overlap.
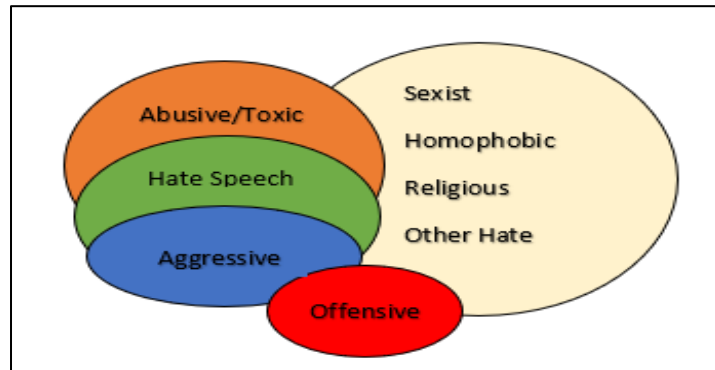
Figure 3.1: **Hierarchy of hate speech concepts proposed by Poletto et al. (2021)**

For example, racial microaggressions could be observed as expressions of racism, but they do not necessarily contain a call to violent action that would put them in the hate speech class of the above framework (Poletto et al., 2021). This is owing to racial microaggressions often being too subtle to detect without context; however, the research established that in this study, racial microaggressions could be equally harmful, if not more so than some more typical items that would be classified as "hate speech".

To expand on the hate speech definition, it is a layer between aggressive and abusive text; however, these share a common offensive aspect (Alkomah & Ma, 2022). Sexist, homophobic, and religious hate are different as they target a group of people. Figure 3.1 demonstrates that the separation of the concept is complicated. Specific hate speech definitions are a challenge to navigate; racist and homophobic tweets, for example, are more likely to be labelled as hate speech than other types of offensive or abusive content. There is no authentic way to generalise whether an inflammatory text is hate speech (Alkomah and Ma, 2022).

An informative study by Irimba et al. (2021) explored hateful micro-speech acts and performative modality on Facebook and Twitter during the 2017 election in Kenya. While this was explored from a forensic linguistic angle rather than an SFL angle, as in this study, it still offered valuable insight into the online linguistic landscape of hate speech, especially in the African context. In this study, it was established that most of the online hate messages analysed occurred in Internet flaming - an online verbal exchange characterised by aggressive, impolite, and violent language which results from a discrepancy of ideas and opinions among interlocutors (Irimba et al., 2021). Irimba et al. (2021) established specific micro-speech acts and aspects of modality ranging from simple lexicon to more complex pragmatic structures worked

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together in the service of aggressive ideology by positioning individuals and groups as "deserving" victims of violent speech acts that contained propositions ranging from subtle to extreme forms of discrimination, micro-aggression, and explicit threats and calls to harm the perceived "other" (Irimba et al., 2021). In this study, victims being "deserving" of violent speech played out consistently across the texts.

Toeing the line between hate speech and freedom of expression is not an easy attempt (Bonotti and Seglow, 2021). While constitutions, charters, and declarations proclaim a commitment to the freedom of expression, there is no clear explanation of the rationale or how to navigate difficult cases (Bonotti and Seglow, 2021). As Bonotti and Seglow (2021) explain, hate speech involves much more than just racism; it can also include societal aspects, such as religion, sexual orientation, and disability. The Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) contends that "freedom of expression relates to the liberty to hold opinions and to influence and receive these, and ideas and information, to others in any form (Geldenhuys, 2017). The topic of freedom of expression has, for the past several hundred years, been subject not only to spatial boundaries and temporal limits, but also to political regulation and social control (John, 2019).

Freedom of expression is a vital part of the democratic process and in attaining truth - this is because it provides the opportunity, with freedom, to criticise or converse with one another without fear (Bonotti & Seglow, 2021). The free debate about public issues facilitates the strengthening of democracy, and it encourages everyone to tolerate an array of differing observations (Geldenhuys, 2017). It also plays a key role in holding any government to account through discourse – freedom of expression influences how the government affects the will of the people it governs (Bonotti & Seglow, 2021). A well-known form of freedom of expression is that of protest action – this allows groups to make their grievances and concerns known to the government, hoping this would encourage the government to listen and act (Geldenhuys, 2017). This is important to note, especially about the issues explored in this study (Chapter 2 for more information on the Senekal and Mkhondo incidents).

The South African Constitution protects freedom of expression as a fundamental right (section 16 of the Bill of Rights). This does not mean everyone can throw their opinions into the abyss without consequence. As with all rights, the right to freedom of expression requires that it be exercised without infringing on other rights (Geldenhuys, 2017). The right to the freedom of expression provides for freedom of the press and other media; freedom to receive or impart information and ideas; freedom of artistic creativity; and academic freedom and freedom of scientific research (Geldenhuys, 2017). Section 16 (2) of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 explicitly remarks that the freedom of expression cannot

extend to expression that entails: propaganda for war; incitement of imminent violence; or advocacy of hatred based on race, ethnicity, gender, or religion and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.

This aligns with Bonotti and Seglow's (2021) notion that regulating free speech normally entails a restriction of individual freedom. Individuals should also be concerned with citizens' equal status and the value of a life free from domination, oppression, and subordination or Molier's (2015) notion that freedom of expression cannot be considered an isolated principle and that it is rather part of a certain political system called the liberal democratic constitutional state (Molier, 2015). As Molier (2015) explains, this principle is premised upon individual freedom, peace, and order within the state. According to this observation, the freedom of one individual ends where he inflicts harm on another (Molier, 2015). It is up to the state to demarcate the limits within which individuals are to decide, under their convictions, how to live their lives (Molier, 2015).

As Geldenhuys (2017) explains about Janse van Rensburg (2013), there are effective measures in place to regulate speech in the media and suitable tribunals to determine complicity with the industry-wide standards on permissible expression, taking cognisance of the context within which the media operate. This means that the print media experience fewer complaints of hate speech than the broadcast sector, owing to the inherent nature of both mediums of communication, but this does not mean that issues are eradicated (Geldenhuys, 2017). The line between freedom of expression and hate speech debate is one that South Africa has been struggling to tow for most of its young democracy.

Hate speech remains a problem, and a diverse array of strategies, proper legislation, and capable leaders are needed to deal with it effectively (Geldenhuys, 2017). Molier (2015) maintains that unless it is accepted that words cannot harm, the continuation of a democratic constitutional state must limit freedom of speech.

As Boardman (1978) explains, several people find it easier to take stands and decide based on existing prejudices or overriding emotional appeal.

Racist hate speech has been described as injurious and characterised by specific participant structures: the speaker needs to be in a position of dominance—a dominance, systemic, and structural (Deumert, 2019). The conceptual core of hate speech is arguably its assault on the civic standing of those it targets, exploiting their already marginal or vulnerable status (Bonotti & Seglow, 2021). This definition helps explain why hate directed towards more privileged members of society rarely is regarded as hate speech and helps make the analytical distinction between hate speech and non-hateful offensive speech (Bonotti & Seglow, 2021).

While hate speech attacks people's identities, offensive speech is directed at their beliefs (Bonotti & Seglow, 2021).

This is a clear example of how the line between hate speech and freedom of expression can be challenging, especially in a country with a tumultuous racial history. Refer to Chapter 2 and the beginning of this chapter for a more detailed discussion of identity.

As John (2019) notes, the rise of Facebook, Google, and other media platform providers has transformed the rules of freedom of expression. Over the past few years, hate speech on social media in South Africa has also become a major topic – for instance, the Penny Sparrow saga in 2016 when the real estate agent commented on the state of a Durban beach on New Year's Day and called Black people monkeys (Geldenhuys, 2017). This led to widespread outrage on social media resulting in complaints against her being filed with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) (Geldenhuys, 2017).

Herman Mashaba from the DA took matters even further by filing criminal charges against Penny Sparrow with the police, and a criminal case was opened (Geldenhuys, 2017). Sparrow later posted an apology on Facebook, but it neglected the Equality Court's definition of an apology, which stipulates that a "mere retraction cannot be called a full and free apology" (Geldenhuys, 2017). John (2019) does not advocate for more free expression but for better free expression and remarks that much is to be conducted. This can be noted in the Penny Sparrow saga.

While these comments were made on a neighbourhood watch group, the comments were still considered public. As Geldenhuys (2017) remarks, "rights to freedom of expression come with responsibilities, and social media is not there for digital citizens to be racist, sexist, or homophobic". Several White South Africans feel there is a "double standard" regarding what is deemed freedom of expression and what is deemed hate speech (Roets in Merrett et al. (2019), for instance). To put it bluntly - Molier (2015) explains that there is speech hateful to some persons because it offends the ideals to which they pledge allegiance; however, to those who produce the speech - it is not hateful but needful, presenting hateful speech offending against their ideals.

Conclusions drawn by Wasserman (2010) on the denial of racism in the Afrikaans press have focused on *Die Burger's* daily newspaper, which was once "the mouthpiece of the National Party". According to this observation, the Afrikaans press has allowed for racism to be observed as the transgressions of an individual rather than a phenomenon rooted in history (Wasserman, 2010). This framework presents the risk of a younger generation becoming socialised through what Wasserman (2010) expresses as "knowledge in the

blood", that is "knowledge embedded in the emotional, psychic, spiritual, social, economic, political and psychological lives of a community". By positioning the Afrikaans identity within a discourse of progress and consumption, the Afrikaans press can obscure links between contemporary incidents of racism and the persistence of racist attitudes conveyed from the apartheid past, where it was complicit (Wasserman, 2010).

While Wasserman's (2010) conclusions paint the Afrikaans press negatively, it is worth reiterating that the specific outlet explored was tasked with spreading news that favoured the National Party during apartheid. Reimagining the stance of Afrikaans in this newspaper to participate in the new liberal democratic South Africa would undoubtedly leave divergences for old schools of thought to filter through. The landscape of the South African news media features an array of issues (Wasserman, 2020).

What is interesting about Wasserman's (2010) findings is his exploration of Durrheim et al.'s. (2005) discursive strategy, the "denial of racism". Durrheim et al. (2005) explored this strategy in the South African media's response to the 1999 Human Rights Commission's investigation into racism in the media (Wasserman, 2010). It was established that the media reacted "scathingly" to allegations that they continued to display racist attitudes well into the postapartheid dispensation (Wasserman, 2010). Durrheim et al. (2005) listed various ways South African media attempted to remodel the field of racist practices and representations into a terrain suited to preserving White privilege (Wasserman, 2010). These strategies were: splitting, (dis)locating, relativising, trivialising, deracialising and, ultimately, reversing racism (Wasserman, 2010).

Wasserman (2010) provides several examples where press reports attempted to dislocate racism from the group of students, or Afrikaners as a group, by blaming it on another group or a political party or finding the causes in the perceived victimisation and marginalisation of Afrikaners. The media consistently - with only a few exceptions - denied, suppressed, or ignored its complicity in or contribution to a climate where racism could flourish (Wasserman, 2010).

The year where this article was published is important; over ten years have passed since then, and the media landscape has changed – especially with the shift to social media (Wasserman, 2020). Nevertheless, it sheds critical light on the historical context where racial issues have been dealt with in the new South Africa.

Exploring prejudice is by no means a new attempt. Van Dijk's (1984) work on prejudice in discourse set the tone for valuable studies on how prejudice is presented in discussions. Van Dijk (1984) found, through interviews conducted in his home country, the Netherlands, that the semantic contents and several types of a strategy of conversation allowed for complex inferences about the contents, organisation, and cognitive

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strategies involved in prejudiced information processing - about minority groups in society (van Dijk, 1984). Van Dijk (1984) established that people could redefine their own racist preferences as preferences or goals of minority groups, consistently attempting to display that their arguments are not racist.

Racial prejudice is not the only prejudice which presents an issue for the landscape of the media in South Africa. Xenophobic violence has been a major problem in South Africa since 2008 (Asakitikpi & Gadzikwa, 2020). While the spread of fake news on social media about xenophobia is by no means the cause for this issue, there is at least evidence that suggests that it acts as a vehicle to spread tension between South Africans and foreigners within and outside the country by that escalating the crisis (Chenzi, 2021). Asakitikpi and Gadzikwa's (2020) CDA of online YouTube news coverage in South Africa identified an apparent distinction between the positive ingroup comprising the indigenes and the negative outgroup comprising non-South African citizens. Asakitikpi and Gadzikwa (2020) used van Dijk's (1998) ideological square media strategies to present a positive ingroup against a negative outgroup.

Van Dijk's (1998) theory demonstrates how speakers or writers emphasise the positive things about "us" (this demonstrates inclusivity), de-emphasise the positive things about "them" (this demonstrates exclusivity), emphasises the negative things about "them" and de-emphasises the negative things about "us" (Van Dijk, 1998). Asakiptikpi and Gadzikwa (2020) established that the perceptions of South African leaders and people suggest that South African citizens are bound as the "we", which makes tolerating immigrants (especially Africans) observed as outsiders, or the "them" to this ideology difficult. While xenophobia is not a clear-cut issue, how it is discussed can have real-life consequences. Xenophobia and farm violence focus heavily on identity and belonging. "us" versus "them" constructions are relevant to this study.

3.6 Comments as a linguistic resource to identify opinion

This study concerns both the posting and commenting features on Facebook and how users employ them to convey their opinions on specific and often sensitive topics. Comments create a rich resource for linguists as they provide examples of evaluative, abusive, and argumentative in several language forms (Kolhatkar et al., 2020).

Linguistic analyses have been conducted on the comment sections of online news articles (Kolhatkar et al., 2020, Sutherland & Adendorff, 2014); blog posts (Simaki et al., 2020), other social media platforms that

offer commenting features, such as Reddit[13]; Twitter; Instagram[14]; Tumblr[15]; and more recently the TikTok[16] (Klein et al., 2019); and Facebook (Tran & Ngo, 2018, Humprecht et al., 2020, Rho et al., 2018).

In a 2013 study published by Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2013), exploring German political blog posts and user interactions, it is explained that provided the controversial nature of politics - political blog postings are usually characterised by controversy and emotionality and, therefore, often exhibit sentiment associated with certain political topics, political parties, or politicians. As one can deduce, the responses to posts of this nature can become highly polarised. This was proven in the study when it was uncovered that blog entries with either more positive or more negative overall sentiment received significantly more comments compared to sentiment-neutral or mixed-sentiment entries (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013).

While there is an indication that political blog posts, and most likely similar posts on similar platforms, with strong positive sentiment, evoke highly emotive responses, as Humprecht et al. (2020) uncovered in their research: "user comments on social media often contain high levels of negative emotions, incivility, and antipolitical rhetoric", particularly when "political topics are discussed". While this is an important notion to explore, the intricacies thereof are too vast to discuss in this study; however, the notion that political topics evoke negative emotions, incivility, and antipolitical rhetoric is something established in both posts and comment sections explored in this study.

Humprecht et al. (2020) also uncovered that the social and cultural context where these sensitive topics are explored significantly affects the responses. In their study, Humprecht et al. (2020) content analysed Facebook comments from six news organisations based in the United States and Germany. It was

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[13] **Reddit** is an online social media forum website in which users share news stories and various other types of content. Reddit consists of millions of individual forums called "subreddits ", which are mostly user-created and organized by topic of discussion. ELDRIDGE, A. 2023. Reddit: American social media forum website. *In:* THE EDITORS OF BRITANNICA (ed.) *Britannica*

[14] **Instagram** is a photo and video sharing app. People can upload photos or videos to the platform and share them with their followers or with a select group of friends. They can also view, comment and like posts shared by their friends on Instagram. INSTAGRAM 2023.

[15] **Tumblr** is a blogging and social media tool that allows users to publish a "tumblelog", or short blog posts. Tumblr's major differentiator is the free-form nature of the site and the ability of users to heavily customize their own pages. BIGCOMMERCE. 2023. *What is Tumblr and how is it used?* [Online]. Available: https://www.bigcommerce.com/ecommerce-answers/what-tumblr-and-how-it-used/ [Accessed].

[16] **TikTok** is social media service where people can share short videos they have made, often of themselves doing an activity and including music. CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY 2023. TikTok. *Cambridge Dictionary.*

established that Facebook comments on German news organisations were more balanced and contained lower hostile emotions (Humprecht et al., 2020). Hostile emotions were particularly prevalent in the United States organisations' news posts and comments (Humprecht et al., 2020). Alternative right-wing media outlets in both countries provoked significantly higher hostile emotions (Humprecht et al., 2020).

This emphasises the importance of context when exploring comments and the importance of the social aspect of language as expressed in Halliday and Hasan's (1989) approach in SFL. Exploring the language employed by social media users allows a glimpse into the potential contrasting observations among people involving identity and social differences (Rho et al., 2018). The linguistic style and effect of online comments have been revealed to influence how users evaluate and react to content on social media (Rho et al., 2018). This implies that "the way people talk about online social movements could influence their perception of related topics" (Rho et al., 2018). Comments are a rich source for exploring public discourse around specific issues.

A study by Klein et al. (2019), for example, explored and compared the language used by Reddit users engaged with conspiracy-related subreddits. Their study explored the language used by individuals engaging with specific and controversial content.

The major point taken from Klein et al. (2019) is that there is a difference in the way language is used among users who will eventually become engaged in a conspiracy theory forum compared to similar users who do not; however, several of these differences are related to users selecting to engage with social groups that share similar interests, motives, and conspiratorial mindsets. While further engagement with these groups may enhance their conspiratorial leanings – this would amplify existing biases rather than the fora being the sole cause of this radicalisation[17] (Klein et al., 2019).

Individuals intrigued by conspiracies gravitate towards these platforms and, therefore, their biases are intact when they interact with posts and other users; however, Enders et al. (2021) also established that these relationships were conditional on conspiracy thinking (Enders et al., 2021). This suggests that the users were predisposed to interpret salient events as products of conspiracies (Enders et al., 2021), which means

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[17] **Radicalisation** is generally used [by some States] to convey the idea of a process through which an individual adopts an increasingly extremist set of beliefs and aspirations. This may include, but is not defined by, the willingness to condone, support, facilitate, or use violence to further political, ideological, religious, or other goals. UNODC. 2018. *'Radicalization' and 'violent extremism'* [Online]. Available: https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-extremism.html [Accessed].

that social media use becomes more strongly associated with conspiracy beliefs as conspiracy thinking intensifies (Enders et al., 2021).

While this may become amplified, the threads are not noted as the cause of these biases. This phenomenon could also be applied to other sensitive topics. For instance, as Rho et al. (2018) explain about the online political news sphere: "People tend to habitually consume the news source of their choice based on political beliefs and engage in discussion within circles of similar political affinity".

This ties into echo chambers and filter bubbles mentioned in Section 3.4.1, Klein et al. (2019) is a significant example of how language offers clues into ideological leanings. Provided the sensitive nature of farm violence, ideological leanings, particularly political ideological leanings, play a pivotal role in shaping the stance of public discourse about South African farm violence on Facebook.

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, a need exists to focus on overarching themes of information, how information is shared, the language employed in communicating this information, and how users engage with this information. As explored in Section 3.7, the comment sections present a valuable linguistic resource for identifying opinions online. Similarly, linguistic markers can prove to be a valuable tool for identifying distinct types of information (Section 3.4.2).

3.7 Linguistic markers as a valuable tool for identifying fake news, misinformation, disinformation, propaganda, and hate speech

Detecting the linguistic devices where information quality is encoded is a growing interest for researchers in Natural Language Processing (NLP) (Khurana et al., 2022). Linguistic cues (or "markers") act as an essential basis for the automatic detection of high-credibility information (Su Qi et al., 2020). Linguistic markers reveal important clues regarding shared information (fake news, misinformation, and disinformation) (Su Qi et al., 2020). Most research in this field focuses on lexical features; syntactic features; semantic features; and discourse features (Su Qi et al., 2020).

Lexical features include character level and word-level features mainly based on the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC); syntactic features include grammatical and structural features -, such as frequency of function words and phrases (constituents) or punctuations and parts of speech (POS) tagging; semantic-level features investigate some psycho-linguistic attributes by analysing sentiment, informality, diversity, and subjectivity; and the rhetorical approach is used to extract features at discourse-level based on the

Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST), an analytic framework to examine the coherence of a story (Su Qi et al., 2020).

Owing to the sensitive nature of the topic explored in this study, information shared may not always be factually accurate, especially on a social media platform such as Facebook. While the focus of this research is not fake news, misinformation, or disinformation, it is still important to note the processes that go into detecting these types of information. It is also worth noting the defining linguistic markers of these types of information.

A study by Sousa-Silva (2022) established that some of the most striking differences between fake and mainstream media news texts could be recognised at the level of discourse. This is important because, as discussed in Section 3.2 and Sousa-Silva's (2022) analysis of *how* something is said, in addition to *what* is said, offers relevant insight into how power is exerted and how ideologies are constructed. Sousa-Silva (2022) paid close attention to word frequency in their study as it allowed an overview of the vocabulary used and an identification of which semantic field was foregrounded.

It was established that the noun "truth" and other words from the same semantic field (such as 'real' or 'fact') were frequent and often employed in the form of an adverb, "truly", which in the case of the research, functioned as an intensifier (Sousa-Silva, 2022). According to Sousa-Silva's (2022) findings, fake news providers portray themselves as the real media, contrary to the mainstream media, observed as "establishment shills" (Sousa-Silva, 2022). It was also established that adverbs were frequently used in disinformation texts for evaluative statement sentences starting with evaluative adverbs rarely are established in mainstream media. (Sousa-Silva, 2022).

Ross and Rivers (2018) conducted a corpus analysis to determine the most frequently used words and word clusters in Trump's tweets compared to the typical Twitter (now X) use by politicians to observe how they aligned with Lakoff's (2017) strategies. Trump's tweets cannot be classified as "fake news" as he is an individual and not a media agency; however, it was established that his tweets carried similar ambiguous characteristics, such as tweeting a claim or a statement that is highly contentious and attempting to present it as truth (Ross & Rivers, 2018).

This can be observed when Trump accuses the media of reporting a false or inaccurate story by labelling it as "fake news"; however, when he tweets a claim or a statement highly contentious and attempts to present it as truth—he is doing that which he accuses the mainstream media of doing which is to spread misleading information (Ross & Rivers, 2018). The result is the same as if a media report were to be labelled as fake

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news; the reader can a) believe it, b) not believe it and disregard it, or c) follow it up with further research to determine its truthfulness (Ross & Rivers, 2018). Those exposed to Trump's tweets were presented with the same scenario, and while explicitly labelling these tweets as fake is not entirely possible (owing to the nature of truth being contestable), this similarity cannot be ignored (Ross & Rivers, 2018).

It was established that the rhetoric employed by Trump in these tweets could be interpreted as hypocritical and potentially unsettling for the public, the political environment, and the collective media institution (Ross & Rivers, 2018). Ross and Rivers (2018) conclude their study by suggesting that perhaps Trump's accusations of fake news undermined his contentious messages as the public could become more untrusting and engage more vigorously in fact-checking and follow-up research rather than relying on the words of a serving president or the words of mainstream media outlets hostile to the president and his public undermining of them (Ross & Rivers, 2018).

In January 2021, Trump was officially banned from Twitter (Twitter, 2021), a move that emphasises the real-life consequences of language online. The social media platform credited his permanent ban owing to "the risk of further incitement of violence" about the Capitol riots, which occurred a week before Trump's ban (Twitter, 2021). The social media platform claimed, "after assessing the language in [those] Tweets against [their] *Glorification of Violence* policy, [they] [had] determined that [those] Tweets [were] in violation of the *Glorification of Violence* policy and [that] user @realDonaldTrump should be immediately permanently suspended from the service" (Twitter, 2021). This a prime example of how language use can have real-life ramifications. As established throughout this chapter, language does more than say something; it can also be a tool for power and control.

Cognitive linguist, George Lakoff, revealed a taxonomy he had created of Trump's tweeting strategies, in an interview with WNYC, in 2017. The first strategy he explored was that of "pre-emptive framing", referring to devising how the user (Trump) wants a topic or issue to be understood before others frame the discussion around the issue (Lakoff, 2017). According to this observation, framing is a strategy to avoid focusing on something that may make the user's decisions look bad (Lakoff, 2017). The second strategy Lakoff refers to is diversion – this is where a major issue is emphasised, but the tweeter brings up a different issue designed to divert attention away from the major issue (Lakoff, 2017). The goal is to convince people to converse about the diversion rather than the major issue the user is trying to avoid (Lakoff, 2017).

Diversion has been a popular strategy employed by politicians throughout history, to varying degrees but has become an especially interesting phenomenon online in recent years. Diversion is not a strategy only employed by Trump and only employed on Twitter. In 2016, UK public relations firm, Bell Pottinger, was

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accused of "stirring up" racial tensions in South Africa (Cave, 2017). The firm played on South Africa's racially tense past to deflect attention away from President Zuma and state capture attempts (Rensburg, 2020). By hiring bots and social media armies on Facebook, Wikipedia[18], Twitter, and other blogs and chat rooms, the firm launched a counter-propaganda campaign on behalf of the Guptas (Mpofu, 2023). The narrative that they countered the state capture narrative was toxic and played into the notion that "Whites in South Africa had seized resources and wealth while they deprived Blacks of education and jobs" (Mpofu, 2023). The message was popularised with an incendiary and now infamous phrase, "White monopoly capital" (Mpofu, 2023). From a linguistic perspective, dysphemism can create a diversion, implementing a deflection technique as observed in Maritz's (2022) exploration of propaganda.

A third strategy employed by Trump in his tweets is that of the "Trial Balloon" – in this strategy, the user throws out an idea, sometimes controversial, to observe how people react, hoping their reactions will offer guidance on how to act (Lakoff, 2017). Fourth, there is the strategy of deflection – here, the user attacks the messenger or person criticising him for undermining the critic's credibility. The goal here is that the public does not take the criticism as seriously as it may deserve to be taken (Lakoff, 2017). There is the strategy Lakoff, called the "Salient Exemplar" – this can be understood as extrapolating from specific to general – in this strategy, the user takes a specific single case or episode and suggests that it applies broadly; this means that, for instance, everyone who shares characteristics similar to the person involved in the case or episode, must be the same (Lakoff, 2017). Various methods exist to interpret language online. Evaluation can provide a valuable tool for analysing the finer nuances of emotion in this language.

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[18] **Wikipedia** is a multilingual, free, online encyclopedia written and maintained by a community of volunteers, known as *Wikipedians*, through open collaboration and using a wiki-based editing system called *MediaWiki*.

WIKIPEDIA CONTRIBUTORS 2023. Wikipedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

3.8 Chapter conclusion

This chapter summarises the literature available on the language of farm violence. The study also elucidates the finer nuances of the social media space and explores assorted studies focusing on similar issues and have used similar methodologies to approach their data. The problematic language is discussed while defining the terms under the "problematic language" label. The study demonstrates how problematic language could be observed as multilayered. This chapter develops a foundational understanding of related topics and important concepts relevant when exploring the results. A sound understanding of these topics guided what types of information were uncovered in the data sets of this study, how information sharing online could affect this information and how problematic language would play a critical role in the discourse of South African farm violence on Facebook.

Chapter 4: Methods and methodology

4.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter indicates the research in the larger field of SFL. The study also elucidates evaluation in greater detail and explains how it has been used in this study. The data collection processes and analysis are elucidated, and the research limitations are discussed.

In this study, four posts exploring two incidents of farm violence and the uproar caused by these incidents formed a corpus with eight subsections and then analysed (Chapter 1 and Chapter 2); these posts were extracted from three Facebook pages. The chosen pages adopted polarised stances on farm violence, allowing observation of how evaluative language differed depending on the context where it occurred. The context depended on the page's target audience. The study also explored two farm violence incidents—one where the victim was White and another where the victims were Black. This difference in context allowed an observation of how farm violence was framed depending on the racial group affected.

The posts dealing with the first farm violence incident—Senekal, focus on the Senekal protests rather than the farm violence incident. The comment section of these posts' approaches farm violence in South Africa. The posts dealing with the second incident—Mkhondo, refer to the farm violence incident. The comment section of these posts focused on farm violence in South Africa but also approached issues, such as belonging, identity, and politics.

- To answer Research Question 1

How is the evaluative language employed in posts by the Facebook page admin and in the comment sections?

Instances of evaluation were first identified and tagged by hand. Concordances were generated, using WordSmith Tools, to organise these instances. The instances were further classified according to the evaluation parameters. Word frequency lists of the evaluative items in the texts were then also formulated. These lists helped develop evaluative items used most frequently in the texts, identifying common themes worth focusing on.

- To answer Research Question 2

How does evaluative language vary across the Facebook pages, based on the farm violence incident?

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The findings of the first research questions exposed how evaluative language is employed in the aforementioned sections and across the pages and incidents.

- To answer Research Question 3

What does evaluative language on the selected pages and their corresponding comment sections suggest about the public discourse of South African farm violence on Facebook?

The general evaluative language employed by the chosen Facebook pages was concluded by reflecting on the results of the first two research questions.

4.2 Research design

Chapter 1 adopts a qualitative design for this study. A qualitative design is an approach where information is collected through social meaning instead of numerical data (Miller & Brewer, 2003); however, some corpus methods were an instrument to collect, organise, and analyse the instances of evaluative language within the text. These methods include formulating concordance and word frequency lists using WordSmith Tools. Corpus methods lean more towards a quantitative research design (Lüdeling & Kytö, 2009); however, this study remained predominantly qualitative, with the quantitative methods supporting the qualitative findings.

4.2.1 Research paradigm: Systemic functional linguistics

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study is in the SFL field, treating language as a process of meaning-making (Zhang & Hu, 2021). Evaluation is a theory in and an extension of SFL as it expands on specific meaning-making items (evaluative language) (Hunston, 2011).

SFL differs from other linguistics theories in that it has, from its onset, sought to be an "appliable linguistics" (Matthiessen, 2012). This difference indicates that SFL aims to be linguistics, where "theory is designed to have the potential to be applied to solve problems that arise in communities around the world, involving both reflection and action" (Matthiessen, 2012).

The basic tenets of the approach are grounded in the notion that language surpasses a neutral means of reflecting or describing the world and plays a crucial role in constructing social life (Gill, 2000). Language is observed as something with the power to shape how certain social issues are observed, but it also accommodates the idea that those social issues, similarly, possess the power to shape the language used.

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The basic goal of SFL is to develop analytical categories for language, capturing its relationship with social structure (Halliday & Hasan, 1989).

SFL is a relatively new branch of modern semiotics, shifting the focus from the internal characteristics of the sign to its role in social practice (Zhang & Hu, 2021). This approach can be especially useful when exploring social communication problems (Zhang & Hu, 2021), similar to those explored in this study. Studies involved a comprehensive exploration of SFL history (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2009, Martin, 2016, Christie & Unsworth, 2000, Almurashi, 2016, Rubtcova et al., 2016, Thompson et al., 2019).

This study can also be observed as a form of discourse analysis. This analysis concerns studying and analysing language use (Hodges et al., 2008). This research scrutinises and analyses evaluative language on Facebook through the evaluative theory.

4.2.2 Evaluative language

Emotion and evaluation are interwoven concepts in linguistics. According to Downes (2000), there are two kinds of felt experience: 1) emotion and evaluation (classed as affect) and 2) intuition (classed as the compulsive sense of a non-propositional meaning). Evaluative language is a broad cover term for expressing a speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, perspective, or emotions about the entities or propositions they are discussing (Thompson and Hunston, 2003). Evaluation describes various phenomena, including sentiment; opinion; attitude; appraisal; affect; perspective; subjectivity; belief; desire; and speculation (Benamara et al., 2017). Evaluative aspects of language convey feelings and assessments of people, situations, and objects and allow exploring those opinions with other speakers, whether through agreement or disagreement (Benamara et al., 2017).

Biber and Finegan (1988) offer the first attempt at defining evaluative language through their exploration of *stance*, defined as the expression of the speaker's attitudes, emotions, and judgement, and is centred around evidentiality (or commitment towards the message) and affect (positive or negative evaluation) (Benamara et al., 2017).

Emotions (feelings) refer to interpretations of bodily arousal, evaluations refer to interpretations of experiences on scales from positive to negative, and intuition refers to interpretations of properties of language (Downes, 2000). The three major evaluation functions include expressing the speaker's or writer's opinion, constructing, and maintaining relations with the speaker or writer and hearer or reader, and organising the discourse (Benamara et al., 2017). Evaluation expresses opinions about entities and is

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primarily (but not exclusively) expressed through adjectives (Benamara et al., 2017). According to the observation, there are two aspects to evaluative language, indicating modality and 'something else' (evaluation, appraisal, or stance, as it is referred to variously) (Hunston & Thompson, 2003).

4.2.3 A case for evaluation

Social media users posting abusive and offensive comments increased the need to analyse the phenomenon and develop automated means to moderate such content (Yin & Zubiaga, 2022). This phenomenon is also evident within the South African context. According to Oriola and Kotzé (2020), South Africa recently witnessed an insurgence of offensive and hate speech and racial and ethnic dispositions on Twitter.

A popular method for regulating language online is the "flag", a mechanism for reporting offensive content on online platforms (Feezell et al., 2023). It is especially popular on social media sites. It acts as a solution to curating massive collections of user-generated content while serving as rhetorical justification for platform owners when removing certain content (Crawford & Gillespie, 2016). "Flags" can also be observed as reaction buttons, such as the 'like' function on Facebook and Instagram, indicating public approval or disapproval (Crawford & Gillespie, 2016). While flags can be useful in regulating online language, dependence on users to flag problematic language offers its own issues (Feezell et al., 2023), combining machine learning and thorough linguistic analysis is a more accurate approach to flagging (Crawford & Gillespie, 2016).

A popular approach to language detection online is sentiment analysis (Kotzé et al., 2020). Sentiment analysis, also called opinion mining, is a growing field at the intersection of linguistics and computer science, attempting to determine text sentiment (Taboada, 2016) automatically. It plays an important role in NLP to determine whether a text is subjective and whether it expresses a positive, negative, or neutral observation (Kotzé & Senekal, 2019).

Sentiment analysis has become a common tool in social media analysis and is often conducted by companies, marketers, and political analysts (Taboada, 2016). While a large portion of research in this field is centred around products, services, and brand awareness conducted to optimise performance (Kotzé & Senekal, 2019, Jiang & Wilson, 2018), the influence of public opinions about social issues on policymakers operates similarly to those of customer reviews for manufacturers (Karamibekr et al., 2012); therefore, sentiment analysis could as easily apply to a socio-political issue, such as farm attacks and public perceptions on racial issues in South Africa, as observed in Kotzé and Senekal (2019).

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Sentiment analysis aims to accomplish four major points about a text, indicating the text's subjectivity; the text's polarity; the dedication to the opinion expressed within the text; and the source of the opinion (Taboada, 2016). While machine-learning approaches are highly sought after, owing to their accuracy, they are not without disadvantages (Taboada, 2016). As they are trained with highly specific data, they are typically not portable to new sources (Yin & Zubiaga, 2022). For instance, while machine learning has been successfully used to detect offensive and hate speech in several English contexts, the distinctiveness of South African tweets and similarities among offensive, hate, and free speeches require domain-specific English corpus and techniques to be detected (Oriola & Kotzé, 2020). Provided the nuances of South African English, Oriola and Kotzé (2020) developed an English corpus from South African tweets and evaluated various machine-learning techniques to detect offensive and hate speech on the platform.

Sentiment analysis can be applied at various levels, focusing on the positive and negative polarity of a text at a document level, sentence level, phrase level, and aspect level (Wankhade et al., 2022). Evaluation can provide a useful framework for this analysis attributable to its focus on emotion in language and the context surrounding this emotion. Evidence of the usefulness of evaluation is in the successful proposed method by Taboada et al. (2009), aiming to automatically classify paragraphs in a text as either description or evaluation (Taboada, 2016). These classifications saw an improved accuracy of the sentiment analysis (Taboada, 2016).

Automated detection models often struggle to identify problematic language more implicitly correctly; this is owing to their reliance on strongly indicative keywords, such as slurs and profanity (Yin & Zubiaga, 2022). Annotations, or tags referred to in this study, can help detect the implicit problematic language in an online text more accurately (Yin & Zubiaga, 2022). Hunston (2011) explains that sentiment analysis is valuable for understanding evaluative meaning in large volumes of text, allowing users to assess the sentiment expressed quickly; however, the focus of sentiment analysis is on obtaining broad accuracy rather than capturing implicit, hedged, or ironic evaluations (Hunston, 2011). As evaluation models within sentiment analysis are still focused on the broader picture, it would not help in classifying the instances of evaluation in this text as these are more nuanced, context-specific and, in several instances, ironic or subtle.

While this study did not branch into computer science and machine learning, it employed a corpus while offering interesting insight into how opinions are expressed online. Sentiment analysis offers interesting approaches and insights into exploring online opinions from a broader perspective; however, it is too broad a field to cover in this chapter. Literature involves comprehensive exploration of sentiment analysis (Wankhade et al., 2022, Mäntylä et al., 2018, Mejova, 2009).

A corpus is a useful tool for organising large bodies of text and is, therefore, valuable for organising large bodies of evaluative text. Corpus approaches to evaluation are elucidated further in Section 4.2.4.

4.2.4   Corpus approaches to evaluation

Corpus linguistics is a multifaceted branch of linguistics covering a range of activities and approaches. At its core, it is centred on collecting quantities of text in electronic form; therefore, they are open to data-manipulation techniques (Hunston, 2011). For instance, key-word-in-context or concordance lines can be useful for finding a search term and observing its immediate environments; collocation studies can be useful for calculating relative frequency; word class, grammatical function, and semantic class can be categorised through annotation; frequency calculations can be based on these categories (Hunston, 2011). These frequencies can be compared across corpora to unveil an array of various observations about language use (Hunston, 2011).

Channell (2003) suggests that corpus-based analysis produces a sound description of the evaluative function of a word or expression. The author also suggests that it allows observation to surpass what intuition can achieve by revealing evaluative functions which intuitions fail to observe (Channell, 2003). Channell's (2003) observation focuses on evaluation when carried by individual lexical items or by semi-fixed expressions rather than entire sentences or stretches of text—similar to an approach adopted by Kolhatkar et al. (2020) in their corpus analysis of online news comments, where the comment sections of online news reports were annotated according to constructiveness and evaluation. This corpus analysis aimed to emphasise:

> "the connections between articles and comments; the connections of comments to each other; the types of topics discussed in comments; the nice (constructive) or mean (toxic) ways in which commenters respond to each other; how language is used to convey very specific types of evaluation; and how negation affects the interpretation of evaluative meaning in discourse" (Kolhatkar et al., 2020).

As Kolhatkar et al. (2020) explain, identifying the units of analysis (the units of evaluative language) is one of the most challenging aspects of linguistic annotation[19], owing to the subjective nature of evaluation.

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[19] **Annotation** is an alternative term for the process of tagging. In this study, the term tagging is preferred.

Identifying evaluation is identifying signals or markers of comparison, subjectivity, and social value (Hunston & Thompson, 2003).

Following this assumption, Hunston and Thompson (2003), Kolhatkar et al. (2020), and Bolinger (1980) identify adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbs as being clear markers of evaluation. Bolinger (1980) furthers this and suggests that euphemism, dysphemism, epithet, and syllogism are also clear evaluation indicators; therefore, these lexical items in the text were searched for.

When tagging the instances of evaluation, the study applied the minimality principle, as mentioned in Kolhatkar et al. (2020). This principle encourages keeping each tagged item short while including all that convey evaluation. Bolinger's (1980) exploration of euphemism, dysphemism, epithet, and syllogism emphasised that evaluative lexical items may occasionally be longer and still necessary to include; however, the main approach would be to keep evaluative instances short.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) separate modality and attitudinal meaning but classify both as interpersonal meaning; in Hunston and Thompson's (2003) approach to evaluation, modality is usually established along the certainty parameter of evaluation (the evaluation parameters are explained further on in this chapter). Hedging refers to a word or phrase used in a sentence to express ambiguity, probability, caution, or even indecisiveness about the remainder of the sentence (Lakoff, 1973).

Hedges, a linguistic item used to express ambiguity, allow the stancetaker to rid themselves of some accountability regarding their stance by not fully committing to it (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). If hedges allow a stancetaker to set the tone for the rest of the sentence, they often conform to the EXPECTEDNESS or IMPORTANCE parameters discussed in Section 4.2.5 i.

4.2.5   Understanding evaluation

This study adopted Hunston and Thompson's (2003) definition of the term "The broad cover term for expressions of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards a perspective on or emotions about entities or propositions that [they] are discussing".

As explained by Hunston and Thompson (2003), no precise process exists for identifying evaluation in the text. Hunston and Sinclair (2003) call this "parasitic" nature of evaluation, meaning it is attached to other resources, and its tendency to be "somewhat randomly dispersed across a range of structural options shared with non-evaluative functions". While identifying evaluation is a challenge, Hunston and Thompson (2003) present various ways to embark on this attempt, including the appraisal framework.

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The appraisal framework was developed by Martin and White (2005) and can be divided into three sub-categories: *Attitude*; *Engagement*; and *Graduation* (Martin & White, 2005). *Attitude* is the framework for mapping emotions as they are constructed in English texts (Martin & White, 2005). This system involves three semantic regions, covering emotion, ethics, and aesthetics (Martin & White, 2005). Martin and White (2005) explain that attitudinal meanings enhance discourse as speakers and writers assume a stance orientated to affect judgement or appreciation.

Martin and White (2005) refer to the emotive dimension of meaning as Affect—the most important *Attitudinal* resource. Affect is mainly concerned with emotion, how someone reacts to behaviour; texts and processes; and phenomena (Martin & White, 2005). Judgement focusses on ethics and evaluating behaviour (Martin & White, 2005). Judgement reworks feelings in the realm of proposals about behaviour (Martin & White, 2005). Appreciation involves evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena, according to how they are or are not valued in a specific field (Martin & White, 2005).

Evaluation was chosen as the main analytical tool for this study as it focuses on emotive language. Evaluation also clarifies the more implicit and often challenging emotive language items in a text. As this study engages a highly polarised topic (South African farm violence), explicit evaluative items were to be expected and often easily identified; however, it is often implicit and challenging to identify evaluative items, that play an equally significant role in the texts. An analytical framework, capturing these instances was critical in forming a sound understating of the public discourse about South African farm violence on Facebook. The evaluative framework's layered approach, through parameters, allowed for this more nuanced approach. The evaluation parameters are observed in the following section.

i.   **Evaluation parameters**

Hunston and Thompson (2003) explain that evaluation centres around four parameters, indicating GOOD-BAD, CERTAINTY, EXPECTEDNESS, and IMPORTANCE.

The GOOD-BAD parameter is the central parameter of the framework, focusing on how positive or negative a stancetaker is (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). It is real-world orientated; it can express a feeling (happy, sad, love etc.), how good or how evil something is (malicious, greedy, benevolent etc.), or even how ugly or beautiful something is (gorgeous, hideous, disgusting etc.) (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). Some evaluative items conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter and the other four parameters, as all instances of evaluation imply something about the GOOD-BAD parameter (Hunston, 2011).

The CERTAINTY parameter focusses on how sure the stancetaker is of their stance (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). It is also real-world orientated and often includes modal auxiliaries (could, will, might, etc.) (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). For instance, if a stancetaker attempts explicitly make it apparent to a reader that they do not doubt that something happened, they could say: "That car **definitely** went through the red light". A reader knows that the stancetaker is sure of the events (the car skipped the red light).

The EXPECTEDNESS parameter focusses on how obvious something is to the stancetaker and their anticipation of providing a stance (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). It is text-orientated, and can be observed at a point-to-point level, often used to link certain steps in the thought process of the stancetaker (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). Words such as 'if', 'so', and 'yet' are example instances of EXPECTEDNESS as these items indicate anticipation of what follows (e.g., **If** you show up, then you're a liar). Words such as 'clearly', and 'would' are also examples of EXPECTEDNESS as these items imply something about the obviousness of something to the stancetaker (e.g., That's **obviously** disgusting).

There could be confusion about the obviousness element of EXPECTEDNESS and the CERTAINTY parameter. The difference between these two classifications is that obviousness (along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter) focusses on COMPREHENSIBILITY, which is how clear the stancetaker finds their stance. CERTAINTY deals with reliability, focusing on how likely or truthful the stancetaker's opinion should be perceived by someone else.

The IMPORTANCE parameter focusses on how relevant something is to the stancetaker's stance; it can be observed as the "evidence" for their observation (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). It is text-orientated and is crucial in organising the text (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). For instance, the mentioning of someone's hair colour could be observed as an instance of importance if it is shared to emphasise something else about the person. For example, "red-haired men are crazy"; the stancetaker is not suggesting that all men are crazy; they suggest that red-haired males are crazy; therefore, they need to make it explicitly clear to the reader what this statement is about.

ii.   Bednarek's (2006) evaluation parameters

Bednarek (2006) suggests that her parameter-based approach to evaluation can help identify common aspects without too much simplification while also considering complexity without making the theory as complex as the data. The author establishes a few evaluative parameters, allowing for their combination in various ways (Bednarek, 2006).

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Bednarek (2006) confirms at least nine parameters for writers or speakers to evaluate aspects of the world. Each of Bednarek's (2006) proposed parameters involves a different dimension along which the evaluation proceeds and includes what she calls, sub-values, which either refer to the various poles on the respective evaluative scale (core evaluative parameters) or distinct types of the parameter (peripheral evaluative parameters).

This framework largely adopts a non-combining approach to evaluation and explores evidentiality by proposing sub-types (Bednarek, 2006). Bednarek (2006) also attempts to combine various approaches to evaluation in her approach, including that of Hunston and Thompson (2003). Bednarek (2006) explains that her framework is broader than most approaches explored. It includes not only evaluations of propositions but also evaluations of several aspects, such as participants; processes, circumstances; events; actions; entities; states of affairs; situations; and discourse. Bednarek's (2006) framework considers anything that can be evaluated. The parameter-based framework of evaluation is, therefore, to be regarded as an open-ended approach, allowing the simple addition of more parameters as research into evaluation progresses (Bednarek, 2006). This ambiguity and the notion that parameters can be combined to express complex evaluations provide this approach with more flexibility than competing notions, such as stance and appraisal (Bednarek, 2006).

Bednarek's (2006) parameter framework comprises six core and three peripheral evaluative parameters. The core evaluative parameters are:

- COMPREHENSIBILITY
- EMOTIVITY
- EXPECTEDNESS
- IMPORTANCE
- POSSIBILITY/NECESSITY
- RELIABILITY

The peripheral evaluative parameters are evidently:

- MENTAL STATE
- STYLE

This study did not employ Bednarek's (2006) peripheral evaluative parameters for several reasons—the main reason being the time constraints of the research; however, Bednarek's (2006) peripheral evaluative

parameters offer valuable contributions to evaluative analyses and could prove to be a valuable tool should this research be continued. As Bednarek's (2006) peripheral evaluative parameters were not employed in this study, they are not elucidated further.

Bednarek's (2006) core evaluative parameters focus on various values, which could be considered sub-parameters. The core evaluative parameters are, therefore, divided (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1:   **Bednarek's (2006) core evaluative parameters**

Core parameter	Sub-parameters
COMPREHENSIBILITY	- Comprehensible *e.g., plain, clear* - Incomprehensible *e.g., mysterious, unclear*
EMOTIVITY	- Positive *e.g., a polished speech* - Negative *e.g., a rant*
EXPECTEDNESS	- Expected *e.g., familiar, inevitably* - Unexpected *e.g., astonishing, surprising* - Contrast e.g., *but, however* - Contrast/Comparison *e.g., not, no, hardly, only (negation)*
IMPORTANCE	- Important *e.g., key, top, landmark* - Unimportant *e.g., minor, slightly*
POSSIBILITY/NECESSITY	- Necessary *e.g., had to* - Not necessary *e.g., need not* - Possible *e.g., could* - Not possible *e.g., inability, could not*
RELIABILITY	- Genuine *e.g., real* - Fake *e.g., choreographed* - High *e.g., will, be to* - Medium *e.g., likely* - Low *e.g., may*

4.2.6   A combined approach

While Bednarek's (2006) framework offers a more flexible approach to evaluation, this study did not want to lose the valuable insights of Hunston and Thompson's (2003) approach; therefore, an adapted framework was created, incorporating Hunston and Thompson's (2003) and Bednarek's (2006) approaches. Hunston and Thompson's (2003) parameters would support the parameter tagging used in this study. Bednarek's

(2006) framework elucidates and discusses the initial parameter tags. This decision was because of the need to elucidate the initial tags further, though lacking time to use a framework as multilayered as the appraisal framework. Bednarek's (2006) approach is open-ended enough to be used in the analysis of the text but broad enough to be adapted to tie into Hunston and Thompson's (2003) parameters.

This study adopted Bednarek's (2006) framework to supplement Hunston and Thompson's (2003) approach. Hunston and Thompson's (2003) approach, therefore, remains the primary approach, while Bednarek's (2006) approach allows for further discussion of the parameters.

Bednarek (2006) suggests deviating from the SFL nature of an approach, such as appraisal. Should this research be further pursued, the appraisal framework would prove a valuable addition. The approach is, therefore, kept centred around SFL, which Hunston and Thompson's (2003) framework allows for.

The instances of evaluation in the text were, therefore, tagged along these parameters: GOOD-BAD CERTAINTY; IMPORTANCE; and EXPECTEDNESS; however, aside from the GOOD-BAD parameter, Bednarek's (2006) core evaluative parameters were incorporated as secondary parameters under the initial parameters. Bednarek's (2006) peripheral parameters were not included in the research but could prove valuable n future research. The study adapted these two frameworks, therefore, categorising parameters according to their interpretation; therefore, it is more accurate to suggest that the combined approach is loosely based on the two parameters.

The GOOD-BAD parameter is centred around how positively or negatively something is expressed by focusing on emotions (happy, sad, love etc.), how good or how evil something is (malicious, greedy, benevolent etc.), or even how ugly or beautiful something is (gorgeous, hideous, disgusting etc.) (Hunston & Thompson, 2003).

The attitudinal portion of the appraisal framework is loosely based on the GOOD-BAD parameter of evaluation (Hunston & Thompson, 2003), the framework's sub-categories, especially judgement, helped to identify instances of evaluation along the GOOD-BAD parameter as the subject of this study, the discourse about farm violence on Facebook, raised several morality questions. No appraisal analysis was conducted in this study, but the framework helped in identifying these instances.

The CERTAINTY parameter focuses on how sure the stancetaker is of their stance and is centred on Bednarek's (2006) sub-values of **(UN)NECESSITY** (obligation, e.g., they had to); **(IM)POSSIBILITY** (probability, e.g., they could not); and **RELIABILITY**. RELIABILITY could then further be separated

into five sub-categories: *GENUINE* (e.g., <u>real)</u>; and *FAKE* (e.g., <u>choreographed)</u>; or degrees of certainty, such as *HIGH* (e.g., <u>will</u>, <u>definitely)</u>; *MEDIUM* (e.g., <u>likely</u>/<u>unlikely)</u>; and *LOW* (e.g., <u>may</u>, <u>perhaps).</u>

The IMPORTANCE parameter focusses on how relevant something is to the stancetaker's stance and is centred around Bednarek's (2006) sub-values of (un)IMPORTANCE, which can be categorised as **AVERRAL** (a term employed by Bednarek (2006) to indicate an important "evidence" directly referred to); **ATTRIBUTION** (important "evidence" indirectly referred to); **RELEVANCE** (an important point); **ELITENESS** (an important entity).

The EXPECTEDNESS parameter focusses on **COMPREHENSIBILITY** or **obviousness** (e.g., they are <u>obviously</u> disgusting), from Hunston and Thompson's (2003) approach and **EXPECTEDNESS** or **ANTICIPATION** (e.g., they were <u>astonished</u>) from Bednarek's (2006) approach.

In the study's interpretation, the main difference between obviousness and CERTAINTY is credited to the implication of the lexical item. The OBVIOUSNESS element to EXPECTEDNESS implies clarity, whereas CERTAINTY implies truth value. EXPECTEDNESS implies anticipation, whereas CERTAINTY implies likelihood. CERTAINTY is more concerned with the commitment a writer or speaker has to a stance, whereas EXPECTEDNESS is more concerned with what this level of clarity or anticipation is because of the stance. CERTAINTY is more of a scale, whereas EXPECTEDNESS presents an assumption based on a stance.

4.2.7   Analytical framework limitations

As observed in the explanation of the above parameters, evaluation, and SFL, are multilayered approaches. These several layers of evaluation can be confusing and difficult to grasp an initial glance. The concept of evaluation, as expressed in this research, is referred to in various terms in diverse approaches. For instance, Biber and Finegan's (1988) notion of "stance", which means there are likely various definitions for the concept. This indication led the research to adopt one term definition and draw from the analysis framework surrounding the definition; owing to how evaluation has been conceptualised, the framework requires a thorough understanding of SFL. As the diverse evaluation layers can become confusing, the study adopted a combined approach from Bednarek (2006) and Hunston and Thompson (2003); this meant the parameters could be kept to four more manageable categories. Bednarek's (2006) parameters helped to amplify the four original parameters. Evaluative theory also poses a risk of subjectivity as the researcher must decide, according to the context, which items are evaluative or not evaluative. While the parameters offer categories for evaluative items to fall into, where an evaluative item begins and concludes within these categories is

largely at the discretion of the researcher. In this study, the researcher accounted for subjectivity but conducting two rounds of 'spot-checks'. This allowed the researcher to compare their identified evaluative items with those of their peers' and their supervisor's identified evaluative items. While the majority of the evaluative items overlapped, where the items differed, the researcher discussed the items with their supervisor. These evaluative items were adjusted according to the discussion.

4.3 Methodology

This study explored the language of South African farm violence on Facebook by focusing on the evaluation present in the texts. The study adopted a combined approach to identify and tag evaluation instances. The approach was built around Hunston and Thompson's (2003) evaluative framework, while an adaption of Bednarek's (2006) framework was employed to assist in a more detailed analysis of the evaluative instances. The texts extracted from Facebook were overseen as a set of small corpora, and evaluation instances were tagged by hand.

Evaluation instances are classified according to Hunston and Thompson's (2003) definition of the term, confirmed through spot checks conducted by the researcher's peers. The study supervisor checked a significant percentage of the evaluation.

Once the instances of evaluation were finalised, the researcher drew up a word frequency list of the evaluative items. While the list's name suggests focusing on words, it includes the evaluative items in the text. This meant that items, comprising two or more words are observed as one unit of meaning. This allowed identifying patterns of evaluative terms across the texts. These patterns allowed identifying key themes. A selection of evaluative items are then discussed within the identified themes.

4.3.1 Research instruments

This study employed WordSmith Tools Version 8.0 to organise the collected data before analysis. WordSmith Tools is a corpus linguistics software package, allowing linguists to identify word patterns (Scott, 2016).

4.3.2 Data domains

The small corpus used in this study comprised four Facebook posts and the related corresponding comment sections. There was, therefore, one corpus with eight subsections. The posts and the comment sections occurred on public Facebook pages and were, therefore, in the public domain.

4.3.3   Processes overview

1   Two Facebook pages were identified—one observing farm violence as a part of the larger crime problem in the country and one observing farm violence as evidence of White genocide.

2   Two posts were then selected from the chosen Facebook pages—one that addressed the Senekal incident and the other the Mkhondo incident (this equated to four posts).

3   The posts were divided into two sub-categories, indicating the main post and the comment section.

4   Texts were closely perused, and instances of evaluative language were tagged by hand. This step was repeated; therefore, two close readings of the text were conducted before the researcher proceeded to step 5.

5   Concordances were formulated, using WordSmith Tools as an instrument, for each body of text (posts and comment sections). There were eight concordances.

6   The evaluative items were then categorised according to the evaluative parameters using a combination of Hunston and Thompson's (2003) and Bednarek's (2006) approaches.

7   Once Step 6 was finalised, the researcher extracted the evaluative items from each body of text and drew up a word frequency list for each text, using WordSmith Tools as an instrument again. There were eight-word frequency lists.

8   The instances of evaluation were then analysed across:

    a) the Facebook pages' posts

    b) the Facebook pages' comment sections

4.3.4   Data collection

The data collection process followed in this study occurred in four parts, as presented below:

1   The Facebook pages and posts that would be explored were identified by searching keywords and phrases on Facebook, indicating "White genocide", "South African White genocide", "farm attacks", and "farm murders". This search rendered several results, and to create a balanced data set, pages were perused with roughly the same following and the number of active users, covering similar issues. The study settled on posts surrounding two events:

•   The murder of Brendin Horner— a young, White male on a farm in Senekal in October 2020

•   The murders of the Coka brothers— two young, Black males on a farm in Mkhondo in April 2021

Both instances garnered ample public uproar and seemed to mirror one another to make an interesting comparison. It was established that the incidents would be the most crucial factor to focus on when selecting pages. This meant that the pages were merely a background for the discussions, and it would be more important to keep the incidents consistent.

The study initially identified two pages (A1 and B1) and (A2) that take on opposing stances. Both pages address the Senekal incident, but the second page (A2) does not address the Mkhondo incident; therefore, the study identified a third page (B2) to explore the Mkhondo incident.

The differing stances clustered around how the pages viewed farm violence. The A1 and B1 page views farm violence as an indication of the larger crime problem in the country. The A2 and B2 pages view farm violence as an indication of white genocide.

2   Once the Facebook pages and posts were finalised, the comment section of each chosen Facebook post was set to the "All Comments" option (as opposed to the "Most Relevant" or "Most Recent") on the Facebook interface. Each comment and reply were expanded using the "See More" tabs (this owes to Facebook's default setting of automatically shortening comments that exceed a specific character limit).

Texts were manually extracted. Once this process was complete, redundant information was removed from these scraped texts and the usernames of the individuals engaging with the posts. Once the texts had been scraped, tidied, and anonymised, they were ready to be tagged for evaluation.

The comments were initially divided into "isolated comments" and "comment threads". However, it was decided that it would be more practical to focus on the comments. This also ensured that no important contextual information was lost.

3   The Facebook posts were hand-tagged, including the corresponding comments, for evaluation. As context dependency is a crucial part of the identifying process, the researcher read the Facebook post and its comments in order. This procedure was repeated across all four of the posts.

Subjectivity had to be considered during this part of the data collection process, pursuing the assistance of peers to help identify evaluative lexical items through what the study calls 'spot-checks'. Their role was to function as a buffer for reliability rather than as active participants.

Peers were presented with small portions from the texts and had to identify items they deemed "evaluative". Once the spot checks were conducted, the researcher checked their own tags against the peers' tags and

adjusted the researcher's tags where necessary. The finalised tags were once again adjusted where necessary. The 'spot checks' indicated a considerable amount of overlap between the researcher's tags and the peers' tags.

Instances of evaluation in the texts were labelled. Concordances were then formulated, using WordSmith Tools as an instrument, for each body of text. The researcher's supervisor checked a large portion of the researcher's tags and while some items were disputed, there was considerable overlap between what the researcher deemed evaluative and what the supervisor deemed evaluative. The point of difference between the researcher and the supervisor's evaluative tags was where the evaluation began and where it concluded. The researcher and the supervisor discussed the various items on which there was disagreement. These items were adjusted to what the researcher and supervisor established through their discussions.

4   Initially, the evaluative instances had to be further categorised according to the attitude portion of the appraisal framework. These instances would be categorised as either effect, judgement, or appreciation and were tagged, by hand, in the tagged concordances formulated using WordSmith Tools.

However, once the researcher commenced with the attitudinal tagging, it seemed a step was missing, and several instances of evaluation were too broad to tag along the attitude portion of the appraisal framework. The researcher then intended to tag instances first along the evaluation parameters and then further tag the instances parallel to the GOOD-BAD parameter, according to the appraisal framework. This would provide a more thorough overview of the evaluative language used in the texts. This would also allow for exploring modality and hedging briefly.

Upon closer examination of the data sets, it was discovered that this would no longer be possible, as this study was too short for multiple tagging levels. Bednarek's (2006) approach to evaluation allowed adding more detail to Hunston and Thompson's (2003) four core parameters in the analysis portion of the findings without having to dive into the nuances of Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework, which would take considerably longer to explain; however, an understanding of Martin and White's (2005) attitudinal category of "judgement" assisted in identifying instances along the GOOD-BAD parameter in the text. However, it was not applied further than identification.

5   The concordances across the evaluation parameters were tagged using Hunston and Thompson's (2003) and Bednarek's (2006) approach. The supervisor conducted 'spot checks' on a large portion of the parameter tags and it was found that the majority of the researcher's parameter tags aligned with the supervisor's parameter tags. Instances that appeared to differ were discussed and adjusted accordingly.

6   Once the evaluative parameters had been tagged, a word list containing the evaluative items for each text were drawn up. These word lists were then converted into word frequency lists through WordSmith Tools to draw up frequency lists of the most utilised evaluative items across the various texts. There were eight-frequency lists.

4.3.5   Data analysis

After finalising the data sets and formulating the concordances using WordSmith Tools, the data analysis portion of the study commenced. As mentioned in the previous sections, this analysis was conducted through both Hunston and Thompson's (2003) and Bednarek's (2006) frameworks of evaluation. Before exploring the results, the concordances were exported to Microsoft Excel. This approach would allow observing how the instances of evaluation varied across the four posts and their comment sections.

The study anticipated using Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework to further classify instances of evaluation along the GOOD-BAD parameter. Conducting an adapted appraisal analysis was intended. The approach would add dimension to the study; this approach would require multiple rounds of tagging and provided the size of the data sets and the time constraints of the study; therefore, it was decided this approach would not be possible. By adopting a combination of Hunston and Thompson's (2003) and Bednarek's (2006) approaches to evaluation, a thorough evaluative analysis of the texts in a limited period could still be conducted.

The main objectives of this research were:

1   To establish how evaluative language was employed in posts by the Facebook page admin and in the comment sections
2   To establish how evaluative language varied across the Facebook pages, depending on the incident
3   To uncover what evaluative language on the selected pages and their corresponding comment sections suggest about the public discourse of South African farm violence on Facebook

The exported concordances were explored to address these research objectives. This approach allowed developing of a significant grasp of the evaluative language used across the texts. The approach meant that if encountering high frequencies of certainty, for instance, the researcher could comment on users' convictions regarding farm violence, or rather how strongly users were committed to their beliefs towards the behaviour, texts, and processes, or phenomena (4.2.5ii) expressed in the posts.

If encountering high frequencies of the GOOD-BAD parameter, the researcher could comment on the users' ethics and evaluating behaviour (4.2.5ii) or rather how the behaviour expressed in these posts was being admired or criticised and praised or condemned.

Encountering high frequencies of the EXPECTEDNESS parameter would lead to research comments on what the users' future anticipations were, based on the behaviour, texts, and processes, or phenomena (4.2.5ii) expressed in the posts.

The GOOD-BAD parameter is the core evaluation parameter in this approach; therefore, it was anticipated that there would be several instances of evaluation along this parameter. It is also important to reiterate that evaluation is to be explored as one concept and not several. The evaluation parameters offer a framework through which one can explore these instances in greater detail, but evaluation remains the key focal point.

Once the findings were recorded and analysed, the results were compared across texts. This allowed establishing how evaluative language was employed in posts created by the Facebook page's admin and the isolated comments and comment threads emerging on these posts. It also allowed establishing how evaluative language varied across the Facebook pages, depending on the incident.

Evaluation is a key tool for identifying stances in discourse and, therefore, valuable for identifying key stances on farm violence. The evaluative findings in these texts provided a sound overview of the farm violence public discourse on Facebook.

4.3.6 Limitations

- Limited research on the topic, specifically from a linguistic angle, meant that the study had limited previous literature to refer to.
- This study focused on the discourse on Facebook and, therefore, only the observations of a small part of the South African population.
- This study only focused on evaluative language; therefore, the findings could only offer an explorative analysis and conclude this angle.
- This study only explored the discourse on two Facebook pages surrounding two specific instances of farm violence, which meant that it could not offer general remarks on the public discourse on farm violence in South Africa. It did, however, offer some valuable insight into the evaluative language on the specific Facebook pages about the specific incidents and offer an origin for future research on the topic.

- Some evaluative items may have been missed in the Facebook comment sections specifically, owing to the nature of social media and issues such as typographical errors and language barriers; however, precautions were taken to ensure that several evaluative items were tagged.

4.3.7   Challenges and recommendations

The study encountered various challenges while collaborating with Wordsmith Tools. The software would not read the closing tags in the tagged evaluative items; this meant that the concordances were inaccurate and did not reflect the true number of evaluative items in the texts. The software has difficulty capturing evaluative items longer than a word, which proved to be problematic as some evaluative units were lengthy and needed to be tagged. After numerous attempts to rectify this issue and an attempt to contact the software's creator, the researcher, and supervisor were forced to arrange. Ms Sulene Pilon, a lecturer at the University of Pretoria's Afrikaans department, kindly offered her assistance and wrote a script that could be run over the TXT files of the texts. This would allow the lengthy evaluative items to be accurately reflected when the texts were run through Wordsmith Tools to draw up the concordances. The script worked, and the concordances were formulated correctly.

The study encountered a second challenge with Wordsmith Tools; the software only stored one original file of each text on the programme. Once the file was saved and sent to the supervisor, it became a copy of the original file and, therefore, did not allow the supervisor to observe the context surrounding the evaluative items correctly. This challenge was rectified by exporting the files to excel and ensuring several characters were provided around the evaluative items.

The length of this report affected what could be explored. It could be worthwhile to add elements of the appraisal framework along the GOOD-BAD parameters, as this would yield valuable insights into how specific evaluative units behave in discussions of farm violence.

Future studies should consider using different linguistic software to WordSmith Tools.

Future studies should also include more Facebook pages as this would provide a better overview of the evaluative language concerning South African farm violence.

4.3.8   Ethical considerations

The confidentiality of the Facebook users was important, and the usernames were, therefore, replaced with randomised codes before any further data collection commenced. This meant that the users remained

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anonymous throughout the study. The peers who helped conduct the spot checks were not informed of the Facebook pages' names and were only presented with portions of the texts that the randomised codes had been applied to. The Facebook pages' names have also been excluded from this report to further ensure complete anonymity. This study was approved for ethical clearance—reference number 17067716 (HUM032/0921).

4.4 Chapter conclusion

This chapter involves research in the larger field of SFL. The study also elucidated their adapted approach to evaluation in greater detail and explained how it would be used in this study. The processes for data collection and analysis are elucidated, and the limitations of the research are addressed.

Chapter 5: Findings and analysis

5.1   Chapter introduction

This chapter addresses and analyses the main study findings. The study provides a basic overview of how evaluative language was employed throughout the texts used in this study. Once this overview is provided, each text is individually discussed. The quantitative results include a circle diagram indicating the distribution of the evaluative parameters across the text and a frequency list indicating the most frequently used evaluative items. In qualitative analyses, the researcher provides examples evaluation as well as the context surrounding these examples. While some examples contain multiple instances of evaluation, the researcher has only addressed selective items to discuss further.

The evaluative items that are discussed further are presented in bold within the examples and key role players are underlined (e.g., thanks EFF for **humbling** the farmers). Key role players are not presented in bold as the role players are not evaluative items but rather evaluated items. For instance, in the example provided, the EFF is evaluated as a "humbler" and the farmers are evaluated as the role players in need of "humbling".

As Brodie (2022) mentions "very few farm murders appear to be committed for political reasons. But the response to them is often political". Due to the nature of farm violence discourse and the nature of discourse on Facebook about sensitive topics, high levels of evaluation were anticipated in these texts. Therefore, the way in which evaluative language was employed by the selected Facebook pages and the users was of more interest to this study than the mere presence of evaluative language.

The Facebook pages used in the study adopted the following major stances:

- Farm violence is an indication of the larger crime problem in the country (texts A1 and B1).
- Farm violence is an indication of a white genocide in the country (texts A2 and B2).

The incidents addressed in this study are:

- The Senekal Incident (addressed in texts A1 and A2).
- The Mkhondo Incident (addressed in texts B1 and B2).

An overview of the findings is discussed in the subsequent section.

5.2 Overview of findings

The study identified several evaluative items across the chosen texts (the Facebook page's post and corresponding comment section). The A1 text addresses the Senekal incident on a Facebook page that views farm violence as a larger part of the crime problem in the country. This Facebook post—by the page—focuses on the Senekal protests rather than the incident. Of the A1 post's total word count, 28.57% of the words are evaluative. The A2 texts also address the Senekal incident, but on a Facebook page that views farm violence as evidence of white genocide. This Facebook post (A2), by Willem Petzer, also focuses on the Senekal protests rather than the incident. Of the A2 post's total word count, 40.47% of the words are evaluative.

Of the A1 comment section's total word count, 36.11% are evaluative. Of the A2 comment section's total word count, 51.56% of words are evaluative. The A2 comment section holds the highest level of evaluation in this study.

The B1 texts address the Mkhondo incident on a Facebook page that views farm violence as a larger part of the crime problem in the country. This Facebook post (B1) focuses on the Mkhondo incident rather than the protests. The post is a shared news report on the incident and, therefore, the page is not the author. Of the B1 post's total word count, 15.44% of the words are evaluative. The B2 texts address the Mkhondo incident on a Facebook page that views farm violence as evidence of white genocide. This Facebook post focuses on the Mkhondo incident rather than the protests. The post is a shared news report on the incident and, therefore, the page is not the author. Of the B2 post's total word count, 8.97% of the words are evaluative. Of the B1 comment section's total word count, 44.17% of the words are evaluative. Of the B2 comment section's total word count, 46.07% of the words are evaluative.

Of the total words across all the posts, 20.18% are evaluative. Each evaluative parameter elaborated by Hunston and Thompson (2003) was used in the Facebook posts, aside from EXPECTEDNESS on the B2 post. Of the total evaluative words in this text, 58.54% belong to evaluative items found along the GOOD-BAD parameter, 19.86% belong to evaluative items found along the IMPORTANCE parameter, 13.94% belong to evaluative items found along the CERTAINTY parameter and 7.66% belong to evaluative items found along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. As evaluative items are not limited to words in these texts, it is also worth exploring these items as instances. However, as an instance is challenging to define and measure in the texts overall, this can only be done for the parameters of evaluation by comparing the items to the total of evaluative instances found within the texts.

The distribution of evaluative items across the four parameters on the posts as a unit is presented below in Figure 5.1.
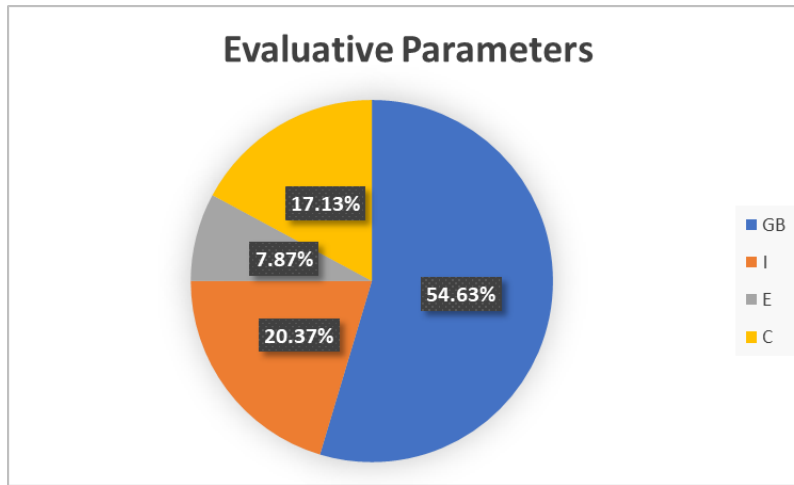

Figure 5.1:   **Evaluative parameter distribution across all posts, per total evaluative instances in text**

As expected, the GOOD-BAD (GB) parameter is the most applied across the posts at 54.63%. The remaining parameters follow with IMPORTANCE (I) at 20.37%, CERTAINTY (C) at 17.13%, and EXPECTEDNESS (E) at 7.87%. The most frequently used evaluative words across the posts are presented in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1:   **Most frequent evaluative words/phrases found across all posts**

N	Evaluative Item (s)	Parameter	Freq.
1	WHITE	I	7
2	ALL	C	3
3	COULD	C	3
4	FIANCÉE	I	3
5	PRO-FARM-MURDERS	GB	3
6	RACIAL	GB	3
7	RACIST	GB	3

These terms indicated the themes addressed in the posts, such as ethnicity ('White', 'racial', 'racist').

The evaluative items in the comment sections are within four evaluative parameters. Of the total words across all the comment sections 44.02% are evaluative. Of the total evaluative words in this text, 40.74%

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belong to evaluative items found along the GOOD-BAD parameter, 21.87% belong to evaluative items found along the IMPORTANCE parameter, 20.93% belong to evaluative items found along the CERTAINTY parameter and 16.46% belong to evaluative items found along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. As mentioned in section 5.2, evaluative items are not limited to words in these texts, therefore it is worth exploring these items as instances. The distribution of these items across the four parameters is presented in Figure 5.2.
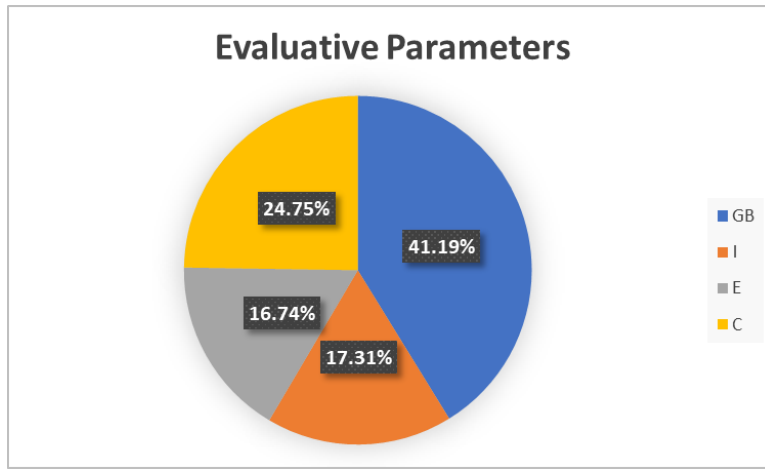

Figure 5.2: **Evaluative parameter distribution across all comment sections, per total evaluative instances in text**

As expected, the GOOD-BAD parameter is the most applied across the comment sections at 41.19%. The parameter is followed by CERTAINTY at 24.75%, IMPORTANCE at 17.31%, and EXPECTEDNESS at 16.74%. This follows a slightly different pattern to the posts. The most frequently used evaluative words across the posts are presented below in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: **Most frequent evaluative words/phrases found across all comment sections**

Nr	Evaluative Item (s)	Parameter	Freq.
1	ARE	C	78
2	WILL	C	68
3	WHITE	I	63
4	IF	E	57
5	BLACK	I	53
6	JUST	E	40
7	CAN	C	26
8	DON'T	C	26

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9	ALL	C	21
10	SO	E	21
11	RACIST	GB	19
12	SHOULD	C	19
13	KNOW	C	18
14	CAN'T	C	17
15	ONLY	E	16

These terms indicate the themes addressed in the posts, such as ethnicity ('White', "Black", 'racist'); however, several function-type words are used across the texts ('are', 'just', 'if'). While these items are tagged for evaluation, their role is supplementary, often emphasising another evaluative item. These words affected the frequency list; while some general themes could be drawn from the word frequency lists, a more nuanced analysis of each evaluative instance was required.

According to this analysis, the evaluative items cluster around two major themes, indicating ethnicity and role players; the three subthemes indicate hate, fear, and the 'greater good'. The A1 and B1 texts observe 'Blackness' as 'good', farmers as violent and, therefore, deserving of revenge ('bad'), and the EFF as the antithesis to this 'badness' ('good'). The A2 and B2 texts observe 'Whiteness' as 'good', farmers as victims of violence ('good') and the EFF as the antithesis to this 'goodness' ('bad'). In the comment sections, a need exists to polarise; very few groups or individuals are, therefore, observed as 'good' on pages with opposing stances.

A detailed analysis was conducted on each text in these sections. The quantitative findings were addressed first, supplementary to the qualitative analysis, the focus of this study.

5.3   Text A1 findings

The Facebook page on which this post (A1) and its corresponding comment section (A1 comment section) occur, view farm violence as a part of the larger crime problem in the country. The page describes a community page. It has 23 000 likes and 25 000 followers. The page aims to "counter the onslaught of extreme Right-Wing propaganda and conspiracy theories" by "sharing credible and accurate facts and statistics". The page presents an understanding of South African farm violence and suggests that it does not discredit the 'trauma' and 'tragedy' associated with this violence. The page claims to address the 'facts' "critically and without bias".

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In this specific post, the page aims to address the Senekal incident (Chapter 2) and the protests surrounding it; this post was by the page. This is not the case for all posts analysed in this study. Some of the other posts supplied articles to address the farm violence incidents. The way a page shares information about the incidents is worth addressing as it alters the level of responsibility the page takes for the observations expressed.

By sharing a news report or any other information, the page is attributing the stance to someone else and, therefore, shifts the responsibility of the observations to the attributed speaker or writer; however, if the page authored the post, as in this post, the page takes full responsibility for the observations expressed.

While this page suggests that it is unbiased by using terms, such as "right-wing", "propaganda", and "conspiracy theories" in its description, it takes a specific stance. These terms present a heavy semantic load and are evaluative. As the evaluative language in a text suggests some level of subjectivity (Bednarek, 2010), it will probably affect the level of bias of a text. Evaluation is a subjectivity that specifically addresses EMOTIVITY; therefore, it could affect the truth value of the text.

This post (A1) concerns the Senekal protest and the page's stance on the uproar about farm violence. The comment section (A1 comments) of the Facebook page's post addresses farm violence in the country, offering various stances.

5.3.1 A1 Post: Quantitative representations

As the page originates this post it features several instances of evaluation. These evaluative instances are implicit and explicit. Of the total words in this text (A1 post), 28.57% are evaluative. The evaluative items in this text (A1 post) are within all four evaluative parameters. Of the total evaluative words in this text, 57.38% belong to evaluative items found along the GOOD-BAD parameter, 21.31% belong to evaluative items found along the IMPORTANCE parameter, 16.39% belong to evaluative items found along the CERTAINTY parameter and 4.92% belong to evaluative items found along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. As mentioned in section 5.2, evaluative items are not limited to words in these texts, therefore it is worth exploring these items as instances.

The distribution of these items across the four parameters is presented below in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: **Evaluative parameter distribution across the text, per total evaluative instances in text: A1 post**
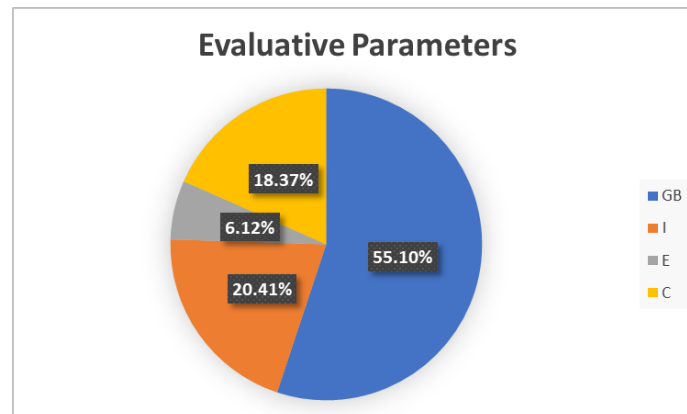
As observed in the above chart (Figure 5.3), the GOOD-BAD parameter is the most applied evaluative parameter in this text at 55.10%. This was anticipated as the GOOD-BAD parameter is the core evaluative parameter in Hunston and Thompson's (2003) evaluative framework; this parameter encapsulates morality questions likely to arise in a sensitive topic, such as farm violence.

IMPORTANCE is the second most applied evaluative parameter in this text at 20.41%, which is understandable as the stancetaker (the page) would likely provide 'evidence' for its observations to appear more robust to its followers.

The CERTAINTY parameter is used third most often in this text at 18.37%. CERTAINTY often indicates something about the truth value of the stancetaker's stance and has likely been used to justify a question of morality, for instance.

EXPECTEDNESS is the least used evaluative parameter in this text at 6.12% As EXPECTEDNESS concerns anticipation and COMPREHENSIBILITY, the stancetaker likely does not need to express these notions as they report on something that happened. As the CERTAINTY parameter is used often, the stancetaker likely has no real need to convey further that they find their stance 'obvious' or that they are anticipating something else to arise from it.

While the parameter distribution throughout a text summarises how the text's evaluation is expressed, the specific evaluative items used in the text offer a more detailed idea of how the page conceptualises farm violence. The most frequently used evaluative items in this text (A1 post) are presented below in Table 5.3.

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Table 5.3:   **Most frequent evaluative words/phrases found across the text: A1 post**

N	Evaluative item (s)	Parameter	Freq.
1	WHITE	I	4
2	PRO-FARM-MURDERS	GB	3
3	RACIST	GB	3
4	ALL	C	2
5	ALREADY	I	2

By observing the most frequently used evaluative items in a text, patterns in the word choice of this page could be identified. The term 'White', conforming to the IMPORTANCE parameter, is used the most. This is interesting as the page is against the notion that White genocide exists. Concerning frequency, this term is followed by 'pro-farm murders' and 'racist', conforming to the GOOD-BAD parameter. The final two most frequent items in this list conform to the CERTAINTY and IMPORTANCE parameters. As observed in Figure 5.2, these items are 'all' and 'already'. These items are supplementary as they do not offer the reader much contextual information without the full statement. These items are, therefore, used to emphasise other evaluative items. This frequency list develops a basic idea of what major themes are approached in this text. From the above list, ethnicity ('White', 'racist') is crucial in these discussions.

Other themes may not be easily deduced from the frequency list as the mention of 'farmers' or 'the EFF', for instance, would not be tagged as evaluative. This results from the items not presenting an ulterior meaning; however, major polarisation exists regarding the role players in farm violence and identifying who is to be blamed for this violence; therefore, evaluative items surround the mention of these role players in this text. An evaluative item providing the reader with a contextual clue that role players are addressed in the text is the term 'pro-farm murders', observed three times. The major themes are discussed in the subsequent section.

5.3.2   Post A1: Qualitative representations

Discourse about farm violence is polarised owing to South Africa's tumultuous racial history, as discussed in Chapter 2. The mention of ethnicity is vital when exploring evaluation in these discourses. This page (A1) was chosen to observe farm violence as a representation of the larger crime problems in the country

and not as racially motivated crimes; therefore, references to racism, 'Whiteness', and 'Blackness', would offer a valuable origin to elucidate the evaluative language associated with this page's stance.

i.   Theme 1: Ethnicity

Racism and the representation of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'.

Of the total evaluative instances found in this text (A1 post), 20.41% of the instances address ethnicity. Of the total ethnicity instances, 55.00% address whiteness, 10.00% address blackness, and 35.00% address racial issues.

In Post A1, racism is directly addressed using terms indicating racist; racial; racists; over-racialised. These expressions can be linked to the neutral base word 'race' and occur along the GOOD-BAD parameter as they present a question of moral value. This can be deduced by exploring these terms' context, indicating a judgement about a specific group. Race is, therefore, addressed in an evaluative manner. The term 'racist' is an adjective to describe various instances of racism. These can be observed in the examples below:

> (1)   "…a **racist** narrative that we strongly condemn".

> (2)   "**Racist** provocateurs like <u>Willem Petzer</u>…"

> (3)   "…White separatism and other **racist** propaganda…"

The stancetaker (the page) that the Senekal protests were 'racist' and uses evaluative terms, such as "narrative", "provocateurs", and "propaganda" to position the reader to perceive the protesters as extremists with racist observations; therefore, the stancetaker discredits the protest and its reasoning. This compels the reader to regard the protest and protesters as 'bad'. The term 'racial' is also an adjective but is used more neutrally than 'racist'. This can be observed in the examples below:

> (4)   "…a **racial** pro-White issue".

> (5)   "Last Friday's #Senekal protest was a result of the result of the **racial** tensions that
>   have been building up in South Africa for years".

In example (4), "racial" is used adversely to emphasise that the protests were a "pro-White issue". In example (5), "racial" describes the tensions that led to the Senekal protest; while it remains negative, it is unattached to a specific group and is, therefore, more neutral than its occurrence in example (4); however, "racial" is less semantically loaded than "racist" as it does not specifically label something or someone but

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implies that race plays a role in the situations. The surrounding context positions the reader to observe the Senekal protest as an exaggerated reaction. This is accomplished in example (5) by shifting the reason behind the Senekal protest from farm violence to South Africa's racially tumultuous past, detracting from the actual violence incident. This reinforces the positioning of the protesters as 'bad'. This can also be observed in the plural noun "racists", as observed in the example below:

(6)   "The <u>EFF</u> and <u>ANC</u>'s presence there was a direct response to **racists** using Senekal to push "**White genocide**" …"

Here (6), the stancetaker uses the noun "racists" to refer to individuals at the Senekal protest. The stancetaker does not indicate whether they consider the protesters to be "racists", but they suggest that these "racists" attended the protest to push "White genocide". This detracts from the farm violence of the incident and instead implies that the protesters exploited the even to behave in a manner that the page deems racist; this once again positions the protesters as 'bad'. A similar observation can be made from the term "over-racialised" in the example below:

(7)   "…the issue had already been twisted and **over-racialised** by <u>AfriForum</u> and other far-right individuals".

Here the stancetaker uses the verb "over-racialised" to describe how the issue (the farm violence incident) is being inflated, therefore, discrediting the protest by suggesting that the issue had been inflated. This again reinforces the notion that the protesters are 'bad'.

The depiction of the protesters as 'bad' and the detracting from the farm violence incident was expected on this page as it was chosen for its focus on debunking the "White genocide myth" and specifically elucidating farm violence from this angle.

After exploring the evaluative items associated with racism, the study explored representations of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'. Evaluative items associated with 'Whiteness' represent 1,8% of the total instances of evaluation in this text. Evaluative items associated with 'Blackness' present 0,7% of the total instances of evaluation in this text.

Terms such as 'White' or 'Black' can occur along two parameters in these findings. If the word 'White' or 'Black' occurs without another evaluative item connected to it, it is plausible to conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter. This results from the stancetaker using the word as a descriptor or adjective,

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which raises the question of relevance. It should be questioned why the stancetaker mentions someone's ethnicity. This phenomenon is presented below:

(8) "…the **government** is '**scared**' of stopping **White people** when they riot".

While the adjective 'White' plays an evaluative role in this text portion, an evaluative item, such as 'scared', conforming to the GOOD-BAD parameter, is a more obvious evaluation indicator. The mention of 'White' to describe the 'people' diverts the readers' attention to the specific group that the stancetaker credits for this fear. In certain contexts, mentioning an individual's ethnicity is not evaluative, provided these texts deliberately position the reader. While it may accurately describe a group, it is still evaluative because of its surrounding context. In example (8), for instance, it is contemplated why the stancetaker mentions the group's ethnicity and, upon further investigation, discovers that ethnicity acts as an important descriptor for who the "government" fears. According to the stancetaker, "White people", specifically, instil fear of the government. A similar phenomenon is observed with the adjective "Black":

(9) "…vilify all **Black** people as murderers and criminals".

In example (9), "Black people" are being vilified and are, according to the stancetaker, targeted for their ethnicity; however, if an adjective, such as "White" or "Black", occurs with another evaluative item, specifically a noun, such as "genocide" or "separatism", as observed earlier, the meaning of the evaluative item shifts to a concept. This means that an evaluative item, such as "White domination", for instance, should not be separated into "White" and "domination". While it could speak to various parameters, the stancetaker deliberately refers to "White domination" as a single idea. If "White" were to be separated from "domination" in this context, it would alter the potency of what the stancetaker attempts to convey. To simplify it, "White" on its own, as a descriptor (adjective), does not necessarily present intense negative connotations, whereas a concept, such as "White domination" (an adjective plus a noun), presents heavily loaded connotations (Maritz, 2022). "White" describes and could subtly imply something, whereas "White domination" explicitly indicates a stance. 'Whiteness' or 'Blackness' represented in this way would, therefore, conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it raises questions of moral standing.

Whiteness, in this text, is linked to an overarching subtheme of "White supremacy" and is expressed negatively. This text observes "Whiteness" as 'bad'. Earlier in this section, this is to be expected because of the page's nature. This can be observed in these examples:

(10)   "The <u>EFF</u> and ANC's presence there was a direct response to racists using Senekal to push '**White genocide**', '**White separatism'** and other racist propaganda on to the national stage".

(11)   "…has less to do with **White** farmers and more to do with the struggle against **White domination** during Apartheid".

'Blackness' is referred to in this text along the GOOD-BAD parameter with the heavily semantically loaded noun "swart gevaar", which translates to "Black danger" (12). This term was used during the apartheid regime to refer to the perceived threat of the majority Black population (Jansen, 2013). It was used to justify the regime and could be observed as apartheid-era propaganda (Jansen, 2013); however, in this text, it is important to turn attention to what surrounds this loaded term. The full sentence, where this evaluative item occurs, reads:

(12)   "This 'pro-farm murders' label is a **false claim** used to justify the **'Swart gevaar'** narrative intended to vilify all Black people as murderers and criminals".

The stancetaker observes this evaluative item as a "false claim" and a "narrative to vilify all Black people". The term is used to subvert what the term implies. It is also worth noting that the term has been placed in quotation marks, indicating attribution and, therefore, distancing the stancetaker from it. While "swart gevaar" occurs along the GOOD-BAD parameter, it could also occur along the IMPORTANCE parameter when considering this attribution, as the term could be signalling evidence to the reader for the stancetaker's observation; however, as the term is linked to the apartheid era, the study chose to rather group it along the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it raises morality questions. This stancetaker observes "Black" as 'good' even though this term observes "Black" as 'bad'.

ii.   Theme 2: Role players

Farmers, farm workers, political stances, political parties, and political figures.

While the representation of ethnicity in farm violence discourse is important and is to be expected, there is another equally crucial element worth exploring, indicating *role players*. Role players refer to those individuals or groups, a) involved in these incidents, b) involved in discussions about these incidents or c) act, provided these incidents. Provided farm violence, as explored in Chapter 2, stances on farm violence are highly politicised and, therefore, evoke responses from political parties and political figures; however, those that sense the brunt of these incidents and their ripple effect are farmers and farm workers.

In this text (A1 post), farmers are mentioned three times and evaluated three times; the EFF is mentioned seven times, evaluated six times, and neutrally mentioned once; Julius Malema is mentioned twice and evaluated twice; Willem Petzer is mentioned once and evaluated once; the ANC is mentioned three times, evaluated twice, and mentioned neutrally once; AfriForum is mentioned once and evaluated once; the 'right-wing' is mentioned twice and evaluated twice.

The first example (13) regarding this theme involves the struggle song "Dubul' ibhunu", which inevitably finds its way into discourse about farm violence, and it is, therefore, unsurprising that it emerges in this text. The song, discussed in Section 3.2 in Chapter 3, directly translates to "shoot the boer", which is evaluative; however, as Deumert (2019) explains, there is context to this song that cannot be excluded from its mention as it plays a critical role in South Africa's delicate history with 'Whiteness' and 'White supremacy'. It is still an evaluative item that explicitly suggests that farmers should be "shot", which could be observed as jarring for individuals and groups affected by these incidents. The song's mention would conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it is an attributed item. The reference to the song is, therefore, the more pertinent act of evaluation. While the song's words are undoubtedly evaluative and explicitly call for violence to be acted out on a specific group of people, it is the controversy of it being indicated. Were the song being used as an actual call to "shoot the boer", it would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter. The reference to the song in this text is presented below:

(13)   "The **Dubul' ibhunu** or '**shoot the boer'** song many claims as proof that the <u>EFF</u> is '**pro-farm murders'** has less to do with White farmers and more to do with the struggle against White domination during apartheid".

In example (13), the stancetaker adopts a similar stance to the song as Deumert (2019), suggesting that it is a call to end oppression and should not be taken out of context. Even though this is the case, the song would still conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter and observes "farmers" as bad. Using the word "boer" is interesting as it is the Afrikaans word for farmer and, therefore, implicates a specific type of farmer—a White Afrikaans farmer. Provided South Africa's history of racial oppression and the era where the song rose to prominence, these instances are to be expected. An interesting point raised in this portion of the text, however, is that the EFF is "pro-farm murders". This point is raised again in these portions of the text:

(14)   "**Racist provocateurs** like <u>Willem Petzer</u> have been **mislabelling** the <u>EFF</u> counter-protests as '**pro-farm murders'** even though the <u>EFF</u> never endorsed the murder of Brendin Horner".

(15)   "There is no evidence that the <u>EFF</u> **supports farm murders**".

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The suggestion that the EFF supports farm violence in South Africa is a loaded accusation. The stancetaker, in examples (14) and (15), discredits this notion by suggesting that there is no evidence or proof to support this "claim" and credits the observation to "racist provocateurs like Willem Petzer"[20]. The term "pro-farm murders" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it indicates a stance based on moral values that the EFF supports killing farmers, especially White farmers. The notion that this EFF is "pro-farm murders" is strongly disagreed with by the stancetaker, as indicated by the terms "mislabelling" and "never endorsed".

Another interesting mention is that of the "far-right". In this Facebook discourse, the right represents a conservative or socially traditional spectrum, whereas the left represents a radical or progressive socialist spectrum (Brown et al., 2018). In these examples, "right-wing" is observed as 'bad'. This is presented below:

> (16)   "**Whether** you **agree** or **disagree** with the EFF being in Senekal, note that they were **only** there because the issue had **already** been twisted and **over-racialised** by AfriForum and other **far-right** individuals".

> (17)   "…the **fact of the matter** is many of those **right-wingers** who earlier **rioted** in Senekal had **already** turned the case into a **racial pro-White** issue".

The notions of the "right" versus the "left" present a stark contrast between who is observed as 'good' and who is observed as 'bad'. Where the mention of AfriForum, or Willem Petzer, is taken to represent the "right" in this body of text, the mention of the EFF acts as its antithesis. While there is no mention of the "left" in this text, the EFF is associated with the "left" and, therefore, according to this text, is the 'good'.

In example (16), the stancetaker carefully begins their statement with "Whether you agree or disagree with the EFF being in Senekal…" this could be observed as an example of hedging; refer to Section 4.2.4 in Chapter 4, as the stancetaker introduces an element of ambiguity to their stance. By setting their statement up this way, they imply that whatever follows this statement is the truth because regardless ("whether you agree or disagree") of the reader's stance, the stancetaker's is correct. It is also a way to distance themselves from the observation that the EFF should have been at the protests. They let the reader determin whether it

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[20] **Willem Petzer** is an activist against the so-called White genocide in South Africa. SIMON ALLISON. 2020. The Facebook group taking on South Africa's White right. *Mail & Guuardian*.

was appropriate for the EFF to be there; however, after this hedge, the stancetaker justifies the EFF's presence and, therefore, implies their support. This is observed in the following excerpt from example (18):

> (18)   "…they were **only** there because the issue had already been **twisted** and **over-racialised** by <u>AfriForum</u> and <u>other far-right individuals</u>".

Here the stancetaker justifies the EFF's presence by suggesting that this issue (the farm violence incident) had been "twisted". The word "twist" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting manipulation. The stancetaker suggests "AfriForum" and "far-right" individuals "over-racialised" this issue before the EFF became involved.

"Only" is another interesting evaluation instance in this example, suggesting how obvious this stance (the appropriateness of the EFF's presence) is to the stancetaker. The evaluative framework used in this study suggests that COMPREHENSIBILITY (or obviousness) conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, and, therefore, "only" in example (18) achieves a similar result to the hedging explored in example (18); however, "only" disregards the option disagreement.

Instances of hedging are probably parallel to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter; however, as expressed above, not all instances of EXPECTEDNESS are considered hedging. While all instances of hedging aim to express ambiguity, not all instances of EXPECTEDNESS aim to do so. Sometimes of EXPECTEDNESS, especially those dealing with COMPREHENSIBILITY, the opposite is true, as the stancetaker attempts to demonstrate their stance as the most obvious choice. Here, "only" suggests that the EFF's presence was seemingly "obvious" and warranted as the issue had been "over-racialised" by certain groups.

Another means to justify a stance is by suggesting something about the truthfulness of it; this can be noted in example (17), where the statement begins with "the fact of the matter…". This phrase is tagged along the CERTAINTY parameter, suggesting the genuineness of whatever follows the stancetaker's initial statement ("fact of the matter"). It indicates that the stancetaker is certain that their observation is correct based on the truth value of their statement. The noun "fact" suggests that it is true.

CERTAINTY and EXPECTEDNESS fulfil a similar evaluative function in that both guide the reader to adopt their stance. The critical difference in the study's understanding of the combined evaluative framework approach mentioned in Chapter 4 is that EXPECTEDNESS (COMPREHENSIBILITY) implies clarity to the stancetaker, whereas CERTAINTY (genuineness) implies something about the truth value of a statement. Where COMPREHENSIBILITY suggests, CERTAINTY declares. "Only" in example (18) is an interesting occurrence, as it could likely be parallel to the CERTAINTY and EXPECTEDNESS

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parameters. This is tagged along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it concerns COMPREHENSIBILITY more than genuineness; however, a case could be made that it implies something about the statement's truth value. For consistency, adverbs are tagged, such as 'only' and 'just', along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter (implying COMPREHENSIBILITY or obviousness), and nouns, such as 'fact' and 'bias', along the CERTAINTY parameter.

In this text specifically, "only", example (18) and "fact of the matter", example (17) suggest something about the role players. In example (18), "only" justifies the EFF's presence at the protest; in example (17) ", fact of the matter" suggests that the "right-wingers" were present to push a pro-White issue.

While "AfriForum" and "EFF" are not considered evaluative items in this text, as are political groups, and their mention is because of their evidenced presence at the protest. The mention of these two groups, therefore, does not imply something else, and, as these are their official names, it is not being used outside of context; however, the context surrounding the mention of these groups provides valuable information to understand how certain stancetakers observe these entities. As noted in example (16) AfriForum is associated with the "far-right" individuals, conforming to the GOOD-BAD parameter and provided the context of this text, the reader knows this means the stancetaker observes AfriForum as 'bad'. It is also interesting to note the adjective "other" with "far-right", which implies there were more of these 'bad' entities present. While the lexical item "other" is not evaluative in this text, it implies that several role players were present at the protest which held these "far-right" observations, once again creating a 'bad' image of the protesters.

iii.　　Additional themes of interest

Hate, fear, and the 'greater good'.

In the previous theme, the stancetakers justify their observations by implicating something about those they deem 'bad'. Stancetakers across the texts justify their observations through fear and their perception of a 'greater good'. Stancetakers built on this notion with discussions of war and a call to defend this 'greater good', often through violence. Stancetakers set their 'greater good' up as the truth by undermining the truthfulness of opposing observations. The example below illustrates two of these themes, 'fear' and the 'greater good':

> (19)　　"This '**pro-farm murders'** label is a **false claim** used to **justify** the '**Swartgevaar**' **narrative intended to vilify** all Black people as **murderers** and **criminals**. This is a **racist narrative** that we strongly **condemn**".

The evaluative items "pro-farm murders", "swartgevaar", and "racist narrative" are discussed in the analysis of examples (1), (10), and (14), respectively. The terms "pro-farm murders" and "swartgevaar" are in quotation marks in the original text and indicate that the stancetaker is distancing themselves by attributing these evaluative items to another speaker; therefore, the stancetaker implies perceived fear from the group that they do not support. The stancetaker suggests that these terms "justify" a "narrative" "intend to vilify all Black people as murderers and criminals". The evaluative items "vilify", "murderers", and "criminals" conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter and emphasise how the stancetaker perceives the observations of those who disagree on farm violence. While the stancetaker comments on the fear of the stance they do not support, they indirectly suggest that this perception is what their stance "fears". The 'greater good' here is the stancetaker's attempt to discredit the other stance's fear as a "racist narrative".

The term "narrative" is used twice in example (19), first with the noun "swartgevaar", an adjective, and secondly with the adjective 'racist'. In both occurrences, "narrative" implies something about the truthfulness of the stance by suggesting that it is merely an "account of events", therefore, suggesting that it is not necessarily factually correct. Similarly, the 'pro-farm murders' label is called a "false claim", where both "false" and "claim" are individual evaluative items that conform to the CERTAINTY parameter, as these items focus on genuineness. This suggests that the stancetaker does not deem the other stance's account as genuine.

The stancetaker explicitly disregards the other stance's account by suggesting they "strongly condemn". "Strongly" conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it emphasises how committed the stancetaker is to this observation and can, therefore, be observed as the stancetaker expressing a crucial point. "Condemn" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it offers a harsh moral judgement on the other stance. Both items emphasise the stancetaker's distaste for the other stance.

While 'war' and the call to "defend" do not occur in example (19), they emerge in the example below, even though 'war' is not explicitly mentioned:

> (20) "Julius Malema '**ordered**' his party's followers to go to Senekal and **defend** state property".

The suggestion that Julius Malema[21] "ordered" his party to "defend state property" suggests some battle; those destroying the state property (the protesters) are perceived as the enemy, and those defending it (the EFF) as the heroes. The 'war' is, therefore, between the protesters and the EFF; it is the EFF's duty to defend state property. "Ordered" and "defend" conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, referring to 'morally justified' calls to action.

5.3.3   A1 Comment section: Quantitative overview

The comment section of a post allows various individuals to express their stance; however, owing to phenomena such as echo chambers and algorithms, most of these comments agree with the stance of the page. Owing to the reply feature in the comments, it is also likely that certain users would challenge some of these stances.

Of the total words in this text (A1 comment section), 36.11% are evaluative. The evaluative items in this text (A1 comment section) are within all four evaluative parameters. Of the total evaluative words in this text, 44.40% belong to evaluative items found along the GOOD-BAD parameter, 22.70% belong to evaluative items found along the CERTAINTY parameter, 19.56% belong to evaluative items found along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter and 13.34% belong to evaluative items found along the IMPORTANCE parameter. As mentioned in section 5.2, evaluative items are not limited to words in these texts, therefore it is worth exploring these items as instances.

The distribution of these items across the four parameters is presented below in Figure 5.4.

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[21] **Julius Malema** is the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters, a South African political party founded in 2013. Malema previously served as President of the ANC Youth League from 2008 to 2012, when he was expelled. *People's Assembly. 2023.*
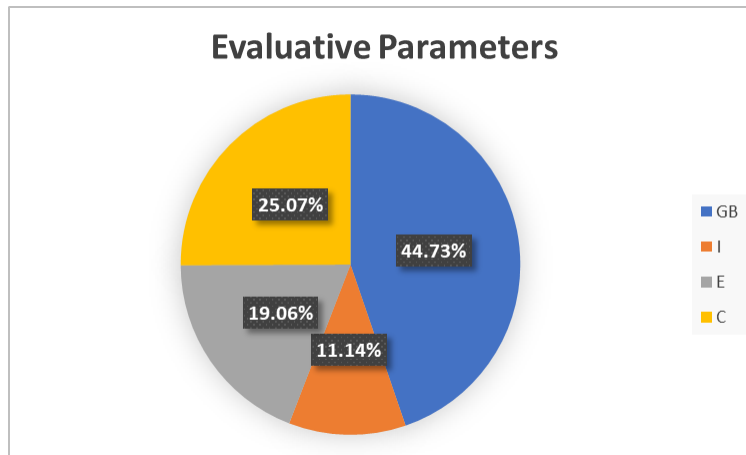
Figure 5.4: **Evaluative parameter distribution across the text, per total evaluative instances in text: A1's comment section**

As anticipated, the GOOD-BAD parameter is used the most in this text (A1 comment section) at 44.73%. The CERTAINTY parameter at 25.07%, the EXPECTEDNESS parameter at 19.06%, and the IMPORTANCE parameter, at 11.14%, follow this parameter. This differs from the A1 post, where EXPECTEDNESS is used the least. The size of this data set is considerably larger than the post, which could be the reason for the slight difference in parameter distribution; however, considerable interaction exists in this comment section (A1), which could also explain why EXPECTEDNESS is used more often, as stancetakers would likely portray their stance as being 'obvious' or 'anticipate' something about the alternative stances. Similarly, CERTAINTY indicates a dedication to a stance, and EXPECTEDNESS indicates clarity to the stancetaker.

The evaluative items used by commenters offer a more detailed idea of how the comment section conceptualises farm violence. The most frequently used evaluative items in this text (A1 comments) are presented below in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: **Most frequent evaluative words/phrases found across the text: A1's comment section**

N	Word	Parameter	Freq.
1	ARE	C	28
2	IF	E	20
3	DEMAND	GB	11

N	Word	Parameter	Freq.
4	VIOLENT	GB	11
5	ALL	C	10
6	JUST	E	10
7	KNOW	C	10
8	WILL	C	10
9	DON'T	C	9
10	REALLY	C	9
11	CAN	C	8
12	LOL	E	8
13	CAN'T	C	7
14	DIDN'T	C	7
15	LOVE	GB	7
16	ANYTHING	C	6
17	GIRL	GB	6
18	HONESTLY	GB	6
19	SHOW-ME	I	6
20	SO	E and C[22]	6
21	THINK	E	6
22	VERY	C	6

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[22] In this text "So" is used along both the EXPECTEDNESS and the CERTAINTY parameters and as each instance of the item has been individually tagged along the parameter this did not affect the distribution.

N	Word	Parameter	Freq.
23	WHITE	I	6
24	ANY	I	5
25	BLACK	I	5

The frequency list indicates that words, such as 'are', 'if', 'will', 'don't', and 'can' occur in copious quantities throughout the text. While these words are evaluative and worth elucidating, it is to be expected that items such as these would occur in large quantities throughout any text, performing a functional role (Baroni, 2005). As Baroni (2005) suggests, a dramatic drop exists in the frequency levels of these function words ('are') and content words ('demand'); therefore, it is more important to focus on the most frequently occurring content words.

While not occurring close to the top of this list, the terms 'White' and 'Black' occur in the top 25 most frequently used evaluative items in this text. Owing to evaluative items, such as "White supremacy", while 'Whiteness' or 'Blackness' along the IMPORTANCE parameter occurs six and five times, respectively, they are counted as separate items dealing with the same topic, indicating 'ethnicity'. While the frequency list can be a useful indicator of important themes, it also risks missing more nuanced details, especially with the elevated levels of function words. It is, therefore, worth paying close attention to the evaluative items associated with the major themes mentioned in the analysis of the A1 post. The major themes in this study are observed in the subsequent section.

5.3.4   A1 comment section: Qualitative representations

Evaluative language clusters around two major themes across the texts, indicating ethnicity and role players; the three subthemes, include hate, fear, and a call to defend the 'greater good'. These themes are discussed below while elucidating evaluative items.

i.   Theme 1: Ethnicity

Racism and representations of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'.

Of the total evaluative instances found in this text (A1 comment section), 3.31% of the instances address ethnicity. Of the total ethnicity instances, 42.10% address whiteness, 31.58% address blackness, and 26.32% address racial issues. Similar to the findings of Post A1, the term "racist" is largely used as an

adjective throughout this text, with the plural "racists" used as the noun. In discussing these terms in Post A1, these evaluative items occur along the GOOD-BAD parameter as they raise questions of moral value. The term "racists" occurs in these contexts:

(21)   "Honestly the fact that you're trying to defend a group of people with a **racist** agenda…"

(22)   "Please point out my **racist** agenda…"

(23)   "Willem Petzer a **racist** provocateur? You should look-up the meaning of the word".

(24)   "I say we find a just big enough island ship all our **racist** people there".

(25)   "…objectivity is not the **racists** strong point…"

(26)   "…hardcore right-wingers, unapologetic **racists** and unrepentant White supremacists…"

(27)   "…behaving-like-an-animal.... All these words are nothing-new to those who fight against **racists**…"

Examples (21) and (22) occur in a comment thread and should, therefore, be observed as a dialogue rather than a monologue (Hunston & Thompson, 2003). This thread demonstrates how various observations can evolve in a comment section. Even if the page made its stance known, it does not imply that all comments agree with this perspective; however, as mentioned in the discussion of algorithms, echo chambers, filter bubbles, and other social media phenomena in Chapter 3, it is unsurprising that most align with the page's observations.

The excerpt of a comments thread below contextualises examples (26) and (27) and demonstrates how opposing stances often evolve in these settings:

(28)   "User A: I'll stick to my own opinion, my **terrorist sympathiser friend**.

(29)   User B: I don't think you know what an argument is.

(30)   User A: That's your opinion my friend, and you're entitled to it.

(31)   User B: to add, I never **sympathised with the** EFF, merely stated that your statement is as repetitive and sad as your opinions.

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(32)   <u>User A</u>: Sounds like a **sympathiser** to me love.

(33)   <u>User B</u>: and you sound exactly like a White **supremacist** to me.

(34)   <u>User A</u>: Show me which of my comments sound like that please. Much appreciated.

(35)   <u>User B</u>: honestly, the fact that you're on this page trying to defend a group of people with a **racist** agenda is good enough for me.

(36)   <u>User A</u>: Please explain my **racist** agenda. Much appreciated.

(37)   <u>User B</u>: let me see... you think that farm murders are terrorist attacks and should be declared a hate crime, completely disregarding the rest of the murders that happen daily that are equally as brutal of not more so, if you're not a **White supremacist** then you're are White supremacist sympathiser, so before you accuse me of something you can't prove I said, back track a bit and see how visible your actual opinions are.

(38)   <u>User A</u>: Nonsense, girl. Show me where I am a **White supremacist sympathiser**. Much appreciated".

Owing to the length of the study, each line of dialogue in example (28) is not elucidated; instead, the focus is on contextualising examples (36) and (37). Example (28), therefore, presents a contextual clue for further deliberation of examples (36) and (37).

In example ((36), User B uses "racist" to describe the "agenda" of the people. User A is defending. By suggesting that User A is "trying to defend" this group of "racist" people, User B is implying that User A is racist without specifying it; however, if one turns to example (28), this interaction initially saw User A call User B a "terrorist sympathiser", which led User B to retaliate by calling User A "White supremacist sympathiser". Examples (27) and (28) occur after this interaction.

In example (22), User A disputes User B's notion of their "racist agenda" by asking User B to point it out. User A asks User B to explain which of their comments sounded like a "White supremacist sympathiser". In both instances, User A suggests they disagree with User B's labelling of them. While the study is more interested in how racism is expressed in these examples, it is worth contextualising interactions, such as ensuring an accurate presentation of the meaning of the evaluative item.

The suggestion that User A has a "racist agenda" is an interesting evaluation instance worth elucidating. The term "racist" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, presenting a moral judgement; concerning the noun "agenda" also conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter while suggesting something about moral judgement; however, where "racist" is explicitly 'bad', "agenda" is more implicitly observed as 'bad'. To have an "agenda" means to have underlying intentions or motives, and while this is perceived as a negative notion, it does not present as much potency as a term such as "racist". While a "racist agenda" is one concept, the items are separated into two individual evaluations as both can be understood individually (as opposed to "White supremacist", an established concept and, therefore, acts as a unit). "Racist agenda" would still make sense should the stancetaker have only used one or the other (for instance, User B could have suggested User A was defending a "group of racist people" instead of "people with a racist agenda" or User B could have suggested that User B was defending "people with an agenda"). Using the noun "agenda" with the adjective "racist" emphasises that this specific "agenda" is especially 'bad'.

In example (23), the user (User C) directs a rhetorical question and then responds to it, "Willem Petzer a racist provocateur? You should look up the meaning of the word". User C disagrees with how the term "racist" is being used in the post, the way Post A1 explores evaluative items dealing with racism. The noun "provocateur" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting that Willem Petzer deliberately provokes racist behaviour. This is something that the stancetaker (User C) strongly disagrees with by suggesting that the page should "look up the meaning of the word". The verb "look up" is the evaluative item in this statement. It conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it is a sarcastic remark. Sarcasm is tagged along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it deals with COMPREHENSIBILITY. Sarcasm suggests that the stancetaker observes their stance as obvious to the reader. As the stancetaker observes their stance as obvious to the reader, they undermine the alternative stance by mocking it. In example (23), the stancetaker does not genuinely suggest that the page does not understand the meaning of the word "racist" or "provocateur"; they are, however, suggesting that the page mislabelled Willem Petzer as a "racist provocateur". The stancetaker is not genuinely suggesting that the page look up the meaning of these words; they suggest that the page is incorrect.

In this text, racist individuals ("racist people" or "racists") are perceived as unwelcome (24) "find a just big enough island and ship all our racist people there"), subjective (25) "objectivity is not the racists' strong suit"), and the ultimate 'bad' entity (26) "unrepentant White supremacists". The term "racism" also occurs in the text and can be observed in the example below:

(39)   "And the **old-Apartheid-flags** at these '**farm-attack'** protests are-not an indication of the **inherent racism** of the **movement**?"

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In example (39), the "old Apartheid flags" are observed as an "indication of the inherent racism of the movement". Using the term "movement" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and suggests that this incident (the 'farm attack' protest) is a part of something more (the attempt to raise awareness about farm violence). The attribution of the term "farm-attack" suggests that this stancetaker does not necessarily observe these protests as being about farm violence, a stance reinforced by the suggestion that "inherent racism" exists in this movement. The adjective "inherent" conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, suggesting that this "racism" is innate to this specific group (groups and individuals protesting farm violence), and this "racism" is, therefore, obvious to the stancetaker.

In example (39), the items being evaluated are the "protest" and the "movement". "Farm-attack protests" would not be marked as evaluative in this study as these protests occurred and these protests focused on "farm attacks". While the term "farm-attack" is technically evaluative due to its highly politicised nature, its occurrence in these texts does not suggest evaluation as it is a direct reference to what was being dealt with at the protest. The evaluated in example (39) is, therefore, the "movement" and the "farm-attack protests". The terms "inherent" and "racism" function as the evaluators of these groups. "Inherent" and "racism" are marked as separate instances of evaluation as they fulfil various functions, where "inherent" suggests something about obviousness, and "racism" suggests a moral judgement.

The mention of the "old apartheid flag" in example (39) is also a significant marker of evaluation; while this implies something 'bad' (the oppressive apartheid regime), its mention acts as evidence for the "inherent racism" of this movement (those who protest farm violence). It would, therefore, conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter. In example (39), the stancetaker implies that everyone who protests farm violence (the "movement") is racist; however, the statement is structured, therefore, this stance appears to be validated by "evidence". The term "racial supremacy" is a more neutral version of the term "White supremacy" and occurs in the example below:

> (40) "This gathering should have been used to support the family. One is there to push the importance of their **racial supremacy**. **The others say they were** there to **protect government property**".

This comment is interesting as it offers judgement on both parties involved on the day of the Senekal protest. While the user judges the protesters, both groups (the original protesters and the counter-protesters) are presented as 'bad'. Before this instance, one side has been painted as 'good' and another as 'bad'. This comment also clearly references which sides the post discusses (the farm violence protesters and the counter-protesters); therefore, it can be deduced that the side pushing "racial supremacy" refers to the

protesters and the side "protect[ing] government property" refers to the counter-protesters. The protesters are, therefore, observed as 'bad' owing to their "racial supremacy" (GOOD-BAD parameter) and the counter-protesters are observed as 'good' as they were there to "protect" (GOOD-BAD parameter) "government property"; however, by hedging their statement ("the others say they were"), the stancetaker adds ambiguity to this statement and distances themselves from agreeing that the counter-protesters were present for those purposes ("to protect government property). "Racial supremacy" is, however, a more potent term as it implies this group perceives themselves as racially superior and, therefore, are considered "racist".

As with Post A1's findings, specific references to 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness' play a critical role in these discussions (Table 5.5). Most of the references to 'Whiteness' conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as 'White' is an adjective, which raises questions of relevance. This can be observed in the examples below:

(41)　"So, I will go ahead and say that the White people were the violent ones".

(42)　"…there were White people at that protest who were only there to cause trouble".

In the analysis of Post A1, 'Whiteness' expressed along the IMPORTANCE parameter raises questions of relevance. In examples (41) and (42), the term "White" is used to describe the people who were "violent" and "only there to cause trouble". This mention of 'Whiteness' is, therefore, not the most prominent marker of evaluation in the statement; the actions of the "White people" specifically are. It is also interesting to note that the term "European" is also mentioned about Whiteness; however, this is discussed under references to 'Blackness', where it is directly positioned against the term "African". References to 'Whiteness' also occur along the GOOD-BAD parameter. Examples of these instances are presented below:

(43)　"Enough is enough, clearly these things (**hardcore right-wingers**, u**napologetic racists** and **unrepentant White supremacists**) don't subscribe to politeness".

(44)　"…sounds good to me, **Mr White supremacist**…"

(45)　"…how is the page biased? Is there a **White genocide** in this country?"

As established in the analysis of Post A1, these terms ("White supremacists"; "Mr White supremacist", and "White genocide") cluster around a subtheme of White supremacy. The sentence in example (44) is highly evaluative. An especially interesting instance in this example is how the stancetaker collectively refers to "hardcore right-wingers", "unapologetic racists", and "unrepentant White supremacists" as "things". In example (43), the noun "things" would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as the stancetakers are

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deliberately dehumanising those who fit into the categories; therefore, while the terms ("hardcore right-wingers", "unapologetic racists", and "unrepentant White supremacists") are semantically loaded, by referring to these individuals collectively as 'things', the stancetaker emphasises their distaste of these groups by dehumanising them. It is also interesting to note the stancetaker's use of the adjectives "hardcore", "unapologetic", and "unrepentant" to describe these groups. These adjectives all conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter and again emphasise the stancetaker's distaste for these groups. The stancetaker regards these groups as the ultimate 'bad'. While the terms expressed in examples (42) to (43) explicitly mention "White" supremacy, there are more complex references to 'Whiteness' in this text. This can be observed in the example below:

> (46) "I love what <u>EFF</u> did…. This is not **Germany during Hitler's reign**. **The blonde hair, blue-eyed race** is not superior and will never be".

In example (46), the stancetaker references Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazi Party, whose notorious White supremacist beliefs led to the Holocaust (the state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million European Jews between 1933 and 1945) (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2023). The mention of Nazi Germany is followed by the statement that "the blonde hair, blue-eyed race is not superior and never will be"; this refers to the pseudoscientific Nazi concept of an "Aryan" or "master" race. These instances allude to White supremacy by a well-known historical reference instead of blatantly stating the term "White supremacy". While some allusions diminish a stance, this allusion accomplishes the opposite. Provided the notoriety of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, its mention could be more evaluative than that of "White supremacy", as the accepted global observation is that the Holocaust is a devastating historical event that is and should remain widely criticised.

Both evaluative items ("Germany during Hitler's reign" and "the blonde hair blue-eyed race") conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter. One may have anticipated that, owing to the semantic loaded nature of these statements owing to this White supremacy reference, these items would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter; however, the items are better suited to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as the items provide evidence of White supremacy instead of mentioning it explicitly. The stancetaker is, therefore, making a critical point about White supremacy by referencing something regarded as the ultimate 'bad' historic event.

As this example begins with "I love what the EFF did", the reader is immediately positioned to observe the EFF as the antithesis to "Germany during Hitler's reign" and, therefore, the heroes. This can only be deduced by first observing the post and knowing what the EFF did ("protected government property") and why they did it (because of the farm violence protest). While there is no mention of the protesters, by turning

to the contextual clues, it can be deduced that the "blonde hair, blue-eyed race" is the protesters and that their beliefs do not consider farm violence but White supremacy. By subtly likening the protesters to this Nazi ideal, the stancetaker positions these protesters as undoubtedly 'bad'. The stancetaker suggests that the EFF's actions were warranted owing to the protesters' White supremacist beliefs. Most references to 'Blackness' in this text occur along the IMPORTANCE parameter. Examples of these instances are presented below:

> (47)   "You use words like girl and love when talking to a woman. **Terrorist** when discussing a Black **man**…"

> (48)   "…the voice for the oppressed Black people of South Africa".

Similar to the analysis of 'Whiteness', 'Blackness' represented along the IMPORTANCE parameter, as expressed through the term "Black", is not as semantically loaded as the evaluative items surrounding it. This can be noted in example (47), where the noun "terrorist" presents more of a semantic load than the adjective "Black" does; however, the stancetaker specifies someone else's use of the term "terrorist" to refer to a "Black man" and, therefore, this term is an instance of attribution and not the stancetaker's opinion. In this example, while the noun "terrorist" would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, it is evidence of how this other person discusses a "Black man". It emphasises how a term, such as 'Black' along the IMPORTANCE parameter, is an evaluative item, presenting less of a semantic load and acts more to guide the reader to understand who they are referring to.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in example (48), where the adjective "oppressed" is used to describe the "Black people of South Africa".

The term "African" refers to 'Blackness' in this text. In the analysis of references to 'Whiteness', it is used in direct contrast to the term "European", referring to 'Whiteness'. The below example demonstrates a thread where this contrast is made:

> (49)   "User D: The vilifying of the EFF and CIC Julius Malema is so similar to what was done to **Mama Winnie Madikizela Mandela**. After her death they confessed to the nefarious agenda that was perpetrated against her in order to demonise her to the people because she was too bold and strong the voice for the oppressed Black people of South Africa. Violence and murder of any person regardless should be and is condemned in the strongest terms. If CIC Julius Malema has said or done anything worth condemnation let us deal with that specific thing. The hatred

directed to him personally by certain groupings pushing certain agendas is suspicious.

(50)   <u>User E</u>: mama **She aint my mama**. <u>CIC JulieArse</u>? A laughingstock at best.

(51)   <u>User D</u>: You are right she is the mother of Africans not Europeans.

(52)   <u>User D</u>: yours are **apartheid** accomplice".

In example (49), User D is referring to Winnie Mandela[23] as "mama", and User E disputes this by remarking that "she ain't my mama". As commenters on Facebook can see the other users' profile images, User D could see that User E was White and, therefore, states, "you are right; she is the mother of Africans, not Europeans". This statement would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter as User D judges a) User E's comment and b) White people (Europeans). In this context, this statement is especially evaluative as User E consider themselves as "South African"; therefore, the "not my mama" comment and User E subtly that they are not by reinforcing the notion that she is the "mother of Africans not Europeans", while these terms are used in this context to reference 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness', the terms also present the weight of identity with them and raise questions of who a South African identity belongs to. As discussed in Chapter 2, identity and ethnicity play a critical role in farm violence discussions as these topics raise pertinent questions of belonging. User D's labelling of User E as "European" suggests that User D does not belong in contrast with "Africans" who belong.

ii.   Theme 2: Role players

Farmers, farm workers, political stances, political groups, and political figures.

In the analysis of Post A1, various significant role players discuss farm violence. These role players usually, and unsurprisingly, include farmers and farm workers. Because of the highly politicised nature of farm violence, various political stances, groups, and figures are also unsurprisingly mentioned.

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[23] **Winnie Mandela** was an ANC politician and the ex-wife of the late former President Nelson Mandela whose reputation became mired in allegations of murder and fraud.

DAVID BERESFORD & DAN VAN DER WALT. 2018. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela obituary. *The Guardian.*

In this text (A1 comment section), farmers are mentioned twenty-two times, evaluated eighteen times, and mentioned neutrally four times; farm workers are mentioned once and evaluated once; the EFF is mentioned seventeen times, evaluated fifteen times, and mentioned neutrally twice; Julius Malema is mentioned five times and evaluated five times; Willem Petzer is mentioned five times, evaluated four times, and mentioned neutrally once; President Cyril Ramaphosa is mentioned neutrally three times; the ANC is mentioned twice and evaluated twice; the 'left-wing' is mentioned twice and evaluated twice; the 'right-wing' is mentioned six times and evaluated six times.

The study elucidates the reference to these role players in these examples. Examples of the references to farmers are presented below:

(53)   "Senekal **chaos**: Arrested **farmer allegedly** '**encouraged** people to **storm** court', get accused…'"

(54)   "… the **terrible loss of life** on the farms are being used for **political gain** and that is just so **disrespectful**".

(55)   "South Africans are **at war** today with **criminals** and the **farmers**, their families and **workers are carrying the brunt** of the attack".

(56)   "… 'tell-the-story how we [**the farmers**] are being murdered, tortured, and raped".

In example (53), the farmers are portrayed as violent as they "encouraged people to storm court"; however, as this is a headline from a news article and the accusation is attributed, it is a more subtle instance of evaluation. The verb "storm" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it indicates an act of violence.

In examples (54) to (56), farmers and farm workers are portrayed as victims. There is a "terrible loss of life on farms"; they are "carrying the brunt of the attack" of a 'war'; they are being "murdered", "tortured", and "raped". These evaluative items present a heavy semantic load. While the instances indicate violence (which would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter), these violent actions are mentioned to indicate the victimhood of the farmers and farm workers and, therefore, would conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter as they express a type of evidence for the observation.

Examples (55) and (56) deviate dramatically from the stance of the page, which suggests farm violence as a part of the larger crime problem in the country; this is because these examples have been taken from a supposed "demands" document created by the protesters. While this context shifts the reader's framing of the stances in this text, it is important to observe the demands first from the protester's stance and then as

attribution (therefore, the analysis of these items above). This entire document acts as attribution as the user remarks the following before sharing it:

(57) "Those were the **demands** from farmers on the previous **violent** protest by the **thugs**. What does point 6 have to do with the murder? This is what led to the <u>EFF</u> protest".

In example (57), the stancetaker references a "demand" by the farmers. This demand is elucidated in the analysis of example (57) but largely deals with the land question; however, more relevant to this section, the stancetaker calls the farmers "violent" and "thugs". These terms conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter and indicate that the stancetaker observes the protesters as 'bad'. The stancetaker also suggests that it is this behaviour and these demands that cause the "EFF to protest". This justifies the EFF's presence at the protest to contain the farmers' violence and their unrealistic demands. The EFF's presence symbolises the defence against this 'bad' entity (the protesters).

It is uncertain in the study whether the demands document was present at the protests. The stancetaker's sharing of it is conducted to cast the protesters (and farmers) negatively. Some demands are presented below:

(58) "We **demand** that farm murder and attacks are **prioritised** as a **priority crime**".

(59) "We **demand** that Bheki Cele apologises and stops condoning farm attacks and threatening farmers".

(60) "We demand that politicians are held accountable for condoning calling for attacks on **farmers** and that it be prosecuted as hate crimes".

(61) "We **demand** that President Ramaphosa **publicly** state that farmers **did not steal any land**".

In example (58), the demand calls for farm violence to be "prioritised as a priority crime". The verb "demand" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and indicates a tone of forcefulness, emphasising the frustrations of the "farmers". Both "prioritised" and "priority crime" conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter and indicate the "farmers" desires to have these crimes taken more seriously.

Examples (59) and (60) suggest that "farm attacks" have been "condoned" by "Bheki Cele" and "politicians. The verb 'condone' (expressed as the present participle "condoning" in this text) suggests that the South African Minister of Police (Bheki Cele) and South African politicians approve farm violence. In

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example (60) the stancetaker calls for the "attacks on farmers" to be "prosecuted as hate crimes". The noun 'hate crime' conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and presents a heavy semantic load. As a hate crime is typically defined as "a crime, typically involving violence, motivated by prejudice based on ethnicity, religion or similar grounds" the stancetaker suggests that farmers encounter violence because of prejudice and that this issue should be more widely recognised.

Example (61) is especially interesting as it raises the land question, which, discussed in Chapter 2, is inextricably linked to farm violence discussions. The "demand" that President Ramaphosa "publicly state that farmers did not steal any land" indicates this stancetaker strongly believes South African land rightfully belongs to 'White' farmers. While the term 'White' is not mentioned here, it is implied by the mention of stolen land as it references the land issues and redistribution discussed in Chapter 2. The verb 'steal" would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it indicates a judgement about someone's morals.

In the analysis of Post A1, political groups and political figures are often mentioned in farm violence discussions. In this text (the comment section of Post A1), the following role players are mentioned: Willem Petzer; Julius Malema; the EFF; and the ANC. Similarly, political stances are also mentioned in this text. These political stances are referred to: the left; the right. As the post for this comment section (Post A1) mentions Willem Petzer and Julius Malema, it was anticipated that the comment section would discuss the two role players. Examples of references to Willem Petzer are presented below:

> (62)　"…**even** <u>Willem Petzer</u> **admitted** in his video that there were White people at that protest who were **only** there to cause **trouble**".

> (63)　"<u>Willem Petzer</u> a racist provocateur? You should look up the meaning of the word. Soiling social media with a 30% education does not stand you in good stead".

> (64)　"<u>Willem</u> pizza ran-like-a-coward…"

> (65)　"…who did <u>Willem Petzer</u> **wanna blame** for the **torching** of the van later on, **pathetic to say the least**".

Most of these portray Willem Petzer negatively, especially as a "coward" in example (64) and as "pathetic" in example (65). The word play and deliberate misspelling of Willem Petzer's name in example (64) as "Willem Pizza" indicates that the stancetaker is belittling Petzer, a point reinforced with the term "coward". Both instances conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

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Example (62) suggests that Willem Petzer agrees (admitted) that some White people were only there to cause trouble. While the stancetaker in this example does not directly indicate Petzer as someone causing trouble, they use Petzer's name to justify their stance ("that there were White people at the protest who were only there to cause trouble"). Examples of references to Julius Malema are presented below:

(66)   "The **vilifying** of the EFF and CIC <u>Julius Malema</u> is so **similar** to what was done to **Mama Winnie Madikizela Mandela**".

(67)   "If CIC <u>Julius Malema</u> has said or done anything worth condemnation, let us deal with that specific thing. The **hatred** directed to him personally by certain groupings pushing certain agendas is suspicious".

(68)   "One group turned up and were **violent**, **as per their plan** set out **by terrorist-in-chief** <u>Malema</u>, the other was **peaceful** and **cleaned up** the aforementioned **mess**".

(69)   "She aint my mama. CIC JulieArse? A **laughingstock** at best".

In examples (66) and (67), Julius Malema is presented as someone who is "vilified" and wrongly experiences "hatred". The verb "'vilify' (presented in this text as the present participle "vilifying") conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter. The noun "hatred" also conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter. These two evaluative items are used to present Malema in a positive light, but also as a victim.

In examples (68) and (69), Malema is presented as a "terrorist-in-chief" and a "laughingstock". The term "terrorist-in-chief" exploits the term "commander-in-chief", which he is referred to in example (68). The noun "terrorist" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and is especially semantically loaded in this setting as the term is highly politicised and has historically been used in a biased way (for example, whom one side calls a "terrorist" another calls a "freedom fighter"). As EFF stands for 'Economic Freedom Fighters', it is interesting that a stancetaker uses the term "terrorist-in-chief" to refer to its leader, Julius Malema. This also links to the apartheid-era "swartgevaar" propaganda mentioned in Post A1, as several anti-apartheid activists were labelled as "terrorists" (South African History Online, 2023a).

In example (69), the stancetaker calls Malema a "laughingstock", an evaluative item that conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and suggests that Malema should not be taken seriously; however, the stancetaker also calls Malema "JulieArse". This wordplay and deliberate misspelling of "Julius" is done to belittle him, similar to how Willem Petzer is belittled by the misspelling of his name ("Willem Pizza"); however, the misspelling of Petzer's name is less semantically provoked than the misspelling of Julius Malema's name is not. Using the noun "arse" in the spelling of "Julius" is the equivalent of calling Malema an "arse" to

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suggest that he is "stupid, irritating, and contemptible" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). The term "JulieArse" would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter and is heavily semantically loaded. Examples (68) and (69) portray Julius Malema adversely. It is interesting to note the differences in stance surrounding Malema among the examples. This polarisation is an indicator of how polarised these opinions about farm violence can become and demonstrate how farm violence surpasses discussions of actual violence. Like Malema, the EFF is observed in a positive and negative light throughout this comment section. Some examples referring to the EFF are presented below:

(70) "Thanks, <u>EFF</u>, for humbling White arrogance".

(71) "All they want is to **character assassinate** the <u>EFF</u> by labelling them as a party that is '**pro-farm murders'**. Luckily **this ain't the 1980s** so that **strategy** doesn't work anymore for <u>AfriForum</u> supporters and members".

In example (70), the EFF is thanked by the stancetaker for "humbling White arrogance". The verb 'humble' (presented in this text as the present participle "humbling") conforms to the GOOD-BAD and is used to demonstrate that the EFF defeated "White arrogance". "White arrogance", while technically comprising an adjective and a noun, is observed as a single unit of meaning. It is interesting to mention "White arrogance" and not the protesters, as it does not specifically encapsulate the protesters but 'Whiteness'. This achieves a greater evaluative influence than if the stancetaker had directly referenced the protesters or even farmers. The EFF is observed as 'good' because of this feat.

In example (71), the stancetaker mentions the "pro-farm murders" label (as referenced in Post A1) often associated with the EFF; however, the stancetaker attributes this label to someone else and, therefore, distancing themselves from it. The stancetaker suggests that this label is a means to "character assassinate" the EFF. To "character assassinate" someone means to "deliberately attempt to destroy someone's reputation" (Collins English Dictionary, 2023). This term is heavily semantically loaded and conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting a harsh judgement of someone. The stancetaker suggests that this label ("pro-farm murders") deliberately attempts to damage the EFF's reputation.

The stancetaker follows this by suggesting that "this ain't the 1980s, so that strategy doesn't work anymore for AfriForum supporters and members". "This ain't the 1980s" alludes to one of the final decades of the apartheid era (South African History Online, 2023c). This reference indirectly references apartheid and the "swart gevaar" propaganda mentioned in Post A1 to the mention of the 'pro-farm murders' label in this text. The notion that the EFF (a Black-run party) is pro-farm murders (implied here to mean those instances

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of farm violence perpetuated against White farmers) is referenced as a similar "strategy" used during apartheid to instil fear about Blackness; however, according to the stancetaker, as South Africa is no longer under apartheid rule ("this ain't the 1980s") this "strategy" no longer holds any ground ("doesn't work anymore"). The stancetaker then adds that it specifically does not work for "AfriForum supporters and members", therefore implying this group adopts apartheid-era beliefs and therefore implying that they are 'bad'. "This ain't the 1980s" would, therefore, conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it provides evidence for a stance (that the pro-farm murders label attempts to damage the EFF's reputation).

While this page's stance is that the EFF is 'good', observed in the analysis of Post A1, as multiple users can share their stance in the comment section, opposing observations are still encountered; therefore, the EFF is also observed negatively in this text. Some examples referring to the EFF are presented below:

> (72)   "I consider the <u>EFF</u> to be a **terrorist** group, and you are **defending** them **tooth and nail**".

> (73)   "I **agree** it was the farm protesters that **turned the car over**. I **never once** said they **didn't**. I was discussing the **typical violence** that was **perpetrated** by the <u>EFF</u> **terrorists** this last time round".

In example (72), the EFF is considered a "terrorist" group. As the term "terrorist" is discussed in the analysis of example (59), it is not discussed again here. It is a semantically provoked term, conforming to the GOOD-BAD parameter and presents an interesting undertone of apartheid-era language. The EFF is, therefore, observed as not only 'bad' but also violent.

In example (73), the term terrorist is used to describe the EFF once again. In this example, the EFF displayed "typical violence" at the protests. The noun violence conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and suggests that the EFF is a violent group; however, using the adjective "typical" suggests that this was not a once-off occurrence and instead happens regularly. "Typical" would, therefore, conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as the stancetaker uses it to justify their labelling of the EFF as "terrorists". The stancetaker observes the EFF as "terrorists" because they are continuously violent. This stancetaker, therefore, perceives the EFF as 'bad'.

In the examples above, examples (70) and (71) hold no middle ground. Stancetakers are pro-EFF ("humbling White arrogance") or anti-EFF ("terrorists"); however, there are also stances present within this text that do not adopt either observation. An example of this stance is presented below:

(74)   "According to Netwerk24, there were <u>EFF</u> supporters who sang and chanted **'Kill the farmer, kill the boer'**". As much as I **cannot stomach** the **Boere crowd**, I was also **disgusted** at the <u>EFF</u>'s conduct in 2020".

In example (74), the stancetaker "cannot stomach the boere crowd" but is also "disgusted" with the EFF for chanting "Kill the farmer, kill the boer". While this stancetaker is against the EFF's actions at this protest, they ensure they are not observed as supporters of the "boere crowd". As in the analysis of the term in Post A1, "kill the farmer, kill the boer" conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter and is evidence of the stancetaker's observation. By mentioning the song and their "disgust" at the singing of it, the stancetaker is framing the EFF as 'bad' as the verb "disgusted" indicates a "strong disapproval aroused by something unpleasant or offensive". In example (74), the stancetaker is offended by the EFF's singing of the song. While "cannot stomach" is also semantically loaded, it does not present as much significance as "disgusted" in this context.

"Cannot stomach" would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as the stancetaker indicates a strong intolerance of that group. It is less semantically loaded in this context as the stancetaker offers more evidence for their stance regarding the EFF; however, the stancetaker suggests a blanket intolerance for the "boere crowd" but specifies being "disgusted" by the EFF's "conduct in 2020". The stancetaker observes the "Boere crowd" as the ultimate 'bad' entity here, as they do not specify the reasoning for not tolerating the "Boere crowd"; however, the statement is too ambiguous to give the stancetaker's true observation on this group away. The stancetaker's observations on the EFF's behaviour, however, are specific and, therefore, more explicit. Another example of the mention of the song, Dbul' ibhunu is presented below:

(75)   "<u>User D</u>: How can you say there is no **evidence** that the <u>EFF</u> **supports farm murders** when they literally sing "**kill the boer, kill the farmer**"? Your argument does not hold up.

(76)   <u>User E</u>: that song was around waaay before <u>EFF</u> they didn't compose it...it was sang in retaliation of what the boers where doing.

(77)   <u>User D</u>: And that somehow **justifies** singing it at a **protest** specifically against **killing of farmers**...?

(78)   <u>User E</u>: And the **old Apartheid flags** at these "farm attack" protests are not an indication of the **inherent racism** of the movement?

(79)   <u>User F</u>: If farmers are showing up with AWB[24] uniforms and a flag that has a long
history of inhumanity to a race then hell, they must sing as loud as they can".

Example (75) is the start of a thread discussing the song. As observed, User D contends that the singing of the song is "evidence" that the EFF "supports farm murders". User E contends that the song's context ("the song was around waaay before", "the EFF didn't compose it") disproves this and that the singing of the song was done "on retaliation to what the boers were doing". The mention of the "old apartheid flags" and "[Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging] AWB uniforms" is provided as evidence of inappropriate behaviour on the other side. This "evidence" balances out the 'bad' of the singing of the "song". User F's observation that "if farmers are showing up with AWB uniforms and a flag with a long history of inhumanity to a race then hell, they must sing as loud as they can" emphasises this point by suggesting that if the farmers are behaving inappropriately, then the EFF may sing the song ("then hell, they must sing as loud as they can"). While there are several interest instances of evaluation in this thread, owing to the time constraints of this study, the focus remains on the notion that the EFF 'supports' farm violence and that the movement (protest) is "inherently racist".

This thread demonstrates the polarisation established in discussions of farm violence. The verb "supports" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it indicates not only agreement with a moral stance but active participation in this stance. By labelling the EFF as "supporting farm violence", it is suggested that the EFF are actively involved in farm violence. Conversely, the suggestion that the movement against farm violence is "inherently racist" suggests that those speaking out against farm violence are automatically against other races. Both observations are extreme and backed up with 'evidence' for justified 'hatred' in the discussion. A similar observation about the EFF's involvement in farm violence in expressed about the ANC—this can be observed in the below example.

(80)   "The ANC government came with the Constitution that **affords** people **equal
rights**. I **wonder** how the state can **sponsor violence** while **affording** people so
much **rights**".

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[24] **The AWB** refers to the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging ("Afrikaner Resistance Movement") an "ultra-right wing" organization that first came to prominence in the 1970s and was led by Eugene TerreblancheSOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY ONLINE. 2023b. *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB)* [Online]. Available: https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/afrikaner-weerstandsbeweging-awb [Accessed].

In example (80), the stancetaker suggests that the ANC "sponsors" farm violence. This verb is more semantically loaded than the verb "support" as it suggests a financial involvement and, therefore, greater commitment to this instigating this violence.

Two more important 'role players' in farm violence discussions are the 'left' and the 'right'. These are nuanced populist terms that emphasise polarity more than the traditional political stances the terms are associated with. An example of a reference to the 'left' in this text is presented below (81):

> (81)   "I love that **lefty fail safe** (**cop out**) '**educate yourself'** so far in my experience it means that you have **no argument** and **can't refute anything**".

While this page is deemed as 'left-wing', it does not mean that 'right-wing' stances would not find a way into the comment section of the text. The "lefty fail safe" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting a reverting of opinions of the 'left'; the stancetaker clarifies that they mean it is a "cop out". The term "cop out" suggests avoidance and would, therefore, also conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter as the stancetaker indicates that the 'left' are avoiding responsibility. The term the stancetaker disputes is "educate yourself", providing the context and attribution, something suggested in a previous comment that the stancetaker disagrees with. The stancetaker begins their statement with "I love", but this 'love' is sarcastic and, therefore, conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. The stancetaker further remarks that telling people to "educate" themselves means they "have no argument" and "can't refute anything". This suggests that those on the 'left', according to this stancetaker, cannot prove their observations ("can't refute") with valid reasoning ("no argument").

This stancetaker expresses a strongly negative observation towards the 'left' and subtly positions themselves on the 'right'. This is not a true representation of what these terms mean; it is a means of understanding polarity. This is a negative observation of the 'left' and a subtly 'positive' observation of the right. This encapsulates the SFL notion that a meaning is stated, another meaning is implied, and meaning-making is equally about what has not been expressed as it is about what has. An example is the direct opposite of example (82) and now discusses the 'right' is presented below:

> (82)   "…nothing I guess this is classic **righty** argument **didn't know facts spoke-shit** then wouldn't even admit they might be wrong…"

Example (75) and (76) are taken from a thread, and example (82) is a response to example (75); therefore, the framing of the "right" in this way. Here the stancetaker suggests that the stancetaker in example (82) is adopting a "classic righty argument" and "didn't know facts", "spoke-shit", and "wouldn't even admit that

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they might be wrong". While this example offers interesting instances of evaluation, what is more interesting is how it states the same thing as example (82), that the other side ('the right') cannot prove their stance with 'evidence' ("didn't know facts", "spoke-shit"). While this stancetaker regards the right as 'bad' and implies the 'left' is 'good', the way where they do it is nearly identical to the way the stancetaker on the 'right' attempted to portray the 'left' as 'bad'.

iii.   Additional themes of interest

Hate, fear and the 'greater good'

In the analysis of Post A1, a need exists for stancetakers to justify their stance as part of a "greater good". There are also several references to war, and there exists this call to "defend" this "greater good". A need exists to justify the "greater good" by either presenting it as the ultimate truth or by undermining the truthfulness of an opposing observation.

When observing example (78), it can be deduced that the "greater good", according to User E, is fighting White supremacy (this is made clear to the reader by the stancetaker's reference to "old apartheid flags" and "AWB uniforms"); however, observing User D's stance in the same example, it can be deduced that the "greater good" is the defence against farm violence (this is clarified by the stancetaker's reference to the struggle song "Dubul' ibhunu" as evidence of farm violence). These interactions emerge throughout the text, but as the page's stance is more aligned with User D's stance, the comment section observes the defence against White supremacy as more pertinent than User E's argument that the violence is deliberately perpetrated against farmers (specifically White farmers, owing to the mention of "boer"). User E also clarifies this; User F disagrees with User D's stance.

While this text does not feature an explicit call to defend, it features various comments suggesting that the EFF's presence was necessary to combat the "violence" of the protesters, for instance. An analysis of how this language is employed can be observed in example (73); therefore, it is not discussed here.

As discussed above, these additional themes emerge throughout the text and the examples already provided. This emphasises that multiple layers of evaluation can exist in a single comment. In some instances, other themes are more pertinent.

With most texts, ethnicity and the mention of role players are more important to stance than the 'greater good', the notion of war and a call to defend, and truthfulness or validity. These themes reinforce the main themes of ethnicity or role players. This can be observed in examples (14), (19). And (71), suggesting that

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the EFF is labelled as "pro-farm murders". The stancetaker strongly disagrees with this notion and instead invalidates the notion as a "character assignation" or a "1980s" "strategy". The stancetaker must invalidate this claim to emphasise White supremacy. This example focuses on ethnicity (more subtly, through the mention of the "1980s" as discussed in the analysis of example (71) and role players (the EFF and AfriForum). By presenting this observation as untrue and invalid, the stancetaker frames their observation as correct, portraying "AfriForum" and its members" as the ultimate 'bad' entity. The questioning of the validity of their stance reinforces the stancetaker's stance.

The A1 texts adopt a stance of 'Whiteness' being 'bad' and 'Blackness' as 'good'. Groups such as the EFF are observed as the antithesis to combatting this 'badness'. It is insinuated that the Senekal protest was an excuse for role players, such as AfriForum and other far-right groups, to be 'racist', and the EFF's presence at the protest and singing of the song "Dbul' ibhunu" was justified because of this racism. Farm violence is observed as a part of the larger crime problem on this page. It is implied that supporters of the farm violence protest had a hidden "agenda".

5.4 Text A2 findings

The Facebook page where this post (A2) and its comment section (A2 comment section) appear suggests that it aims to "raise awareness of White genocide in South Africa". The page has 41 339 likes and 43 570 followers. The page classification involves presenting a non-governmental organisation and shares a detailed account of the reasons for White genocide in South Africa. The page suggests that "White South Africans have been placed on Level 6 of a possible eight stages of genocide". The page's 'About' section features elevated levels of semantically provoked evaluative items, providing 'evidence' to justify their stance.

One of the means where the page 'justifies' its stance is by addressing the genocide levels they claim White South Africans are experiencing. The page defines these levels, and 'evidence' is provided for this 'White genocide' in these ways:

- **Classification**. The page explains this by using "us" and "them" constructions and provides the terms "boer", "Whitey", "iBunu", Settlers and "Colonialists" as evidence for this.
- **Symbolisation**. The page describes this step as giving names or symbols to the classification. The page refers to the song "Dubul' ibhunu" as evidence of this symbolisation.

- **Dehumanisation**. The page describes this step as one group denying the humanity of another group. They explain that using names, being equated to "vermin" and "animals", and gratuitous violence on farms are acts of dehumanisation.

- **Organisation**. The page does not specifically describe this term but alludes to its meaning by suggesting that "genocide is always organised, usually by the state, though sometimes informally or by terrorists". The page cites the government's "turning a blind eye to this and calling it a normal crime at worst" as evidence for this organisation. The page also cites the redistribution of land as evidence of organisation.

- **Polarisation**. This page describes polarisation as extremists driving groups apart and cites the quota system[25] and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE)[26] as evidence. The page's link between polarisation and these so-called laws that "oppress" is unclear; however, the page also cites "polarising propaganda" as a reason for this polarisation, which they deem is being "preached from public stages at political gatherings". The evidence provided for this "propaganda" is the labelling of White people as "murderers" and "thieves".

- **Preparation**. The page defines this level as identifying and separating victims based on their ethnic groups or religious identities. According to the page, "death lists are formulated, members of victim groups are forced to wear identifying symbols, and they are often segregated into ghettos, forced into concentration camps or confined to famine struck regions and starved". The page provides the increase in White squatter camps as evidence for this step and suggests that this results from affirmative action. The page suggests that these White individuals have no hope of receiving food or shelter from the government.

Potential elements of truth in the aforementioned evidence, classifying these along the genocide levels seems extreme. South Africa has a complicated racial past (Chapter 2). Several instances cited by this page

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[25] **A quota system** is a method of setting a limit on how much of something a country or company is allowed to have. In this context the page is referring to the quota system in South African professional sports teams that require non-White players to be included in the team. LOUW, A. M. 2019. " Affirmative" (measures in) action? Revising the lawfulness of racial quotas (in South African (professional) team sports). *De Jure Law Journal,* 52**,** 380-414.

[26] **Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)** is a government policy to advance economic transformation and enhance the economic participation of Black people (African, Coloured, and Indian people who are South African citizens) in the South African economy.

Norton Rose Fulbright. 2018. *Broad-based Black economic empowerment – basic principles* [Online]. Available: https://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/en-za/knowledge/publications/fe87cd48/broad-based-black-economic-empowerment--basic-principles [Accessed].

as evidence of 'genocide' are policies and procedures put into place to rectify this racial past. While there are arguments about whether it is time to drop these policies, these policies were not created to damage White South Africans solely (Norton Rose Fulbright, 2018), as this page suggests.

South Africa also suffers from extreme poverty levels, with 18,2 million people living in extreme poverty in 2022 (Statista Research Department, 2023). Therefore, to suggest that the poverty experienced by White South Africans ("the increase in White squatter camps") is a sign of genocide is difficult to prove as the country suffers extreme poverty levels, regardless of ethnicity.

This page perceives White genocide as a significant issue in South Africa, and with 41 339 likes and 43 570 followers, it is safe to deduce that several individuals adopt a similar observation. It was, therefore, a valuable page to explore when elucidating the farm violence public discourse on Facebook.

5.4.1 Text A2 post: Quantitative representations

As this post is a screenshot of a tweet and a response by two key role players in the Senekal protests, it was anticipated that the page's post would feature several instances of evaluation. Of the total evaluative words in this text (A2 post), 40.47% were evaluative. This means this post (A2) contains 11.90% more evaluative items than the A1 post.

Of the total evaluative words in this text, 68.64% belong to evaluative items found along the GOOD-BAD parameter, 11.76% belong to evaluative items found along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, 9.80% belong to evaluative items found along the IMPORTANCE parameter and 9.80% belong to evaluative items found along the CERTAINTY parameter. As mentioned in section 5.2, evaluative items are not limited to words in these texts, therefore it is worth exploring these items as instances. The evaluative items in this text (A1 post) are parallel to all four evaluative parameters.

The distribution of these items across the four parameters is presented below in Figure 5.5.

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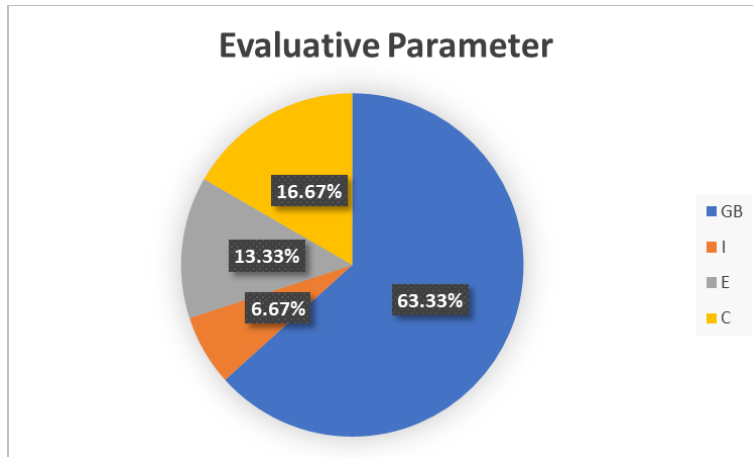
Figure 5.5: **Evaluative parameter distribution across the text, per total evaluative instances in text: A2 post**

In this text, the GOOD-BAD parameter is the most applied evaluative parameter at 63.33%; while this phenomenon is expected in most texts as it is the core evaluative framework, the high number of evaluative items observed along the GOOD-BAD still offers an interesting origin when exploring morality questions. The second most applied evaluative parameter in this text is the CERTAINTY parameter at 16.67%; the third most applied evaluative parameter is EXPECTEDNESS at 13.33%, with the least used parameter being the IMPORTANCE parameter at 6.67%. This means the IMPORTANCE parameter is used 13.74% less in this text (A2 post) than in the A1 post. This is a result of the shorter length of the text and the need to express a stance clearly.

A frequency list has been omitted from the quantitative findings for the A2 post, as this text is too short to yield viable results. This post features a tweet and a response to the tweet; therefore, the repetition of terms only occurs twice. The shorter nature of this text allows for clarifying the text in its entirety; therefore, the themes are not as necessary.

5.4.2 Post A2: Qualitative representations

Earlier in this section, Post A2 is shorter than Post A1 as it shares a screenshot, including a tweet and a response to the tweet. The tweet and Petzer's response to the tweet are key role players mentioned in the analysis of Post A1 and its comment section. Owing to the shorter nature of Post A2, the text is explored in its entirety instead of through selected examples as conducted in the analysis of Post A1. Before commencing with the analysis of this text, this entire text should be observed as an instance of attribution as it was not by the page; however, provided the contextual clues of this page and sharing Willem Petzer's to Julius Malema's tweet, as opposed to sharing only Malema's tweet, it was deduced that the page's stance

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leans more towards Petzer's observations. This text was chosen for its polarisation of Post A1's stance; however, in Post A1, aside from certain instances, the page takes full responsibility for its stance as it was by the page. This is not the case in this post (Post A2), as it is an attributed stance and was not by the page. There is, therefore, a subtle difference in responsibility and the potency of the commitment to the stance.

In this text (A2 post), the EFF is mentioned once and evaluated once; Julius Malema is mentioned twice and evaluated twice; President Cyril Ramaphosa is mentioned once and evaluated once; the ANC is mentioned once and evaluated once; AfriForum is mentioned once but not evaluated.

The original tweet by Julius Malema is presented below:

> (83)   "Since the **government** of <u>@CyrilRamaphosa</u> is **extremely scared** to respond **decisively**, we are **on our own**. Next appearance, **all ground forces** and **peace-loving** <u>South Africans</u> will be in attendance, in **defence** of our **democracy** and property. **Magwala a chechele morago! Fighters attack!"**

In example (83), Malema suggests that President Ramaphosa's government is "extremely scared" of responding "decisively" and that they are "on [their] own". The adjective "scared" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it indicates fear, observed as 'bad', compared to something like "bravery", which would be 'good', for instance. The adverb "extremely" conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it emphasises the intensity of this "fear". The adverb "decisively" conforms to the CERTAINTY parameter, as it indicates that the government and President Ramaphosa are not acting effectively, and the stancetaker (Malema) is, therefore, questioning their reliability. While the "we" Malema is referring to is not explicitly stated, it can be deduced that he is talking to his party's (the EFF) followers, as this is whom Petzer refers to in his response in example (84). Malema's statement that "they ("we") are "on [their] own" indicates a lack of support and, therefore, conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter; it alludes to the notion that it is up to them (Malema and his party's followers) to take the action that President Ramaphosa and the government have not taken. Malema reinforces this notion by calling for "ground forces" and "peace-loving South Africans" to attend the "next appearance" in the "defence of our democracy and property".

These evaluative instances contradict one another; for instance, the terms "ground forces" and "peace-loving" are grouped and converse with the same group of individuals (South Africans who must defend their democracy and property); however, "ground forces" is a term used to describe a military force that operates on the ground, implying some violence as these forces are usually heavily armed. The noun "ground force" (expressed in this text as the plural "ground forces"), therefore, conforms to the GOOD-

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BAD parameter, as it alludes to acts of violence which would raise a question of moral value. The adjective "peace-loving" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting something about morality; however, peace and violence directly contradict this. This raises the question of why Malema would want "peace-loving" South Africans and "ground forces" present at the protests.

The final part of the tweet suggests that these groups (the "ground forces" and "peace-loving South Africans") will be in attendance at the next "appearance" in "defence" of their "democracy" and "property". This statement is then followed by the statement "Magwala a chechele morago", which means "cowards move to the back" (The Citizen, 2020), and a call to action that remarks ", fighters attack". These contextual clues would lead the reader to deduce that the "peace-loving" South Africans, while mentioned, are not the group he is targeting with his tweet. The noun "defence" indicates resistance to an attack, and, therefore, would imply that what Malema calls the "ground forces" (and technically, the "peace-loving" South Africans) do something 'good'; this evaluative item would, therefore, conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter. The notion that this "defence" is a just cause is further strengthened by Malema's mention of "democracy", a noun that also conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and is considered, from a liberal perspective, to be something 'good'. Malema is, therefore, calling his followers (which the reader now knows are "ground forces" and "peace-loving South Africans") to defend what is 'good'. By commenting "fighters attack" and "cowards move to the back", Malema insinuates that his call is more directed to "ground forces". Both evaluative items conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter while not explicitly mentioning (violence) violent actions.

From the aforementioned, the predominant themes in this tweet centre around war ("ground forces", "fighters attack" and a call to defend the 'greater good' ("in defence of our democracy") because of the government and president's shortcomings ("extremely scared to respond decisively") which implies something about the validity of Malema's stance (for instance, if the president and the government cannot act "decisively", then Malema will. This implies that the government and the president's response is invalid or incorrect. While no role players are mentioned, as this tweet is directly from a prominent role player, it relates to the role players' theme; however, there is no mention of ethnicity; perhaps "Magwala a chechele morago!" suggests something about ethnicity as it is the only part of the tweet not in English; however, this is too vague a reference to support that point. Willem Petzer then shares Malema's tweet, and his response is indicated below:

> (84)   "**So**, <u>Julius Malema</u> is **threatening** to send his <u>EFF</u> **"ground forces"** to **intimidate**
> the family of Brendin Horner and those supporting them at the next court date. I
> am willing to bet <u>Julius Malema</u>, and his **merry band of bekvegters** will be too

afraid to come to the next #StopPlaasMoorde protest, or **they'll run like cowards**...

This is **not the first time** they **threaten** this, they did the same at the <u>AfriForum</u> protest after Black Monday! **"Fighters attack?" No**, **more like cowards cowering**".

In example (84), Willem Petzer dissects Malema's tweet. Petzer begins his tweet with the conjunction "so", which in this context is an introductory particle (Merriam Webster, 2023). Using "so" to begin the stancetaker's response indicates that a statement will follow because of Malema's tweet. "So" would, therefore, conform to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it creates anticipation about what the stancetaker addresses next. While "so" does not always indicate evaluation, the context of this text (sharing Malema's tweet) suggests a stance on the tweet and, therefore, "so" is an evaluative item.

Petzer remarks that the EFF is "threatening" to send "ground forces". The verb "threatening" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it indicates that the EFF will "take hostile action against someone or something (in this case, the protesters)" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). Petzer is, therefore, implying that the EFF will do something 'bad' (send "ground forces"). The term "ground forces" is addressed in example (65) and will, therefore, not be discussed in this section; however, what is worth noticing is that in this example (83), "ground forces" are in quotation marks and, therefore, being attributed to someone else (the reader knows this attribution is to Malema as the original tweet has been included). The attribution of "ground forces" in this example (83) is, therefore, not an attempt to shift responsibility from the stancetaker but to reference the original tweet. This instance of attribution could also be observed as sarcasm. Scare quotes are often used to signify sarcasm in written text (University of Sussex, 2023) and, provided the context of this text, Petzer is making a sarcastic remark about Malema's mention of "ground forces". "Ground forces" in Petzer's tweet would, therefore, conform to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter as sarcasm demonstrates something about the COMPREHENSIBILITY of the stance, that the stancetaker understands what is alleged, however, strongly disagree with it and are using sarcasm to demonstrate this point.

Petzer calls Malema's followers his "merry band of bekvegters", indicating that "ground forces" is a sarcastic remark. The term "merry band" is sarcastic and, therefore, evaluative in this example (84), as Petzer does not observe Malema's followers as a "merry band" of individuals. This point can be deduced by turning to the overall context of the tweet, and the term "bekvegters" suggests that these "fighters" are fighting with their mouths ("bek"), which leads to observing the remark as sarcastic. While this term ("merry band of bekvegters") appears sarcastic, it would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting

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something 'bad' about Malema's followers and should be observed as a unit instead of being divided into individual evaluative items.

Petzer also disregards Malema's call to action ("fighters attack") by stating: "'Fighters attack?' No, more like cowards cowering". Petzer calls Malema's followers "cowards" twice in example (84) ("they'll run like cowards" and "cowards cowering"). This is interesting as Malema also refers to cowards ("Magwala a chechele morago!" or "cowards move to the back"); however, although it is implied, Malema does not explicitly indicate who he thinks are "cowards". Petzer lucidly implicates Malema's followers as "cowards". The noun "coward" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it indicates a "lack of courage" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023) and, therefore, positions the EFF as 'bad'. Petzer also remarks that this is "not the first time" that the EFF "threatens this" the statement "not the first time" conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter and acts as evidence to support Petzer's negative observation of the EFF (that this behaviour has occurred more than once and, therefore, demonstrates a pattern of sorts).

The suggestion by Petzer that the EFF intends to "intimidate" the family of Brendin Horner further casts Malema and the EFF negatively as someone intimidating the family of a murder victim is 'bad'. "Intimidate" would, therefore, conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it offers a moral judgement about Malema and the EFF.

Post A2 immediately begins with an exchange between two key role players in discussing the Senekal incident—Julius Malema and Willem Petzer. While this exchange features commentary from both role players, it is leaning towards Petzer's observations. This can be deduced, first, by considering the context of the Facebook page that the post is being shared (discussed in Section 5.4) and secondly by considering that Petzer's tweet is a response to Malema's original tweet; therefore, it is Petzer's response being shared as opposed to sharing two individual tweets. The overarching stance in Post A1 is that Julius Malema and the EFF are unwelcome at farm violence protests, that they are not to be taken seriously at these protests should they appear, and, because of this, they are the 'bad' entity. While this is a short post compared to Post A1, it is still semantically loaded and features several instances of evaluation.

5.4.3   A2 comment section: Quantitative representations

As this post directly addresses two key role players in the Senekal protests, it was anticipated that the comment section would feature several instances of evaluation. Of the total evaluative words in this text (A2 comment section), 51.56% were evaluative. This means there are 15.45% more evaluative items in this

text (A2 comment section) than in the A1 comment section. This is a considerable jump in evaluation from the first text to the second.

Of the total evaluative words in this text, 44.08% belong to evaluative items found along the GOOD-BAD parameter, 24.00% belong to evaluative items found along the IMPORTANCE parameter, 15.99% belong to evaluative items found along the CERTAINTY parameter and 15.93% belong to evaluative items found along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. As mentioned in section 5.2, evaluative items are not limited to words in these texts, therefore it is worth exploring these items as instances. The evaluative items in this text (A2 comment section) are parallel to all four evaluative parameters.

The distribution of these items across the four parameters is presented below in Figure 5.6.
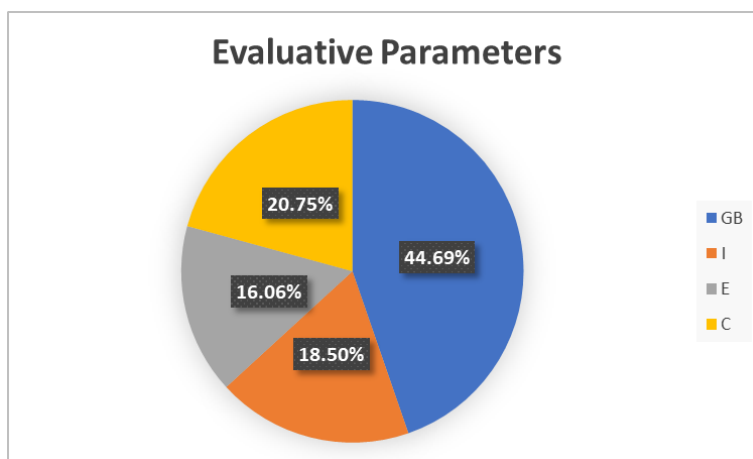
Evaluative Parameters

- GB — 44.69%
- I — 18.50%
- E — 16.06%
- C — 20.75%

Figure 5.6:   **Evaluative parameter distribution across the text, per total evaluative instances in text: A2's comment section**

As anticipated, the GOOD-BAD parameter is used most in this text (A2 comment section) at 44.69%. The GOOD-BAD parameter is used only 0.04% more in the A1 comment section. However it is used considerably less than in the A1 post (which contains 10.41% more GOOD-BAD instances than the A2 comment section) and A2 post (which contains 18.64% more GOOD-BAD instances than the A2 comment section). Concerning the frequency of use, the GOOD-BAD parameter is followed by the CERTAINTY parameter at 20.75%, the IMPORTANCE parameter at 18.50%, and the EXPECTEDNESS parameter at 16.06% —the least used evaluative parameter in this text (A2 comment section). As this text contains considerably more instances of evaluation than the A1 comment section, it is interesting that both sections use the GOOD-BAD parameter at roughly the same number of times. Provided this page (A2), to spread awareness about White genocide, it is perhaps unsurprising that the CERTAINTY parameter is the second most applied parameter, as it deals with the truth value, something commenters will probably focus on.

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While the parameter distribution across the texts solidly summarises how evaluative language is employed, a word frequency list summarises the patterns of evaluative items in the text.

The frequency list of the comment section in the A1 analysis featured fewer clear indicators of major themes worth addressing; this section indicates a focus on certain themes. The A1 comment section featured fewer content words as the text was less evaluative than this text (A2 comment section). The frequency list for the A2 comment section is presented below in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: **Most frequent evaluative words/phrases found across the text: A1's comment section**

N	Evaluative Item	Parameter	Freq.
1	WILL	C	29
2	IF	E	18
3	ARE	C	15
4	JUST	E	15
5	RACIST	GB	11
6	CAN	C	9
7	WHITES	GB	8
8	APARTHEID	GB	7
9	WHITE	I	7
10	YOU GUYS	GB	7
11	BLACK	I	6
12	DON'T	C	6
13	PEACE-LOVING	GB	6
14	SANCTIONS	GB	6
15	ANYTHING	C	5
16	ONLY	E	5
17	WILL BE	C	5
18	WOULD	C	5
19	ALL	C and E[27]	4
20	BOERE	GB	4
21	CLOWN	GB	4
22	LIKE	I	4

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[27] In this text "All" is used along both the CERTAINTY and the EXPECTEDNESS parameters, and as each instance of the item has been individually tagged along the parameter this did not affect the distribution.

N	Evaluative Item	Parameter	Freq.
23	MUST	C	4
24	NOW	E	4
25	ALWAYS	C	3

The evaluative items demonstrated in the frequency list helped identify two major themes and three subthemes across the texts. A selection of content words and larger evaluative items are explored regarding these themes in the following section.

5.4.4   A2 comment section: Qualitative representations

As noted in the frequency list above, ethnicity ("racism", 'White', 'Whites', "Black") is a major point of discussion in this comment section (A2). Similarly, role players ("boere", "you guys") are worth addressing. Terms such as "peace-loving", "sanctions", and "apartheid" indicate a discussion about fear and the 'greater good' will follow.

Most of the comments in the A2 comment section align with the page's stance; however, a few instances of comments question the page's stance and those commenters supporting it. These comments are usually responded to negatively by those aligned with the page's stance. This is expected as the predominant discourse would be that of the page. This is owing to how social media operates, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Similar to the A1 comment section, these comments (in A2) cluster around three major themes associated with farm violence. These are ethnicity role players, justifying a stance through hate, fear, and a call to defend a 'greater good'. This comment section features several complex and heavily semantically loaded instances of evaluation. It includes several references to South African history and perpetuates the notion that White is 'good' and Black is 'bad'. 'Whiteness' is framed as under threat, and White farmers are portrayed as victims who must defend themselves. An in-depth analysis of the themes is embarked on below.

i.   Theme 1: Ethnicity

Racism and representations of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'.

Of the total evaluative instances found in this text (A2 comment section), 5.73% of the instances address ethnicity. Of the total ethnicity instances, 39.34% address whiteness, 29.51% address blackness, and 31.15% address racial issues.

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In Post A2, racism is directly addressed using these terms: racist; racists; and racial. Similar to the findings in the A1 analysis, the term 'racist' is often used as an adjective in this text; however, it also appears to be a noun multiple times throughout this comment section (A2). While 'racist' refers to prejudice directed at Black individuals and groups in the A1 findings, in this text (A2), it refers to both prejudices directed at Black individuals and groups and White individuals and groups. As mentioned in the analysis of the A1 data sets, the term 'racist' and related items dealing with race (such as 'racial') would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as they offer a judgement of morality. Examples of how the term 'racist' is used to refer to prejudice directed at White individuals and groups are presented below:

(85)   "**Malema** won't be there. If the popo hits the fan he and these **racist** ANC leaders
         would be the first who would leave the country and come back after the **bloodshed**
         is over".

(86)   "**Racist** ANC Government in cahoots with <u>EFF</u> Terrorist farm murderers".

In examples (85) and (86), the stancetaker implicates the ANC as 'racist'. While neither example explicitly suggest that the ANC is racist towards White individuals and groups, this can be deduced by a few contextual clues. For instance, the ANC is the oldest liberation movement in Africa, largely created to act as a voice for the majority Black population in South Africa during the struggle against apartheid (African National Congress, 2023); therefore, it can be deduced that the stancetakers in examples (85) and (86) are not suggesting that the ANC is racist towards Black individuals and groups. The mention of ANC "leaders" in example (85) further emphasises this notion, as most ANC leaders are Black.

In example (85), the stancetaker states that "Malema won't be there"; this is directly referencing the page's post where Malema is calling for his "ground forces" to attend the protests. This indicates that the stancetaker disagrees with Malema's tweet and is, therefore, more aligned with Petzer's observations (analysis of Post A2). The stancetaker also indirectly implicates Malema as being racist, and as Malema is a Black man, it further reinforces the notion that 'racism' that the stancetaker refers to is directed at White individuals and groups. This implication can be observed in the following statement: "Malema won't be there. If the popo hits the fan, he and these racist ANC leaders…" where Malema ("he") is grouped with the "racist ANC leaders".

In example (86), the "ANC Government" is described as 'racist' and being "in cahoots with EFF Terrorist farm murderers". As explained in the analysis of the A1 data sets, in these texts, "terrorist" is a racialised term owing to its strong ties to apartheid-era propaganda. The labelling of the EFF as "terrorist farm murderers" is a loaded accusation and implies something about racially motivated farm violence; this can

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be deduced by the term "terrorist" but also by turning to the context of this text. As the EFF is also a 'Black' political party, the labelling of the group as "terrorist farm murderers" in "cahoots" with the "racist ANC government" further reinforces this 'racism' refers to 'prejudice' against White individuals and groups.

Examples (85) and (86) place heavy accusations on the ANC and EFF ("racist" and "terrorist farm murderers"). While the ANC is not explicitly labelled as "terrorist farm murderers" in example (86), the party's "cahoots" with the EFF suggest that they, too, according to the stancetaker, be included in this category. The term "in cahoots" indicates a "secret collusion" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023) and, therefore, conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

In example (85), the stancetaker also proclaims that the EFF and the ANC are 'cowards' as they would be "the first who would leave the country and come back when the bloodshed is over" if the "popo hits the fan". The phrase "if the popo [pawpaw] hits the fan" is a less offensive version of the phrase "when the shit hits the fan", referring to the "disastrous consequences of something become public" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023); therefore, the stancetaker suggests that when the tension finally erupts because of the farm violence issue, the EFF and ANC will leave the country, only to return once the "bloodshed" is over. The noun "bloodshed" indicates "the killing or wounding of people on a large scale during a conflict" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023) and would, therefore, conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter; however, as the stancetaker is making this point to portray the EFF and the ANC as 'cowardly', it would be better suited to the IMPORTANCE parameter and, therefore, the full evaluative item would be "come back after the bloodshed is over". Similarly, "the first who would leave" would conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as the stancetaker is making a point about the 'cowardice' of the two 'racist' parties.

While there is the suggestion of racism directed at White individuals and groups throughout this text, racism is also suggested in the more typically accepted sense—prejudice directed at people of colour. Examples of how the term 'racist' is used in this sense are presented below:

(87)   "… nothing **racist** being said here. Highlighting Cultural differences isn't racist…"

(88)   "…we are discussing this land before **The Racists** separated Black people here?"

In example (87), the stancetaker is defending their comment by suggesting that they were "highlighting cultural differences", something that they do not consider 'racist'. While the "cultural differences" that this stancetaker refers to are ambiguous in this comment, a comment by the same stancetaker in the same thread remarks: "Malema, where is he when u are protesting? I'm not sure how fancy clothes and weaves are going to work against some very very angry farmers". The mention of "Malema" and "weaves" would lead the

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reader to suspect that the "cultural differences" that this stancetaker refers to, relate to race, as weaves have a complex historical significance for Black females (Mokoena, 2017). Using "weaves" is, therefore, a stereotypic remark. Its use of "fancy clothes" implies that it is an expensive luxury. To specifically mention a "weave" and therefore allude to Black women's hair is a critical yet subtle detail. Hair plays a pivotal role in the identity of Black females because of years of oppression and the notion that Black hair is not desirable (Mokoena, 2017). In recent years, several instances of outdated rules about Black people's hair causing major tension in South African schools were presented (Mokoena, 2017). A weave typically mimics a more Caucasian hair look, which has been debated among Black females in recent years (Mokoena, 2017). Whether this was an intentional reference by the stancetaker is irrelevant; it is still an evaluative item, alluding to a sensitive issue among Black women.

As established in the analysis of the A1 data set, the term 'racial' is more generalised than 'racist'. While racist is explicitly evaluative, 'racial' is more ambiguous and, therefore, more subtle. An example of how the term 'racial' is used in the comment section of A2 is presented below:

> (89)   "These are **the guys** that **attack Clicks customers**??? This has nothing to do with
> protecting property... It's an opportunity to **stoke the racial fire**".

In example (89), the term 'racial' is used in the phrase "stoke the racial fire". The phrase would be tagged as an evaluative unit, as opposed to individual evaluative units, as it describes a specific action and is metaphorical. To stoke a fire means to 'add coal or wood to keep it burning' as observed in example (89); the stancetaker is not referring to the act of keeping an actual fire burning but a 'racial' fire. This "racial fire" is a metaphor for South Africa's racial tension. The act of provoking this racial tension ("stoke") would, therefore, encourage this tension to continue. The act of "stok[ing] the racial fire" is, therefore, perceived as 'bad', which would mean this phrase conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

While this stancetaker does not mention who they believe is stoking the racial fire, the reader can deduce this is what the stancetaker means by observing contextual clues within the comment. For instance, the stancetaker refers to "protecting property" by referring to the post (A2 post), which is what Malema suggested his followers (the EFF) would do at the protest. As this is a comment on that specific post, the reader can safely assume this is whom the stancetaker refers to. Another contextual clue that the stancetaker refers to the EFF is the suggestion that "these are the guys that attack Clicks customers". This is a direct

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reference to the Clicks Hair Scandal[28] , where EFF played a pivotal role. The stance taken, therefore, is that the EFF will not protect property ("nothing to do with") at the farm violence protests and is a guise to deliberately cause racial tension ("opportunity to stoke the racial fire").

In the analysis of A1, a comment thread aligns with a dialogue. This means that the users may disagree with one another; therefore, differing stances are to be expected in the comment section and specifically in a comment thread. An excerpt from a comments thread dealing with racism is presented below:

(90) "User G: User H, you are one **really bad messed up Black racist**! **Cretins like you** and Malema Maasdorp and the **delinquent Andile likes** are precisely why South Africa is becoming a **shithole third-world country** as all **your likes** thrive on is **racism**, **hatred**, and **violence.** You **can't build you can only break down** and **plunder** and **blame** other... This is **all you can offer poor** South Africa... It is **inherently** and **disappointingly in your blood** to **offer nothing better**....

(91) This is why Black **Africans** like you will forever blame **everyone else** but yourselves and then **beg** that very same **White western countries** and that very same White people you so **despise and blame** to save you from your own incompetence, to help you with aid or rather maybe Aids. Grow up and grow a pair of balls you clown. Even better go ask Unisa your tuition funds back as I find it hard to believe that you could've taken on board anything through that thick skull of yours...

(92) User H: **Black man** like me cannot be a **Racist**

(93) If SA is becoming the **third-world** country, when was it the 2nd or 1st World country.

(94) **Racist,** if you got a problem on how we run things here please pack your bags and go back home in Netherlands, your relatives are missing you there. This country belongs to Black people. "**You are a foreigner here**".

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[28] **The Clicks Hair Scandal** took place in September 2020. Clicks, a pharmacy, health, and beauty retailer in South Africa, released an advertisement that featured pictures of African hair labelled dry, dull, and damaged and White hair that was described as fine and flat. The EFF labelled the advertisement "dehumanizing" and "racist and Julius Malema called for Clicks stores to be closed. This led to protests that saw EFF members damaging a few Clicks stores around the country. *BBC NEWS 2020. South Africa's Clicks beauty stores raided after 'racist' hair advert.*

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While this comments thread features a large variety of evaluative instances, owing to the discussion length of this study, each instance in this analysis is not addressed. Instead, the study focused on the evaluative items, emphasising the racism expressed in example (94). This comments thread features a combination of explicit and implicit evaluative items; while the explicit instances are more clearly evaluative and, therefore, easy to detect, the implicit instances are more subtle and less easy to detect.

As this is a comment thread, it should be observed as a discussion and as User H has been tagged in the comment, one can safely assume this comment is directed at User H and, therefore, User H is the intended reader; however, as this comment thread is public, there are more readers involved in this thread than just User H. While User H plays an active role in this discussion, the other readers play a passive role; therefore, while User G's remarks directly implicate User H, these remarks could also implicate something about the group to which User H belongs.

In User G's comment, it is clarified to the reader that the stancetaker (User G) is labelling User H as a 'racist'. While using the noun 'racist' to label someone is already a loaded accusation and indicates that the stancetaker perceives this person as 'bad', User G further emphasises this 'badness' by using the adverb "really" and the adjectives 'bad' and "messed up" to describe this 'racist'.

'Really' would conform to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it emphasises how obvious User H's racism is to User G. The adjectives 'bad' and "messed up" would both conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as these evaluative items indicate that User G finds fault in User H's morals.

User G also describes User H's ethnicity ("Black racist"). The adjective 'Black' conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as the stancetaker (User G) indicates to the reader that this 'racist' person is specifically "Black". The reader would, therefore, need to deduce why the 'racist' person's race is important to this stancetaker. One can deduce this by turning to the page, classified as a "non-governmental organisation" focused on stopping "White South African genocide". This description would suggest that this page perceives White people as under threat and, therefore, it would be understandable that commenters on this page would find that prejudice exists against White people in South Africa. This stancetaker (User G) emphasises the ethnicity of User H as they perceive the term 'racist' to be too ambiguous. By emphasising that User H is "Black", the stancetaker clarifies they are specifically referring to racism directed at White people and, therefore, see White people as at a disadvantage.

User G also calls User H a "cretin" who is responsible for South Africa to become "a shithole third-world country". The noun "cretin" is a derogatory term describing a "stupid person", and it is used as a general

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term of abuse (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). The term would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as User G is making a judgement about User H's intelligence to belittle them; however, what is perhaps more interesting in this comment is the accusation that User H's "likes" are responsible for making South Africa become "a shithole third-world country". By describing South Africa as a "shithole", User G is subtly referencing a now notorious remark made by former US President Donald Trump in 2018 during an oval office meeting about immigrants, specifically those from Haiti and various African nations.

However, this subtle reference has an even heavier semantic load than this initial reference. In 2018, Trump tweeted about farm violence in South Africa and called for the Secretary of State to scrutinise "land and farm seizures and expropriations and large-scale killing of farmers" (Marx-Knoetze, 2020). The tweet was praised by groups, such as AfriForum, with the group remarking that "Trump's Tweet on South Africa expresses justified concern about what is going on" (AfriForum, 2021) but was largely condemned as a "far-right idea" (Wilson, 2018). It is interesting that, according to Trump, African nations were considered unworthy of assistance when it involved immigrants, who were implied to be non-White groups, but South Africa is deemed worthy of assistance regarding the White population.

The notion that South Africa is a "third-world country" is also an interesting evaluative term. While the term "third-world" is still used colloquially to refer to developing nations; these terms "imply racism in terms of hierarchy; the notion that some are first and others behind" are more used in formal spaces (Khan et al., 2022). While "shithole country" and "third-world country" are terms presenting nuances, in this text, the terms are a unit to describe what South Africa is "becoming" according to User G. The term "shithole third-world country" is, therefore, tagged as a single evaluative unit that conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter. While this term represents an act of judgement against South Africa, by understanding the context of its origins, it is a subtle act of attribution. User G implies that Trump's "shithole country" label is justified and that "cretins", like User H, are the reason for this label. "Shithole third-world country", therefore, has several racial undertones and subtly strengthens User G's accusation of User H's racism.

Another significant accusation directed at User G by User H is that "it is inherently and disappointingly in [User H and people like User H's] blood" to offer "nothing more" than "racism", "hatred", and "violence" to South Africa. The terms "inherently" and "in your blood" indicate that the stancetaker observes "racism", "hatred", and "violence to be ingrained in User H's (whom the reader knows is Black) character. As User G uses the term "your likes" in this comment, the reader also knows that User G extends this observation to all Black people. User G, therefore, observes all Black people as 1) racist, 2) hateful, 3) violent and 4) the reason for South Africa's 'demise'. These observations echo those of the "swart gevaar" narrative

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(Section 5.3.2) and are prejudiced towards South Africa's Black population. This comments thread emphasises how farm violence discourse can quickly become a heated and emotionally provoked argument about race.

User G's comment also features a statement indicative of 'White saviourism' ("beg that very same White western countries and that very same White people you so despise and blame to save you from your own incompetence, to help you with aid …"). The White Saviourism Industrial Complex (WSIC) refers to the myth that "non-White communities need White outsiders to rescue them" (Helmick, 2022). User G suggests that "Black Africans" will "forever blame everyone but [themselves]" but will need the help of the Western world (implying Whiteness) when they suffer from "their own incompetence". User G is, therefore, implying that Black people cannot do much without the assistance of White people. This is a provocative accusation that suggests Black people cannot lead themselves.

The final loaded accusation User G makes about User H is that they are unintelligent ("go ask Unisa your tuition funds back as I find it hard to believe that you could've taken on board anything through that thick skull of yours"). The notion that User H could not "take on board anything through [their] thick skull" is explicitly evaluative and conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it is a judgement about User H's intelligence; however, what is potentially more intriguing in this example (72) is User H's mention of Unisa specifically. Unisa (the University of South Africa) is the largest open-distance learning institution in Africa (Unisa, 2023). In recent years, Unisa has come under fire for racial tensions and other issues (Belinda Bozzoli, 2018). Unisa has amassed somewhat of a notorious reputation. To suggest that User H was educated at Unisa is subtly diminishing their intelligence.

From the above analysis, it has become apparent that User G has attempted to make hurtful and harmful accusations about a) User H and b) the Black population; therefore, User G acted prejudiced towards a) User H and b) the Black population. This act is intriguing as this prejudice (racism) is what User G is accusing User H of performing.

In Chapter 3, Deumert (2019) explains the speech act of "interpellation", which, as she mentions in Fanon's (2008) observation, is an "intersubjective and experienced" labelling. Deumert (2019) explains the calls to "give back the land" as interpellations. That these utterances are a provoked response that attempts to defend against being interpellated by the "other" (in Deumert's (2019) explanation, the "other" refers to the "boer"). This excerpt is part of a larger comment thread where User H initially responds to the original post (Post A2) with the following comment:

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(95)   "What are guys going to do???are you going to **shoot me, to shoot us, to kill us**,
         they way you killed **Solomon Mahlangu, Steve Biko and Chris Hani**. We are
         coming there, and we will protest to save our democracy and you guys can come
         and implement your **fucken Apartheid** there, then **we will see what will happen**!
         Do you guys think we are **afraid** of you guys? One **Magosha** of you **pointed a gun
         at us** at EC during **Clicks** protests. you guys declared a war. Then we will see what
         will happen".

Example (95) provides further context, for example (94) and is, therefore, not evaluated in great detail. The gist of this comment and the significance of mentioning the murders of anti-apartheid activists is to indicate that under the apartheid regime, several prolific Black males were murdered; therefore, User H is asking Petzer (rhetorically) if White protesters are threatening to murder the people Malema is calling to attend the protests. User H implies this would not be out of character as several Black people have been murdered by White people in South Africa's past.

In this comment section, User H argues with commenters and portrays 'Blackness' as 'good'. Usually, User H is shut down harshly (as observed in example (92)). While User H's initial comment on the page's post (Post A2) was directed at the post, User H was criticised and received several personal threats from other commenters. User H's first comment features strong evaluative items like "implement your fucken apartheid there", "Magosha" (which translates to "whore"), "you guys declared a war, "we will see what will happen". This comment is threatening; however, it does not directly address any specific individual and, therefore, it is less 'personal' than User G's response to this comment.

User G's retaliation to User H's initial comment and User H's loaded statement that "Black man like me cannot be racist" could be observed as acts of interpellation where one party feels offended by what the other party has attempted to classify them as and retaliates with heavily loaded accusations about the other party as a means to disown the attempted labelling; however, User H's comments target User G specifically and echo notoriously racist observations. Numerous instances were unnecessary and could be observed as taking it too far. To insinuate that User H, specifically, is racist, violent, hateful, and turning South Africa into a "shithole" is a harsh personal attack. User H responds by remarking that User G is not welcome in South Africa ("this country belongs to Black people", "you are a foreigner, "go back home in Netherlands, your relatives are missing you there"); however, User H begins this statement with the conjunction 'if', therefore, User H does not imply that all White South Africans must leave the country, only those who "have a problem with how [they] run things". While User H's comment is still othering and intends to indicate that South Africa does not belong to White people, it is less harsh than User G's implication that

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all Black people are inherently 'bad'. While User H calls User G a 'racist', specifically, this only occurs once User G has labelled User H a racist multiple times and has made some notoriously racist remarks about User H.

While User H's initial comment also contains threatening language, this threatening language is also mentioned with "evidence" for this observation ("to shoot us, to kill us, the way you killed Solomon Mahlangu, Steve Biko and Chris Hani", "apartheid", "pointed a gun"). This 'evidence' seems plausible and, therefore, does not make User H seem irrational. Whether this evidence is correct does not matter, as the stancetaker attempts to portray their perspective and, therefore, their emotions as valid.

Conversely, User G's 'evidence' is not as plausible as User G's attempts to use characteristics of User H as their 'evidence'. This makes them appear irrational and prejudiced as they are not pinpointing an actual event or reason for their evidence but a personal judgement.

In example (91), how 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness' are represented plays a critical role in these discussions. It is, therefore, crucial that direct mention of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness' be explored.

In this text, 'Whiteness' is referred to along the IMPORTANCE parameter and the GOOD-BAD parameter. The noun 'Whites' accounts for 43% of those mentions. As Bolinger (1980) explains, nouns, such as 'Whites', present a heavy semantic load, as these items no longer refer to a characteristic of a person or a group but an entire identity. An example of how White is used along the IMPORTANCE parameter is presented below:

> (96)   "The universities and schools are run by insane lefty cultural Marxists who only care about minorities as long as they are not **White**".

In example (96), the stancetaker suggests that White minority groups are not cared for. The loaded accusation of universities as schools being "run by insane lefty cultural Marxists" is addressed further in this analysis; however, it provides some context about whom this stancetaker perceives as 'bad'. 'White' in this example specifically describe which "minority" and, therefore, conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter. 'White' in this example is a supplementary evaluative item to the notion that "insane lefty cultural Marxists" only care about other ethnic groups ("not White"). 'White' is merely describing the minority, whereas the loaded accusation (that "insane lefty cultural Marxists" don't care about White people). Examples of how 'White' is used along the GOOD-BAD parameter are presented below:

(97)   "Remember in SA the **Whites** have the Government, Police and army against them".

(98)   "…get a wake up the **Whites** are going nowhere but forward we will March".

(99)   "The Black police don't care for whatever happens to **Whites**".

(100)   "Us **Whiteys** should stock up till the supermarket shelves are bare, create shortages, maxing out our credit cards to do so if need be and watch this shit show from the sidelines".

As the reader observes in examples (97) to (100), the noun 'Whites', or "Whiteys" in example (100), could be supplemented with the adjective 'White' plus the noun 'people' which would present less of a semantic load. While some instances of an adjective used with a noun could indicate a more subjective representation of a group (Maritz, 2022), with these examples, it would have the opposite effect. This phenomenon results from the noun's focus on ethnicity, which in this context is a major point of tension. The mention of ethnicity through a noun ('Whites') in this text draws a definitive line between two groups ('White' and "Black"). The shifting of the word 'White' from an adjective to a noun shifts the evaluative load as it now refers to an identity rather than a characteristic and is, therefore, as Bolinger (1980) would suggest, more "permanent".

In this text, 'Whites' are mainly observed as resilient ("Whites are going nowhere"), victims ("Whites have the government, police and army against them" and "the Black police don't care for whatever happens to Whites") calculated ("creating shortages", "maxing out credit cards") and are not responsible for the issues being discussed in this text ("watch this shit show from the sidelines").

Similar to the A1 data set, the term 'White' is also used to describe concepts, such as "White guilt" and "White privilege". This can be observed in the example below:

(101)   "The government always try to ransom us with our **supposed "White Guilt** and **Privilege"**. I say we turn the tables and ransom them with our skills and knowledge".

In example (101), the stancetaker mentions "White Guilt and Privilege". These terms would be split into two evaluative items along the GOOD-BAD parameter, indicating "White Guilt" and "Privilege", as the items specifically approach two concepts. While the noun "privilege" is tagged without the term White, the reader knows that the stancetaker refers to "White privilege" as the conjunction "and" indicates that the

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'White' tagged with the term "guilt" also belongs to the term "privilege"; however, as this is not as it appears in the text, the evaluative items are tagged as "White guilt" and "privilege". In the analysis of the A1 data set, concepts such as "White guilt" should not be divided into separate evaluative items and should instead be observed as a conceptual unit; therefore, the concept of "White privilege" is implied in this comment.

The reader can deduce that the stancetaker disagrees with these terms ("White guilt and privilege") for two main reasons. The first is that the stancetaker refers to these concepts as "supposed". The adjective "supposed" indicates that, while generally believed to be true, these concepts are not necessarily true (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). The adjective "supposed" would, therefore, conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it acts as attribution. The stancetaker, therefore, is that while these concepts are generally accepted, they do not necessarily agree with them. The second indicator that the stancetaker does not agree with these terms is the quotation marks around the terms, indicating attribution and, therefore, distances the stancetaker from the concepts.

Once this disagreement has been established, it is further emphasised with the verb "ransom", conforming to the GOOD-BAD parameter. To ransom means to "obtain the release of someone by paying a sum of money" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023); in this comment, it is, therefore, being used metaphorically as the government is not holding White people (as indicated by "us" and the mention of "White guilt and privilege") captive and demanding payment for release. Instead, according to the stancetaker in example (101), the government is using "White guilt and privilege" to hold White people accountable for something. This 'something' is ambiguously defined but approaches racial issues in South Africa's history, provided the text and the mention of White guilt and privilege. The stancetaker uses "ransom" a second time when they suggest that they should subvert ("turn the tables") being "ransom[ed]" by "ransom[ing]" the government with "skills and knowledge".

By paying careful attention to the contextual clues, the reader can establish that this stancetaker is White ("us", "our supposed White privilege"). The stancetaker's mention of "we", therefore, implies White people. The stancetaker's mention of using "our skills and knowledge" to "ransom" the government, therefore, implies that this stancetaker perceives White people as more skilled and knowledgeable than the government. This stancetaker, therefore, observes White people as 'good', and they depend on Whiter people so much that they cannot operate without them.

Similar to the A1 data set, in this text (A2), 'White' is also used interchangeably with the term "European". An example of how this term is used in this text is presented below:

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(102) "You boys in S Africa need to bring it on. You are pioneer descendants of **European** explorers".

In example (102), the stancetaker uses the terms, such as "European explorers" and "pioneer descendants" to describe these "boys" in South Africa. The terms present a more positive connotation than a term, such as 'coloniser' does, for instance, and implies that the stancetaker observes the White ("European') explorers as 'good'; therefore, both the terms ("European explorers" and "pioneer descendants") would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter. The stancetaker's call for these "boys" to "bring it on" is another interesting instance of evaluation in this comment. The phrase "bring it on" would conform to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it indicates something about the stancetaker's anticipation for future events, that they are confident that these "boys" (the pioneer descendants of European explorers) will win in an altercation. Taking this data set's post (Post A2) into consideration, the reader knows that the stancetaker refers to Malema's call to defend "democracy" and "property" and Petzer's refuting of this call to defend.

The stancetaker suggests that because White South Africans are descendants of Europeans, they have the ability to fight back against Malema and the EFF with a high chance of success. The stancetaker does not provide any reasoning for this ability other than 'Whiteness'. Potentially, the stancetaker could adopt this observation as they perceive a pioneer's ability to explore a "new country or area" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023), proving that these "boys" can fend for themselves. This is an interesting observation as it aligns with the empty land myth mentioned in Chapter 2 and exploits this notion of a need to tame a country already inhabited. If these "boys" could tame South Africa, they would be strong enough to oppose the EFF and Malema. This stancetaker glorifies 'Whiteness', similar to how it was glorified during the colonial and apartheid eras.

While several comments on this page adopt the stance of the page, as this is a public page, diverse observations will be expressed within the comments. Another instance of an opposing observation specifically focused on 'Whiteness', is presented below:

(103) "What's wrong with you **White** people?"

In example (103), the stancetaker observes 'White' people as 'bad' by asking, "what's wrong with [them]?". 'White' is an adjective and would conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter. 'White' in this comment is used to specify something is wrong with White people. The question "what's wrong" would conform to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it indicates obviousness to the stancetaker. The stance directed a rhetorical question about the White people and, therefore, accuses them of being "wrong". While the suggestion that

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something is wrong with a group would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it is a question of morality, it expresses clarity to the stancetaker and is, therefore, tagged along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. This stancetaker believes there is something wrong with White people's behaviour.

It is anticipated that if the mention of 'Whiteness' appears in a text, 'Blackness' will probably also appear in the same text. In this text, 'Blackness' is mentioned considerably less than 'Whiteness'. This can be noted in

Table 5.6. Similar to 'Whiteness', 'Blackness' is referred to along with the IMPORTANCE and GOOD-BAD parameters in this text. An example of how 'Blackness' is referred to along the IMPORTANCE parameter is presented below:

> (104)   "Please just take your blinkers off and use the brain and common sense the good lord gave u. Did u know the first slave owner was a **Black** man in America? Awkward? Did u know it was the **Black** man who gathered his people and walked them to the coast to sell them as slaves".

> (105)   "**Black** man like me cannot be a Racist".

In example (104), the stancetaker reflects someone else's stance (another commenter's stance) as a narrow perspective ("take your blinkers off"). The stancetaker provides 'evidence' to justify their stance. This 'evidence' suggests that "the first slave owner was a Black man in America" and that it was a "Black man who gathered his people… to sell them as slaves". Using the adjective 'Black' in this example, therefore, presents questions of relevance. The stancetaker mentions that a "Black man" did something 'bad' (sold his own people as slaves) to position 'Blackness' negatively. The mention of slavery is especially pertinent in this comment as it directly references the well-documented historical injustice towards Black people. To specifically draw attention to the idea that a Black man participated in this injustice presents an attempt to detract from the overt racism and exploitation that occurred during the slave trade. While accurate facts are important in shaping the 'good' versus 'bad' dialogue, when observing evaluation, the focus is on the user's stance. The intention behind sharing this is more relevant than the concern. As the reader knows, the intention for depicting 'Blackness' in this negative way is the stancetaker's attempt at convincing this other individual to "take [their] blinkers off".

In example (105), the stancetaker suggests that they, a "Black man", cannot be 'racist'. "Black" is an adjective, and it supplements the notion that this stancetaker cannot be racist because of their 'Blackness'. The modal verb "cannot" indicate that a prominent level of CERTAINTY is being placed on this notion

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(That this "Black man" is not racist) and indicates that the stancetaker is firmly committed to this stance. This statement is semantically loaded and portrays 'Blackness' in a positive light as it suggests that a "Black man" is incapable of having a prejudice towards racial groups; however, if one refers to example (105), this statement is in retaliation to the several accusations made by User H. It is also clear this stancetaker remarks that they "cannot be racist" after being labelled a "really bad messed up Black racist".

As with the case of 'Whiteness' and the noun 'Whites', the noun 'Blacks' is also used throughout this text. As mentioned in the analysis of 'Whites', this term would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter and presents a heavy semantic load because of its focus on identity rather than description, as with 'Black' along the IMPORTANCE parameter. Examples of how the noun 'Blacks' is used in this text are presented below:

> (106) "AND OVERSEAS PEOPLE just LOVE the Black**s**".

> (107) "5 million Whites against 50 million Blacks...do the maths".

As this noun has been explored in depth in the 'Whiteness' analysis, it is not explored again here; however, what is worth noting is the sarcasm in example (106), indicated by the capitalisation of specific words. This suggestion that "overseas people just love the Blacks" implies those same people do not love the Whites; therefore, this mention of 'Blackness' is negative. Similarly, in example (107), the emphasis on the large divergence between the ethnic group numbers portrays 'Whiteness' as vulnerable to 'Blackness' and, therefore, negatively portrays 'Blackness'.

As noted in the analysis of the A1 data sets, ethnicity can also be expressed subtly without mentioning 'Blackness' or 'Whiteness' directly. An example of this subtle representation of 'Blackness' is presented below:

> (108) "And by this we don't have to go the **savage**, **barbaric** violent route that **the other side** uses repeatedly time and time again and blatantly gets away with because they are considered '**Royal Game / Protected Species'**".

Example (108) occurs in the same comment (107). The reader knows that the "we" in example (108) refers to White people; therefore, "the other side" would refer to Black people. The stancetaker suggests that the route this "other side" uses (to protest) is savage, barbaric, and violent. These terms would all conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as these items suggest something about morality. This stancetaker, therefore, observes 'Blackness' as 'bad'. The specific word choice to describe the "route" of the "other side" in this comment is interesting, as terms, such as "savage" and "barbaric" are largely associated with racist ideals

used to vilify Black individuals during the colonial era (Mazzon, 2021) similar to the "swartgevaar" mentioned in the analysis of the A1 data sets.

The stancetaker also refers to "the other side" (which the reader now knows is the Black population) as "Royal Game" or "Protected Species". These are dehumanising terms as they liken the Black population to animals ("game", "species"). While humans are technically a species, to classify a different race as a diverse species is a prominent level of implied belittlement—both of these terms. "Royal Game" and "Protected Species" would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter as the stancetaker attempts to portray 'Blackness' as 'bad'.

This text, the comment section of post A2, contains several evaluative items associated with racism and representations of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'. While racism is taken to mean prejudice against White groups and individuals and prejudice against Black groups and individuals in this text, it is associated with prejudice against White groups, particularly farmers. 'Whiteness' is portrayed as mainly 'good' in this text and under threat. 'Blackness' is portrayed as mainly 'bad' in this text and is portrayed as a large part of this threat to 'Whiteness'. This text mentions 'Whiteness' more than it mentions Blackness; however, often, when mentioning 'Whiteness', the stancetakers are implying something (usually negative) about 'Blackness'. This text holds more overtly evaluative items spread across the theme of ethnicity and echoes apartheid-era language and ideals.

ii. Theme 2: Role players

Farmers, farm workers, political stances, political parties, and political figures.

In analysing the A1 data set, how various role players are portrayed plays a crucial role in discussions of farm violence. Significant role players usually include farmers, farm workers, political stances, groups, and figures. The study elucidates the reference to these various role players in these examples.

In this text (A2 comment section), farmers are mentioned eighteen times and evaluated eighteen times; the EFF is mentioned thirty-one times, evaluated thirty times, and mentioned neutrally once; Julius Malema is mentioned nineteen times, evaluated eighteen times, and mentioned neutrally once; the ANC was mentioned fourteen times and evaluated fourteen times; the 'left-wing' was mentioned once and evaluated once. It was anticipated that the mention of the EFF and Julius Malema would feature several times within this comment section as the post includes a direct tweet from Malema. However, the post also includes Petzer's response to the tweet, yet Petzer is not mentioned in this comment section.

As this comment section features several evaluative items specifically associated with role players; therefore, this study cannot discuss nor display the instances as it would affect the length of the study; therefore, the study displays the most relevant instances. Of these displayed instances, only a few relevant examples are analysed to provide a basic gist of the influence of these comments. Examples of references to farmers are presented below:

(109) "This time it won't be the **poor little White** Reporter that you **swore at** and the **hundreds of times** you've **THREATENED** to **KILL THE <u>BOER</u>** This time you **COWARD** YOU can have your day. Don't send your **Cockroach Warriors**... COME WITH WERE WAITING!!!"

(110) "<u>Farmer</u> Lives Matter!!!!"

(111) "This time you will face real "<u>boere</u>" and not children and women, cowards".

(112) "I'm not sure how **fancy clothes** and **weaves** are going to work against some **very very angry** <u>farmers</u>. Who **btw** are **the reason u have food to eat**".

In the above examples (109) to (112), farmers are portrayed as both strong ("you will face real "boere"") and as victims ("threatened to kill the boer", "farmer lives matter"), providers ("the reason you have food to eat"). While the evaluative items differ in these examples and approach slightly varied themes, the examples all portray farmers as 'good'. Another interesting point to note about this comment section is that while 'farmers' are mentioned multiple times, there is no mention of farm workers compared to the A1 comment section.

Example (109) is especially intriguing as the "KILL THE BOER" mention alludes to the song "Dubul' ibhunu", discussed in both the A1 analysis and in Chapter 3, Section 3.2. The reader can deduce this is a reference to the song as the stancetaker remarks earlier in the comment that "this time it won't be the poor little White reporter…". As this is an excerpt from an isolated comment in the comment section of Post A2, the mention of the reporter's ethnicity would function as a contextual clue to whose stance (Petzer or Malema) this stancetaker is leaning towards. This would mean 'White' conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it acts as evidence for the stancetaker's observation. The reader, therefore, has adequate contextual information to know that the "you" the stancetaker is addressing is Malema. As Malema has been reprimanded for singing the "Dubul' ibhunu" song in the past, the threat this stancetaker refers to is Malema's continued singing of the song.

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"KILL THE BOER" would, therefore, be tagged an evaluative unit along the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it acts as evidence for why this "coward" (which the reader now knows implies Malema) can "have [their] day". That Malema will face something more powerful than the "poor little White reporter" ("who won't be") at the protests. The suggestion that "[they] are waiting" indicates this should be perceived as a threat. While portraying Malema as 'bad' for threatening to "kill the boer", this stancetaker is positioning the "boer" (farmer) as 'good'. The suggestion that farmers are "the reason u have food to eat" in example ((112)) is evidence of their 'goodness' and, therefore, conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter.

Example (110) is a critical comment in this text as it mimics the term "Black Lives Matter" (BLM), the name of a "political and social movement which advocates for non-violent civil disobedience in protest against police brutality and the violence of racism against Black people" (Vaughan, 2021). In 2020, the murder of African American George Floyd at the hands of a White American police officer caused an international uproar (Vaughan, 2021). While one might question why this relates to the discussion of farm violence, the Senekal and the BLM protests regarding George Floyd occurred in the same year – 2020; therefore, mentioning BLM in this text makes sense in the larger context of the time-span.

Interestingly, about a month before Floyd's murder, Collins Khosa, a Black South African man, was killed at the hands of The South African National Defence Force (SANDF), an issue largely ignored until Floyd's death and the international uproar caused by the BLM movement (Pillay, 2022). Both deaths led to a discussion of race and the lasting implications of racial oppression in South Africa and the world (Pillay, 2022).

The BLM movement and the death of Khosa are complex phenomena that could also be explored using evaluation; however, as this study focused on farm violence, it concerns the stance being taken by rewording the term "Black Lives Matter". Provided the large outroar caused by the BLM protests, the stancetaker attempts to make a point about "farmers lives" and is potentially implying that violence towards farmers should be met with the same level of outcry as deaths, such as Floyd's. This statement is heavily semantically loaded because of historical context. While saying "farmers lives matter" is an evaluative statement bar the historical context, it is less potent; however, understanding the historical context behind the term indicates layers to this statement.

While this example could conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter, it is tagged along the GOOD-BAD parameter as the reference to BLM is potentially too subtle for someone to grasp should they not have historical context. This differs from the Hitler mention in the A1 analysis as that historical reference is well established and widely understood. "Farmer Lives Matter" could be tagged along the IMPORTANCE and

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GOOD-BAD parameters; however, it is GOOD-BAD and has, therefore, been tagged as such. The stancetaker in example (110), therefore, observes farmers as 'good'. As the Senekal incident was focused on a gruesome farm violence incident, a remark like this is not out of place.

This comment section features multiple and specific mentions of Malema and the EFF. This is unsurprising as the post features a tweet from Malema; however, what is interesting about these mentions is the evaluative items surrounding the mention of the role players. While some instances portray Malema and the EFF in a positive light, the vast majority of these are overwhelmingly negative towards both parties. Examples of the mention of Malema are presented below:

(113)   "<u>Malema</u> has been waiting for this day. In his **chicken brain** he wishes to demolish the Whites and take what is theirs. Because he **has not worked for a thing in his life**. His hangers on don't know how long and cold a jail sentence is".

(114)   "Let's then see how <u>Kim Jong JuJu</u> and his inkwenke penis dribble followers like to starve".

(115)   "<u>JULIUS</u> SITS AT HOME IN HIS COLONIAL SUIT SIPPING COLONIAL CHAMPAGNE WHILE HE SENDS SAVAGES TO DO THE WORK".

(116)   "This <u>Julius</u> **boy** is got **mad cow disease**".

There is no mention of Malema in this text that portrays him as 'good'; instead, most of the comments mentioning Malema portray him as 'bad'. This can be observed in examples (65) to (71), where Malema is described as unintelligent ("chicken brain"), spoilt ("hasn't worked for a thing in his life"), a hypocrite ("sits at home in his colonial suit sipping colonial champagne and sends savages to do the work"), a dictator ("Kim Jong JuJu), and mentally unstable ("mad cow disease"). Malema's followers are also called "inkwenke penis dribble followers", inkwenke means "a boy" in Xhosa by referring to his followers this way, the stancetaker is suggesting that Malema is "a boy's penis dribble" therefore indicating that Malema is not to be taken seriously.

In example (113), the stancetaker suggests that Malema "wishes to demolish the Whites". This statement echoes the notion that the "EFF support[s] farm violence", discussed in the analysis of the A1 data set. The verb "demolish" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting that Malema has made a calculated decision to destroy a specific ethnic group ('Whites'). The positioning of Malema as wanting to destroy White people portrays him as the ultimate bad entity in this text.

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In example (114), Malema is called "Kim Jong JuJu" this exploit words likens Malema to North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un. North Korea is often cited as one of the last true "communist" states in the world, while the nation's primary ideology is technically "nationalism" (Dukalskis, 2020). Kim Jong Un's authoritarian rule is notorious worldwide (Dukalskis, 2020), and to liken Malema to Kim Jong Un is to label Malema a dictator. This label (Kim Jong JuJu), therefore, conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting that this stancetaker takes strong issue with Malema's leadership. To call someone a "dictator" is a negative implication.

In example (115), the stancetaker positions Malema as a hypocrite by remarking that he "sits at home…while he sends savages to do the work". This hypocrisy is emphasised by the mention of "colonial suits" and "colonial champagne". By mentioning that Malema is sitting at home enjoying, specifically, colonial luxuries (suits and champagne), the stancetaker is implying that Malema will enjoy "colonial" items while publicly denouncing colonialism (Phiri and Matambo, 2020). The mention of these items would conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as the intention is to provide evidence for Malema's hypocrisy. The suggestion that Malema "sends savages to do the work" is another attempt by the stancetaker to emphasise what the stancetaker observes as Malema's skewed morals. The stancetaker's choice to use the noun "savages" in this comment is intriguing as the term has a long history of dehumanising Black people specifically and has ties to the colonial era (Jardina and Piston, 2021).

Black people being "savages" is also woven into the "swart gevaar" narrative perpetuated during apartheid (Durrheim, 2005). While this stancetaker does not explicitly mention the EFF, the suggestion that Malema is sending "savages" to do the work is a direct reference to the post where Malema remarks that his "ground forces" will attend the protest; therefore, it is implied these "savages" are Malema's followers, the EFF, a party known for its pro-Black stance. The noun "savages" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it portrays Malema's followers negatively. While the historical significance of the term could lead it to be tagged along the IMPORTANCE parameter, it is more clearly an indication of morality and, therefore, is better suited to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

The EFF and Malema are understandably linked, and often, their mention implies something about the other; however, the EFF is also singled out and mentioned specifically throughout this text (A2). Aside from a few comments, see examples (115) and (116), most comments in this text portray the EFF negatively. Examples of the EFF's mention are presented below:

(117) "Down with the **racis**t EFF!!!! Amandla!!!!!!"

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In example (117), the EFF is being described as 'racist' an obvious instance of evaluation that conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter; however, perhaps more interesting is the term "Amandla". "Amandla" means "power" in the Nguni languages (Collins English Dictionary, 2023). The term was a political slogan by the ANC during the struggle against apartheid and is often used with the word "awethu" to form the full slogan "amandla awethu", which means "power to the people" (Misra, 2009). To use "amandla" in a statement that labels the EFF, a pro-Black party, 'racist' and calls for its downfall, is contradictory.

The term "amandla" is synonymous with the struggle against racial segregation and oppression at the hands of the White minority. It, therefore, specifically implies a struggle against 'Whiteness', and a struggle against 'Whiteness' is not what this stancetaker is suggesting. Perhaps the stancetaker has used the term "amandla" to distance themselves from being called racist. Perhaps the stancetaker used the term "Amandla" to make their stance appear more acceptable. "Amandla", therefore, conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it references a historically significant term to make a point. In this example, "amandla" could also be observed as hedging as the stancetaker attempts to make their initial evaluative statement more 'acceptable' to the reader. The stancetaker, therefore, enhances their stance by using verbal appropriation.

The loaded accusation that the "EFF supports farm murders", which was discussed in the analysis of the A1 data set, also appears in the comment section of this text (A2); however, the accusation is made more in this text (A2). Examples of its occurrence are presented below.

(118) "So, the <u>EFF</u> are basically **defending farm murderers** in court protest, because **they are the farm murderers**".

(119) "**Guess who sponsored the murderers**???!! The " "**peace-loving**" EFF. That's why they want to be there!!!"

(120) "<u>Ali Naka</u> a **full** <u>EFF member</u> is alleged of **being behind farm murders** in South Africa".

(121) "Oh, the <u>EFF</u> set everything alright, I forgot, and 10,000 times later nothing happens to them. Racist <u>ANC Government</u> in cahoots with <u>EFF</u> **Terrorist farm murderers**".

(122) "…**just another confirmation** that the <u>EFF</u> support farm murderers".

As this statement is elucidated in the A1 analysis, it is not clarified again here. The gist of this accusation is to label the EFF as the ultimate 'bad' entity. It is also worth noting that the term "terrorist" appears in example (121) again, which also ties to the "swart gevaar" notion, identifying a 'face' of the identity to direct anger towards.

Another loaded accusation about the EFF is the suggestion that the party is "like the ANC"; in this context, the ANC is an evaluative item as the party's likeness implies something negative. This is presented below.

> (123)   "<u>EFF</u> is like the <u>ANC</u>. In 1976 with **Sharpeville** the <u>ANC</u> was **so scared** they **used the kids in the front lines**".

The suggestion that the EFF is like the ANC, who "used kids in the front lines", is disturbing and makes a judgement about the EFF's morals; however, what is intriguing in this comment is the mention of "Sharpeville". The Sharpeville Massacre occurred on 21 March 1960 and resulted from a protest against anti-Black pass laws under apartheid rule (Lodge, 2011). The White police opened fire on the crowd, killing 69 Black people, including several children (United Nations South Africa, 2021). Sharpeville played a pivotal role in the struggle against apartheid and sparked hundreds of mass protests by Black South Africans (United Nations South Africa, 2021). To suggest that the ANC deliberately sacrificed children in this tragedy. The Sharpeville protest was against racial segregation, and it was the White police force responsible for those deaths. To imply that the ANC used children on the frontlines is a poor attempt to emphasise the ANC's fear on that day. To suggest that the EFF would act similarly is also to emphasise their "scaredness".

While most of the EFF's mentions are negative, there are a few comments in this text (A2) that attempt to defend the EFF. Some of these mentions are presented below:

> (124)   "The <u>EFF</u> will be there protesting to **save our democracy**".

> (125)   "We as <u>EFF</u> will keep on protesting **against** any **Racist** remarks".

In the two examples above (124) and (125), the EFF is portrayed as 'good'. This results from their attempt to "save our democracy" and their protest against "any racist remarks".

While other political parties are mentioned in this text, these parties are often mentioned in a comment that mentions the EFF and Malema. Owing to the length of this study, these political parties will, therefore, not be discussed as Malema and the EFF are the most pertinent of these mentions.

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As in the A1 analysis, the populist interpretations of polarised political stances "the left" and "the right" are also alluded to in this text. This text only explicitly mentions "the left" once and does not mention "the right". This instance is presented below:

> (126) "The *whole of* the *western world* has gone *politically correct* and *WOKE*. The universities and schools are run by **insane lefty cultural Marxists**".

The term "insane lefty cultural Marxists" is approached in example (126), elaborated here. The word "lefty" refers to the 'left wing'. This terminology is discussed in Section 5.4.2, presenting a semantic load. By adding the suffix -y to the term "left", the term is transformed from a noun to an adjective. This means that the stancetaker is naming an attribute (belonging to "left-wing ideology") of another noun (which the reader knows, in this, is the "cultural Marxists"). Cultural Marxism is widely regarded as a conspiracy theory; however, as with terms, such as "left-wing" and "right-wing", what the term initially meant versus what it means to the public is different (Jamin, 2018). As a critical theory, Cultural Marxism considers culture to be "something that needs to be studied within the system and the social relations through which it is produced and then carried by the people" (Jamin, 2018). The 1990s "Cultural Marxism" has been observed by several as a dangerous ideology that attempts to "destroy Western traditions and values" (Jamin, 2018). This aligns with White genocide, where a fear of the destruction of 'Whiteness' is expressed.

Provided the stancetaker's mention of "woke" and the description of these "Cultural Marxists", the reader realises that this stancetaker is adopting the latter, perhaps more populist, interpretation of the term; therefore, the stancetaker places themselves on 'the right'. The term "woke" is inextricably tied to Black consciousness and anti-racist struggles (Cammaerts, 2022). It originated as a Black slang word that expressed a need for African Americans to be "acutely aware and conscious of the dangers and threats inherent to a White-dominated racist America" (Cammaerts, 2022). In recent years, the term has shifted from a verb to an adjective and now includes various injustices (Cammaerts, 2022). The term has also become "weaponised" by "the right" are sometimes used as "an insult used against anyone who fights fascism, racism and other forms of injustices and discrimination and to signify a supposed progressive over-reaction" (Cammaerts, 2022). This is the intention of the stancetaker, in example (78). The term "lefty cultural Marxists" has been tagged along the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it is a negative judgement about "the left". The term "woke" in this context is an insult and, therefore, also conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it also implies a negative judgement about "the left".

The user in example (126) not only expresses distaste towards 'the left' but also uses widely used 'right wing' terminology. 'The left' is, therefore, represented as the ultimate 'bad' entity in this text.

This comment alludes to a populist stance that South African universities and schools are run by people determined to eradicate 'Whiteness'. This stancetaker implies that their stance is under threat. By positioning their stance as under threat, the stancetaker is portraying themselves as a victim.

iii.   Additional themes of interest

Hate, fear, and the 'greater good'.

As explained in the analysis of the A1 data sets, in these discourses on farm violence, a need exists to justify a stance by polarising it with another stance. There is a 'hatred' and a 'fear' of this 'other stance' justified against a 'greater good'. The below comment thread demonstrates how two opposing stances are justified in this text:

(127)   "**User H:** How many **Black** people have been **murdered** by you guys during an **Apartheid**?
'Molato ga Bole' You guys are *just barking for nothing*! *You guys* are *just making noise* and you *can't do anything.* <u>We, The EFF</u> will be there protesting to **save our democracy** and you can *bring you fucken Apartheid there 'we don't care'*, **we will wait for you to shoot or kill 1st, then we will see what will happen**!

(128)   **If you guys want a war we will give you the war**. It's not 1930 whereby you will have more Black people on your side.

(129)   I am saying this again: we are coming there to save our democracy!

(130)   This country **belongs to Black people** and *you guys are foreigners here*!

(131)   **User J:** u *aren't* **fighting for democracy**. There *is no peace-loving EFF*. U *bombed clicks stores over shampoo* for *God's sake,* but u *want to stop* the farmers protesting **violent disgusting genocide**. And how *quickly u forget* who *killed Stompie....* your *beloved* <u>Mrs Mandela</u>. *U forget who stole billions....* <u>the government</u>. *U forget who sits like a fat cat* and *doesn't go to the protests with you...* <u>Malema</u>*....seriously... wake up. Apartheid is long gone*. <u>EFF</u> and <u>ANC</u> **use u guys to their own ends**. That's **not democracy** that's **corruption**, **murder**, **rape**, and **theft**. *U guy*s *won't* have *anything at the end of the day*. They however **will be living like kings** and **the peasants will grovel. Does Zim ring any bells**?"

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In example (130), User H is justifying their stance (that the country "belongs to Black people" and that "the EFF is defending democracy") because of the violence perpetuated against Black people. The 'greater good' is to "defend democracy", and the fear of and hatred towards the implied 'White people' results from this violence and injustice. To User H, Black people may defend themselves against White people at protests such as Senekal ("we are coming there"). User H fears that they, too, will be murdered at the hands of White people ("Black people have been murdered by you guys during apartheid"). User H calls for a 'war' to defend Black people.

User J is justifying their stance (that the EFF is not attending the protests to "defend democracy" nor are they "peace-loving", instead they are 'corrupt' 'murderers', 'rapists', and 'thieves') by expressing hatred and fear towards the EFF and the ANC, justified by portraying them as 'bad' ("you forget who killed Stompie…your beloved Mrs Mandela", "you forget who sits like fat cats", "who doesn't go to the protests with you"). User J fears becoming like "Zim" and feels the need to 'defend' (protest) their stance. The 'greater good' according to User J, is "protesting a violent, disgusting genocide".

Both users emphasise the 'badness' of the other users' people to prove their stance to be the most morally sound. One user is pointing at the other user pushing a narrative like "you are bad because you have done this bad thing, therefore I am good". Both users portray themselves as victims, and both users justify their calls to action (to protest and to defend democracy) as a part of a greater issue, the cause of their victimisation.

This comment thread (132) also makes two historically significant references, the first is a reference to the Clicks saga, discussed in example (133), and the second is a reference to Zimbabwean history, discussed in Chapter 2. The Clicks saga and Zimbabwean history are mentioned multiple times throughout this text, and both are mentioned to portray 'Blackness' negatively. Some of these references are presented below:

(132)   "These are the guys that attack **Clicks** customers??? This has nothing to do with protecting property".

(133)   Peace loving?? But they **bombed <u>clicks</u>** stores.

(134)   This time the <u>EFF</u> won't be **pushing housewives around in clicks**. They will be dealing with big strong men.

(135)   "A Zim is on its way".

(136)   "Does Zim ring any bells?"

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(137)   "…he brought Zimbabwe soldiers to kill White farmers and truck drivers".

(138)   "u keep on believing that Zim's issues aren't because they chased the Whites away".

The Clicks saga, mentioned in examples (132) to (134), functions as evidence of the EFF's irrationality. Zimbabwean history, mentioned in examples (135) to (138), is a cautionary tale of what happens to African countries when 'Whiteness' is removed.

The comment section of Post A2 aligns with the page's stance (that Malema and the EFF should not attend farm violence protests). The comment section mentions racism multiple times but alternates its implication by positioning White individuals and groups encountering racial prejudice. 'Whiteness' is perceived as 'good' in these comments and 'Blackness' as 'bad'; however, there are a few instances where discussions where 'Blackness' is defended as 'good' and 'Whiteness' is expressed as 'bad'.

There are two major stances in this text: 1) that farm violence is a calculated attempt by the EFF, the ANC, and other Black groups to exterminate 'Whiteness', and 2) that the EFF, ANC, and Black groups are defending themselves against racism and, therefore, their distaste of 'Whiteness' is justified. The first stance is the more prominent stance. This page features several explicit instances of racism but uses subtle references to, and occasionally, historical events provided as evidence to express a racist stance implicitly. It was anticipated there would be a great deal of discussion about the EFF and Malema in this comment section, as the post to which these comments refer features a tweet made by Malema.

What is perhaps the most concerning finding on this page is the mention of "Cultural Marxism", and the deliberate spreading of myths, such as the notions that Black people and the apartheid-era leaders killed Chris Hani were framed, that the ANC deliberately sacrificed children in the Sharpeville massacre and the notion that farm violence is government sponsored and EFF supported. Several comments on this page also perpetuate the harmful notion that Black people are inherently unintelligent, violent, and 'bad'. This comment section features more extreme stances than the A1 data set. This comment section echoes apartheid-era language, therefore, detracts from the core purpose of the Senekal protest – which was to protest farm violence. While this is largely a result of the contents of the initial post shared (tweets about the protest by direct role players as opposed to a news report, for instance), it does shed an interesting light on how racial tension looms in the mention of farm violence and leads to heated arguments.

This page observes the Senekal protest as necessary and validates the measures taken by the "protesters" as a defence against 'badness' which, in this text, is the EFF and Malema. This page also observes farm violence as a "genocide", indicating that 'Whiteness' is being eradicated in South Africa.

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5.5 Text B1 findings

The B1 post and B1 comment section occur on the same page as the A1 data sets. This means this page adopts a stance that observes farm violence as a part of the general crime problem in South Africa and, therefore, does not believe that farm violence is an indicator of White genocide. The incident in this text involved two Black victims, the Coka brothers, who were killed on a farm in Mkhondo; the full details of this incident can be observed in Chapter 2. As this page's stance on farm violence was discussed thoroughly in the A1 analysis, it is explored again here.

This text (B1) mainly observed the killing of the Coka brothers as a tragedy that deserved as much attention as farm violence involving a White victim. Most users in this comment section suggested that groups, such as AfriForum, would not support this incident of farm violence, nor would it gain as much media attention as the victims were Black. This is an interesting suggestion, as this incident did not receive as much attention on this page as the Senekal incident. A common accusation established in the B1 comment section is that White farmers, racist, deserve retaliation, and revenge should be taken on them. The post in this data set (B1) frames the Coka brothers as good men whom farmers killed in a calculated and violent manner. While most comments on this post align with the post's stance and the page's stance, a few instances of comments questioned this stance.

Another interesting finding in this comment section was a screenshot implicating the brothers and other non-White individuals present when the incident occurred as guilty of the death. This screenshot was shared multiple times throughout the text and opposes the post and page's stance; however, upon closer examination, this screenshot demonstrates the fabrication of 'evidence' by the other side and, therefore, while appearing to oppose the page's stance, reinforced it by portraying the other side negatively.

The first section of this analysis focuses on the quantitative findings, or rather patterns, which provide a general overview of how evaluative language is employed in these texts (B1 post and B1 comment section). The quantitative findings are merely presented to provide a bigger picture of evaluative language, but the analyses focus on the qualitative findings addressed after that. The quantitative findings of the B1 post are described in the subsequent section.

5.5.1   Text B1 post: Quantitative representations

As this post is a news report, it was anticipated that it would feature fewer instances of evaluation than the A1 and A2 posts; this post was not free of evaluation. Of the total evaluative words in this text (B1 post), 15.44% were evaluative.

Of the total evaluative words in this text, 52.32% belong to evaluative items found along the GOOD-BAD parameter, 20.93% belong to evaluative items found along the IMPORTANCE parameter, 15.12% belong to evaluative items found along the CERTAINTY parameter and 11.63% belong to evaluative items found along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. As mentioned in section 5.2, evaluative items are not limited to words in these texts, therefore it is worth exploring these items as instances. The evaluative items in this text (B1 post) are parallel to all four evaluative parameters.

The distribution of these items across the four parameters is presented below in Figure 5.7.
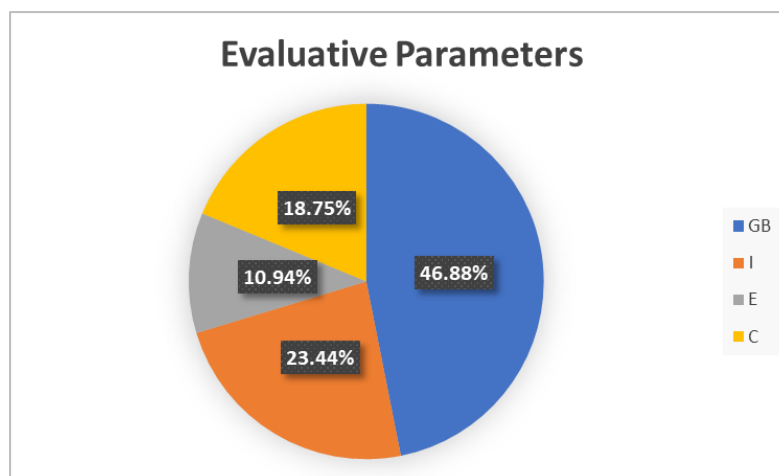
Figure 5.7:   **Evaluative parameter distribution across the text, per total evaluative instances in text: B1 post**

In this text (B1 post), the GOOD-BAD parameter is the most used at 46.88%, while this phenomenon is to be expected, as the GOOD-BAD parameter is the core evaluative parameter. In analysing the previous posts, the GOOD-BAD parameter is still a valuable origin for observing issues involving a question of morality. The second most applied parameter in this text is the IMPORTANCE parameter at 23.44%, CERTAINTY is the third most applied parameter at 18.75%, and EXPECTEDNESS is the least used parameter at 10.94%. This text's parameter distribution aligns with the A1 post's parameter distribution, with the popularity of parameters following the exact pattern. The A1 post features 8.22% more evaluative items along the GOOD-BAD parameter, whereas this text features 4.82% more evaluative items along the

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EXPECTEDNESS parameter. As the B1 post is a news report, it is understandable that it features less evaluative items along the GOOD-BAD parameter. This post (B1) does, however, adopt a slightly different distribution pattern to the A2 post, with CERTAINTY being the second most applied parameter in the A2 post and IMPORTANCE being the least used. This text (B1 post) also uses the GOOD-BAD parameter 16.45% less than the A2 post.

While the parameter distribution throughout a text summarises how the text's evaluation is expressed, the specific evaluative items used in the text offer a more detailed idea of how the page conceptualises farm violence. The most frequently occurring evaluative items in this text (Post B1) are presented below in

Table 5.6.

Table 5.6:   **Most frequent evaluative words/phrases found across the text: B1 post**

N	Evaluative item (s)	Parameter	Freq.
1	COULD	C	3
2	FIANCÉE	I	3
3	AILING	I	2
4	DEEPLY	I	2
5	DEMAND	GB	2

While this Post (B1) features fewer evaluative items than posts A1 and A2, evaluative items addressing some main themes of farm violence (ethnicity, role players and hate, fear, and the greater good) are still present in the text. These items are, however, not indicated in the frequency list. As this text is less semantically loaded than the previous two posts (A1 and A2), the evaluation patterns are not as obvious in this list, as there is little repetition. The stancetaker in this post is a journalist and, therefore, would adopt more neutral language; therefore, evaluative items are usually, throughout this text, less obvious than in the A posts.

Upon closer examination of the text, however, the study established that, while subtle, this text addresses the major themes observed in the A data sets. These evaluative items are discussed as qualitative representations of the data in the following section.

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Evaluative language clusters around two major themes across the texts, indicating ethnicity and role players; the three subthemes, include hate, fear, and a call to defend the 'greater good'. These themes are discussed below while elucidating evaluative items.

i. Theme 1: Ethnicity

Racism and representations of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'.

Of the total evaluative instances found in this text (B1 post), 0.13% of the instances address ethnicity. Of the total ethnicity instances whiteness and blackness are addressed equally, and racial issues are not addressed.

There is no direct mention of racism in this Post (B1); however, the stancetaker refers to a "racial incident" when reporting the Mkhondo incident. This is presented below:

> (139)   "Two **farmers** charged with murder of **workers**. One of the **two brothers** who were shot and killed in a suspected **racial** incident was murdered days before he could introduce his **pregnant fiancée** to his **mother**".

In example (139), the adjective 'racial' is less incriminating than the adjective 'racist' would be; however, 'racial' still indicates that race played a crucial role in this incident and would, therefore, conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter. While the stancetaker does not explicitly mention the ethnicity of the farmers and the farm workers, the reader knows that the males killed were Black, as images of the brothers were included in the news report. Their ethnicity is also confirmed further on in the report by an outside source, refer to example (139); therefore, the reader can deduce this "racial incident" was targeted at Black males and, therefore, the stancetaker is implying that the farmers were racist; however, the stancetaker also uses the hedge "suspected" to distance themselves from the accusation. The verb "suspected" conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it indicates this "racial incident" is not obvious to the stancetaker.

The stancetaker also suggests that one brother was "murdered" in this "racial incident" "days before he could introduce his *pregnant fiancée* to his *mother*". Using the verb "murder" (used in this text in the past tense "murdered") is interesting as it implies pre-meditation and calculation by the farmers. It would, therefore, conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter. The further suggestion that this "murder" occurred right before ("days before") this victim could introduce his "pregnant fiancée" to his "mother" indicates that the stancetaker attempts to emphasise the tragedy of this farm violence incident. The evaluative items "days

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before", "pregnant fiancée" and "mother", therefore, all conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as these items function as evidence to the reader for why this incident was even more tragic than a "racial incident". In providing this evidence, the reader is positioned to observe the farmers as 'bad'. There is no direct reference to 'Whiteness' in this text; however, there is one direct reference to 'Blackness'. This reference is presented below:

> (140)   "Ntombi said the family wants the suspects to rot in jail. "I think the farmers didn't even hesitate to pull the trigger because they know Black **life doesn't matter** and [they] will soon get out of prison ", she said".

The mention of 'Blackness' in example (140) is an instance of attribution; this means that the stancetaker is not taking responsibility for the statement. The suggestion that the farmers "know Black life doesn't matter" is a provocative accusation, and while the stancetaker is not stating this opinion directly, the decision to include it in the report suggests that this is the stance the stancetaker is leaning towards. The comment is credited to Ntombi, identified as the victim's niece. It is, therefore, to be anticipated that her statement would be emotionally provocative. The statement "Black life doesn't matter" subtly references the BLM movement mentioned in the analysis of the A2 data set and, therefore, conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter. Ntombi's suggestion that these farmers "know" that "Black life doesn't matter" indicates CERTAINTY as it suggests Ntombi is convinced that this is what the farmers believe. This CERTAINTY further emphasises that Ntombi and the stancetaker observe the farmers as 'bad'. The suggestion that the farmers "didn't even hesitate to pull the trigger" further emphasises that these farmers were calculated in their killing of the Coka brothers.

ii.   Theme 2: Role players

Farmers and farm workers.

In this text (B1 post), farmers are mentioned eight times, evaluated six times, and mentioned neutrally twice; farm workers are mentioned three times, evaluated twice, and mentioned neutrally once. As demonstrated in the previous section, the stancetaker subtly positions the reader to not only observe these farmers as 'bad' but also as calculated. Another reference to farmers that frames them as the ultimate 'bad' entity is presented below:

> (141)   "Ntombi Coka, told Sowetan that her uncles were **killed** while **breaking up** a fight between the **jobseekers** and <u>farmers</u>. "I went to the scene and when I arrived, I

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found farmers **chasing people** around. My uncles were **lying down** with **bullets wounds**", she said".

In example (141), Ntombi's uncles (the Coka brothers) are alleged to have been "breaking up a fight" when they were killed. This suggests something about their morals and frames them as 'good'. This evaluative item, therefore, conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

It is also worth noting that the term "jobseekers" explains who the farmers were fighting. This implies those involved in this fight were not necessarily farm workers at that specific farm; however, as the farmers are presented to have been "chasing people around", the stancetaker observes these "jobseekers" as 'good'. The term "jobseeker" is also positive, as it suggests these individuals were seeking work. This term would, therefore, conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

It is interesting to observe that the terms "murdered" and "killed" are used interchangeably in this news report. While "murder" is a technical term, this news report broke when the farmers were charged with murder and not yet convicted. While they might later be convicted of murder, this was yet to be proven. To suggest that the Coka brothers were "murdered", as observed in example (139), is a subtle indication that the stancetaker observes the farmers as already guilty. In this example (141), however, it is remarked that the Coka brothers were "killed". This term is more ambiguous and does not necessarily imply a calculated decision behind death. "Killed" also conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

While this news report addresses the Mkhondo incident, upon closer examination, the stancetaker discusses two farm violence incidents, with the second referring to an incident in Limpopo. This is slightly confusing as there appears to be more to the Mkhondo incident. The Limpopo incident is not discussed in this analysis owing to the restricted length of this study.

iii.   Additional themes of interest

Hate, fear, and the 'greater good'.

In this text (Post B1), while attributed to Ntombi, hatred is expressed towards the farmers ("murdered days before he could introduce his pregnant fiancée to his mother"), fear is expressed for Black lives ("Black life doesn't matter") and the greater good is expressed as a call for these farmers to "rot in jail".

This Post (Post B1) does not feature as several instances of evaluation as the A posts do, and this Post (B1) expresses an objective observation of the incident; however, upon closer examination, it becomes evident

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that evaluation is still present in the text. Most of these evaluations do not sustain a heavy semantic load and, therefore, subtly guide the reader to adopt their stance. This text positions the farmers as 'bad' and emphasises this badness by incorporating details about the victims and including quotes from their nieces. It is also interesting that the most obvious instances of evaluation are credited to this niece, and the stancetaker, therefore, distances themselves from this stance.

This post did not garner as much attention as the A1 post did; however, there were several instances of evaluation worth exploring in the comment section. The quantitative findings of the B1 comment section are presented below.

5.5.3   B1 comment section: Quantitative representations

Of the total words in this text (B1 comment section), 44.17% were evaluative. This meant this comment section was 8.06% more evaluative than the A1 comment section but 7.39% less evaluative than the A2 comment section. It is also worth mentioning that 32.27% of the evaluative items in this text (B1 comment section) feature on a screenshot shared multiple times throughout the text; therefore, much of the B1 comment section comprises repeated evaluative items.

Of the total evaluative words in this text, 34.55% belong to evaluative items found along the GOOD-BAD parameter, 25.83% belong to evaluative items found along the IMPORTANCE parameter, 27.19% belong to evaluative items found along the CERTAINTY parameter and 12.43% belong to evaluative items found along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. As mentioned in section 5.2, evaluative items are not limited to words in these texts, therefore it is worth exploring these items as instances. The evaluative items in this text (B1 comment section) are parallel to all four evaluative parameters.

The distribution of these items across the four parameters is presented below in Figure 5.8.

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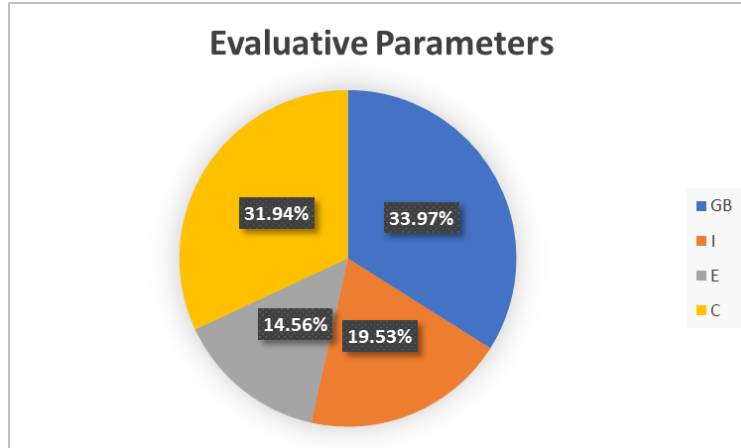
Figure 5.8: Evaluative parameter distribution across the text, per total evaluative instances in text: B1's comment section

While the GOOD-BAD parameter is the most applied in this text at 33.97%, the parameter is used 10.76% less often in this text (B1 comment section) than in the A1 comment section and 10.72% A2 comment section. Conversely, the CERTAINTY parameter is used 6.87% more often in this text than in the A1 comment section and 11.19% more often than in the A2 comment section. The CERTAINTY parameter is, therefore, the second most applied evaluative parameter in this text at 31.94%. The third most applied evaluative parameter in the B1 comment section is the IMPORTANCE parameter at 19.53%. This parameter is used 8.39% more often in this text than in the A1 comment section, but only 1.03% more often than in the A2 comment section. EXPECTEDNESS is used least often in this text, at 14.56%, a phenomenon also observed in the A data sets. This distribution pattern was likely influenced by sharing the screenshot mentioned. The screenshot specifically discusses elements of truthfulness, conforming to the CERTAINTY parameter, which could explain the dramatic increase in using the CERTAINTY parameter in this text. While the parameter distribution across the texts solidly summarises how evaluative language is employed, a word frequency list summarises the patterns of evaluative items in the text.

This text's (B1 comment section) frequency list features several function words, such as 'will', 'if', and 'just'. However, it also features critical content words, such as 'White, 'Black', and 'White supremacy'. The frequency list for the A2 comment section emerges below in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Most frequent evaluative words/phrases found across the text: B1's comment section

N	Evaluative item (s)	Parameter	Freq.
1	WHITE	I	30
2	BLACK	I	25

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N	Evaluative item (s)	Parameter	Freq.
3	ARE	C	21
4	WILL	C	19
5	FAKE	C	9
6	IF	E	8
7	JUST	E	8
8	MUST	C	7
9	NOW	E	7
10	SHOULD	C	7
11	ALWAYS	C	6
12	CAN	C	6
13	DON'T	C	6
14	EVEN	I	6
15	IS	C	6
16	AFRICAN	I	5
17	CAN'T	C	5
18	KILLED	GB	5
19	NOT	C	5
20	SO	E	5
21	UNFORTUNATELY	GB	5
22	WHITE SUPREMACISTS	GB	5
23	ALL	C	4
24	ALMOST	C	4
25	BELIEVE	C	4

The evaluative items demonstrated in the frequency list helped identify two major themes and three subthemes across the texts. A selection of content words and larger evaluative items are explored regarding these themes in the following section.

5.5.4 B1 comment section: Qualitative representations

Evaluative language clusters around two major themes across the texts, indicating ethnicity and role players; the three subthemes, include hate, fear, and a call to defend the 'greater good'. These themes are discussed below while elucidating evaluative items.

i.   Theme 1: Ethnicity

Racism and representations of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'.

Of the total evaluative instances found in this text (B1 comment section), 11.96% of the instances address ethnicity. Of the total ethnicity instances, 46.23% address whiteness, 40.57% address blackness, and 13.20% address racial issues.

In this text (B1 comments), the term 'racist' is used both as a noun and an adjective. The term 'racist' as a noun presents a heavier semantic load than using the term as an adjective; however, both instances conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as these items offer a moral judgement, specifically about a particular ethnicity. In this text, the term 'racist' describes prejudice against Black groups and individuals only. The noun "racism" is also used in this text. The term is a noun, but as it labels a behaviour rather than an identity, it is less incriminating than 'racist'.

An example of how the term "racism" is used in this text is presented below:

> (142)   "***Reveng**e sometimes is always* the *best medicine*, otherwise this *Will never stop*. *White* **racism** in *White* <u>owned farms</u> is *rife*, and people come to social media to *defend* that *evil*. Even this government has *failed* to contain this *horrible* treatment of <u>workers</u> etc".

In example (142), the stancetaker emphasises that the racism they refer to specifically applies to White farmers. The stancetaker repeats the term 'White' fist to describe "racism" and then to describe the owners of these farms. In both instances, the mention of 'White' conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it provides the reader with crucial details about whom the stancetaker's observations are focused on. "Racism" used in example (142) is observed as a justification for "revenge" towards these farmers. The noun racism conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter; however, the adjective "rife" used to emphasise that this racism is a common occurrence conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter. The stancetaker suggests that to stop the "horrible treatment of workers" on "White owned farms", revenge should be taken on these "White farmers". This statement has a threatening undertone and could be observed as calling for violence.

While the term "racism" does not present as much of a semantic load as calling someone 'racist', as observed in example (142); however, it is still a provocative term, especially when emphasised with additional evaluative items, also observed in example (142). When "racism" is used, it describes a 'behaviour' rather than an identity and, therefore, appears less permanent. To label a group or individual as

"racists" or "a racist" is to link this behaviour ('racism') to who they are as a person. The evaluated (the group or individual targeted with the label) is, therefore, observed as intrinsically 'bad'. Examples of how the term 'racist' is used in this text are presented below:

> (143)   Are you saying we must grab every land *"OWNED"* by a **racist**?.... lol I think I love this idea In fact - not only farms to be seized - all property belonging to **racists**. We've *tolerated* their *behaviour long enough*. *It's time to take back what's ours*.

> (144)   "…you such an *evil apartheid beneficiary*. **Addicted racist**".

> (145)   "NOTICE HOW *WHITE SUPREMACISTS* TRY TO *HIDE* AMONG **NON-RACIST** *WHITES*".

In example (143), revenge is referenced once again. Here, a stancetaker is responding to another user with a rhetorical question that insinuates that "every land "OWNED" by a racist" must be "grabbed". This ties into land expropriation, discussed in Chapter 2. Placing the term "owned" in quotation marks indicates that the stancetaker is being sarcastic and that they do not believe these individuals ("racists") own the land, to begin with. The evaluative item "owned", therefore, conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. The stancetaker expands on justified "land grabs" by suggesting that "not just farms" but "all property belonging to racists" should be "seized" and that it is "time to take back what's ours". The phrase "take back what's ours" conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, implying that the land was taken away from this stancetaker. Provided the context of land expropriation, the reader can deduce that the stancetaker refers to land reallocated by the Native Land Act in 1913, a motion which land reform aims to rectify. The suggestion that land be "seized" is justified as these people are "racists" and, therefore, according to the stancetaker, deserving of this.

In example (144), the stancetaker refers to someone not only as an "addicted racist" but also as an "evil apartheid beneficiary". To suggest that someone is an "addicted racist" is to suggest that not only is this person prejudice, but they are also incapable of stopping this prejudice. That means this stancetaker observes whomever they are directing this stance towards as inherently 'bad', and this badness is emphasised by their inability to behave differently. "Addicted racist" has been tagged as a unit of evaluation as it describes the specific nature of the 'racist' whom this stancetaker addresses. "Addicted racist" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter. The "addicted racist" is also described as an "apartheid beneficiary", which emphasises their 'badness' as it insinuates that this individual is an "addicted racist" who benefitted from a separatist regime. To further indicate to the reader just how 'bad' this person is, the

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stancetaker calls them "evil"; both "evil" and "apartheid beneficiary" conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

In example (144), the term "non-racist" describes certain White people. The term "non-racist" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and indicates these White people are 'good'. The term is juxtaposed with the term "White supremacists", considered the 'bad' group of White people. The attempt by these "White supremacists" to "hide" among "non-racist Whites" suggests that not all White people are racist, but White supremacists often disguise themselves as these White people. The verb "hide", therefore, also conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

Alike the A data sets, the representations of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness' on these pages play a critical role in how farm violence is discussed. As observed above, 'Whiteness' is 'good' in this comment section (B1); however, it is more often observed as 'bad'. As in the A data sets, while most of the stances represented in this comment section align with the page, some commenters challenge this observation. An excerpt from a comment thread that features two differing stances on 'Whiteness' is presented below:

(146) "**User K:** [From Image]: I think it's SUPER that **White** countries are all being turned into third-world melting pots! It will END RACISM. **WHITE GENOCIDE**? That's just a **White supremacist** racist conspiracy theory that isn't even happening!

(147) **User L: White people**! You always seeking attentions. Yoo".

In example (147), the commenter shares an image, featuring a sarcastic remark; the second user addresses the image by remarking that "White people" are "always seeking attentions". User K has shared an image and did not type their comment; therefore, this could be observed as an attributed stance; however, as there is no other text shared by this user, it can be assumed that their stance aligns with that expressed in this comment. The text begins by using the word "super" to describe how "White countries" are being turned into "third-world melting pots". The adjective "super" conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it is sarcastic, the adjective 'White' conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it is specifically "White countries" being turned into "third-world", and "melting pots" both conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as these items indicate the country is 'declining' and follows a similar construction to the terms "shithole third-world country", addressed in example (90) in the A2 comment section analysis.

User K then remarks that this (the turning of White countries into "third-world melting pots") will "end racism". While ending racism would be considered 'good' it is 'bad' as it is sarcastic; therefore, while it alludes to the GOOD-BAD parameter, it is tagged on the EXPECTEDNESS parameter.

User K mentions "White genocide" and that it is "just a White supremacist conspiracy theory that isn't even happening". This statement is sarcastic and implies that the stancetaker believes there is a White genocide happening. While these evaluative items depict 'Whiteness' as 'bad', the sarcasm indicates that this stancetaker observes 'Whiteness' as 'good'.

User L responds by remarking that "White people" are always "seeking attentions", positioning them as 'bad' as "seeking attentions" would conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

Importantly, 'Whiteness' is mentioned multiple times throughout the text, but most of these occur because of a screenshot shared multiple times. The screenshot offers an interesting discussion about 'the greater good', discoursed in Section 5.4.4. iii. An example of a comment observing 'Whiteness' as 'bad' is indicated below:

> (148) "It is heartbreaking that some **White supremacists** and racists still do not value a life of a human being. But they don't regard Black people and **POC of colour** as fellow human beings, they see animals and subhumans. And when people retaliate, they play victims".

In example (148), the stancetaker refers to "White supremacists" specifically. This term conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter. When used with the term "racists", it emphasises the 'badness' of whomever they are referring to. As the reader has the context of the posts, it can be deduced that the farmers are being portrayed as White supremacists, as this example has been taken from an isolated comment. Implying that the farmers are "White supremacists" and "racists" is already a loaded accusation; however, this stancetaker further emphasises their distaste for these individuals by suggesting that they do not "value" the "life of a human being"; they do not regard "Black people and POC of colour [people of colour (POC)] as human beings" but as "animals and subhumans". The verb "value" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter. The specific description that their racism extends to 'Black' people and "POC of colour" would conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as the ill-treatment of these groups specifically led to these labels. The stancetaker suggests that "when people retaliate, they play victims" this statement plays into a similar notion mentioned in example (148), where because these people are "White supremacists and racist", they deserve to have either "land grabbed" or "retaliation". The verb "retaliate" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter

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and indicates a need to attack a similar attack. While this stancetaker does not explicitly mention farm violence directed at White farmers, provided the context of the comment, it can be deduced that this is what "retaliation" alludes to. As with most texts analysed, 'Whiteness' is contrasted with Blackness; this can be observed in the below example:

> (149) "**Mandela people** that he loved so much that he forgave without apologizing "we are animals" we are **eliminated** because we are **cowards Black people** suffer because hate themselves Black people **hate <u>EFF</u> that is Black** and **love <u>ANC</u> that is White** wuuu wiiii".

In example (149), White people are called "Mandela people"; the reader knows this label called White people. The context of the second part presents the reader with a contextual clue ("Black people hate EFF that is Black and love ANC that is White") as Mandela was a part of the ANC and the first democratically elected president of South Africa. This comment is interesting, as it depicts 'Whiteness' as 'bad' but does not depict 'Blackness' as 'good' either.

In this comment, White people are 'bad' for doing something 'bad' that Mandela "forgave without apologising" in South African history. The reader knows this 'bad thing' that Mandela forgave was the apartheid regime. "Mandela" is, therefore, an evaluative item and, while a proper noun, is being used to describe White people and, therefore, conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter.

In this comment section (B1 comment section), Black people are not depicted as 'bad' in that they are violent and dangerous, as in the A2 findings, for instance, but as 'bad' for "hating themselves", especially for "hating the EFF that is Black". The verb "hate" is heavily provocative and conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and insinuates that Black people strongly dislike themselves. "Black" is an adjective and, therefore, conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter. This comment arrives at one main point, subtly encoded in the context: if Black people want to stop "hating themselves", they need to "love" the EFF, "which is Black". 'Blackness' is, therefore, not observed as 'good' but not as 'bad'; it is observed as something that needs to be 'loved' (but is not), and for it to be 'loved', it requires the EFF (Black). The EFF is, therefore, observed as the 'good' entity in this comment.

Example (150) is a complex illustration of how evaluation can express an issue but imply something else. Most references to 'Blackness' in this text are, however, less complex. Although the notion that the ANC does not care for the Black population is a notion that emerges again. This notion can be observed in the below example:

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(150)   "They say we are free but Black people are still treated like this under ANC, in an African country. It's exhausting and sad".

In example (150), the stancetaker suggests that Black people are "still treated like this under ANC" and remarks it is "exhausting and sad". This comment refers directly to the killing of the Coka brothers and indicates that the stancetaker does not feel that Black people are free in South Africa. This, once again, subtly mentions South Africa's racial past and 'Black' is used to describe the people still suffering because of this past. 'Black' is, therefore, used as an adjective and conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter. Examples (149) and (150) have one major theme in common; both examples portray the government as being uninterested in the struggles of its 'Black' population. 'Black' in this comment is, therefore, depicted as 'good'. As evidenced by the above examples, specific role players are crucial in discussing farm violence. The specific role players mentioned in this text (including the EFF and ANC) are discussed below.

ii.   Theme 2: Role players

Farmers, farm workers, political stances, political parties, and political figures.

In this text (B1 comment section), farmers are mentioned thirteen times and evaluated thirteen times; farm workers are mentioned four times and evaluated four times; the EFF is mentioned twice and evaluated twice; the ANC is mentioned three times and three times; AfriForum is mentioned five times and evaluated five times; the 'left-wing' is mentioned twice and evaluated twice; the 'right-wing' is mentioned five times and evaluated five times.

As mentioned throughout this study, the commenting feature allows multiple stancetakers to express their opinions on the page's post. In this comment section, an interesting phenomenon occurs where two stancetakers reference the Senekal incident (the incident addressed by the A data sets). The reference to the Senekal incident is presented below:

(151)   What's your views on this murder??? He did not trespass or harass anyone! You're all quiet when a **White man** loses his life! May Jesus save us all...

(152)   [From an Image]: Didiza says murder of young <u>farm manager</u> was 'senseless'. Brendin Horner's body was found tied to a pole on Thursday…"

In example (151), the stancetaker diverts attention from the Mkhondo incident, where two Black males were murdered, to address the Senekal incident, where a White male was murdered. The stancetaker accuses the page of being "all quiet when a White man loses his life" and shares a screenshot of a news update with

details of Horner's death. The stancetaker also suggests that the page does not 'care' about White farmers and only concerns farm violence if it involves Black people. This echoes statements about 'Blackness' in this post ("Black life don't matter"). White" conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it describes the man's (whom the reader knows is Brendin Horner) ethnicity. Horner's ethnicity is an important detail about whom this stancetaker observes as deserving of attention, especially regarding farm violence. This infuses into White victimhood often associated with farm violence. This stancetaker observes 'Whiteness' as 'good'.

While example (152), discussed below, occurs in a comment thread, it still directly refers to the mention of Horner in example (151). Both instances offer an interesting observation of two highly visible and polarised stances. Example (153) is presented below:

> (153)   "Who kill <u>Brendin Horner</u>? Black people you want to say??? How pity, maybe you kill him because **boer do that in the apartheid** kill other **boers** and **blame it to my kind**!!!"

In example (153), the stancetaker suggests that it was the "boer" who "killed [Brendin] Horner" and not the Black suspects. This accusation echoes a similar accusation about the killing of Chris Hani in the A2 comment section, where a stancetaker suggests that it was "you evil people" (indicate Black people) who killed Chris Hani and blamed it on the White government. In example (153), the stance uses "boer" twice. While the term "boer" means "farmer", as it is an Afrikaans word, it indicates a specific type of farmer (an Afrikaans farmer, therefore, a White farmer). While the term "boer" could be tagged as a single evaluative item, the full accusation ("boer do that in apartheid") is strong and alludes to South African history; therefore, this term is tagged along the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it acts as 'evidence' for this stancetaker's observation that "boer" killed Horner and blamed it on Black people. The Hanie and Horner blame-shifting intends to portray the other side as 'bad'. The perception that 'White' farmers deserve farm violence occurs multiple times throughout this text. Some examples are presented below:

> (154)   "<u>Farmers</u> neh then they wonder why the **brutal killings** on <u>Farmers</u>. they treat people with such evil and want them to accept and move on like they always say we must **"GET OVER APARTHEID"** well...and this will never make news and <u>AfriForum</u> lawyers will make sure not justice will be served".

> (155)   "The **dog's food is worth double what they pay their <u>employees</u>** a month. It's <u>not just in the farms</u> even our **mothers** who work in their homes cleaning and taking care of their kids live are **paid with leftovers that they don't even dare give their**

dogs. Their dogs and cats have medical aid yet the people who take care of them can't even afford to go see a doctor".

(156) "Cos <u>farmers</u> are **treating their <u>workers</u> like shit** it's **modern-day slavery**. Thing is the workers are afraid to talk about how they are treated at the farms. Unemployment is high so they reckon better to keep quiet".

In examples (154) to (156), farmers are portrayed as 'bad'. Their 'badness' is emphasised by "treating their workers like shit" and "modern-day [slaves]", paying their employees less than what they spend on "dog food", and the Mkhondo incident "never making the news".

In example (154), the stancetaker places "get over apartheid" in quotation marks, indicating attribution. The stancetaker suggests the lack of grounds for "getting over apartheid" as the 'farmers' still "treat people with such evil". The t expression "get over apartheid" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it indicates a judgement; however, the judgement is not on the irrelevance of apartheid as it would suggest without the quotation marks, but the **relevance** of apartheid. This "evil", according to the stancetaker, is the reason for the "brutal killings" on farms.

The phrase "brutal killings" is tagged as one evaluative unit along the GOOD-BAD parameter as one focal point. The terms make sense as single evaluative items in this text; however, the study did not tag them as individual items as the terms, in this context, would lose the evaluative poignancy the stancetaker attempts to convey. In this comment, the stancetaker suggests that brutal farm killings happen because of the poor treatment of 'Black' people. This notion is deduced by the stancetaker stating, "we must get over apartheid", as White people would not necessarily need to "get over apartheid" as they directly benefitted from it. The modal verb "must" in this statement conforms to the CERTAINTY parameter and indicates obligation. Implying that White people are telling Black people they must "get over apartheid" portrays White people as insensitive. This further emphasises the stancetaker's observation of "brutal killings" resulting from their "evil".

While the examples following (155) justify farm violence, they indicate that how 'White' people (as deduced by the context of the comment section and the direct mention of the farm) treat their employees is unethical. Interestingly, even though the Mkhondo incident was a farm violence incident, these stancetakers appear not to be associating it us such. Though it is not mentioned, it is implied that farmer means White, and farm violence includes White people. This is interesting, as the stancetaker in example (154) suggests that this murder will not receive the same attention as those with White victims would (the mention of AfriForum indicates this, as AfriForum has been outspoken about killing White farmers).

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As observed in the findings until this point, if farmers are 'bad', then the EFF is often positioned as the antithesis to this 'bad' and are, therefore, 'good.

Two examples of the EFF's portrayal of being the 'solution' to the 'badness' of 'Whiteness', specifically White farmers, are presented below:

(157)   "…it's really high time **we vote for <u>EFF</u>**".

(158)   "We As Black people know exactly who to put in Power that will end this. It's pointless to debate here about this matter. Because it's only a Matter of time before another one decides to kill again. Let's **put the red sea in power** and you will see **changes**".

In example (157), the EFF is directly mentioned; however, in example (158), the party is called "the red sea", which is a metaphor for the EFF's famous red colour theme. The full statement, "put the red sea in power", is, however, tagged as one evaluative item, as it indicates a call to action. It is tagged along the GOOD-BAD parameter.

In example (157), the stancetaker remarks it is "really high time" that "[they] vote for EFF". This is a short comment, but it still portrays a provocative stance. The adverb "really" conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it indicates obviousness to the stancetaker (the term "really" could, for instance, be substituted with 'clearly' which would indicate that they know that the EFF should be voted for"). The adverb "high time" also conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it indicates anticipation ('it has been long enough; it is now time to do something'). While the EFF would not normally be tagged as evaluative, the party's mention makes the word "vote" evaluative. The evaluative unit is, therefore, "vote for the EFF". In this example, voting for the EFF is observed as an act of moral 'goodness' (deduced by exploring the two adverbs before the call to action) and, therefore, "vote for the EFF" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter.

While example (158) adopts a more implicit call to action, it implies the same point as example (157); however, the stancetaker, in example (158) further emphasises that "you will see changes" if the "red sea" (EFF) is put in power.

If the EFF represents the antithesis to the 'badness' of 'Whiteness', then AfriForum emerges to represent the antithesis to the 'goodness' of 'Blackness' in this text. This notion is presented in the comment thread below:

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(159)   I'm still shocked that there's been no word from <u>AfriForum</u>, or anyone with a 'Stop farm murders' profile pic...Oh well, I guess <u>farm murders</u> is a **White thing** a Black **person murdered on a farm by a farmer is "not" a farm murder**.... A **White farmer being murdered on his farm by a White person, is "not" a farm murder**, but a **White farmer being murdered by a Black person is a farm murder?** No one is as **confused** as a **White genocide believer**".

(160)   "...Do we now for <u>AfriForum's</u> sake have to have **subclasses** of murders? Cause this for me is definitely a <u>farm murder</u> & I don't get why they're not making a fuss".

In example (159), the stancetaker suggests that AfriForum observes farm murders as a "White thing", and their apparent inaction about the Mkhondo incident is, according to the stancetaker, "shocking". White is an adjective to describe ("farm murders"), and, therefore, it conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter. The adjective "shocked" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, indicating disgust. The stancetaker further emphasises the racial nature of farm violence by remarking that "farm murders" are only classified as farm murders if the victim is White and the perpetrator is Black ("Black person murdered on a farm by a farmer is "not" a farm murder"; "White farmer being murdered on his farm by a White person, is "not" a farm murder"; "White farmer being murdered by a Black person is a farm murder"). The stancetaker remarks that "no one is as confused as a White genocide believer", the term "as confused as" conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it indicates clarity to the stancetaker. The phrase "White genocide believer" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter. The stancetaker suggests that for this logic to make sense (that "farm murders" is a "White thing"), someone needs to be confused. This means this logic does not make sense to the stancetaker, and they disagree. The mention of the "White genocide believer" further cements the stancetaker's level of disagreement.

In example (160), the stancetaker also questions AfriForum's apparent lack of attention towards the Mkhondo incident ("I don't get why they're not making a fuss") and accuses the group of having "subclasses" of murder. The term 'subclass' conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, indicating the ranking of the Mkhondo as a less serious farm violence incident. While this example does not explicitly suggest that AfriForum as 'racist'. This is implied through their inaction, as the reader knows this farm violence incident involved two Black victims.

Similarly, in how "Blackness" and "Whiteness" and 'the EFF' and "AfriForum are contrasted in this text, the "left" is often contrasted with "the right". In this text ", the left" and "the right" are mentioned in a comments thread, observed below. The terms "right-wing" and "left-wing" are mentioned a few times in

the text; however, most of the instances do not directly implicate any group or individual involved with farm violence except for AfriForum. Two noteworthy occurrences, therefore, are the labelling of AfriForum as a "right-wing" group and implying that the BLM movement categorises as "extreme-left". What is worth noting about these terms is the polarising of BLM and AfriForum along the "extreme-left" and "far-right" lines, respectively.

iii.　　　　Additional themes of interest

Hate, fear, and the 'greater good'.

In the discussion of 'Whiteness' in Section 5.3.4. i, a screenshot indicates that it was a Black person who shot the Coka brothers, accounting for most of the mentions of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness' in the text, as the screen shot is shared four times. The screenshot alone (shared four times) also accounts for 32,72% of the total evaluative items in this text. When something is repeated, it is often conducted for emphasis. The emphasis in this text, however, is not on how the White farmers are innocent (the subject of the screenshot) but on how the story, which the stancetakers deem false, is being shared to fabricate a 'lie'. The transcript of the screenshot is presented below:

(161)　　"User x: Heartless monsters

(162)　　**User y**: Yes this is in Mkhondo area, near Dirkiesdorp. From **a reliable source** who was there, the two people were shot by the <u>farm owner</u>. They are brothers one shot the other with a gun he forcefully took from the **White** man, he started shooting like a mad man then one **White** man shot him and unfortunately he died. Two **White** men are critically injured by Black people and the other might not survive, then the fight began. 4 **White** men currently arrested for what we don't know. Coz it should be one. The Black people that almost killed the **White** men are still not arrested... I don't want us to be biased, I'm Black and this is the truth and the only truth".

A response to the screenshot is presented below:

(163)　　"I did wonder about the name but more importantly that a Black person would say I am a Black person".

(164)　　"Ooòoh that fool can't even spell "Name" sies... Caucasian Tendencies"

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The above screenshot indicates that those who align with the stance that farm violence is racially motivated often fabricate the 'evidence' to prove this information. This entire screenshot is, therefore, an act of attribution. While the evaluative items in the screenshot are interesting, comprising a decent portion of the total evaluative items, more interesting is the intention behind sharing it. The reader now knows it displaying this 'witness report' is false; therefore, the most important statement in this screenshot is "I'm Black and this is the truth and the only truth" as it is a point cited in the rebuttal of the truthfulness of the screenshot. Another key takeaway from this screenshot is the spelling of User Y's name. This name cannot be analysed as it might risk the anonymity of a user. Even if this user is an actual person, the study lacked adequate information to prove the legitimacy of the user in the screenshot and, therefore, withheld the identity.

The self-identifying of the user's ethnicity ("Black"), conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it intends to present their perspective (that one of the Coka brothers shot the other and that the White farmers are innocent). It seems more provocative or 'supported' by them being 'Black' and still observes the farmers as innocent. This point is refuted in example (163), where the user questions the user's need to identify themselves as "Black". In example (163), the user also expresses they "wondered about the name". This is one of the most common refutations of this screenshot as the user's name is spelt phonetically rather than in the correct way. As it is an African name, this leads the users to believe that it is not an authentic account and, instead, it is fabricated to prove the innocence of the White farmers. In example (164), this point is raised again, and in response to this notion, the stancetaker states ("sies… Caucasian tendencies"). "Sies" is an exclamation of disgust in Afrikaans and, therefore, conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting disapproval. The term "Caucasian tendencies" also conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting that this (the fabrication of a name) is typical behaviour from "Caucasians" (White people). This entire interaction, therefore, observes 'Whiteness' as 'bad'.

Another theme emerging often in discourse about farm violence is Zimbabwe. Example (164), below, is a response to example (158); however, as it approaches the theme of Zimbabwe, it is addressed in this section as the mention of Zimbabwe is an important subtheme in discussions of farm violence. Zimbabwe is mentioned multiple times in the A2 comment section analysis. South Africa is often compared to the nation because of Zimbabwe's Fast-Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) of the early 2000s—which led to widespread farm violence (Chapter 2), often cited as a sign of caution to South Africa.

(165)   "Lol the little you have will be gone. You might **go to Zimbabwe as a refugee**.
          You are proving that you cannot think to save your life".

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In this example (165), the phrase "go to Zimbabwe as a refugee" is ironic. The stance does not mean people will "go to Zimbabwe as a refugee" if the EFF is voted into power. They suggest that South Africa will become 'like Zimbabwe' and that South Africans must flee South Africa as several Zimbabweans fled and continue to flee the country because of political unrest. By reversing this notion (that South Africans must flee to Zimbabwe, specifically), the stancetaker alludes to the political unrest Zimbabwe experienced, where land played a crucial role. While the term is ironic, it is not sarcastic and, therefore, conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it presents a moral judgement about 1) Zimbabwe and 2) what will happen to South Africa if the EFF is voted into power. The stancetaker, therefore, portrays the EFF as 'bad'.

In this comment section, 'hate' is directed towards farmers and 'Whiteness' for the treatment of Black employees and farm workers; 'fear' is conceptualised as the racism encountered by Black people while the 'greater good' appears to make White people experience some ramifications for this behaviour. The EFF is observed as a group that will end this and 'rescue' the Black population. Opposing observations are presented in this comment section, with one commenter suggesting that putting the EFF in power will cause South Africans to enter Zimbabwe as a refugee. Another commenter directs attention away from the Mkhondo incident while focusing on the Senekal incident. This text also involves a screenshot being shared multiple times to emphasise how people fabricate information about farm violence. White people in this text are observed as 'bad', and Black people as 'good'; racism refers mainly to White prejudice directed at Black people. The leading role players are the farmer, the farm worker, the EFF, and AfriForum, without mention of Julius Malema.

5.6   Text B2 findings

The B2 Post and B2 comment sections are extracted from a Facebook page that views farm violence as as evidence for white genocide. The page description is regarded as "media" with 56 000 likes and 59 000 followers. This page's "about" section lacks a description of what the page deals with; however, the name of the page and the posts most recently shared when this study commenced were implemented. This page adopted a stance similar to the A2 Facebook page. This page, therefore, observes farm violence as an indicator of White genocide. While the B1 post received less attention than the A1 post, the B2 post entertained the same level of attention as the A2 page did.

This page shared a news report on the Mkhondo events, adopting a balanced observation of the incident by relaying the reported events from the prosecutor and the defence. This post approaches the Mkhondo protests, but the article mostly addresses the incident. As the name of this page is in Afrikaans, the study anticipated that while the post (B2) was in English, several comments would likely be in Afrikaans.

While a considerable amount of the comments are composed in Afrikaans, and while Afrikaans was the dominant language in the comment section, considerable comments are in English to explore. While the researcher's first language is not Afrikaans, her Afrikaans-fluency was adequate to tag and translate comments for evaluation (for discussion only, as the researcher tagged the items observed in the text to ensure reliable results). The frequency list was affected slightly, but it still provided a thorough overview of the evaluative patterns within the text with significant insight into the common themes addressed.

The same screenshot shared in the B1 comment section is also shared on this page (B2); however, in the comment section, it presents information. As this screenshot is discussed in the previous analysis (B1 comment section), it not disclosed in this comment section; however, the intention of sharing it differs in this text.

5.6.1 B2 post: Quantitative representations

Post (B2), similar to the B1 post, is a news report and, therefore, it was anticipated to feature fewer instances of evaluation than the A1 and A2 posts. As with the B1 post, post (B2) still features instances of evaluation. Of the total words in this text (B2 post), 8.97% is evaluative. The evaluative items in this text (B1 post) are parallel to three of the evaluative parameters.

Of the total evaluative words in this text, 64.29% belong to evaluative items found along the GOOD-BAD parameter, 28.57% belong to evaluative items found along the IMPORTANCE parameter, 7.14% belong to evaluative items found along the CERTAINTY parameter and 0% belong to evaluative items found along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. As mentioned in section 5.2, evaluative items are not limited to words in these texts, therefore it is worth exploring these items as instances.

The distribution of these items across the three parameters is presented below in Figure 5.9.
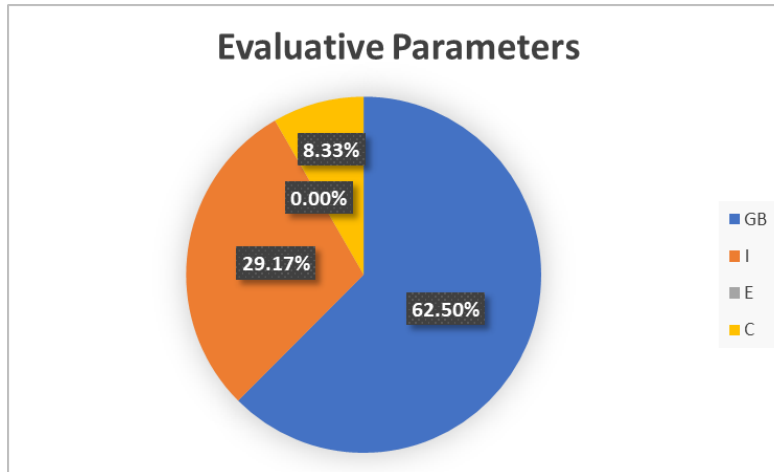
Figure 5.9:   Evaluative parameter distribution across the text: B2 post

The GOOD-BAD parameter is the most applied evaluative parameter in this text (B2 post), with 62.50% of the total evaluative items falling along the parameter, which is only 0.83% less than the A2 post; therefore, while this post is the least evaluative text, it uses the GOOD-BAD parameter the second most often when compared to other texts. The IMPORTANCE parameter is the second most applied parameter in the A2 post at 29.17%, and the CERTAINTY parameter is applied the least out of the three parameters addressed in this post at 8.33%. The EXPECTEDNESS parameter was not applied in this post.

As this post is a news report, it was expected to feature low levels of evaluation. Most of the evaluative items in this text conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as the stancetaker (the reader knows this is the journalist) is sharing the direct report of what transpired during the Mkhondo incident. The prosecutor and the defence provide this direct report; therefore, the question of moral judgement plays a crucial role.

While frequency lists help a reader develop a sound understanding of the language patterns present in a text, this post features little repetition and, therefore, a frequency list is unnecessary. While most of the evaluative items in this text are parallel to the GOOD-BAD parameter, the only repeated word, 'White', is parallel to the IMPORTANCE parameter. The adjective 'White' was repeated only twice but gave the study an indication of relevance. The B2 post was well-balanced between the two farm violence stances; however, in the last two paragraphs of the text, where the two mentions of "White occur", the stancetaker suggests a leaning. This indicates how repetition can often be a useful indicator for identifying important themes in a text.

While this post (B2) features fewer evaluative items than posts A1 and A2, evaluative items addressing the main themes of farm violence (ethnicity, role players and hate, fear, and the greater good) are still present

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in the text. Unlike B1's post, this text shares the prosecutor's interpretation of events and the defence's interpretation of the events. Post (B2) supplies two clear stances on the Mkhondo incident. This means that several of the evaluative items shared are attributed stances and do not necessarily reflect the stancetaker, or the journalist's observations. The text also addresses the Mkhondo protest; through this address, the stancetaker adopts their own perspective. In the defence's stance, it is suggested that the farmers were victims, and B2the death of the Coka brothers is framed as an act of self-defence.

5.6.2   B2 post: Qualitative representations

Evaluative language clusters around two major themes across the texts, indicating ethnicity and role players; the three subthemes, include hate, fear, and a call to defend the 'greater good'. These themes are discussed below while elucidating evaluative items.

i.   Theme 1: Ethnicity

Racism and representations of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'.

Of the total evaluative instances found in this text (B2 post), 12.50% of the instances address ethnicity. Interestingly, this post (B2) does not mention blackness, racism, or racial issues directly. Every ethnicity instance in this text is used to address whiteness.

The mention of 'Whiteness' is presented below:

> (166)   "Outside the court, the town was locked down as the angry crowd pelted police with stones, bottles, and other objects. **White** journalists and photographers suffered abuse, with The Citizen photographer Jacques Nelles told never to come back because he is **White**".

> (167)   "It was a frightful experience to get out of town, with people hurling rocks and other objects at any **White** person. The bail hearing is expected to resume today".

In examples (166) and (167), the stancetaker refers to the Mkhondo protest and not the incident. In these examples, 'White' is an adjective to describe the ethnicity of the people mentioned and, therefore, conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter. The stancetaker presents these White people as victims ("told never to come back", "suffered abuse", "people hurling rocks and other objects at any White person", "a frightful experience").

Example (166) remarks that a journalist was "told never to come back because he is White". The adverb "never" expresses a strong degree of CERTAINTY and suggests that this journalist is not only unwelcome now, but always. The CERTAINTY of this statement, partnered with the notion that the journalist "suffered abuse" at this protest, indicates that the protesters were violent, especially because of their ethnicity; therefore, while racism is not specifically mentioned, it is implied. The verb "suffered" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting an unpleasant experience. The noun "abuse" also conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting violent mistreatment. These unpleasant experiences are framed because of ethnicity and emphasise the stancetaker's attempt at indicating racism.

In example (166), while it is not explicitly remarked that the White people had a "frightful" experience leaving town, owing to the reasoning for this frightful experience ("with people hurling rocks and other objects at any White person"), it can be deduced White people experienced this "frightful" experience. The adjective "frightful" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting an unpleasant experience. In example (166), similar to example (167), the ethnicity of these people ("any White person") is provided as the main reason for these unpleasant experiences, and therefore, racism is further implied.

ii.   Theme 2: Role players

Farmers and farm workers.

In this text (B2 post), farmers are mentioned five times, evaluated three times, and mentioned neutrally twice; farm workers are mentioned once and evaluated once.

This post (B2) provides two attributed reports of the events that transpired on the night of the Mkhondo incident. Farmers are occasionally portrayed as 'good' in this text and occasionally as 'bad'. Farm workers are only mentioned once and are portrayed as on the farmers' side. The victims are not allocated to either group, which leaves their roles on the farm unknown. An instance where the farmers are portrayed as 'good' is presented below:

> (168)   "Malan stated that around 11am, a message was sent on the <u>farmers' WhatsApp group</u>, that a group of people was **intimidating** <u>farm workers</u>. He said when he arrived, the <u>owner of the farm</u>, Werner Potgieter, was **severely** <u>injured</u> and then Malan was **hit** on the head with a steel pipe".

As observed in example (168), this statement is attributed to the prosecutor and, therefore, does not appear to be the stancetaker's observation. In example (168), the stancetaker, whom the reader knows is Malan -

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one farmer charged with murder, claims to have visited the farm because of a WhatsApp[29] group message, implying that he was called there to help. The adjective "intimidating" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting that this group acted in a menacing way towards the farm workers. The suggestions that the farm owner was "severely injured", and that Malan was "hit on the head with a steep pipe" indicate that this group were violent. The term "injured" is not evaluative in this context as it describes the state of someone; however, the adverb "severely" is evaluative, emphasising the farm owner's injuries; this evaluative item would, therefore, conform to the IMPORTANCE parameter. The verb "hit" is evaluative as it indicates a deliberate, violent action; "hit" would, therefore, conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter. Example (168) demonstrates that the scene was violent before Malan arrived, implying his presence is a result of defence, therefore, further implying he, and as a result, the other farmers, are 'good'. An instance where the farmers are portrayed as 'bad' is presented below:

> (169)   "The <u>farmers</u> were armed, wore bulletproof vests and were **out to kill** on the day two Mkhondo <u>farm dwellers</u> were *gunned down* and three other people were *injured,* according to prosecutor Robert Molokoane yesterday".

In example (169), the stance is attributed to the prosecutor, Robert Molokoane. The stancetaker's suggestion that the farmers were "out to kill" indicates they had an agenda. "Out to kill", therefore, conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, implying the farmers were violent and calculated. In this example, the group referred to in example (168) is called "farm dwellers". This description suggests that the victims ("farm dwellers") belonged on the farm and were not intruders. If these victims belonged and were gunned down because the farmers were "out to kill", the farmers are, therefore, framed as 'bad'.

iii.   Additional themes of interest

Hate, fear, and the 'greater good'.

This text (B2 post) presents a somewhat balanced observation of the incident by providing two direct accounts of the events; therefore, there does not appear to be 'hate', 'fear' or a 'greater good' expressed by the stancetaker about the event; however, in the stance presented by the prosecutor, the farmers are presented as calculated ("out to kill"), violent ("gunned down") and it is suggested that they "acted on a

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[29] **WhatsApp** is a a free cross-platform messaging service. It lets users of iPhone and Android smartphones and Mac and Windows PC call and exchange text, photo, audio, and video messages with others across the globe for free, regardless of the recipient's device. NICK BARNEY. 2023. *Definition: WhatsApp* [Online]. TechTarget Available: https://www.techtarget.com/searchmobilecomputing/definition/WhatsApp [Accessed].

common purpose". This stance portrays the farmers as 'bad' and justifies the charges laid against them; however, in the stance presented by the defence's advocate, the "group of people" (which implies the victims) are portrayed as "intimidating", violent ("hit on the head with a steel pipe"), and as having been violent first ("owner of the farm…severely injured").

In the final paragraph, when discussing the protest, the stancetaker only portrays the protesters as being violent towards White people. In this post, both sides are observed as violent.

The B2 post is the least evaluative body of text across explored in this study; however, it is also the body of text that uses the GOOD-BAD parameter the second most, at 62.50% within this evaluation. This post is well-balanced between stances, but this balance is created by sharing two opposing stances. The stancetaker in the B2 post only adopts a definitive stance on the Mkhondo protest but remains neutral in discussing the incident. The few evaluative instances in this text still address the major themes established across the texts in this study. The post designates the comment section, discussed in the following section.

5.6.3   B2 comment section: Quantitative representations

Of the total words in this text (B2 comment section), 46.07% were evaluative. The B2 comment section is, therefore, more evaluative than the A1 and B1 comment sections, but was 5.49% less evaluative than the A2 comment section.

Of the total evaluative words in this text, 38.31% belong to evaluative items found along the GOOD-BAD parameter, 24.61% belong to evaluative items found along the IMPORTANCE parameter, 19.35% belong to evaluative items found along the CERTAINTY parameter and 17.73% belong to evaluative items found along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. As mentioned in section 5.2, evaluative items are not limited to words in these texts, therefore it is worth exploring these items as instances. The evaluative items in this text (B2 comment section) are parallel to all four evaluative parameters.

The distribution of these items across the four parameters is presented below in Figure 5.10.
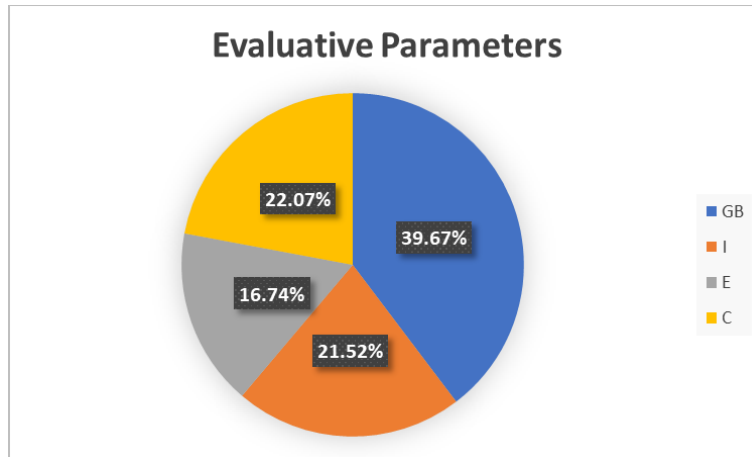
Figure 5.10: Evaluative parameter distribution across the text, per total evaluative instances in text: B2's comment section

As anticipated in this text, the GOOD-BAD parameter is applied most in the text at 39.67%. In this text (B2 Comments), the GOOD-BAD parameter was used more 5.7% more than in the B1 comment section, but 5.06% less in the A1 comment section and 5.02% less in the A2 comment section. The CERTAINTY parameter is used the second most often in this text at 22.07%, followed by the IMPORTANCE parameter at 21.52% and then the EXPECTEDNESS parameter at 16.74%. This text (B2 Comments) uses the IMPORTANCE parameter more often than the others.

While the parameter distribution across the texts solidly summarises how evaluative language is employed, a word frequency list summarises the patterns of evaluative items in the text. The frequency list for the B2 comment section is presented below in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Most frequent evaluative words/phrases found across the text: B2's comment section

N	Word	Parameter	Freq.
1	WHITE	I	20
2	BLACK	I	17
3	ARE	C	14
4	IF	E	11
5	WILL	C	10
6	SHOULD	C	8
7	JUST	E	7
8	SO	E	7
9	BROTHER	GB	6

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N	Word	Parameter	Freq.
10	DON'T	C	5
11	KILLED	GB	5
12	MOET	C	5
13	MAAR	E	4
14	ONLY	E	4
15	SAL	C	4
16	WAR	GB	4
17	ALL	I	3
18	ALMOST	E	3
19	ATTACKERS	GB	3
20	BARBARE	GB	3
21	CAN	C	3
22	CAN'T	C	3
23	CRIMINALS	GB	3
24	EVERY	I	3
25	HAVE TO	C	3

The evaluative items demonstrated in the frequency list helped identify two major themes and three subthemes across the texts. As much of this text (B2 comment section) was in Afrikaans, sometimes, some of the same concepts were not grouped. This was not too much of a concern, and the frequency list still proved to be a useful indicator of the themes. A selection of content words and larger evaluative items are explored regarding these themes in the following section.

5.6.4   B2 comment section: Qualitative representations

Evaluative language clusters around two major themes across the texts, indicating ethnicity and role players; the three subthemes, include hate, fear, and a call to defend the 'greater good'. These themes are discussed below while elucidating evaluative items.

i.   Theme 1: Ethnicity

Racism and representations of 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'.

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Of the total evaluative instances found in this text (B2 comment section), 6.96% of the instances address ethnicity. Of the total ethnicity instances, 51.56% address whiteness, 39.06% address blackness, and 9.38% address racial issues.

Racism was explicitly mentioned throughout this comment section in English and Afrikaans. Racism, in this comment section, largely referred to prejudice against White people by Black people. An example of how racism is expressed in this text is presented below:

> (170)　"You always prepare for the unexpected, and the attackers got what they deserved, its cleat that this **racist** prosecutor is looking for brownie points!!"

In example (170), the stancetaker uses the term 'racist' (expressed as racist) as an adjective to describe the prosecutor. This term conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, suggesting that the prosecutor is prejudiced (racist) towards White people. The notion is deduced by referring to the post, where the prosecutor implies that the Mkhondo incident was a racially motivated attack ("the farmers were out to kill"). This stancetaker also labels the Coka brothers as "farm attackers" and suggests they "got what they deserved". This echoes the notion, addressed in the A1 comment section, that White people deserve to be treated violently for how they treat their workers. The phrase "got what they deserved" is tagged as a unit of evaluation as it implies something about anticipation that the Coka brothers ("farm attackers") did something (attacked the farm) that warranted their killings. While this could conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, owing to the implication that the Coka brothers deserved to die, it has been tagged along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter. The stancetaker implies that the prosecutor had an ulterior motive for their ruling by suggesting that he was "looking for brownie points", a phrase used to "earn approval" for something, which is not a 'bad' action; however, in this comment, it is negative, as the stancetaker implies that this prosecutor is racist and, therefore, prejudiced. To gain approval for being prejudiced would be considered 'bad'.

As expected, the law topic is a common occurrence in this comment section. This is unsurprising, as the post explicitly mentions legal role players (the prosecutor and the defence) in this incident. The following example (171) also explores a 'racist' legal entity. The comment is translated into English.

> (171)　"**User N:** Jy kan die beste advokaat he maar dit gaan nie help met die fokken **rasistiese** regters nie".

Example translated from Afrikaans to English:

> "You can have the best advocates, but it won't help against **fucking racist** judges".

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In example (171), the stancetaker suggests that it does not matter whether you are well represented in court, the "fucking racist judges" will still find you guilty. The vulgar adjective "fucking" or "fokken" conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it indicates that the stancetaker not only finds the judges 'racist' or "rasistiese" (which questions their morality and conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter) but anticipates that because of this racism, "you" will not be tried fairly, even if you have the best support ("best advocates").

A third instance of how the term 'racist' describes legal entities is presented below. It is also an Afrikaans comment translated for discussion:

> (172)   "Die hof en prokereur is **rasisties** en hulle gan sukkel om hulle vry te kry. Wa is al die boere wat **so groot was** op Senekal dag?"

Example translated from Afrikaans to English:

> "The court and attorneys are **racist**, and they will struggle to get out. Where are all the farmers who were **so big** at Senekal day?"

In example (172), the court and the attorneys are described as 'racist' or "rasisties" and it is suggested that the farmers will "struggle" to escape the legal ramifications of their actions. The verb "struggle" or "sukkel" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and indicates that it will be difficult for the farmers to evade this situation. This results from the court and attorneys being racist and not because of the farmer implicated in the killing of the Coka brothers. Interestingly, this stancetaker references the Senekal incident and rhetorically asks where those protesters are, implying that they should help these farmers find a way out of their legal troubles.

This rhetorical question and the emphasis ("so") on their metaphorical "bigness" at those protests are intended to undermine the protesters by suggesting that they are hypocritical for showing support for that incident but for this one. The evaluative item "so groot was" or "were so big", therefore, conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it uses the farmers' behaviour during a previous as 'evidence' for why they should support this incident. Their lack of presence or involvement in this incident is, therefore, observing these farmers (from the Senekal protests) as 'bad'. The text alludes to two types of farmers, 'good' farmers (those giving this incident attention) and 'bad' farmers (those who provided Senekal attention but not Mkhondo). In the B1 comments, the notion that Mkhondo needs more attention is also raised; however, in the B1 text, this attention is being called for because of the loss of Black lives. In this text (B2), Mkhondo

deserves more attention so the farmers who have been 'wrongly convicted' can be assisted to evade their legal ramifications.

Most of the texts analysed in this study developed polarisation between 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'. Either 'Whiteness' is observed as 'good', or 'Blackness' is observed as 'good', but neither ethnicity is displayed as 'good' simultaneously. There is, therefore, always a 'bad' ethnicity polarised against a 'good' ethnicity. Examples of instances where 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness' are mentioned in the B2 comment section are presented below:

(173) "…if our **White** volk numbers has been reduced from 7 million to 4 million? 3 million has gone missing since 1994, actually more than that because according to statistics, a **volk** will double in favourable circumstances every 10 years, so we should have been at least 18 million by now. so, either we are being murdered or emigrate: hows that for victims? so just why have the Black volk multiplied from 15m to 54m?"

In example (173), White people are being portrayed as "victims" because of the decrease in their population ("numbers"). The terms "White volk" and "Black volk" both conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as these terms "volk" means "nation" in Afrikaans. To address South African ethnic groups as separate nations is to suggest that these two groups do not belong together subtly. The large discrepancy between the growth of the two groups indicates that White people are suffering as in "favourable" conditions, they would have "doubled". By contrasting the apparent growth of the Black population against a decline of the White population, the stancetaker suggests that this decline is the Black population's fault. 'Whiteness' is, therefore, observed as 'good' and 'Blackness' as 'bad'. A similar contrast can be observed in the two examples below:

(174) "It's about time we start protecting ourselves nobody will, because we are White and they will accuse us from anything, making it a **MOER of a story** if **White** kills Black, but **everything 100%** if Black kills **White** WE are getting fed up cause nothing's been done about FARM MURDERS, about time we Farmers ACT".

(175) "So if Black**s** kill hundreds of **Whites** nothing but when White people try to protect themselves and kill 2 Black criminals the whole town is up in arms, if those farmers were not armed they would be dead this is a case of self-defence, but unfortunately we share this country with **illiterate idiots**, fucked up society we live in where the **minority** gets killed every day but nothing happens but just 1 Black criminal gets killed in self-defence then its murder and *racism* and the whole world bow down

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> coz Black lives matter, what about **White lives**? They murder our woman and rape
> our daughters; I've never once heard of a **White** person breaking into a Black's
> house and *murder* and *rape* the victims... #*cANCermustfall* #*effsemoer*".

Examples (174) and (175) indicate that when Black people kill White people, "nothing" is done, but when White people kill Black people, it's a "moer of a story". A similar comparison is in the B1 comment section, example (159), where whose death counts as a stancetaker elucidates farm murder, and it is suggested that according to groups, such as AfriForum, the only farm murder that counts as such is when a 'White' person is murdered. In this text, B2 comment section, White people are portrayed as "protecting themselves" when the Black Coka brothers were killed. The public outcry is, therefore, rejected, and the focal point shifted from killing two men to the need to protect yourself as a White South African. The terms 'White' and 'Black' are used both along the GOOD-BAD parameter ('Blacks' 'Whites') and the IMPORTANCE parameter ("a White person" or "Black criminal") in examples (174) and (175). In this example (175), Black people are portrayed as murderers ("murder our women") and rapists ("rape our daughters").

In this same example (174) the following hashtags are also used: #cANCermustfall #effsemoer; both hashtags conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter as they portray these political parties negatively. The choice to mention these political parties, in a section centred on portraying 'Blackness', these hashtags aim to tie these two groups to the "racism" that these stancetakers believe White people encounter. Similar to how the EFF represents the antithesis to the 'badness' of 'Whiteness' in the B1 comment section, in this text, the EFF represents the antithesis of the 'goodness' of 'Whiteness'. 'Whiteness', in this text, is, therefore, 'good', and 'Blackness' is 'bad'.

The statement that nothing is being done about "farm murders" is interesting, as the Mkhondo incident was contemplating a farm murder in the B1 comment section. Where stancetakers calls for more to be done about the violence directed at Black people, this page calls for something to be done about the violence directed at White people. These instances led the research to adopt the "farm violence" term, as both incidents are parallel to this category without the specifics of ethnicity prohibiting it. The final example explored under the theme of ethnicity in this text (B2 comment section) is in Afrikaans but has been translated:

> (176)   "…**Wit** mense kan ook soos barbare optree wanneer ons moet, maar ons te goed
> vir julle **bliksems** vir nou".

Example translated from Afrikaans to English:

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"**White** people can also perform like **barbarians** when we must, but we're too good for you **bliksems** for now".

In example (176), it is suggested that "White people can also perform like barbarians" as mentioned in the study, the act of describing Black people as "savages" or "barbarians" has its roots in colonialism and apartheid. The term "barbarian" or "barbare", therefore, conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter; while 'Blackness' is not mentioned, owing to the historical context of a term, such as "barbarian", the reader can deduce this is who the stancetaker references. The term barbarian and the 'badness' of the Black people, in this user's opinion, is further emphasised by the statement "we're too good for you bliksems for now", as the term "bliksems" has become integrated into South African English it was left untouched; the term is the equivalent of calling someone a "bastard". The term, therefore, conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter. The suggestion that White people or "wit mense" (an instance of IMPORTANCE in this example) are better than the implied Black people because of the "barbaric" behaviour is, therefore, to frame 'Whiteness' as 'good' and 'Blackness' as 'bad'.

'Whiteness' in this text (B2 comments) is, therefore, largely represented as 'good' and 'Blackness' as 'bad'. Similarly, notions of racism in this text usually imply an act of prejudice directed at White people by Black people.

ii. Theme 2: Role players

Farmers, farm workers, political stances, political parties, and political figures.

In this text (B2 comment section), farmers are mentioned forty-two times, evaluated forty times, and mentioned neutrally twice; farm workers are mentioned six times and evaluated six times; the EFF is mentioned three times and evaluated three times; Julius Malema is mentioned once and evaluated once; the ANC is mentioned eight times and evaluated eight times.

As approached in the previous section and the discussion of the EFF as the antithesis to the 'goodness' of 'Whiteness' in example (175), the way key role players are represented in farm discourse is a key focal point of this study. Like 'Whiteness', farmers are generally observed as 'good' and under 'threat' throughout this B2 comment section. Some examples approaching the notion that farmers are under threat are presented below:

(177) "[From Image] OFFICIALLY **THE DEADLIEST JOB ON EARTH** BEING A **WHITE** <u>FARMER</u> IN SOUTH AFRICA ".

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© University of Pretoria

(178) <u>Farm workers</u> started the **war**, by killing our <u>farmers</u>".

(179) "When they sing **"kill the Boer, kill the farmer"** we take it seriously".

(180) "…Sounds like a farm attack to me that ended in the <u>farmer</u> and <u>farm worker's</u> favour! Security use bullet proof vests for safety...why shouldn't <u>farmers</u>... Given the <u>history of farm attacks</u>? The <u>farmers</u> weren't expecting to have tea and scones with the **attackers**!"

In examples (177) to (180), farming is portrayed as "the deadliest job in the world" if you're a "White farmer in South Africa" it is suggested that farm workers started the 'war' and, therefore, deserved retaliation, and a reference to the struggle song, Dbul' ibunu is made. The terms "deadliest job in the world" and 'war' conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter; however, the reference to the song Dbul' ibunu ("kill the boer, kill the farmer") conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it is a reference to a controversial song and acts as 'evidence' for why farmer may retaliate. Similar to the B1 comment section, in this B2 comment section, there is a call for violence to be directed at the 'bad' group. In the B1 comment section, the 'bad' group is the "evil" farmers; in this comment section (B2 comment section), the 'bad' group is the farm workers. In both instances, calls exist for extreme violence inflicted on the other side for their 'badness'.

This notion can also be noted in example (180), where the Mkhondo incident is framed as a "farm attack"; owing to the "history of farm attacks", the farmers are justified in their handling of the situation.

Previously in this analysis, while most of the stances expressed align with the page's stance, some comments challenge this stance. An excerpt of a thread where a user challenges another user's observation is presented below:

(181) "**User P:** But the one brother shot the other brother.. Why is this not mentioned"?

(182) **User Q:** User P those are **lies** by <u>boers</u> trying **implicate the dead** those were unarmed, why did one brother would've shot his brother for these fagots are lying trying to avoid prison they thought they are untouchable, **the wheel has turned** it not then it's now, people from Mkhondo (pietretief) kak name says this was not the first incident where **White <u>boers</u>** killed Black**s** in Mpumalanga farm they previously got away with it, but not this time, an example will be shown with these four".

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In example (181), the stancetaker suggests that the one brother shot the other (a notion presented to the reader in the screenshot discussed in the previous analysis of the B2 comment section); User Q disputes this notion. While User Q's comment features several provocative evaluative terms, the key takeaway is how farmers are framed in this text and, therefore, the focus of this discussion. In User Q's stance, the "boers" are trying to "implicate the dead" and "lying" to avoid jail time, and it is "not the first incident" where "White boers killed Blacks". The term "boer" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter in this comment, as "boer" implicates a specific group of White farmers. In the second mention of "boer" the stancetaker emphasises the ethnicity of the boer as 'White' this instance of 'White' conforms to the IMPORTANCE parameter, as it raises questions of relevance, but more important, it conforms to the parameter, as it is making a crucial point about these "boers". The repetition of the term 'White', therefore, emphasises the 'badness' of White Afrikaans ("boer") farmers.

The stancetaker also suggests that the one brother shooting the other brother are "lies" and the "boers" are "implicating the dead". "implicating the dead" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter, as it is suggesting a moral judgement has been made about these farmers. The notion that "the wheel has turned" conforms to the EXPECTEDNESS parameter, as it indicates anticipation about what's to come. User Q's comment frames farmers as 'bad'. The final example of how farmers are represented in this text can be observed below:

> (183)   "When there is no more <u>farmers</u> left u better hope your government can feed u your
> greed and hate is your own **demise**".

In example (183), farmers are again displayed as 'good'. It is owing to their contributions to feeding the country. This stancetaker believes that without farmers (implied here to mean White farmers), the country will struggle ("demise"). Farmers are, therefore, framed as an integral part of South Africa's success.

Political parties, figures and stances are key in farm violence discourse. As has been approached earlier in this section, the EFF is often portrayed as either the hero in the plight against farm violence or as the instigator. In this text, they are framed as the latter (#EFFsemoer). As the EFF is discussed in example (174), it is not discussed further here. Julius Malema, leader of the EFF, is specifically mentioned, observed below:

> (184)   "…whose property were the protestors? Being a farmer lately you always have to
> wear bullet proof vests if you don't want to get murdered. Why don't they arrest
> <u>Malema </u>when calling his "**fighters**" to these protests? **Hypocrites**!"

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Example (184), the stancetaker directly refers to Malema's tweet from the A2 post. This occurrence demonstrates how South African farm violence discourse, particularly on Facebook, often overlaps concerning terms of what incidents have recently occurred. Provided the small divergence between the Senekal and the Mkhondo incidents, it is unsurprising that it is mentioned in this text (A2 Comments). The stancetaker calls the police "hypocrites" for note arresting Malema for calling his "fighters" to the protests, as opposed to the farmers involved in the death of two Black men. The term "hypocrites" conforms to the GOOD-BAD parameter and questions the police's arrest of the farmers involved in the Mkhondo incident. Malema, similar to the EFF, is presented at the anthesis to the 'good' farmers.

The ANC also plays a critical role in the framing of the discourse on farm violence. Often, the ANC is observed as 'bad' either for "supporting" farm violence or for not doing enough to support the Black communities involved in farm violence. There have been few positive mentions of the ANC in these texts. This is continued through this text. An example of the mention of the ANC is presented below:

(185)   "a **guerilla war** against the White people it was the **tactics** of the <u>ANC</u> and **communists** then, and it still is".

In example (185), the terms "guerilla war" and "communists" conform to the GOOD-BAD parameter and have strong connotations to the apartheid era. The noun "tactics" conforms to the CERTAINTY parameter, as it indicates something about the truth value of the ANC. The term "tactics" suggests that the ANC has adopted a secret strategy to eliminate South Africans and is, therefore, not being truthful about its plans for South Africa. This comment positions the ANC as having a calculated plan to wage war against White people. This notion, and this comment, exploit the "swartgevaar" narrative while implying that the ANC is not only 'bad' but dangerous.

In this text (comment section B2), the key role players in South African farm violence discourse are farmers, farm workers, the EFF, Julius Malema, and the ANC. Farmers are mainly portrayed as 'good', and farm workers, the EFF, Julius Malema and the ANC, as 'bad'. The justification of violence towards 'the other side' is a consistent theme in the discussion of role players—in this and the previous texts (B1 comment section). Most comments on this post align with the page's stance (that farm violence indicates a White genocide); however, a comment by User Q emphasises a strong dislike for farmers and suggests that "the wheel is turning", implying that farmers will be met with the same treatment they treat farm workers. While not all the questioning stances are discussed, the stance observes farmers as 'bad'.

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iii.   Additional themes of interest

Hate, fear, and the 'greater good'.

The discourse of farm violence on Facebook in this and the previous texts analysed cluster around three major subthemes: hatred for someone or something, fear of someone or something, and a call to defend such a type of 'greater good'. These subthemes are addressed in the below comment, in Afrikaans, but have been translated for discussion:

> (186)   "Dis hier. By wyse van spreuke nie meer jare of maande nie. **Dis dae**. Wees voorbereid om julself en jul gesinne binne in jul gemeenskappe te **verdedig**. Dit is wat die <u>ANC **al vir jare bepla**</u>n het. Dis reeds hulle wat hierdie gedrag van hul "our people" goedkeur om hul politieke agendas (**waaronder die dood van elke witte in SA**) te bereik".

Example translated from Afrikaans to English:

> "It's here. In manner of speaking, it's no longer years or months. **It's days**. Be prepared to **defend** <u>yourself</u> and <u>your families</u> in your c<u>ommunities</u>. This is what the <u>ANC</u> have been **planning** for years. They already endorse these "our people" attitudes to push their **political agendas** (**which includes the killing of all the Whites in SA**)

In example (186), the stancetaker warns White South Africans that the time is near, and they must be prepared to "defend" themselves and their families and communities. The stancetaker suggests that the ANC have been planning "this" (while ambiguous, the reader can deduce that "this" is the killing of all Whites) for years, pushing their political agendas and using "our people" attitudes, which include the killing of all the Whites in SA.

In example (186), hate is directed towards the ANC for their planning, pushing of political agendas, and "our people" attitudes. Fear is centred around the "killing of all Whites in SA". Because of this hate and fear, White South Africans must convene to defend a 'common good' (themselves, their families, and their communities).

While this example (186) approaches the subthemes, these are often dispersed throughout the text to create a bigger picture. In this text (B2 Comments), hate is directed towards Black people, farm, workers, the EFF, the ANC, and the judicial system. Fear is usually centred around being killed, in particular on a farm, and the eradication of 'Whiteness'. The 'greater good' that must be defended is, therefore, the identity of being

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a White farmer in South Africa. Evaluative language, across all four of the parameters, is employed throughout the text (B2 comment section) to convey these subthemes.

The findings of the B2 comment section indicate that the Mkhondo incident is largely observed as a "farm attack that went wrong". The Coka brothers are called "farm attackers" and "farm workers". 'Whiteness' portrayed as 'good', and 'Blackness' is portrayed as 'bad'.

5.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter directs and analyses the key findings of this study. It was established that the A2 and B2 comment sections contained the highest levels of evaluation. This meant that the pages observing farm violence as evidence of a White genocide featured more evaluative language in the comment sections than the page regarding farm violence as a sign of the larger crime problems in the country. The GOOD-BAD is the most applied evaluative parameter across the texts.

Most evaluative items in these texts cluster around the two major themes—ethnicity and role players and three subthemes of 'hate', 'fear' and the 'greater good'. In the A1 and B1 comment sections, 'Whiteness' is framed as 'bad' and 'Blackness' as 'good'. In the same texts, the EFF is delineated as 'good', and groups, such as AfriForum, are presented as 'bad'. In the A2 and B2 posts' comment sections, the opposite is true; 'Whiteness' is framed as 'good' and 'Blackness' as 'bad'. In the same comment sections, the EFF is observed as 'bad'. AfriForum's minor mentions indicate it as 'good'. Another major notion from these comment sections is that the EFF and ANC support or sponsor farm violence. In the A1 and B1 comment sections, this notion is condemned, and in the A2 and B2 comment sections, this is supported.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter discusses the conclusions of the research. The conclusions are drawn directly from the questions that inspired the research. Little research exists on the language of farm violence from a specifically linguistic angle. South African farm violence, and the discourse surrounding it on Facebook, have been addressed by Barraclough (2021) and Sheik (2022) in media and cultural studies. These studies approached the language used in farm violence discourse; however, the focus of the research in both instances was on the main tropes and themes associated with this discourse rather than the specific emotional words or phrases used to describe it. These studies also employed CDA to elucidate POS. The current research adopted a SFL approach, observing language as meaning-making (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2009). This study explored meaning-making through language choice to convey stance, whereas Barraclough (2021) and Sheik (2022) investigated power dynamics in farm violence discourse. This research, therefore, adopted a more macro-linguistic approach focused on a semantic language level by specifically addressing evaluative language employed in the chosen Facebook posts and comment sections.

Barraclough (2021) and Sheik's (2022) offer valuable insight into the topic, providing the current research with a sound origin when commencing the analysis, especially regarding the major themes worth addressing. Because of Barraclough's (2021) and Sheik's (2022) findings concerning major discursive themes, this research uncovered similar findings on a thematic level. Themes, such as racial polarisation, role players (such as the EFF, farmers, farm workers, and the ANC), violence and fear, occurred in the discourse.

This study elaborates on two instances of farm violence, indicating the Senekal and the Mkhondo incident. The Senekal incident involved a White victim, whereas the Mkhondo incident involved a Black victim. The A data sets (A1 post, A1 comment section, A2 post, and A2 comment section) addressed the Senekal incident. The B data sets (B1 post, B1 comment section, B2 Post and B2 comment section) addressed the Mkhondo incident.

The study focused on two major themes, indicating ethnicity and role players. Within these themes, the focus was on subthemes of racism, representations of 'Whiteness', 'Blackness', the key groups, and individuals mentioned in the text. The study also focused on additional subthemes, clustering around hate, fear, and a call to defend 'a greater good'. Similar to Barraclough (2021), this study established that

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Zimbabwe was used as evidence for what could happen to South Africa should farm violence continue; its mention was, therefore, often used to instil fear.

Once the study finalised the discursive themes of farm violence in the various texts (four Facebook pages and their corresponding comment sections), various examples are presented of how evaluative language was employed to address the themes. This entailed the themes indicating the origin of the discussion; however, the study's main concern was how evaluative language was used to convey the stance of the page and the commenters when addressing these themes. The themes, therefore, were complimentary to the instances of evaluative language but did not present the focus of the study.

The study adopted a combined evaluative approach to identify, classify, and discuss the instances of evaluation in the texts. This approach combined Hunston and Thompson's (2003) evaluative and Bednarek's (2006) new evaluative frameworks. Evaluative language use is discussed specifically regarding the main research questions addressed in these sections.

6.2   Chapter 1—summary

Chapter 1 of this study introduces the research topic. The term farm violence is explained, and some general background and context to the study are provided. The research questions and objectives are explained, and the farm violence incidents (Senekal and Mkhondo) are introduced.

6.3   Chapter 2—summary

Chapter 2 addresses South African history. It elucidates land and identity and demonstrates how South Africa's tumultuous racial past continues to play a role in postapartheid South Africa. The official figures of farm violence in South Africa are explored. The preference for the term 'farm violence' is explained, and the incidents (Senekal and Mkhondo) explored in the study are elucidated.

6.4   Chapter 3—summary

Chapter 3 addresses the literature on farm violence in South Africa. Barraclough (2021) and Sheik (2022) conducted two dissertation-level studies on farm violence on Facebook in media studies. These studies, however, focused on how information on the topic was shared and received. Sheik (2022) adopted a similar approach to this study; however, it focused on encoding and decoding rather than evaluating language. This chapter also addresses the finer nuances of the online space, such as algorithms, echo chambers, filter bubbles, and problematic language. It also directs the types of information established online and how this

is shared. Phenomena such as these affected this study. This was confirmed in the analysis of the findings where problematic language was evident, stances were mainly aligned with the page where they occurred, and false and misleading information was shared.

6.5   Chapter 4—summary

Chapter 4 of this study addresses the various methods used in this study and the specific methodology process adopted. The study was in the larger field of SFL, and it was explained that evaluation is in the field of and expands on the SFL field. The study addressed the evaluation parameters and indicated employing a combined approach to identify these parameters, drawing from Hunston and Thompson's (2003) and Bednarek's (2006) framework. The processes for data collection and analysis are elucidated, and the limitations are addressed.

6.6   Chapter 5—summary and conclusion to the study

Chapter 5 addresses the study findings. In this chapter, evaluative instances are identified while analysing evaluative instances on the chosen Facebook page's posts and the corresponding comment sections. The conclusions are, therefore, discussed with the research questions observed below.

6.6.1   Research Question 1: How is the evaluative language employed in posts by the Facebook page admin and in the comment sections?

The first research question aimed to uncover general findings and patterns of evaluative language across the admin's posts and the corresponding comment sections.

The study established that the GOOD-BAD parameter is the most applied evaluative parameter across all texts. This was anticipated as the GOOD-BAD parameter is the core parameter of evaluation; however, according to Hunston and Thompson (2003), the GOOD-BAD parameter also indicates a judgement of moral value, which was to be expected as this study focused on an issue that typically raises morality questions. While this parameter is often used, the framing of who was considered 'good' and who was considered 'bad' understandably differed according to the pages, regardless of the incidents. The A1 and B1 data sets, taken from a page perceiving 'White genocide' as a myth, largely framed 'Whiteness' and farmers as 'bad'. The A2 and B2 data sets, taken from two pages perceiving 'White genocide' as a legitimate issue, framed 'Blackness' as 'bad' but did not implicate farm workers as 'bad'. Instead, the 'bad' entity was associated with an external 'other', implying that this other was Black.

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The remainder of the evaluative parameters adopted a supplementary role, emphasising the 'good' and 'bad' entities or stances being portrayed. This meant that evaluative instances along the CERTAINTY parameter, for instance, were largely employed by stancetakers to indicate a commitment to their stance either through (un)necessity, (e.g., had to); (im)possibility (e.g., "could not") or reliability (e.g., "fake" or "unlikely"). The CERTAINTY parameter often indicates how true the stancetaker established a stance about a 'good' or 'bad' entity or stance.

Evaluative items established along the IMPORTANCE parameter were largely employed to provide evidence for a stancetaker's observation or to indicate an important aspect of the stancetaker's observation (e.g., providing someone's ethnicity to emphasise that it is people belonging to that ethnicity being labelled with this observation).

Evaluative items established along the EXPECTEDNESS parameter were largely employed to indicate either how obvious something was to the stancetaker (e.g., "obviously") or what the stancetaker was anticipating because of their stance (e.g., "if"). Several instances of EXPECTEDNESS indicate sarcasm (e.g., "Oh I Forgot"), emphasising that the stancetaker established their observation so obviously that they could use irony to mock the alternative observation.

As the posts are shorter than the comment sections, less room exists for the stancetaker to emphasise their stance; therefore, the GOOD-BAD parameter is used more frequently in these posts than in the comment section.

The comment section engages three levels of discussion, indicating the stancetaker's observations on the page's post, the stancetaker's observations on farm violence, and the stancetaker's observations regarding other stancetakers. Conversely, only one level of discussion is engaged in the posts, indicating the stancetaker's observation on the incident being addressed. The comment section, therefore, allows for observations to be challenged while behaving as a spoken discourse would to an extent. The post behaves in a more traditional written discourse to position the reader in a passive role where they cannot engage with the stance.

These discussion layers also affected evaluation. In the comment section, evaluation was often used to 'attack' another stancetaker and, depending on how heated the discussion was, could feature several provocative evaluative items. The post, while attempting to obtain a strong point across, is not arguing with another stancetaker and, therefore, does not need to attack someone.

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The page's post sets the tone for the comment section, and it addresses a sensitive issue, but once the tone has been set, the commenters may change the direction of the stance. Owing to social media phenomena, such as algorithms, echo chambers, and filter bubbles, the dominant stance in the comment section usually aligns with the page's stance. Similarly, when commenters disagree with the page's stance, they are 'attacked' by other commenters who defend the page's stance. The was observed throughout the data sets, where most of the comments aligned with the stance of the page; other users often targeted the few that did not agree.

This led to the second research question, which aimed to uncover how evaluative language varies across the pages and depending on the farm violence incident being addressed. This research question is discussed in the subsequent section.

6.6.2 Research Question 2: How does evaluative language vary across the Facebook pages, based on the farm violence incident?

The second research question aimed to uncover how evaluative language differed depending on the Facebook page (a page that observed farm violence as a part of the general crime problem in South Africa versus a page that observed farm violence as evidence of White genocide) and the incident (Senekal versus Mkhondo or White victim versus Black victim). The study, therefore, compared the findings across the pages and then across the incidents.

The A posts (A1 post and A2 post) featured considerably higher levels of evaluation than the B posts (B1 post and B2 post). This is owing to the nature of the posts. In the A1 post, the page's admin authored the post, and in the A2 post, the page's admin shared Willem Petzer's response to a Julius Malema tweet. These posts also focused on the Senekal protests rather than the Senekal incident. It was, therefore, anticipated that these two posts would feature elevated levels of evaluation. The A2 post features the highest levels of evaluation out of the posts, with 40.07% of the words in the text belonging to evaluative items.

The B posts (B1 post and B2 post) are news reports about the Mkhondo incident. The pages' admins, therefore, did not author the posts. These posts (B1 post and B2 post) are news reports on the incident; therefore, it was anticipated that they would feature less evaluative language as news reports are intended to be unbiased; however, albeit at a lower level, both reports (B1 post and B2 post) feature evaluation. Several of these evaluative instances were attributed to another stancetaker and, therefore, did not necessarily indicate the stancetaker's instances of evaluation. The stancetaker's choice of which attributed evaluative items to include, could subtly suggest something about their leaning. The B2 post, for instance,

features higher levels of evaluation than the B1 post; however, upon closer examination of the B2 post, the study established that the stancetaker supplied a quote from the prosecutor involved in Mkhondo and a quote by the defence. Most of the evaluative instances, therefore, were attributed, and as the stancetaker provided two stances, it was more balanced than the B1 post, which only included attributed stances from the victim's niece. The B1 post does not mention that any White farmers were injured in the incident, whereas the B2 post mentions that a farm owner was "severely injured". The final two paragraphs of the B2 post, initially more balanced, clarify that the stancetaker observed the Mkhondo protests as wrong and indicated that White people were victims. This notion is, however, not implied about the incident.

Of the comment sections, Post A1 (addressing the Senekal incident and protests specifically) received the most attention. The A2 comment section features the highest levels of evaluation, with 51.56% of the total words in the text being evaluative.

The A1 comment section features the most interaction among differing stances, although the most popular stance was still that of the page. In addressing the Senekal protests, the A1 comment section largely observed the protesters as 'bad' and suggested that the protest was uncalled for. 'Whiteness' is largely associated with White domination in the A1 comments, and the EFF is observed as the anthesis to this domination. Racism is also mentioned multiple times in the A1 comment section, with several evaluative items clustering around this theme. Usually, where an individual questions the stance of the page or the stance of an individual agreeing with the page, the individual is shut down and labelled as 'racist'; however, the A1 comment section reflects that farm violence is not an issue that deserves individual attention; evidence, such as the evaluative phrase "50+ people die in SA every single day" is used to lessen the severity of the Senekal incident.

The A2 comment section features more explicit evaluation instances, whereas the A1 comment section employs various implicit evaluations. The A2 comment section repeatedly remarks that the EFF supports farm murders and insinuates that farm attacks are "state-sponsored". This comment section features some interaction between differing stances, but these interactions are more hostile than in the A1 comment section—with one user accusing another user of being a "really bad messed up Black racist" and then stating that it is "inherently and disappointingly" in his "blood" to "offer nothing better". While an interaction in the A1 comment section observes a user calling another user a "terrorist sympathiser" in retaliation to being called a "White supremacist", there is no similar instance where a user lists reasons White people are "inherently and disappointingly" only capable of "racism, hatred, and violence".

The A2 comment section ties 'Blackness' to danger throughout the text, employing terms, including "shithole third-world country" to describe South Africa and mentions terms, such as "Cultural Marxism" and "woke". Whereas the A1 comment section ties 'Whiteness' to violence throughout, mentions the "far-right" multiple times and employs terms, such as "White arrogance" and "White supremacy" when discussing 'Whiteness'. The A1 comment section observes racism as prejudice against people of colour, specifically Black people. The A2 comment section observes racism as prejudice against White people.

The evaluative language in the A1 comment section is less semantically provoked in most instances and, therefore, more challenging for the untrained eye to pick up. The A1 commenters use language widely accepted online, and therefore, their stances are less biased. Conversely, the A2 commenters use language heavily semantically loaded and adopt several apartheid-era ideals, especially that Black people are unintelligent, dangerous, and unethical. The emphasis on the violence of Black South Africans is often used as a reason for farmers to "fight back" in this text.

The B comment sections feature fewer comments than the A comment sections. These comments are also briefer. The B1 comments are evenly split between comment threads and isolated comments; however, the B2 comment section holds more isolated comments than comment threads. The B2 comment section is, therefore, the least interactive comment section.

The B1 comment section observes the Mkhondo incident as a tragedy calculated by the White farmers. Commenters use threatening language and suggest that tragedies, such as "these are a call for revenge". The EFF is presented as the entity to end tragedies ("it's really high time we vote for the EFF"), and land should be grabbed from "racist White farmers". Farm workers are likened to "slaves", and "AfriForum" is called out for not reacting to the death of two Black males on a farm. The B1 comment section uses evaluative language to indicate that White farmers treat their staff badly and that instances of farm violence involving Black people are ignored.

The B1 comment section also features a screenshot of a supposed "witness" from the event. The screenshot is shared multiple times throughout the comment section but is an example of why the other side is wrong. The screenshot portrays a supposedly Black female confessing to White males being injured during the farm violence incident; however, the commenters dismiss this screenshot for various reasons; the first being the Black person identifying themselves as a Black person, the spelling of the name (which has been left out of this study to ensure anonymity) and the second being the emphasis of this person present at the incident ("from a reliable source who was there").

The Senekal incident is cited twice in the B1 comment section (the Mkhondo incident). The first mention is by a commenter attempting to dismiss the page's focus on the killing of the Coka brothers by asking why they did not address Brendin Horner's murder. Various commenters immediately dismiss this comment. The second instance is when another commenter suggests that maybe "boere" killed Horner and blamed it on Black people as they did in "apartheid". Both instances detract from the respective farm violence incidents and inflate the other.

The B2 comment section observes the Mkhondo incident as a "farm attack that ended in the farmer and farm workers favour". In the comment section, evaluative language is used to justify why the brothers were not supposed to be on the farm. This is especially interesting as the page's post does not favour a specific stance regarding the farm violence incident. Most of the commenters on this page, therefore, adopted the defence's stance.

The B2 comment section does not include several opposing stances to the defence's stance; however, one instance of an opposing stance is expressed similarly to the comment in the B1 comment section where "boers" unfairly blame the death on Black people. The same screenshot from the B1 comment section is shared in this comment section (B2); however, it is provided as "evidence" for the farmers' innocence. The B2 comment section also features Afrikaans comments—to be expected as it is a page with an Afrikaans name. The B2 comment section mainly uses evaluative language to indicate the farmers' innocence or justify the farmers' use of violence and to implicate 'Blackness' as 'bad'.

6.6.3 Research Question 3: What does evaluative language on the selected pages and their corresponding comment sections suggest about the public discourse of South African farm violence on Facebook?

Across the texts, 'Whiteness' is polarised with 'Blackness', racism is addressed, and role players are implicated. In the A1 and B1 data sets (the same page), farmers are implicated as 'bad', and the EFF is observed as 'good'. In the A2 and B2 data sets (two pages with the same stance), the farmers are observed as 'good', and the EFF and the government are perceived as 'bad'. Interestingly, throughout the texts, farm workers are never implicated as 'bad'. In the A1 and B1 data sets, farm workers are portrayed as victims treated badly by White farmers. In the A2 and B2 data sets, farm workers are grouped with the farmers in portraying violence on farms. 'Whiteness' is largely observed as 'bad' in the A1 and B1 data sets and as 'good' in the A2 and B2 data sets. Conversely, 'Blackness' is largely observed as 'good' in the A1 and B1 data sets and as 'bad' in the A2 and B2 data sets.

The EFF is observed as the solution to ending racism on farms in the A1 and B1 data sets and as the cause of farm violence in the A2 and B2 data sets. Throughout the data sets, a need exists to polarise one group with another—whether 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness', farmers, and the EFF, or "the right" and "the left"; therefore, several commenters fail to notice that they argue the same points from various angles. There appears to be little understanding of the other side in the texts. Farm violence is observed as evidence of genocide or something not worth addressing. Neither stance leave much room for discussion, as evidenced by stancetakers attacking one another when an alternative stance is offered. The public discourse on farm violence largely serves as a means for South Africans to address racial frustrations; therefore, discussions often veer off track and implicate one side as being 'bad', deserving of some punishment.

The song "Dbul 'ibunu" is referred to in each comment section except for B1 at least once. In most of its mentions, the song is portrayed negatively. The song is also mentioned in the A1 post, where it is described as a struggle song, and it is suggested that it is not evidence of a call to kill White farmers. As evidenced by its constant mention, this song plays a core role in farm violence discussions.

Public discourse on South African farm violence, especially on the A2 and B2 pages, also observes Zimbabwe as a cautionary tale for what could happen to South Africa. This is intended to instil fear and justify 'fighting back' in an analogous way; White racism on farms is intended to justify "revenge" towards White farmers. The A1 and B1 data sets imply that farm violence results directly from White racism. The A2 and B2 data sets imply that farm violence is a targeted attempt to destroy White South Africans and, therefore, White farmers may retaliate.

Public discourse about farm violence in South Africa on Facebook is emotional, racial, and a call for violence from both sides. One side is appealing for better treatment of farm workers, and the other is calling for the so-called 'calculated' killings of farmers. Both sides are calling for an end to farm violence; however, their focus on racialised issues prevents them from considering that they are arguing for the same thing—a safer environment on farms. This discourse demonstrates a need for better discourse groups around this sensitive topic.

6.7   Recommendations

For future research, it is recommended to expand the study to include more Facebook pages. This would help develop a better overview of how evaluative language is used to discuss farm violence on the platform. It could also be worthwhile to extend the study to include various social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and LinkedIn, as these platforms attract diverse audiences. Although, some finer

nuances would need to be ironed out for TikTok and YouTube as these are largely video-sharing platforms. It could also be worthwhile to investigate the comments on an official news outlet's page on these platforms, as Sheik (2022) has conducted. This could provide an interesting point of comparison as the intention behind the posts is slightly different for news outlets as opposed to a public Facebook page aimed at raising awareness about a specific issue. A future study could also add a layer of analysis of evaluative language by employing the appraisal framework.

6.8   Contributions

This study explores South African farm violence from a linguistic angle. While South African farm violence has been addressed in various other fields, it was not addressed in linguistics specifically from an evaluative and, therefore, this study provides a valuable origin for further researcher into language about farm violence on social media.

6.9   Chapter conclusion

The evaluative language was a valuable linguistic tool for analysing the farm violence public discourse on Facebook as it measures stance. Through evaluative language, Facebook users indicate their stance on farm violence. The Facebook page, observing farm violence as a general indicator of South Africa's crime problems, featured comments that appeared, on the surface to be more trustworthy; however, upon closer examination, it was established that several of these comments featured elevated levels of implicit evaluation. While less obvious than the explicitly evaluative items established on the page observing farm violence as an indicator of White genocide; these implicitly evaluative items were still worth exploring.

Facebook users often dramatise the 'badness' of a different side to emphasise their side's 'goodness'. The four evaluative parameters: GOOD-BAD, CERTAINTY, IMPORTANCE, and EXPECTEDNESS, work in tandem to convey the Facebook user's stance. This demonstrates how evaluation should be observed as a singular concept (Hunston & Thompson, 2003) rather than four concepts.

Farm violence in South Africa is discussed in extremes on these pages, with a stancetaker either seeing something as 'good' or 'bad', 'black' or 'White' or 'left' or 'right'. As evidenced by the hostile comments towards individuals with differing stances, the discourse about South African farm violence on Facebook is emotional, racial, and polarised and calls for violence towards the other side.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical clearance form

Faculty of Humanities
Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotho

1 November 2021

Dear Ms DA van der Horst

Project Title:	Public discourse about South African farm violence on Facebook
Researcher:	Ms DA van der Horst
Supervisor(s):	Dr AP Maritz
Department:	Afrikaans
Reference number:	17067716 (HUM032/0921)
Degree:	Masters

Thank you for the application that was submitted for ethical consideration.

The Research Ethics Committee notes that this is a literature-based study and no human subjects are involved.

The application has been **approved** on 28 October 2021 with the assumption that the document(s) are in the public domain. Data collection may therefore commence, along these guidelines.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. However, should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, a new research proposal and application for ethical clearance will have to be submitted for approval.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,

Prof Karen Harris
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: tracey.andrew@up.ac.za

Appendix B: Example of Evaluative tagging: Excel Document

N	Post B2 Evaluation		
	Concordance	Parameter	Evaluative Item Only
1	Jaap Cilliers, said they would dispute the state's case that there was no common purpose. The affidavits of Mbita and Greyling painted a 〈cvrb〉 **chaotic** and violence-charged picture. Mbita stated that around Ham, a message was sent on the farmers' WhatsApp group, that a	GB	〈nvw〉chaotic〈/nvw〉
2	He told the Piet Retief Magistrate's Court the farmers had "acted on common purpose". … "The accused were called via radio to a war, to a 〈cvrb〉 **fight**. After the call, they armed themselves with guns. To make_it worse, they wore bulletproof vests and the end result was that	GB	〈nvw〉fight〈/nvw〉
3	and photographers suffered abuse, with The Citizen photographer Jacques Nelles told never to come back because he is white. It was a 〈cvrb〉 **frightful** experience to get out of town, with people hurling rocks and other objects at any_white_person. The bail hearing is expected	GB	〈nvw〉frightful〈/nvw〉
4	yesterday. He told the Piet Retief Magistrate's Court the farmers had "acted on common purpose". … "The accused were called via radio to a 〈cvrb〉 **war**, to a fight. After the call, they armed themselves with guns.	GB	〈nvw〉war〈/nvw〉
5	To make_it worse, they wore bulletproof vests and the end result … said they would dispute the state's case that there was no common purpose. The affidavits of Mbita and Greyling painted a chaotic and 〈cvrb〉 **violence-charged** picture. Mbita stated that around Ham, a message was sent on the farmers' WhatsApp group, that a group of people was	GB	〈nvw〉violence-charged〈/nvw〉
6	never to come back because he is white. It was a frightful experience to get out of town, with people hurling rocks and other objects at 〈cvrb〉 **any** white_person. The bail hearing is expected to resume today.	C	〈nvw〉any〈/nvw〉
7	was severely injured and then Mbita was hit on the head with a steel pipe. Outside the court, the town was locked down at the angry crowd 〈cvrb〉 **pelted** police with stones, bottles and other objects. White journalists and photographers suffered abuse, with The Citizen		〈nvw〉pelted〈/nvw〉
8	injured, according to prosecutor Robert Molokoane. … oct: Text B2 Update: Piet Retief The farmers were armed, wore bulletproof vests and were out_to_kill on the day two Mkhondo farm 〈cvrb〉 **dwellers** were gunned_down and three other people were	GB	〈nvw〉dwellers〈/nvw〉
9	White journalists and photographers suffered abuse, with The Citizen photographer Jacques Nelles told never to come back because he is 〈cvrb〉 **white**. It was a frightful experience to get out of town, with people hurling rocks and other objects at any_white_person. The bail	I	〈nvw〉white〈/nvw〉
10	people hurling rocks and other objects at any_white_person. The bail hearing is expected to resume today. … "The accused were called via radio to a war, to a fight. After the call, they armed themselves with guns. To make_it 〈cvrb〉 **worse**, they wore bulletproof vests and the end result was that two people were murdered…	GB	〈nvw〉worse〈/nvw〉
11	photographer Jacques Nelles told never to come back because he is white. It was a frightful experience to get out of town, with 〈cvrb〉 **people** hurling rocks and other objects at any_white_person. The bail hearing is expected to resume today.	I	〈nvw〉hurling〈/nvw〉
12	the town was locked down at the angry crowd pelted police with stones, bottles and other objects. White journalists and 〈cvrb〉 **photographers** suffered abuse, with The Citizen photographer Jacques Nelles told never to come back because he is white. It was a frightful		〈nvw〉suffered〈/nvw〉
13	told never to come back because he is white. It was a frightful experience to … of murder and one of assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm. The farmers were arrested more than a week ago, following the 〈cvrb〉 **fatal** shooting of Celia brothers Zanele and Mgcini. Yende was	GB	〈nvw〉fatal〈/nvw〉
14	arrested on Friday. Mbita's advocate, Jaap Cilliers, said they would … Potgieter, was severely injured and then Mbita was hit on the head with a steel pipe. Outside the court, the town was locked down at the 〈cvrb〉 **angry** crowd pelted police with stones, bottles and other objects.	GB	〈nvw〉angry〈/nvw〉
15	White journalists and photographers suffered abuse, with The … "acted on common purpose". … "The accused were called via radio to a war, to a fight. After the call, they armed themselves with guns. To 〈cvrb〉 **make_it** worse, they wore bulletproof vests and the end result	I	〈nvw〉make_it〈/nvw〉
16	was that two people were murdered…" This was the basis of the state's … stones, bottles and other objects. White journalists and photographers suffered abuse, with The Citizen photographer Jacques Nelles told 〈cvrb〉 **never** to come back because he is white. It was a frightful	C	〈nvw〉never〈/nvw〉
17	experience to get out of town, with people hurling rocks and other … was intimidating farm workers. He said when he arrived, the owner of the farm, Werner Potgieter, was severely injured and then Mbita was 〈cvrb〉 **hit** on the head with a steel pipe. Outside the court, the town was	C	〈nvw〉hit〈/nvw〉
18	locked down at the angry crowd pelted police with stones. … and violence-charged picture. Mbita stated that around Ham, a message was sent on the farmers' WhatsApp group, that a group of people was 〈cvrb〉 **intimidating** farm workers. He said when he arrived, the	GB	〈nvw〉intimidating〈/nvw〉
19	owner of the farm, Werner Potgieter, was severely injured and then Mbita … WhatsApp group, that a group of people was intimidating farm workers. He said when he arrived, the owner of the farm, Werner Potgieter, was 〈cvrb〉 **severely** injured and then Mbita was hit on the head with a	I	〈nvw〉severely〈/nvw〉
20	steel pipe. Outside the court, the town was locked down at the angry … oct: Text B2 Update: Piet Retief The farmers were armed, wore bulletproof vests and were out_to_kill on the day two Mkhondo farm dwellers were 〈cvrb〉 **gunned_down** and three other people were injured,	GB	〈nvw〉gunned_down〈/nvw〉
21	other people were injured, according to prosecutor … oct: Text B2 Update: Piet Retief The farmers were armed, wore bulletproof vests and were out_to_kill on the day two Mkhondo farm dwellers were gunned_down and three	GB	〈nvw〉out_to_kill〈/nvw〉
22	Text B2 Update: Piet Retief The farmers were armed, wore bulletproof vests and were out_to_kill on the day two Mkhondo farm dwellers were gunned_down and three other people were injured, according to prosecutor Robert Molokoane yesterday. He told the Piet Retief	GB	〈nvw〉white〈/nvw〉
23	never to come back because he is white. It was a frightful experience to get out of town, with people hurling rocks and other objects at **any** 〈cvrb〉 white_person. The bail hearing is expected to resume today.	I	〈nvw〉white〈/nvw〉

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