

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Sigma Male Narratives on X

Vojtěch Šišák

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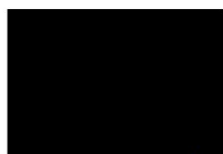
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Mgr. Libor Marek, Ph.D.
děkan



doc. Mgr. Roman Trušník, Ph.D.
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá kritickou analýzou diskurzu narativů týkajících se identity Sigma mužů na X. Vycházející z poznatků kritické diskurzivní analýzy, kritických studií diskurzu a naratologie práce zkoumá, jak uživatelé X utváří a projednávají identitu Sigma mužů v rámci online diskurzu. Praktická část zkoumá jazykové strategie, narativní struktury a konstrukce sociální identity používané v příspěvcích věnujících se identitě Sigma mužů na X. Prostřednictvím analýzy vybraných příspěvků si tato práce klade za cíl objasnit diskurzivní praktiky a mocenskou dynamiku, které jsou součástí konstrukce narativů Sigma mužů na X.

Klíčová slova: Sigma muž, identita, narativ, diskurz, kritická diskurzivní analýza, sociální média, X

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis focuses on a critical discourse analysis of narratives surrounding the Sigma male identity on X. The thesis explores how X users construct and negotiate the identity of Sigma males within online discourse based on frameworks of discourse analysis, critical discourse studies, and narratology. The practical part investigates the linguistic strategies, narrative structures, and social identity constructions employed in posts discussing Sigma identity on X. Through an analysis of selected posts, this thesis aims to elucidate the discursive practices and power dynamics inherent in the construction of Sigma male narratives on X.

Keywords: Sigma male, identity, narrative, discourse, critical discourse analysis, social media, X

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of Web 2.0, how people talk and share stories has changed. This new way, which Herring and Androutsopoulos (2019, 130) call “Discourse 2.0,” includes elements like social media updates, video annotations, or collaborative editing. Users adapt to these changes by using features such as @ and # on platforms like X (formerly Twitter).

In computer-mediated discourse (CMD), meaning is primarily formed and negotiated through verbal communication, written (messages, blogs, etc.) and oral (videos, video chats, etc.), where contextual cues are minimized compared to face-to-face interaction. The language is also used to construct social identities on various platforms, which may or may not reflect the real-life identities of the users (Herring and Androutsopoulos 2015, 140). In the ever-evolving digital communication landscape, platforms like X have become vital arenas for constructing and disseminating diverse discourses reflecting and reframing societal narratives, especially narratives about identity, which shape how individuals perceive themselves within society.

Scholars such as Raewyn Connell in *Masculinities* and Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* have explored the complexities of social identity, highlighting how traditional notions of masculinity intersect with power dynamics. Building on these insights, authors like Michael Kimmel with *Manhood in America* and R.W. Connell with *The Men and the Boys* contributed to our understanding of traditional and evolving male identities within societal contexts. However, the concept of a Sigma male identity, which has emerged in contemporary online discourse and popular culture, has remained relatively unexplored in academic discourse despite its popularity on the web. This thesis aims to fill the gap by examining the portrayal of the Sigma male identity on X through the lens of critical discourse analysis (CDA), exploring its discursive construction and reception.

CDA is a methodological approach that examines how language, discourse, and power intersect to produce and reproduce social hierarchies and identities (Fairclough 1993, 12–13). Rooted in critical linguistics, CDA aims to reveal the underlying ideologies, structures, and power relations embedded within texts and discourses (van Leeuwen 2006, 290). By analyzing the linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and discursive practices, CDA aims to clarify how language shapes and reflects social reality (Machin and Mayr 2012, 5).

The thesis tracks how X users engage with and respond to the Sigma male identity concept and what narratives and patterns emerge in terms of interpretations of the concept in the online discourse.

The bachelor's thesis is in two parts. The theory section lays the groundwork for understanding Sigma male narratives on X by introducing the fundamental concepts and frameworks of CDA. It starts by defining discourse as the central unit of analysis and then delves into the complex relationship between discourse and identity, focusing on social identity, self-presentation, and how masculinity intersects with gender within discursive practices. This section also explores the linguistic devices used in discourse to construct and negotiate meaning. Additionally, it provides an overview of the main approaches used by prominent CDA scholars to illustrate the various methods employed in CDA.

The analysis section examines selected posts related to the Sigma male identity. Linguostylistic analysis is applied to establish the positive and negative connotations associated with the Sigma identity and extends to explore the metaphors and intertextual links embedded within Sigma male discourse. Moreover, the examination of narrative structures reveals the underlying frameworks shaping the portrayal of Sigma males, focusing on the nuanced narratives and representations surrounding the identity. Finally, the analysis delves into the construction of the identity, exploring how pop culture references – historical and fictional – and self-presentation strategies employed by X users contribute to the construction of the Sigma male identity on the platform.

I. THEORY

1 DISCOURSE

Defining discourse is no easy task because the term *discourse* is used across many Humanities disciplines and thus encompasses a number of definitions dependent on the particular field of knowledge and scholarly approach where different scholars work with different definitions (Mills 2001, 1–4; Catalano and Waugh 2020, 2).

For example, in contemporary linguistics, *discourse* is generally understood in two ways: (1) as language in use, including text contextualization and turn-taking practices in speech acts, and (2) as social practices of given communities (Wodak 2018, 74). Within Humanities, the term is commonly used in cultural and literary theory (Bulter 2008; De Beaugrande 1993; Hall 1996) and with slight variation in mainstream linguistics (Brown and Yule, 1983; Carter and Simpson, 2003; Sinclair, Sinclair, and Coulthard, 1975) and critical linguistics (Fairclough, 2013; van Leeuwen, 2006; Wodak, 2001).

In cultural theory, *discourse* refers to a dynamic social practice that continually shapes and reproduces itself through everyday interactions and institutional structures. It constructs subjects through language and media, reflecting broader societal norms and power dynamics (Fiske 2004, 1281–1282). In contrast, in literary theory, *discourse* refers to how language operates within literature, encompassing its creation, interpretation, and the interaction between text, reader, and author. It moves beyond analyzing the text as an object, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between text and its interpretations by readers (De Beaugrande 1993, 427–431).

In the field of the so-called “mainstream linguistics,” the term *discourse* is used to refer to the variations in language used in a particular field of communication, e.g., the discourse of law, technology, or politics, where each of these *discourses* adheres to a different register, which represents a set of specific language features such as differences in lexis, tone, and style specific for or predominantly used in the context of a particular social setting or purpose (Mills 2001, 9). In critical linguistics, which builds upon cultural theory and mainstream linguistics, *discourse* is seen as a medium through which power is exercised, maintained, or challenged by the use of particular linguistic features and social and cultural implications embedded in language use (Mills 2001, 147–148).

In a nutshell, *discourse* is language in the broader context, beyond the structure of a sentence and its interpretation, which may consist of meanings from discursive structures that might be incomplete, fragmented, or defy the usual rules of grammar or syntax (Yule 2010, 142). *Discourse*, in the most general sense, is an interaction of human beings in various

forms – a type of social practice – involving both direct communication with a spoken word or a piece of writing and indirect communication with the use of images and graphs or nonverbal means like gestures (Bloor and Bloor 2013, 6–7; Fairclough 1993, 62–64).

This thesis adopts the critical linguistics perspective of *discourse*, which sees language as a tool for negotiating power dynamics embedded in social and cultural contexts. This perspective allows for examining how linguistic features reflect, perpetuate, and influence these dynamics, allowing CDA to be conducted.

2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a part of a broader field of discourse studies called Critical Discourse Studies which is a part of Discourse Studies.

2.1 Discourse analysis (DA)

While discourse analysis grew out of linguistics, it elevates itself in its endeavors of analyzing discourse above the level of sentences in favor of the linguistic and non-linguistic constituents that make up various social practices (Mills 2001, 132–133). DA builds upon disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, and political studies, among others.

According to Fairclough (1993, 12–13), there are two distinct types of discourse analyses: *critical* and *non-critical*. The difference between them lies in how they orient themselves in relation to discourse, where the *non-critical* would limit its scope to discursive practices as such. While both types of analysis focus on methods, conventions, and strategies employed in language use across diverse contexts, which shape and reflect given communities or cultures and serve as integral tools for conveying ideas, beliefs, and social realities, CDA also considers the effect of ideologies and power relations on the construction of those social identities, beliefs, and shared ideas that often go unnoticed.

Finally, while all forms of DA focus on understanding and analyzing texts in social and cultural contexts, CDA aims at critical examination of texts, intending to expose and challenge the power structures embedded within by unveiling their political implications and advocating for societal change to the benefit of the marginalized groups (Kress 1990, 85).

2.2 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

CDA goes beyond the concern with linguistic units like grammar or syntax and focuses on the social impact of discourse on social practices (Wodak 2018, 70–71). It is an approach to studying language in practical contexts, paying particular attention to the construction, reproduction, and legitimization of power dynamics and ideologies (Catalano and Waugh 2020, 1). In doing so, it critically evaluates the analyzed discourse to bring out the hidden interests of those in power (Catalano and Waugh 2020, 3–4).

It departs from traditional perspectives of regarding different expressions of the same idea as mere stylistic differences or markers of social categories like class or profession for viewing linguistic variation as a possible sign of ideology (van Leeuwen 2006, 291–292).

CDA emerged in the mid-1980s through the work of Fairclough (1993), van Dijk (2008b), Wodak, and other critical linguists. The movement officially took shape in 1992

during a meeting of the aforementioned scholars in Amsterdam (van Leeuwen 2006, 292). CDA aims to point out the use of ideologically biased linguistic features and elements while trying to explain why the purpose and goal of their use (Machin and Mayr 2012, 5).

CDA is based on the idea of understanding that language use, both written and spoken, is the main driver behind maintaining and justifying societal inequality and oppression and seeks to reveal how this happens with an aim to raise awareness and advocate for change based on its findings (van Leeuwen 2006, 290). Although many scholars adopt the CDA approach pioneered by Norman Fairclough, CDA is not limited to any particular linguistic or DA framework (van Leeuwen 2006, 290).

2.2.1 Principles of CDA

In CDA, *critical* does not inherently imply negativity or exclusively dealing with especially serious topics (Wodak 2018, 75). *Critical* in this context means a thoughtful analysis and thorough evaluation (Bloor and Bloor 2013, 4–5).

CDA studies how texts are produced, communicated, received, and reproduced within the influences of different social settings and socio-cultural contexts (Kress 1990, 92–93). CDA does not isolate language within specific domains or fields in contrast to other non-critical forms of DA, as all areas of communication and communicative events are influenced and shaped by their social-cultural practices and power dynamics (Kress 1990, 92). Kress (1990, 93) considers texts to be “repositories” of socio-cultural practices as these practices influence their creation and are embedded in the texts to be retrieved. Texts are thus viewed as the results of the selection processes of linguistic and lexical elements for specific reasons and intentions (Machin and Mayr 2012, 32), as the meaning of words is shaped by their usage within various contexts rather than solely by their dictionary definitions (Bakhtin 1986, 86-89).

For example, words or concepts with opposing meanings, such as “good” and “bad,” can form opposing structures. These structures can imply traits associated with one group by assigning the opposite to another group, idea, or action. This may lead to the assumption that the traits and groups represented by these opposing pairs are mutually exclusive. (Machin and Mayr 2012, 39–42). Word choices and linguistic structures can, therefore, reveal what perception of a specific event, situation, or the world at large is being created and in whose interest (Machin and Mayr 2012, 32). For instance, words with positive connotations might represent a specific group of people, an idea, or an individual the author favors, while words with negative connotations might represent others (Machin and Mayr 2012, 33).

CDA acknowledges the ability of language to represent reality through mediation and create and shape the perceived notion of reality through specific linguistic means and resources, in the process known as lexicalization (Kress 1990, 91). One example of lexicalization could be euphemisms, which can make the matter at hand appear better or worse than it is, not by altering reality but by its perception on which readers build presuppositions and form opinions (Kress 1990, 91). Metaphors, a linguistic device conveying abstract or complex ideas by drawing parallels between different concepts, are also used in this way, allowing CDA to reveal underlying ideologies or power dynamics within discourse (Bloor and Bloor 2013, 69-70).

2.2.2 Main approaches to CDA

Due to the multidisciplinary nature of CDA and its wide range of applications, various methods exist within the field. Although each approach is individually adjusted to a specific project, three prominent approaches are discussed below to illustrate the versatility of CDA methodologies across different research contexts. (van Leeuwen 2006, 290).

2.2.2.1 Socio-cultural approach (Fairclough)

The socio-cultural approach is associated with the name of Norman Fairclough and his three-dimensional conception. Building upon Michael Halliday's functional analysis, Fairclough's analysis framework also consists of three dimensions: text production, distribution, and consumption (Fairclough 1993, 72). The three-dimensional conception of discourse is a way of looking at discourse by combining the language and text analysis of linguistics, examining how social practices relate to larger social structures, and focusing on how people actively create and make sense of social practices (Fairclough 1993, 62–63).

Fairclough (2001, 22–25) sees texts as part of particular social events where interaction is not limited to speech and writing, and text creation is performed by social agents whose text creation process and abilities are influenced by social practices, structures, and structural constraints of language, such as grammar, and power dynamics. Social practices would involve actions performed by individuals in social relations through discourse. Fairclough (1993, 65–73) suggests that discursive practices are not only agents of perpetuating established societal norms, such as the systems of beliefs, knowledge, and identities but also an instrument of initiating societal transformation and shifts within such systems.

2.2.2.2 *Socio-cognitive approach (Van Dijk)*

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach emphasizes the cognitive processes involved in discourse comprehension and production, examining how individuals' social identities, knowledge structures, and beliefs influence their interpretation and construction of discourse (Van Dijk 2008a, 22–23). The scholar argues that discourse is shaped by social cognition, which encompasses individuals' mental representations of social groups, events, and situations, as well as their strategies for understanding and responding to discourse (Van Dijk 2008b, 5). Van Dijk's approach thus aims to uncover how language is used to perpetuate or challenge power relations and ideologies within society while focusing on cognitive mechanisms such as schema activation, inference-making, and persuasive strategies (Van Dijk 1993, 253–255). The approach highlights the interconnectedness of language, cognition, and social context in discourse influencing social action.

2.2.2.3 *Discourse-historical approach (Wodak)*

The discourse-historical approach (DHA) to CDA seeks to expose concealed power dynamics in texts by combining information from historical and intertextual sources as well as the political and social context in which the text creation takes place (Wodak 2018, 76). The subject of this approach is thus considered in four types of contexts (Wodak, 2001, 67):

- Context within the text itself
- Intertextual and interdiscursive connection to other texts
- Social and sociological factors beyond language
- Sociopolitical and historical context

Like Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, DHA also works with three dimensions of textual meaning and structure: the *linguistic elements* that create specific *discursive strategies* used in communicative events about a particular *topic* (Wodak 2018, 76).

Wodak (2013, 529) also focuses on intertextuality, which links analyzed texts to other texts, and recontextualization, where an argument is taken out of its original context in the process of de-contextualization and then put into a different context. That is because some practices might become normalized and seem ordinary without being questioned until examined in a different context (Bloor and Bloor 2013, 5).

2.3 Discourse and power

In general, all the approaches discussed above focus on the relationship between power and discourse. According to Holzschleiter (2010, 3), two types of power are at play in social

discursive interactions: (1) the influence of societal history on words and their meanings and (2) the ability of individuals to change those meanings through discourse, either individually or collectively. Van Dijk (2008b, 9) defines power as one group having control over another group, which, when unchecked, can escalate into abuse and domination, particularly when it takes the form of manipulation or indoctrination (van Dijk 2008b, 17–18).

Fairclough (2001, 36) distinguishes power in the context of discourse into two categories: power *in* discourse and power *behind* discourse. Power *in* discourse captures power dynamics among discourse participants, such as those who have more power than others or have power over others. The projection of power dynamics between participants and the difference in power is represented through linguistic features on all levels, from phonological to syntactical and textual, which either project power or lack thereof (Kress 1990, 89–90). This inequality in power reduces the range of linguistic element choices available to less powerful interlocutors as the power difference increases (Kress 1990, 87–88). More powerful participants may then control or constrain the contributions of the less powerful interlocutors (Fairclough 2001, 36). Fairclough (2001, 39) identifies three types of constraints, those being constraints of:

- Content – what can be said or done;
- Relations – social relations participants can express through discourse;
- Subjects – positions that participants are allowed to occupy in discourse;

Power *behind* discourse, on the other hand, implies that the structure and function of discourse are fundamentally influenced by hidden power dynamics, as seen in processes like standardization where one dialect is elevated above others, and access to discourse is governed by power, imposing constraints that reinforce social inequalities (Fairclough 2001, 46–55). After all, the choice of linguistic form and elements is never neutral but is always affected by the power dynamics of discourse participants that deform the communication in some way, usually in favor of the participants with more power (Kress 1990, 89–90).

Fairclough's analysis also highlights the phenomenon of "othering," where certain groups or individuals are marginalized or excluded from specific discourse settings. This process often involves the construction of binary distinctions between "us" and "them." This exclusionary practice marginalizes individuals and reinforces stereotypes and prejudices, reinforcing societal divisions (van Dijk 2008b, 227).

2.4 Discourse and identity

Identification is a fundamental mechanism in human society for organizing individuals into groups (Jenkins 2008, 13). Identity is formed by how individuals perceive themselves and recognize their affiliation with a particular social group (Tajfel 1978, 63). In other words, identity expresses belonging to a group based on its members' shared characteristics and association with other groups (Jenkins 2008, 16–17).

Some identities are constructed by individuals, such as occupational, while others may be assigned to them, such as national, racial, or cultural (Bloor and Bloor 2013, 86). Identities are also constructed through discourse and express who we are, just like who we are not (Hall 1996, 4–5), as well as how individuals and groups interact, establishing similarities and differences with other groups. (Jenkins 2008, 18). Identity construction thus inevitably creates an inclusive “we,” a specific collection of commonalities and shared belonging, which in turn creates an exclusionary “they” (Gilroy 1997, 301–302).

2.4.1 Social identity

Social identity, also called collective identity, plays a fundamental role in shaping how individuals perceive themselves and interact with others within society (Ashton, Deaux and McLaughling-Volpe 2004, 81). Social identity encompasses ways individuals and groups construct and assert themselves, whether through religious beliefs, political affiliations, or cultural and national belonging, reflecting a complex interplay between personal choices, societal influences, and historical contexts (Jenkins 2008, 28–30).

Historically, identity was rather assigned than chosen or adopted when societies were more stable and less interconnected. In recent times of rapid change, however, identity has become increasingly important as individuals define themselves within the changing social frameworks and structures (Howell 2002, 367–368). Identity nowadays is thus accepted to be not static but constantly evolving and dynamic (Jenkins 2008, 17).

Jenkins (2008, 39–40) proposes three distinct “orders,” the *individual*, *interaction*, and *institutional*, through which the world is experienced by humans and based on which identity is constructed. *Individual* order contains the idea that while identity cannot exist in isolation from social interaction, it is shaped by internal self-definition just as external definitions from others. Embodied in the human body and deeply rooted in early socialization processes, primary identities such as selfhood and gender are more resistant to change than other identities (Jenkins 2008, 40–42).

Interaction order highlights the reciprocal nature of identity and the necessity of identity validation through social interactions. In other words, how individuals see themselves is just as important for shaping their identity as how others see them. Individuals consciously pursue specific identities while the pursuit is influenced by social improvisation, shaping the public and self-image of individuals in everyday interactions (Jenkins 2008, 42–43).

Institutional order shapes identity formation by providing frameworks for collective identification and categorization. Institutions, recognized patterns of practice within societies, play a crucial role in defining individual and collective identities, mainly through organizational structures and recruitment procedures that allocate specific roles and positions, thereby imparting identities to individuals. This process combines the tangible and abstract elements of identification, as institutional classifications reflect power dynamics, contributing to the systematic production and reproduction of individual and collective identities within broader social contexts. (Jenkins 2008, 44–45).

2.4.2 Self-presentation

Self-presentation refers to the conscious or subconscious ways individuals express themselves in social interactions (Goffman 1956, 1–3). A distinction should be made between *self-presentation* and *self-representation*, where the difference lies in their conceptualization. *Presentation* refers to the act of individuals expressing themselves, while *representation* denotes the creation of signs or objects that stand in place of something else, representing them but not being them directly (Rettberg 2017, 430–431). In social media, the distinction between presentation and representation is nuanced, as users engage in self-expression and create symbolic content, blurring the lines between the two concepts.

Self-presentation is intricately intertwined with individuals' tools and technologies, allowing them to enact and project various social identities (Jones and Hafner 2021, 211). In the context of social media and CMD, individuals continually project their self-image to their audiences, dynamically maintaining their desired identity through linguistic choices like specific vocabulary, tone, and narrative structures (Jones and Hafner 2021, 212–214; Joseph 2004, 15).

2.4.3 Gender and discourse

According to Yule (2010, 274), there are three genders: *biological*, *grammatical*, and *social*. While *biological* gender delineates male and female sexes and *grammatical* gender categorizes nouns into classes in languages like Italian, *social* gender encompasses multiple dimensions beyond biological and grammatical distinctions, extending into social roles and

linguistic practices (Yule 2010, 274). Gender and identity are intertwined in discourse studies, where gender is perceived as a multifaceted construct shaped by social, cultural, and linguistic factors (Edwards 2009, 126–127). It is also the social gender that most prominently shapes individual identities through societal roles and linguistic conventions (Yule 2010, 274). These extend to interactional dynamics, where male hierarchical conversational structures may contrast with female collaborative approaches (Yule 2010, 276).

2.4.4 Masculinity and discourse

Discourse plays a significant role in constructing and perpetuating cultural norms and expectations surrounding masculinity, as masculinity is not a fixed, universal concept but rather a socially constructed phenomenon that varies across cultures and historical contexts (Connell 1995, 68). Although stereotypically associated with men, masculinity and men are distinct concepts, with masculinity being a socially constructed quality as women may also engage in social practices traditionally considered masculine (Kiesling 2007, 655–656).

Masculinity is thus defined by practices that men and women engage in that align with one or the other gender and are perpetuated through discourse (Connell 1995, 71; Kiesling 2007, 655–656). Connell (1995, 77–80) considers four practices to be the primary patterns behind the construction of masculinity:

- Hegemony – one social group has power over another group;
- Domination/Subordination – one social group is superior in status to another group;
- Complicity – superiority of a few members of a group benefits all members;
- Marginalization – superior group marginalizes inferior group.

In the context of discursive practices, Kiesling (2007, 658) proposes four main “cultural discourses of hegemonic masculinity” through which men construct their masculine identity:

- Gender difference – discourse of men being different from women;
- Heterosexism – discourse of sexual desire for women;
- Dominance – discourses about strength, authority, and control;
- Male solidarity – discourses about activities done by men with men, not women.

Masculinity is then expressed by discursive elements that are directly or indirectly linked to one or more of these discourses. (Kiesling 2007, 661).

Alternative constructions of masculinity, such as the Sigma male identity, challenge these conventional notions of masculinity by narratives emphasizing traits such as male independence, non-conformity, self-reliance, and rejecting hierarchical structures instead of male solidarity (Beale, 2010).

3 NARRATIVE

Narrative is usually defined as a discourse genre (De Fina and Johnstone 2015, 152). A term most frequently used in literary studies to mean discourse with attributes of narrativity (Greimas and Courtes 1982, 208–210). Our understanding of the world and forming social identities happen through engaging with narratives, often without even realizing it (Somers 1994, 606). Greimas and Courtes (1982, 203) define narrative as storytelling involving characters and actions. In its most basic form, a narrative is then a sentence expressing a transition from an initial state of being to a later or final one through a carried-out action or process (Greimas and Courtes 1982, 203).

In the context of discursive structures, narrative refers to a representation of a world shown through language or another form of communication, focusing on one or more characters in a particular time and place as they carry out actions that form the plot structure (Fludernik 2009, 6–7). This is achieved through emplotment, or the way events are organized into meaningful stories, which give significance to individual events regardless of their chronological order. Emplotment turns events into episodes and helps understand their interrelatedness (Somers 1994, 616–617). It is crucial for understanding narratives, as it distinguishes them from mere lists of events and allows one to grasp their deeper meanings, which can be expressed explicitly or implicitly (Greimas and Courtes 1982, 203).

3.1 Narrativity

Greimas and Courtes (1982, 208–210) define narrativity as the organizing principle distinguishing narrative from non-narrative discourse. Somers (1994, 617–620) outlines four dimensions of narrativity: *ontological*, *public*, *conceptual*, and *metanarrativity*.

Ontological narratives are stories people use to understand and navigate their lives. These narratives shape our sense of identity and guide our actions, forming a continuous cycle where new actions lead to new narratives. Understanding our place in these narratives is crucial for making sense of our social existence and identity.

Public narratives are stories tied to broader cultural and institutional contexts, shaping our understanding of social identity within a community across various spheres like family, work, religion, and government (Somers 1994, 619). *Metanarrativity* encompasses overarching narratives that shape our understanding of history and society despite operating mainly at an unconscious level (Somers 1994, 619). *Conceptual* narrativity involves social researchers creating vocabulary and frameworks to understand how narratives shape social actions, institutions, and identities over time (Somers 1994, 620).

3.2 Narrative analysis

A narrative requires a plot that organizes individual events into a coherent unit, a story (Greimas and Courtes 1982, 208–210). Narrative analysis methods vary, but they share a common understanding that narratives are for constructing identities and guiding our actions by helping us interpret our experiences (Somers 1994, 614). According to Labov (1972, 360), a narrative is a set of clauses whose order cannot be changed without altering the semantic interpretation. A minimal narrative would then consist of two temporally ordered clauses while a fully formed narrative would, according to Labov (1972, 363), also include clauses of:

- Abstract – summary of the story to come;
- Orientation – identification of time, place, characters, and activity or situation;
- Complicating action – recapitulation of events, building tension for climax;
- Evaluation – adding of details, comparison, suspension;
- Result or resolution – release of tension, explanation of what happened;
- Coda – marking the end, a summary of the story that ended.

Vladimir Propp's (2010, 25) analysis of Russian folktales led to identifying specific plot structures and narrative schemas. These structured frameworks consist of abstracted patterns that outline how these narratives are organized. Propp also observed that the characters in these folktales adhere to these patterns and are defined in terms of their function, an abstract type of plot that exists across stories (Propp 2010, 79). Propp (2010, 79–80) grouped these functions and their variations into seven “spheres of action” of the: (1) Villain, (2) Donor, (3) Helper, (4) Princess, (5) Dispatcher, (6) Hero and (7) False hero. Although, Propp (2010, 90–91) does not concern himself with classifying the attributes of characters that belong to a particular sphere as they are specific to each story and their functions, unlike their function.

3.3 Narrative and identity

Narratives are not just a property of literary works but are an inherent part of everyday communication and play an important role in identity creation and expression (Schiffrin 1996, 167–169; Sommers 1994, 621). Identity is a dynamic process rather than a fixed outcome, shaped through interactions and storytelling (De Fina and Johnstone 2015, 157–158). Narratives help individuals construct coherent life stories, and there may not be a singular “true self” emerging from these stories (Schiffrin 1996, 198–199). Instead, it may be that identities are negotiated in social contexts, often appearing plural, fragmented and

based on how narrators position themselves within the story world, in interaction with others, and in defining their “stable” self (De Fina and Johnstone 2015, 157–158).

Propp’s narrative analysis is often applied to analyzing contemporary narratives, such as those surrounding identity (De Fina and Johnstone 2015, 153). Although Propp emphasizes the universality of character functions rather than specific attributes, we can still see parallels in contemporary narratives and Propp’s hero and false hero types when analyzing Sigma male narratives on social media.

3.4 Narratives on social media

Social media narratives generally differ from traditional fictional narratives in several ways. While fictional narratives often follow predefined structures and plotlines, social media narratives exhibit emergent linearity and collaborative tellership (Page, 2013, 14). The narrative qualities of social media stories depend on their embedded context, which includes multilayered factors such as (Page 2013, 14):

- Participants – interaction participants and their group relations;
- Imagined context – cognitive creation of context based on knowledge and cues;
- Extrasituational context – offline contexts like age, gender, ethnicity, and values;
- Behavioral context – context of the physical environment where interaction occurs;
- Textual context – verbal and visual elements surrounding the text;
- Generic context – purpose and rules of the medium where narrative occurs.

Unlike fictional narratives, which are often authored by a single individual or a select group, social media narratives are mainly co-constructed by multiple participants in real-time, leading to dynamic and ever-evolving stories that reflect the diverse perspectives and experiences of the participants (Georgakopoulou 2022, 246–247). These narratives are shaped not only by the content shared but also by the interactive nature of social media platforms, where comments, likes, and shares contribute to the ongoing development of the narrative (Page 2013, 14). Thus, social media narratives represent a unique form of storytelling that is deeply intertwined with the social dynamics of the digital age, offering insight into how individuals engage with and make sense of their lived experiences in an increasingly interconnected world (Georgakopoulou 2022, 246–247).

4 DEFINING SIGMA MALES

The concept of a Sigma male is a relatively recent addition to the spectrum of male archetypes that attempts to further categorize and understand social dynamics among men. The Sigma male archetype is often portrayed as an enigmatic, solitary figure who possesses a blend of traits, such as confidence and independence, yet actively avoids seeking or holding traditional positions of social power or hierarchy (Adam 2021).

4.1 Origin and evolution of the concept

The term *Sigma male* first emerged within the online space known as the manosphere, a virtual community dedicated to discussions around masculinity, dating, self-improvement, and social dynamics recognized for its discussions on male hierarchy and categorizations like *Alpha* and *Beta* males. This section of the internet develops a socio-sexual hierarchy based on these classifications, attributing specific traits and social status to men according to these Greek letter designations (Spalding 2023). The Sigma male concept slowly gained prominence in online discussions, particularly online forums, social media platforms, and segments of the manosphere. Platforms like Reddit, YouTube, social media, and various blogs played a role in propagating and discussing these male archetypes (Adam 2021).

4.1.1 The Alpha/Beta dichotomy

The concept of Alpha and Beta type distinctions in humans originated from early studies on wolf behavior, especially Rudolf Schenkel's (1946) *Captivity Observations* and Dr. L. David Mech's (1970) *The Wolf: Ecology and Behavior of an Endangered Species*, thanks to which the idea of dominant *Alpha* wolves gained prominence and contributed to popularizing the *Alpha* concept as a whole (Higgs 2022).

Despite the idea of an Alpha wolf being debunked by later studies of wolf packs in the wild and Mech's extensive efforts aimed at dispelling this misunderstanding, the misperception of Alpha and Beta wolves and its application to human behavior have seeped into popular culture (Mech 2008, 4). The misinterpreted findings regarding Alpha and Beta wolves have significantly influenced cultural perceptions within the manosphere. Despite their lack of empirical validity, misappropriating these misinterpreted findings has influenced cultural notions of social dominance and gender roles (Spalding 2023).

Sigma and other male archetypes emerged as a response to the Alpha/Beta male dichotomy, challenging the notion that social hierarchy and dominance are the primary

markers of male success or identity. Instead, it highlights the significance of individualism, self-sufficiency, and autonomy as defining characteristics of male identity (Adam 2021).

4.1.2 The expansion by Theodore Robert Beale

The initial Alpha/Beta dichotomy held a simplistic binary view of men. Beale (2010), writing under the pseudonym of Vox Day, extended this construct with a more nuanced perspective that included additional archetypes, including the Sigma male archetype, coining the term.

Beale's (2010) extended categorization included:

- Alphas – male elite and natural leaders who effortlessly draw women's attention;
- Betas – social class just below Alphas, popular, successful, and often good-looking;
- Deltas – the vast majority of men and a classic Betas in conventional categorizations;
- Gammas – overtly subservient and use flattery and false chivalry to win over women;
- Lambdas – LGBTQ+ individuals with their own social hierarchy;
- Omegas – social outcasts facing rejection and struggle with social belonging;
- Sigmas – independent lone wolves who resist leadership roles and social structures.

4.1.3 Prevalence in Online Communities

Despite the resonance of these new male archetypes proposed by Beale within online male-dominated spaces, they have not penetrated mainstream discourse beyond these niches, confined and obscure, lacking substantial recognition or application in broader societal discussions until the mid-2020 (Spalding 2023). After slowly gaining traction for almost two years, the Sigma male identity finally reached wider public discourse in late 2022 and early 2023, which led to an unexpected response in the form of flooding social media platforms like X and TikTok with ironic Sigma male memes, humorously exaggerating the proposed Sigma traits and in doing so expanding public recognition of the concept beyond its niche (Adam 2024). The fervor has since subsided, but these archetypes persist in contemporary internet culture, resurfacing in discussions or parodies within online communities.

II. ANALYSIS

5 MATERIAL AND METHODS

The analysis focuses on the construction and perception of the Sigma male identity on social media. The discussion of Sigma male on X (formerly Twitter) was chosen for this. X was selected as the corpus source due to its position as a social media platform fostering discussions on diverse topics in which everyone with an X account can participate.

A total of one hundred posts discussing the Sigma male identity from January 2020 to the end of March 2024 were manually selected (see Appendix 1), considering the surge in popularity of Sigma male discussions in early 2023 and the subsequent decline observed throughout the year (Google n.d.). The selection process involved a combination of keyword searches (“Sigma male”) and hashtags such as #SigmaMale, #Sigma, and other variations indicative of discussions related to the Sigma male identity. Only posts with over 50 likes were selected, as these metrics often signify the reach and impact of specific posts within the online community. The posts should thus represent diverse perspectives, opinions, and attitudes toward the Sigma male identity.

An interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of Sigma male identity was applied. Linguostylistic analysis with elements of narrative analysis (Bakhtin 1986; De Fina and Johnstone 2015; Fludernik 2010; Labov 1972; Mills 2001; Page 2013; Propp 2010; Sommers 1994) was used to examine the lexical choices, metaphors and narrative structures used when discussing the Sigma male identity. Narrative structures used in the posts were interpreted to identify representations associated with Sigma male narratives.

CDA perspective (Bloor and Bloor 2013; Fairclough 1993; Fairclough 2013; Kress 1990; Machin and Mayr 2012; Van Dijk 1993; van Leeuwen 2006; Wodak and Meyer 2015) was adopted for the interpretation of the results of linguostylistic and narrative analyses which included sorting posts based on their attitude toward the concept, identifying themes like endorsement or mockery, examining arguments and specific traits associated with the Sigma male identity, and pop culture references illustrating them. The analysis concludes with a summary of self-presentation strategies used by users who identified as Sigma males.

Overall, the methodology involved a qualitative examination to uncover patterns, themes, and attitudes surrounding the Sigma male identity on X. Example posts are shown in their authentic original form, which may contain mistakes or unconventional usage.

6 SIGMA MALE IDENTITY REPRESENTATION

The analysis of the selected posts (100 in total) uncovered several tendencies associated with discourse surrounding the Sigma male identity on X. The reception of the Sigma male identity was predominantly negative, as only 31% of the posts discussed the concept without being critical, with 23% expressing endorsement and 8% maintaining a neutral stance. The critical posts constituted the vast majority, comprising 69% of the corpus.

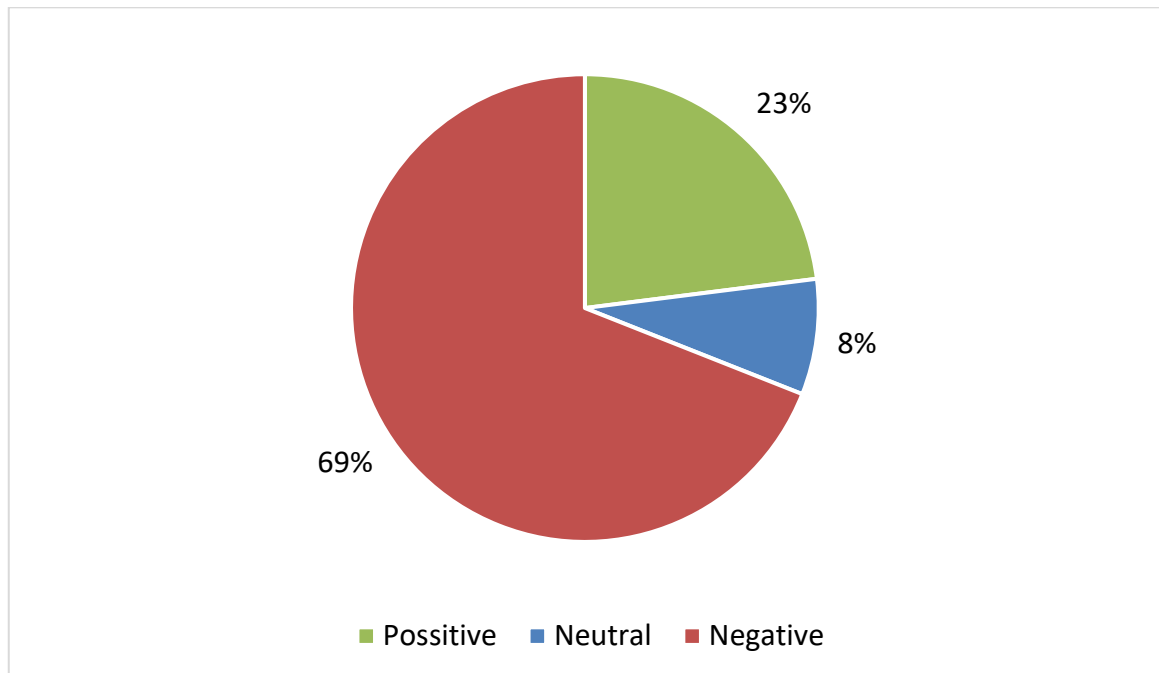


Figure 1. Reception of the Sigma male identity

6.1 Linguostylistic analysis

This section outlines positive and negative traits ascribed to the Sigma male identity.

6.1.1 Characterization

Specific lexical choices employed in posts discussing the Sigma male identity play a crucial role in shaping the discourse of Sigma male narratives, influencing the connotations associated with the Sigma male identity. Although some users referred to traditionally positively connotated character traits (23%), usually associated with independence and self-reliance, most were still skeptical or critical of the identity and associated values (69%).

6.1.1.1 *Characterization of Sigma males*

The words (nouns, verbs and adjectives) characterizing Sigma males in a positive light are summarized in Fig. 2. These perceptually positive traits depict the Sigma male identity as an independent, self-reliant “lone wolf” focused on work and the pursuit of success through

relentless discipline and the “grindset.” At the same time, calmness and confidence about not gaining the approval of others while concealing a warm and helping personality behind a mysterious and charismatic impression seem valued in the Sigma male characterization.

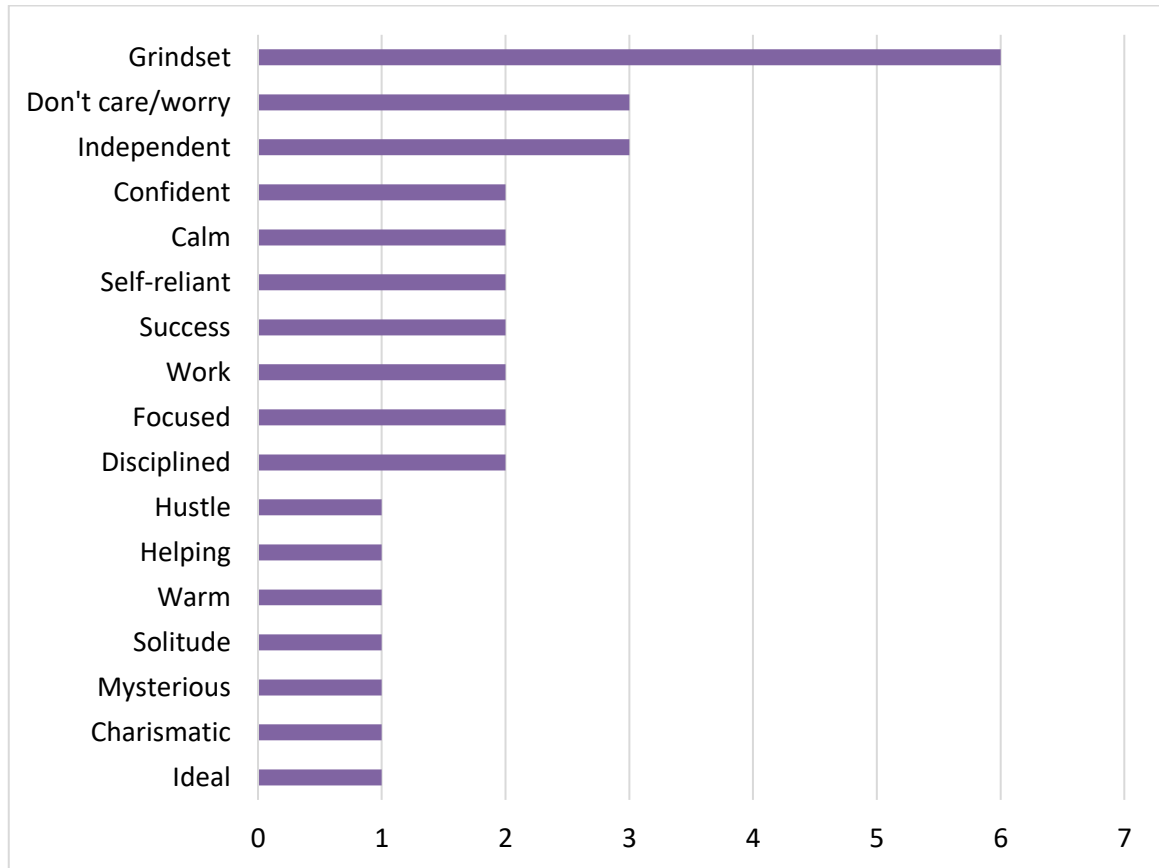


Figure 2. Number of posts containing characteristics with positive connotations

A number of posts (35%) appeared to be positive about the traits associated with Sigmas. For example:

[57] How to identify a Sigma Male: – They are secretive – Extremely discipline [sic] – They don’t like leading – They don’t care about trends – They prefer isolation (Not loneliness) Would you rather be a sigma male?”

In [57], the user outlines traits associated with the Sigma male identity and alludes to other identities with the final question, implying that these traits are lacking in other forms of masculinity. This rhetorical question invites engagement and prompts individuals to reflect on their identity and values concerning the characteristics listed. However, it also reinforces the hierarchical ranking of masculinity and the assumption that being a Sigma male is

desirable or aspirational by creating an oppositional structure that subtly suggests that other archetypes lack listed qualities through a presupposition without explicitly stating it.

Interestingly, the same characteristics perceived as positive were used to mock the identity in several posts (12%). Users deliberately exaggerated these traits to the point of absurdity and projected them to casual everyday situations, making them seem preposterous to produce a humorous reaction in the reader, mocking the identity in the process. So, although the word and quality itself would have a positive meaning and connotation outside of the posts' context and content, in the post, they were used to achieve the opposite:

[39] “Never lock the door when you go to pee at the bar. Let other people get embarrassed when they walk in on you. Show them you don't care. #sigma”

In [39], the Sigma's reasonable indifference to temporary and frivolous trends is projected into the absurd situation where the supposed not caring Sigma would or should go as far as to let people walk on him in public restrooms because he does not care about locking the bathroom stall door and letting other people know that it is occupied.

6.1.1.2 Negative characterization of Sigma males

Since most users (69%) criticized Sigma males, they attributed negative traits to the identity, often in contrast to the positive traits depicted in Figure 2. These characteristics were found in 57% of posts, and the majority of them focused on autism spectrum disorder (ASD) resembling behavior (7%), lack of friends due to isolation (7%), or deficiency in sexual encounters (7%). Characteristics perceived as unfavorable are summarized in Fig. 3.

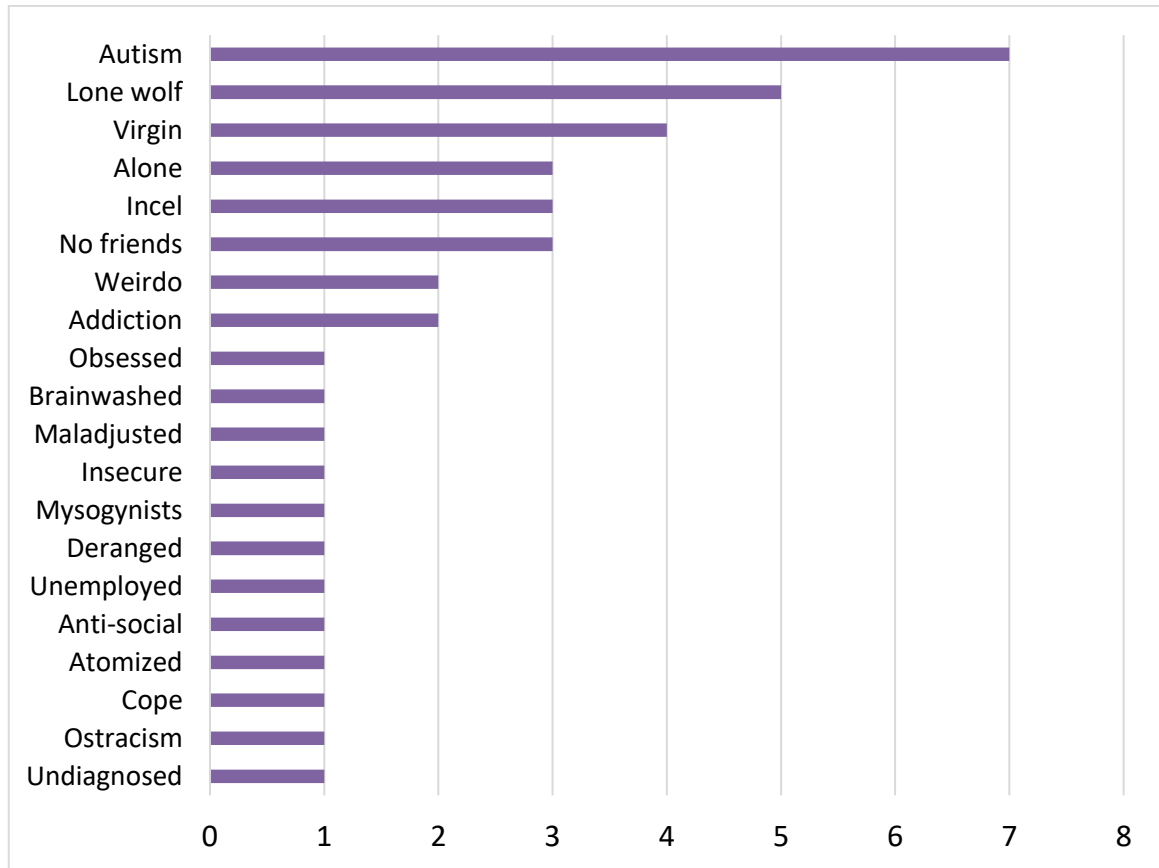


Figure 3. Number of posts containing characteristics with negative connotations

Criticism of Sigma males often revolves around their perceived lack of friends and social isolation (e.g., anti-social, alone, maladjusted). This critique challenges the notion that solitude and independence are keys to success, highlighting the importance of meaningful social connections for personal growth and fulfillment:

[18] “You have to be social to be [sic] successful. There are exceptions but life is about deal flow and opportunities and that stuff always comes from friends or acquaintances and people you know. Life is a team sport. Lone wolf sigma male memes are incel cope. Make more friends.”

Post [18] very well encapsulates the critical opinions about Sigma males where the metaphorical image of a lone wolf who thrives on his own in the wilderness of today’s society is challenged. The user critiques the idea of embracing a lone wolf mindset, suggesting that it may be a coping mechanism for individuals who struggle with social connections, especially when it comes to romantic relationships, by using the internet slang word *incel*. *Incel*, short for involuntary celibacy, is used to describe individuals who are unable to find and establish romantic relationships because of their looks, social

awkwardness, engaging in activities considered unappealing to the opposite sex, such as collecting video games, or a combination of these (Adam 2012).

The posts discussed in this subchapter predominantly use a negative understanding of the lone wolf metaphor in relation to Sigma males. This negative understanding aligns with the broader criticism of Sigma males in the posts, where social isolation and lack of meaningful relationships are portrayed as unfavorable traits.

6.1.2 Metaphors in the characterization of Sigma males

A number of metaphors emerged within the Sigma male narratives. These metaphorical constructs convey complex ideas and attitudes associated with the Sigma male identity. One prominent metaphor that appeared in five posts was that of the “lone wolf.” The metaphor refers to “a person who prefers to work, act or live alone” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2024).

In popular culture, the metaphor is often used to depict a solitary figure navigating the world on their own terms, independent, self-sufficient, and non-conformist, as well as a sense of detachment from societal norms. These characteristics usually manifest themselves as the willingness or need to take matters into their own hands and not rely on the opinion, help, or support of others. Pop culture offers several characters traditionally associated with the metaphor, such as Harry Callahan, A San Francisco police detective from the movie *Dirty Harry*, John Wick, Texan Ranger McQuade from *Lone Wolf McQuade*, and others. What unites these “lone wolf” characters is the idea of them being self-sufficient enough to achieve their virtuous goals on their own accord.

At the same time, the metaphor is used to depict troubled individuals who keep to themselves and operate outside the boundaries of society and its norms due to motivations and goals that are far from noble and is also used to describe individuals who carry out acts of violence or terrorism without direct affiliation to a larger group or organization. These characters may include mass murderers, criminals, and other anti-social figures who disregard social norms. Instead of representing strength and autonomy, the lone wolf metaphor in these cases underscores themes of alienation, isolation, and moral ambiguity, highlighting the darker aspects of human nature and the consequences of individualism taken to extremes. These characters may be depicted as tormented souls grappling with inner demons or past traumas that ultimately drive them to pursue their goals through destructive means, often at the expense of others, which is definitely not a positive connotation.

Examples of such characters would include Theodore Kaczynski, better known as the Unabomber, who was often described as a lone wolf due to his isolated lifestyle, living in a remote cabin in Montana, and solitary activities leading up to his bombings carried out without assistance from others, or Hannibal Lecter, a highly intelligent and manipulative serial killer from the movie *The Silence of the Lambs*.

Four of the five posts that used the metaphor point out that the only quality that the individuals who identify as lone wolves, and by extension as Sigma males, have in common with the aforementioned popular culture “lone wolves” is social isolation. For example, in [17], the user emphasizes that isolation encapsulated in the lone wolf mentality is detrimental to achieving one’s goals and overall.

[17] “You are not a lone wolf sigma male. You are an atomized anti-social stunted growth case who spends all day watching hustle culture videos for “motivation” instead of making friends and starting a business and real life.”

In [17], the user critiques the idea of a lone wolf and Sigma males as socially isolated individuals who lack personal growth and rely on watching videos as a substitute for meaningful social connections. By using the phrase “atomized anti-social stunted growth case,” the user suggests that the lone wolf mentality leads to stagnation and inhibits personal development.

Another metaphor (found in 6 posts) that has entered slang vocabulary was the “grindset,” which is a blend of words *mindset* and *grind*, symbolizing determination, perseverance, and a relentless pursuit of success or a goal characterized by a strong work ethic and resilience in the face of challenges (Matt 2021). Despite its meaning, the metaphor was used with varying degrees of seriousness, mostly sarcastically projecting the associated determination and perseverance to casual, unimportant events such as a *fast food breakfast*:

[14] “going to bed so i can wake up in time for fast food breakfast. that’s the sigma male grindset.”

In [14], the qualities of determination and discipline are applied to going to bed on time, which fits the grindset mindset, but doing so only to wake up and buy oneself breakfast from a fast food restaurant, which is ironic as a more productive reason for going to bed is probably expected of a Sigma male by the reader.

6.1.3 Humor

In 39% of posts, humor was used to poke fun at the concept of the Sigma male identity. Users often used humor to point out perceived flaws of the identity [5, 15], mock it [3, 39], or use the name to make a joke [7, 30]. For example:

[5] “It’s funny those guys who are obsessed with alphas and betas defined an alpha as like personable and charismatic and a leader, so they had to come up with a special kind of alpha who’s on the computer 18 hours a day for themselves to be (Sigma male)”

Post [5] humorously highlights the absurdity of categorizing men into rigid types. The user also claims that the individuals behind the concept created it only to find themselves lacking any desirable traits they labeled as Alpha. So, they had to invent the Sigma type as a loophole to circumvent this fact, just so they did not have to identify as the, in their eyes, inferior Beta.

[7] “Yeah I’m a sigma male... I sig ma mail in the mailbox and put the flag up lol”

In [7], the joke is based on the phonetic resemblance of the words *Sigma male* and *seek my mail* converted by the user to *sig ma mail* to achieve a higher approximation. The user humorously suggests that instead of embodying the qualities typically associated with Sigma males, such as independence and uniqueness, the user’s primary focus or accomplishment is simply checking their mailbox for mail, which is a mundane and ordinary task. This humorous twist underscores the triviality of the Sigma male identity and satirizes striving for independence and uniqueness by highlighting a mundane and routine activity instead.

Jokes about Sigmas were also based on references to other cultural trends, such as meme jokes. For example, in [30], the author states that he is a “Ligma male” rather than a Sigma male:

[30] “I am not a Sigma male. I am a Ligma male.”

The reference to *ligma* requires cultural knowledge and refers to an infamous setup joke/meme of 2018 (The Ses Pool 2018). A nonce word *ligma* was used in the joke to attract a reader’s attention and make them inquire about what *ligma* is. The explanation further pointed to “ligma balls,” as in “lick my balls,” due to the phonological similarity of these words. Through this sarcastic remark, the author ridicules the concept of the Sigma male identity, employing humor to subvert its perceived significance and highlight its triviality via the cultural phenomenon of the *ligma* joke.

6.2 Narrative structures

The analysis of narrative structures revealed recurring themes and patterns in the discourse about the Sigma male identity. Despite the discursive diversity of individual posts, several common themes emerged.

One prominent theme revolves around the concept of masculinity and identity. Users often portray Sigma males as individuals who reject traditional notions of Alpha and Beta masculinity, instead embracing a self-defined identity characterized by independence, self-reliance, and non-conformity. These narratives challenge societal expectations and norms, positioning Sigma males as outliers who navigate the complexities of modern masculinity on their own, resembling the hero type in Propp's classification.

For instance, the hero's journey, as outlined by Propp, mirrors the Sigma male's departure from societal norms exemplified by individuals breaking away from conventional paths to pursue their goals while overcoming obstacles with resilience and self-reliance, similar to the hero's encounters. Ultimately, like the hero, the Sigma male achieves personal fulfillment and authenticity by staying true to themselves, reflecting their quest for self-actualization and autonomy:

[81] "Ninten is genuinely a sigma male. Unlike Mother 2 and 3, theres no prophecized or predetermined events. He simply grinded his way to the top and saved the world cuz he wanted to."

In [81], the user describes Ninten, a twelve-year-old boy character from the *Earthbound* video game series (released as *Mother* in Japan), as a Sigma male. This depiction parallels Propp's hero archetype. In the game's narrative context, Ninten embarks on a quest, faces challenges, and ultimately triumphs over adversity, embodying traits associated with Propp's hero. This comparison highlights the Sigma male's role as a modern-day hero, navigating the complexities of masculinity and individuality like the heroes of myth and legend.

Another prevalent theme was depicting Sigma males as outsiders or loners who struggle to fit into conventional social norms and portrayed Sigma males as solitary figures who prefer solitude and independence over social conformity. This narrative emphasizes the idea of the Sigma male as a lone wolf, detached from societal expectations and norms:

[60] "Sometimes it's hard for me to me to be a Sigma male because I stand alone, often don't fit into groups and no one understands me"

In [60], the user underscores the Sigma male's sense of isolation and lack of understanding from others. The melancholic tone adds depth to the narrative, emphasizing the tension between individualism and the desire for connection.

Lastly, narratives also build upon Propp's false hero archetype. The false hero Sigma male is presented as someone who claims qualities or achievements they do not possess. Such narrative representation would align with Beale's Omegas as opposed to Sigmas. The users see these individuals as superficially adopting Sigma male traits or narratives to assert dominance or authority without embodying the genuine qualities associated with the identity:

[48] "You're not an "alpha male" or a "sigma male" you are a sophomore in Lake Oswego, Oregon and you're behind on your NHS hours"

When Sigmas are perceived as Propp's false heroes, the narratives often incorporate humor and satire as criticism. Several posts (19%) employ sarcasm, self-irony and exaggeration to play on or mock and critique traditional gender roles, cultural stereotypes, and societal norms and expectations, e.g., [25, 84]. This humorous tone adds depth to the narrative structure, inviting the reader to engage critically with the underlying themes and messages:

[25] "A two income house hold tends to be more happy and better off than a single income household. With that being said fellas and kings make sure your girl gets a second job we on our unemployed sigma male shit 🏆 🐺"

In [25], the user sarcastically advocates for Sigma males to make their female partner obtain a second job instead of them getting one. The author pokes fun at the Sigma male concept using traditional gender roles and expectations within relationships, where the notion that masculinity is tied to financial success or providing for one's partner, instead suggesting a humorous reversal where Sigma males are depicted as intentionally avoiding employment. The user also employs emojis, namely the wolf emoji (🐺), referring to the lone wolf metaphor, and the one hundred points emoji (🏆), signifying excellence or great achievement and often used figuratively to denote doing one's best, enhancing the playful tone of the post where doing one's best means to stay unemployed.

6.3 Social identity construction

Narratives play a crucial role in constructing identities and how X users negotiate their identities within the platform's framework. Various narratives emerge within Jenkins' (2008, 39-40) social identity framework in the context of the Sigma male identity. For instance, individuals may assert the Sigma male identity (*individual* order) through their interactions with others on X (*interaction* order), while X's institutional structures shape the visibility and acceptance of Sigma identity on the platform (*institutional* order).

6.3.1 Criticism of Sigma identity

As mentioned earlier, the Sigma male identity has sparked varied responses from X users, with 69% of posts criticizing or making fun of the concept. The Sigma male identity opposition seems to be coming from multiple perspectives, where some see the limitations of the concept and offer constructive criticism [e.g., 18, 86] by encouraging individuals who may identify as a Sigma male to not fall victim to the isolation and alienation this approach to life might bring and to actively seek social connections. For example:

[86] "You are not a "lone wolf". You are not a "sigma male". Men need to bounce ideas off other men to stay sane and keep in check. When you stay in your own bubble, you begin to develop horribly pessimistic and cynical attitudes towards life. BE OUTGOING. Your life depends on it."

In [86], the user stresses the need to engage with others and maintain social connections, which are crucial for an individual's healthy perspective and well-being. It suggests that the aversion to making new connections and relationships may become chronic if the individual stays in his "own bubble" and may lead to negative attitudes and outlooks on life. This ties well to the lone wolf metaphor and pop culture characters associated with Sigmas, where their isolation brings them nothing but misery, and the lack of contact with others deprives them of a chance to see the change for the worse.

Another point of the opposition seems to be that the majority of the Sigma male identity enjoyers are a group of young guys having trouble integrating into society and thus have created a set of traits and qualities that would be deemed desirable and sought after, but in the context of their existence misconstrued into applying to their lack of real-world social interactions concealing or justifying their inferiority and unpopularity [e.g., 62, 66, 100]. The character traits of these bogus Sigmas could be compared to those of Beale's Omegas.

[62] “¹The sigma male culture is fucked up. ²Bro you don’t chase for your food. ³You have never been in a street fight. ⁴You are afraid of talking to a girl you like. ⁵1 year ago all you did was scrolling on TikTok. ⁶The fact that you learnt 5 things doesn’t make you a sigma.”

In [62], the user highlights the discrepancy between the perceived traits of a Sigma male and the reality of someone who identifies as one, presumably a young guy with limited life experience, whose character and situation happen to be in stark contrast with and fall short of what the Sigma male identity is supposed to stand for in the first place. The second sentence of the post contradicts the idea of Sigma males as ambitious go-getters. The third sentence challenges the perception of Sigma males as rugged and tough individuals who are not afraid of confrontation, while the fourth sentence of Sigma males being confident in romantic pursuits and overall. The fifth addresses the idea of a Sigma male as a focused and productive individual prioritizing personal growth and development. The last contradicts the idea of Sigma males being knowledgeable and shrewd as they are not merely knowledgeable but also embody specific character traits and behaviors that differentiate them from others. Finally, the post suggests that while the Sigma male identity is a collection of desirable and admirable traits, the reality of individuals who may identify with the Sigma male identity may be far from that idealized image and that rather insecurity, indolence, and immaturity are more common.

Alongside these arguments against the Sigma male identity concept, six posts seemed to enter into socially significant debates about genders and politics. Within a broader gender debate, the Sigma male concept was used to criticize traditional gender allocation, as in [73]:

[73] “It’s amusing to me that the people who invented the "alpha male," "beta male," and now "sigma male" genders oppose nonbinary genders.”

In [73], the user is comparing types of masculinity to gender perceptions and division beyond the default binary scope, and thus viewing Sigma male identity as nothing more than a make-believe fictional character. The user condemns the existing social construct which supports various types of masculinity but opposes alternative gender preferences. In [76] the user goes further by bringing a gender debate into a political one:

[76] “Right-wing dudes be like: "There’s only two genders & you can’t change it. So anyway, I’m a beta sigma male, and I can’t eat soy because it’ll transform me into a catgirl. PS the government’s making you gay with corn.””

The reference to “right-wing dudes” in [76] implies individuals with conservative or traditional views on social and political issues, typically adhering to binary gender roles and traditional concepts of masculinity. The user satirically contrasts their supposed stance on binary gender identities “There’s only two genders & you can’t change it” with the notion of identifying as a Sigma male. This contrast serves to highlight the irony or inconsistency in their beliefs: while they may rigidly adhere to binary gender categories, they seemingly have no problem with adopting a non-traditional male identity such as the Sigma identity.

Furthermore, the mention of “eat[ing] soy” and transforming into a “catgirl” adds an additional layer of humor and absurdity to the post, poking fun at the belief that eating soy lowers testosterone levels in men, which, although a topic of debate and ongoing research, had the “right-wing dudes” sounding alarms about its possible feminizing effects.

The user concludes with an allusion to the debunked “gay frog” conspiracy theory popularized by Alex Jones, a controversial radio show host and conspiracy theorist, who claimed that the US government was intentionally adding chemicals to the water supply, which he argued was turning frogs and other amphibians gay (Boast 2022, 661–662). By including this allusion in a sarcastic postscript note, the user further ridicules and discredits the “right-wing dudes,” their traditional beliefs about gender dynamics and testosterone-driven masculinity, and by extension, the Sigma male identity.

6.3.2 Pop culture references

A number of posts (15%) also referred to famous fictional characters (10%) or historical figures (5%) when discussing the Sigma male identity.

6.3.2.1 Historical figures

Among contemporary and historical figures whom the users perceived to display or possess traits or behavior associated with the Sigma male identity were Simon Leviev [59], Elon Musk [78], Isaac Newton [83], and Ander Tate [93]. For example:

[83] “isaac newton was the og sigma male. not only did he die a virgin, but during the bubonic plague he invented new math & physics in solitude (but didn’t tell anyone, literally made moves in silence) before his interests led him to alchemy research & aping into the south sea bubble”

In [83], Isaac Newton is considered a Sigma male because of his purported celibacy, suggesting that he lived a solitary and independent life, detached from traditional social

relationships. This would align with the Sigma male identity, which emphasizes self-reliance and a tendency to operate outside conventional social structures. However, the association of Newton's supposed virginity with the Sigma male identity could also be seen as a subtle mockery, especially in light of previous discussions linking the Sigma male identity to incels.

Additionally, the user emphasizes Newton's ability to work alone, implying that he was self-sufficient and did not seek validation or recognition from others for his intellectual pursuits and contributions to mathematics and physics during the bubonic plague, indicating his ability to innovate and make significant advancements in his field without needing external collaboration or approval.

Finally, the reference to Newton's later interests in alchemy research and involvement in financial speculation, like the South Sea Bubble, may suggest his willingness to explore unconventional interests and take risks independently, a trait desirable in Sigmas. This echoes the Sigma male trait of being autonomous and self-assured in one's abilities, further reinforcing the notion of Newton as a lone genius.

[78] "Elon spent 44 billion USD literally so he could ratio everyone on the platform. Sigma male grindset."

In [78], Elon Musk is sarcastically referred to as a Sigma male. The reference to spending \$44 billion to "ratio everyone" suggests Musk's tendency to challenge and surpass others in terms of social influence and online presence, often by replying to or engaging with others in a way that garners more likes or reposts. In the context of social media, *ratio* refers to a situation where the number of replies to a post dramatically exceeds the number of likes and reposts, indicating a controversial or unpopular opinion (Adam 2017). The reference to "Sigma male grindset" adds to the sarcasm of the post by implying that Musk's actions are driven by characteristics associated with the Sigma male identity, such as independence, discipline, and non-conformity.

In another sarcastic post [59], the "tinder swindler," referring to an Israeli conman, Simon Leviev, who allegedly scammed women he met on dating apps out of thousands of dollars, is labeled as a "true" Sigma male and praised for his determination and goal orientation, highlighting positive traits such as perseverance and ambition associated with the Sigma male identity:

[59] "That tinder swindler fella is a true sigma male. An absolute machine. Pure hustle mindset."

However, [59] also suggests a negative connotation associated with the term *swindler* and his backstory, indicating dishonest or unethical behavior, which can be seen as undesirable traits within the Sigma male identity. Overall, the user uses sarcasm to ridicule the character in question while subtly undermining the concept of Sigma male identity.

Similarly, post [93] alludes to a feud, which incidentally also took place on X, between the Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg and former professional kickboxer turned social media personality Andrew Tate. While Tate may express certain Sigma male traits through his determination to achieve athletic or financial success and his non-conformist ideas, his past possesses an uncanny similarity to the one of the tinder swindler with his human trafficking allegations and ongoing trial, which may be highlighting the darker side of Sigma male identity where one's success is achieved at the expense or detriment of others:

[93] “My ancestors died so I could read headlines like “Swedish Teenage Climate Change Activist Claps Back at Human Trafficking Sigma Male Kickboxer””

These real-life examples of the Sigma male identity, although mostly sarcastic, also tie back into its perceived flaws, although not mentioned in the posts directly, observed in figures like the previously mentioned Newton's volatile temperament or Musk's erratic behavior as a leader or purchasing X (at the time Twitter) as a frivolous vanity project endeavor. These allusions illustrate that the Sigma male identity is multifaceted and can embody both admirable qualities and questionable traits. By acknowledging these complexities, the posts challenge the idealistic internet portrayal of Sigma males and present a more nuanced understanding that reflects their real-life manifestation and whether one side of the identity can exist without the other.

6.3.2.2 *Fictional characters*

While the Sigma male identity connoisseurs see the Sigma male identity as something to strive for, many observers are skeptical of the admiration for certain unsavory pop culture figures such as Homelander from *The Boys*, Patrick Bateman from *American Psycho*, Walter White from *Breaking Bad* TV series or Travis Bickle from the movie *Taxi Driver*.

These characters, referred to in the posts, seem to be portrayed as a representation and embodiment of the Sigma male identity traits and may be perceived as a role model for Sigma male identity aspirants who might ignore the character flaws. For example, characters like Patrick Bateman and Homelander, who both possess assets granted to them by external

factors – Bateman’s wealth, prestigious job, and Homelander’s superpowers – both struggle to live up to the expectations placed upon them. Bateman uses his money and job to project an image of success and superiority, but internally, he grapples with insecurity and emptiness, resorting to acts of violence that bring him the feeling of power. Similarly, Homelander relies on his superpowers to maintain an image of invincibility and heroism, but he also suffers from deep-seated insecurity stemming from the pressure to maintain his public persona, even through unethical means. Users seem to acknowledge that both characters are trapped in a cycle of using their assets to mask their inner insecurities and finding themselves unable to live up to their public image, leading to destructive behaviors and fractured identities, e.g.:

[37] “Is homelander part of the sigma male ‘omg he’s so me’ pantheon of characters yet or is that where they draw the line”

[89] “It’s weird that Patrick Bateman gets used as an example of a Sigma Male so frequently because literally the entire point of his character is making fun of sociopathic rich guys who spend tons of time & money trying to live up to the standards of masculinity set by everyone else”

On a lighter note, not all of the posts referring to fictional characters were skeptical or negative, as one referred to R2-D2, a droid from the *Star Wars* movie saga [56], and Ninten, a video game character from the *EarthBound* video game series [81].

[56] “R2D2 was the first sigma male. And that’s that on that.”

The reference to R2-D2 as a Sigma male is worth taking a closer look at because it raises an interesting question about the nature of Sigma male identity. Despite the tongue-in-cheek nature of the post emphasized by the final phrase, R2-D2 embodies and demonstrates many of the traits commonly associated with Sigma males, such as a strong sense of independence, often acting autonomously and making decisions based on its own judgment rather than following orders from others. R2-D2 also exhibits remarkable resourcefulness, using its technical skills and ingenuity to overcome obstacles and solve problems. Throughout the *Star Wars* movie saga, he repairs machinery, hacks into computer systems, and even saves the day on numerous occasions. Instead of merely serving as a passive tool, it actively participates in the unfolding events of the *Star Wars* saga, quietly going about his tasks without seeking praise or acknowledgment, a set of traits congruent with the Sigma male

identity. At the same time, R2-D2 remains somewhat mysterious because of his limited ability to display emotions and communicate.

6.3.3 ASD reference

Some posts (7%) pointed out an observed similarity between the traits associated with the Sigma male identity and ASD as they indeed seem to overlap. The main characteristics of ASD include, but are not limited to (Attwood 2007, 33):

- Social maturation and reasoning develop at a slower pace than peers.
- Limited ability to empathize or understand others' emotions
- Difficulty making friends
- Difficulty in effectively communicating emotions
- Difficulties in engaging in natural conversations
- Tendency to focus on minor details.
- Displaying an unusual level of interest or intense fixation on a particular topic
- A distinct learning profile of abilities that deviates from the typical

Posts, such as [2], focus on some of the Sigma traits as clinical conditions:

[2] “"Sigma male"? You mean undiagnosed autism with an unchecked internet addiction?”

From the point of view of the user, the Sigma male preference for solitude and independence, detachment from societal norms, lack of concern with traditional hierarchies, and aversion to conformity could very well be autism, while the grindset an autistic fascination and obsession with one activity or topic of interest, or even addiction.

6.3.4 Self-presentation of Sigma males

Several posts (31%) indicated that the user identified with the Sigma male identity, with 20% being sarcastic. Several themes emerged from these posts regarding the self-presentation of Sigma males, such as self-improvement, intellect, individualism, confidence, and a reserved, mysterious nature:

[43] “19 yr old wokephase blonde coworker said "isn't it weird how humans are the only animals who pay to live on earth" and I sigma male signaled by saying "there's always a price" and the entire room turned around and looked at me”

In [43], the user refers to a situation where he could express himself as a Sigma male through sharing wisdom. The user considers his response to have carried a meaning of profound

intellect, which elicited a response from the rest of the people in the room, presumably in an instance of admiration or being dumbfounded by such a thoughtful remark. In doing so, the user positions himself as an authority figure within the social context of the interaction where his masculinity is highlighted by referring to the age of the female coworker and the fact that she was going through a so-called “wokephase.” Traditional notions of masculinity and femininity are reinforced by the opposition of basing decisions on feelings and emotions, as a blonde female coworker allegedly does, rather than logic and reason as stereotypically expected of a male and especially a Sigma male hinting at traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. The author also perpetuates stereotypes about intelligence by mentioning the woman’s hair color. Essentially, the post reinforces the image of a Sigma male as a figure of virility expressed through intellectual superiority, confidence, and patriarchal values.

On the other hand, several posts (20%) were self-ironic. The mock Sigma male posts ridiculed the concept by either applying Sigma male traits to casual everyday situations where they became comical because of how out of place they feel [3] or by humorously exaggerating them [e.g., 20, 79]:

[79] “If my girl cheated on me I wouldn’t get mad. I would take the guy out for dinner, I would listen to him, learn what he’s about, find out what makes him better than me, probably even fuck him just to learn his moves. It’s a sigma male mindset.”

In [79], the user humorously takes the stoic indifference, self-assuredness, and focus on self-improvement associated with Sigmas to an extreme level. The user presents a scenario where he would not react negatively if his partner cheated on him and instead proposes an absurdly nonchalant response. The user satirizes the mentioned traits associated with Sigma males as he sarcastically portrays himself as so confident about his self-worth and disregard for societal norms that he is not only willing to engage with the guy who cucked him but even to go so far as to engage in homosexual intercourse to learn from him and improve.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor's thesis analyzed Sigma male representation on the social media platform X through the lens of critical discourse analysis. The corpus consisted of one hundred posts from January 2021 to March 2024. The timeframe delineates the period when the concept of a Sigma male identity reached broader public discourse. The analysis uncovered a clash of opinions, either depicting Sigma males as independent mavericks or autistic virgins.

Genuine Sigma male identity connoisseurs were the minority in the discussion, only accounting for 23% of the posts. In their eyes, Sigma males emphasize independence, self-reliance, non-conformity, prioritizing autonomy and personal development. They value solitude for introspection, embody warmth and confidence, concentrate on surpassing their limitations with discipline, and avoid mainstream competition and participation.

However, most users discussing the Sigma male identity (69%) were critical of the concept, pointing out its inherent flaws. Primary concerns of the opposition seemed to be about its promotion of isolation, with 7% of posts drawing a comparison between Sigma male traits and autism spectrum disorder. The users also questioned the authenticity of Sigma male identity enjoyers (19%), pointing out their perceived immaturity and lack of real-world experience, highlighting a disconnect between the idealized Sigma male image and the reality of those individuals. The users also expressed skepticism (6%) regarding the admiration of controversial figures such as Patric Bateman, Homelander, or Andrew Tate.

Furthermore, the self-presentation part revealed that while Sigma males often reject traditional Alpha male stereotypes of dominance, aggression, and status-seeking behavior, they may still adhere to patriarchal values that benefit them, positioning them as figures of authority and reinforcing stereotypes of male dominance and intellectual superiority, which suggests that while Sigma males may reject some societal norms, particularly those they perceive as limiting, they may embrace and perpetuate others that serve their interests or self-image. For example, 6% of users critiqued the inconsistency and irony in embracing non-traditional male identities like the Sigma male and opposing non-binary genders.

Finally, despite the negative reception, 39% of users used humor to make their point. They used sarcasm to challenge the seriousness with which Sigma male fans approached the identity. Self-ironic posts (19%) used hyperboles to emphasize the absurdity of rigidly adhering to the associated traits by projecting them to casual everyday situations, making them seem preposterous and showcasing their perceived impracticality in real-life scenarios.

The main limitation of this thesis is that the findings are specific to X, limiting generalizability to other platforms. The qualitative nature of the analysis may introduce researcher bias, while the corpus size limits the scope of the findings.

Future research could analyze Sigma male narratives on different platforms to determine whether the findings are consistent across various platforms or are specific to X. Longitudinal research could also track the evolution of Sigma male narratives over time, be it on X or other platforms. Mixed-method approaches could validate qualitative findings quantitatively using a larger corpus.

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APPENDIX 1

Corpus of Sigma male related posts:

- [1] 🌲 Jeff Aegean Pervert 🌲 (@edgytatar). “whoever decided to use that russian song on the first sigma male edit vid changed our timeline” Twitter, March 5, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/edgytatar/status/1500057772725055488>.
- [2] ☐ **Bad ☐ Grrl ☐** (@BVDGRRL). ““Sigma male”? You mean undiagnosed autism with an unchecked internet addiction?” Twitter, January 25, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/BVDGRRL/status/1649496469525893120>.
- [3] ^_^ (@Bruhsepheus). “A truly disciplined sigma male only eats the brownie in the hungry man salisbury steak TV dinner if they grinded and hustled hard enough that day” Twitter, May 17, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/Bruhsepheus/status/1394152606533132289>.
- [4] ^_^ (@Bruhsepheus). “It’s cool how the most physically fit guys now are the ones that can’t look women in the eyes and listen to sigma male phonk music edits/ play 30 hrs of CSGO a week and the guys that played D2 sports after highschool are fat and bright red from alcohol inflammation” Twitter, December 6, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/Bruhsepheus/status/1732186644261081549>.
- [5] “Steve” (@extranapkins). “It’s funny those guys who are obsessed with alphas and betas defined an alpha as like personable and charismatic and a leader, so they had to come up with a special kind of alpha who’s on the computer 18 hours a day for themselves to be (Sigma male)” Twitter, December 4, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/extranapkins/status/1466959094917439488>.
- [6] ☐ (@RICKYRAGE). “sigma male this, sigma male that, how bout sigma balls” Twitter, Aug 14, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/RICKYRAGE/status/1558882303023075328>
- [7] 🍷 **Coffee Lovers and Fans** 🍷 ☺ (@tonyhawktruther). “Yeah I’m a sigma male... I sig ma mail in the mailbox and put the flag up lol” Twitter, October 22, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/tonyhawktruther/status/1716102421066174602>.
- [8] Assad Bajwa (@oyebajwey). “How to be a sigma male ☐ - Pray regularly - Workout & Eat clean - Focus on work / Study. - Give time to family. - Stay real.” Twitter, February 5, 2023. <https://twitter.com/oyebajwey/status/1622189053180264450>.
- [9] atlas (@creatine_cycle). “Sorry for opening up emotionally. That wasn’t very e/acc, accelerationist, sigma male, anti-authoritarian, blade runner 2049, techno-optimist, AI

- danger of me” Twitter, March 5, 2023.
https://twitter.com/creatine_cycle/status/1632179938509066241.
- [10] Bambulu 2.0 (@BambuluMen). “Men often think being an alpha male is the ideal when it comes to attracting women, so they try to be an alpha But they don’t know being the sigma male is Be a sigma!” Twitter, February 17, 2024.
<https://twitter.com/BambuluMen/status/1758959253715366283>.
- [11] Bee, ACABylon (@ACABylonBee). “Alpha/beta/sigma male theory is to men as astrology is to women The zodiac has twelve signs while there are only three kinds of male.. this simply proves dumb women are smarter than dumb men” Twitter, Oct 8, 2022. <https://twitter.com/ACABylonBee/status/1578740383097319426>.
- [12] Ben (@perma__ben). “Mom,,dad. Um yeah so I -I’m uh—I’m a sigma male” Twitter, Nov 24, 2021. https://twitter.com/perma__ben/status/1463608876075470857.
- [13] Bøb Janke: Hönkÿ (@Bob_Janke). “decided to be a sigma male” Twitter, March 22, 2023. https://twitter.com/Bob_Janke/status/1638501225527222273.
- [14] bobby (@bobby). “going to bed so i can wake up in time for fast food breakfast. that’s the sigma male grindset.” Twitter, November 13, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/bobby/status/1459419783846404102>.
- [15] Brizz-Chan (@billybrizzle420). “I love hanging out with autistic sigma male white dudes I feel like a social savant “Wanna go ask those girls if they wanna play doubles?” “Nah they’re not playing pool rn” I know that’s the point we get them to come over and play pool “No”” Twitter, Feb 18, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/billybrizzle420/status/1626937214570573824>.
- [16] Cernovich (@Cernovich). “The Greeks viewed ostracism as the greatest punishing. Online hustle culture course sellers have rebrended not having friends as being sigma male alpha lone wolf.” Twitter, December 20, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/Cernovich/status/1737602051549679723>.
- [17] Cernovich (@Cernovich). “You are not a lone wolf sigma male. You are an atomized anti-social stunted growth case who spends all day watching hustle culture videos for “motivation” instead of making friends and starting a business and real life.” Twitter, December 20, 2023. <https://twitter.com/Cernovich/status/1737597051972522036>.
- [18] Cernovich (@Cernovich). “You have to be social to be successful. There are exceptions but life is about deal flow and opportunities and that stuff always comes from friends or acquaintances and people you know. Life is a team sport. Lone wolf

- sigma male memes are incel cope. Make more friends.” Twitter, December 13, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/Cernovich/status/1734999474009960501>.
- [19] Chase Austin • Girls, Confidence, Power (@Playboysparadox). “The doctor said I am not an alpha sigma male sent from god to save the world. He said I just have autism”
Twitter, January 11, 2024.
<https://twitter.com/Playboysparadox/status/1745572818362790366>.
- [20] Che 🐱 (@Chegueoblin). “As a sigma male that drives an 09 Corolla, the concept of "mate guarding" is foreign to me if anything, I am mate guarded by the women I go out with there’s only one kind of man that makes me feel even a twinge of insecurity and that is a man with an even older Corolla” Twitter, January 25, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/Chegueoblin/status/1626617104358055937>.
- [21] Collins, Sam (@itsSamCollins). “there’s only 2 genders huh? then why did they just come out with the Sigma Male???” Twitter, January 27, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/itsSamCollins/status/1354548469348716549>
- [22] Cortes, Alexander (@AJA_Cortes). “I need someone to explain what “Sigma Male Grindset” is, and how it’s different from autism.” Twitter, March 17, 2022.
https://twitter.com/AJA_Cortes/status/1504534488470147075.
- [23] cyclops, owen (@owenbroadcast). “the sigma male desire to park all the way at the back of the parking lot for absolutely no reason” Twitter, November 28, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/owenbroadcast/status/1465071095170674695>.
- [24] daniella (@dznyella). “‘sigma male’ is just ‘i’m not like other girls’ for men” Twitter, October 20, 2021. <https://twitter.com/dznyella/status/1450623904314269699>.
- [25] DBK (@DripBoolin). “A two income house hold tends to be more happy and better off than a single income household. With that being said fellas and kings make sure your girl gets a second job we on our unemployed sigma male shit 🤪 🐱” Twitter, December 17, 2021. <https://twitter.com/DripBoolin/status/1471640893186842626>.
- [26] De Cruz, Helen (@Helenreflects). “What’s up with all the alpha/sigma male stuff? (I try not to engage but it’s hard to not at least see this go by). I thought humans liberated themselves from all this chimpanzee politicking through the social contract? Why would humans willingly submit to that framework?” Twitter, May 31, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/Helenreflects/status/1663673015580651524>.
- [27] dish ☐ (@companiondish). “not to be a sigma male podcast host but sitting down for 10 minutes to set goals and create action points to reach those goals can literally

- change your life” Twitter, October 19, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/companiondish/status/1582822276159787008>.
- [28] Espiritu, Kevin (@KevinEspiritu). “The alpha/beta/sigma male stuff is a weird combination of absolutely hilarious if you don’t take it too seriously + will ruin your entire life if you do” Twitter, December 28, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/KevinEspiritu/status/1607996399286882305>.
- [29] Explosion, Casey (@CaseyExplosion). “Cishet weirdos: "They just keep making up new genders!" Also cishet weirdos: "As well as the typical alpha/beta dynamic, we’ve categorised the omega male, delta and gamma male, we believe we’ve identified a new type; the sigma male.”” Twitter, January 26, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/CaseyExplosion/status/1354053866594193408>.
- [30] Fallen Oshes @ PAX East (@DaveOshry) “I am not a Sigma male. I am a Ligma male.” Twitter, May 31, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/DaveOshry/status/1399134753073291270>.
- [31] Frizzle, Sandy (@SandyFrizzle). “Sigma male is what happens when you don’t clean under the foreskin” Twitter, February 3, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/SandyFrizzle/status/1356884758559657985>
- [32] Got Pickup?™ Gary PUA 🍷😎 The game strategist (@GotPickup). “5 male personality types: Alpha: dominant badboy Sigma: mysterious lone wolf Gamma: adventurous fun lover Beta: submissive, idealistic nice guy Omega: lazy or laidback, but high IQ” Twitter, January 25, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/GotPickup/status/1698564945464660325>.
- [33] GRINDC 🏳️‍🌈 RE GUY (@paladin_mp4). “i just watched a 10 signs youre a sigma male video and all its describing is autism” Twitter, July 3, 2021.
https://twitter.com/paladin_mp4/status/1411125025059475456.
- [34] Hanīf (@I2ational). “Mother, I know it’s past 8, but please let me watch one more Sigma Male Edit before going to bed.” Twitter, November 21, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/I2ational/status/1727031743025483796>
- [35] Hanīf (@I2ational). “Self Diagnosis: Based Sigma Male Diagnosis from Doctor : Level 3 Autism” Twitter, January 25, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/I2ational/status/1725921346184479160>.
- [36] harnidh (@chiaseedpuddin). “no one wants to marry you deranged weirdos. you are not the catch you think you are. there are men in the world with rizz. you are not those

- men. pls leave women alone and continue with your ‘i am an alpha beta sigma omega male’ threads. we truly want nothing to do with you.” Twitter, Jul 19, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/chiseedpuddin/status/1681589401271369728>.
- [37] Izzzyzzz (@IzzzyzzzArt). “Is homelander part of the sigma male ‘omg he’s so me’ pantheon of characters yet or is that where they draw the line” Twitter, July 31, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/IzzzyzzzArt/status/1553637438941147137>.
- [38] Jakeup (@yashkaf). “If you’re using the language of zoology, you should adopt the success standards of zoology: Alpha male = 100+ grandkids Beta male = 10+ grandkids Delta male = adopted grandkids Omega male = 10 dogs, one of which might be a coyote Sigma male = 10,000 Twitter followers” Twitter, August 31, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/yashkaf/status/1432705926780309520>.
- [39] James (@MKUltraMoney). “Never lock the door when you go to pee at the bar. Let other people get embarrassed when they walk in on you. Show them you don’t care. #sigma” Twitter, August 12, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/MKUltraMoney/status/1425639830755680260>.
- [40] kache (dingboard.com) (@yacineMTB). “yes i’m the handsome guy from wolf of wall street. yes i’m the handsome guy from oppenheimer. yes i’m the handsome guy from bladeruner. yes i’m the handsome guy from drive. yes i’m the handsome guy from fight club. yes i’m a sigma male” Twitter, December 7, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/yacineMTB/status/1732783710557127074>.
- [41] Kelly Turnbull (@Coelasquid). “The whole Sigma male thing is just people who make incel charts ripping off that MGDMT comic I drew back in 2010 where Commander says that once you reach a state of perfect security with your masculinity you achieve Nirvana and don’t worry about gaining people’s approval anymore” Twitter, March 18, 2021 <https://twitter.com/Coelasquid/status/1372426377073336322>.
- [42] khael (@sized000). “i told you many times it’s pronounced “sigma male grindset” not “eating disorder”” Twitter, November 25, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/sized000/status/1728406317466079500>.
- [43] Kierkebard (@zephfyrus). “19 yr old wokephase blonde coworker said "isn't it weird how humans are the only animals who pay to live on earth" and I sigma male signaled by saying "there's always a price" and the entire room turned around and looked at me” Twitter, September 1, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/zephfyrus/status/1432850585435484162>

- [44] kio, bilatinman (@kzzrttt). “sigma male memes have like gone from being unironic to ironic and then somehow looped hard back into 2012 middle school le nazi homophobia xDDD humor in record time” Twitter, Nov 17, 2022. <https://twitter.com/kzzrttt/status/1593288663764541446>.
- [45] Koushik (@kelasik05). “Tbh this all started with Sigma male , Chad grindset , American psycho glorification giving validation to all the misogynists and abelists out there. Now they are projecting that as something to be proud of 😏” Twitter, August 12, 2022. <https://twitter.com/kelasik05/status/1558042571410006016>.
- [46] Kris! 2024 (@KrisWolfheart). “I’ve never seen Taxi Driver and haven’t seen American Psycho in over a decade, but after watching Drive I’m just really afraid every Based Sigma Male character is just going to be a guy that’s transparently autistic” Twitter, July 19, 2022. <https://twitter.com/KrisWolfheart/status/1549209057919000577>.
- [47] kuremi (@krembeni). “The whole Alpha/Beta/Sigma male thing is just basically Astrology for guys who have insecure masculinity” Twitter, September 8, 2021. <https://twitter.com/krembeni/status/1435524324048269312>.
- [48] Kyle 🌱 (@KylePlantEmoji). “You’re not an "alpha male" or a "sigma male" you are a sophomore in Lake Oswego, Oregon and you’re behind on your NHS hours” Twitter, Mar 8, 2021. <https://twitter.com/KylePlantEmoji/status/1368727365518422016>.
- [49] Lecaque, Thomas (@tlecaque). “I discovered "sigma male" TikTok and they all seem to want to be Patrick Bateman and that’s the strongest argument against "sigma males" I can imagine.” Twitter, July 1, 2022. <https://twitter.com/tlecaque/status/1542871647170052097>.
- [50] Liam (@LegoRacers2). “Just clicked for me that Universal is putting all their chips on the table for Oppenheimer because they expect hundreds of thousands of maladjusted young men to watch it because Cillian Murphy is the guy from the sigma male tiktoks” Twitter, July 7, 2023. <https://twitter.com/LegoRacers2/status/1677099039358337024>.
- [51] Lil Revive 🌲 (@LilRevive). “don’t tell me to go to bed i’m literally a sigma male.” Twitter, Aug 30, 2022. <https://twitter.com/LilRevive/status/1564496929844854785>.
- [52] Loftus, Jamie (@jamieloftusHELP). “i would NOT like to wish a merry christmas to all my sigma male kings, as they are too independent and self-reliant to need something as a ‘holiday’ to prove their virility” Twitter, December 25, 2021. <https://twitter.com/jamieloftusHELP/status/1474804439806447619>.

- [53] Lyra, Esq, is NOT DAREDEVIL (@PinkRangerLB). “I still can’t get over how funny it is that men’s rights dorks had to invent the sigma male because they wanted to think of themselves as alphas but needed an explanation for why they had no friends and women didn’t want to fuck them” Twitter, October 25, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/PinkRangerLB/status/1584892369672933377>.
- [54] make up a fighting game player (@makeupafgplayer). “fighting game player who purposefully gets knocked down because winning through wakeup DP is sigma male behavior” Twitter, August 23, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/makeupafgplayer/status/1562122504050704385>.
- [55] Masculine Ego (@MasculineEgo_). “How to become a Sigma Male: - Enjoy being alone - Learn to observe - Always stay calm - Adapt to new things - Keep your circle small - Act confident in every situation” Twitter, Feb 28, 2023.
https://twitter.com/MasculineEgo_/status/1630363655287209984.
- [56] mattman, crisp (@cushbomb). “R2D2 was the first sigma male. And that’s that on that.” Twitter, Feb 12, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/cushbomb/status/1624691096080252928>.
- [57] Mazi, Nathan (@rukky_nate). “How to identify a Sigma Male: – They are secretive – Extremely discipline – They don’t like leading – They don’t care about trends – They prefer isolation (Not loneliness) Would you rather be a sigma male?” Twitter, March 7, 2024. https://twitter.com/rukky_nate/status/1765641345924747605.
- [58] Media, Oz (@OzMediaOfficial). “If ya take advice on how to be an Alpha male from another man. You’re literally. By definition. a beta NOW. If you take advice on how to be a sigma male, you’re actually an Omega. Don’t look up ABO dynamics.” Twitter, December 29, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/OzMediaOfficial/status/1608482095193538563>.
- [59] Memeulous (@Memeulous). “That tinder swindler fella is a true sigma male. An absolute machine. Pure hustle mindset.” Twitter, Feb 9, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/Memeulous/status/1491434152088190977>.
- [60] Menaker, Will (@willmenaker). “Sometimes it’s hard for me to me to be a Sigma male because I stand alone, often don’t fit into groups and no one understands me” Twitter, May 17, 2021. <https://twitter.com/willmenaker/status/1394085866910453766>.
- [61] **MERCURY** (@theeSNYDERVERSE). “I love and hate how the bad guys in the breaking bad universe never win, no matter how much they or the audience want. Walt isn’t Heisenberg or a sigma male, he’s an old chemistry teacher with cancer who dies

- pathetic and alone Jimmy McGill isn't Saul Goodman he's a crooked" Twitter, Aug 17, 2022. <https://twitter.com/theeSNYDERVERSE/status/1559853294352302080>.
- [62] MindCharger (@MindChargerX). "The sigma male culture is fucked up. Bro you don't chase for your food. You have never been in a street fight. You are afraid of talking to a girl you like. 1 year ago all you did was scrolling on TikTok. The fact that you learnt 5 things doesn't make you a sigma." Twitter, January 6, 2024. <https://twitter.com/MindChargerX/status/1743643120284152310>.
- [63] Mowgli (@fbgwayno). "If you ever feel bad about yourself just know there's people out there watching Sigma & Alpha male videos" Twitter, October 18, 2021 <https://twitter.com/fbgwayno/status/1450142404766539780>.
- [64] MR | Charming Misogynist 🍷❤️🔥 (@BecomeAManAgain). "There's nothing wrong with having female friends. - They give you female perspective - They introduce you to new women - Their presence makes other women trust you. There's nothing cool about being a sigma male." Twitter, August 5, 2023. <https://twitter.com/BecomeAManAgain/status/1687714870311936000>.
- [65] Pargin, Jason (@JasonKPargin). "One weird thing about social media bubbles is all of the concepts you ONLY know from your peers making fun of them. I have no idea if a "sigma male" is something that exists outside of memes mocking the idea. Most conservatives have probably never seen a real "trigger warning." Twitter, May 9, 2022. <https://twitter.com/JasonKPargin/status/1523710088103358464>.
- [66] Peter 🤖👉 (@PLDroneOperator). "You Are Not A "Sigma Male" You Are A Weed Addicted College Student With Absolutely Zero Clue As To The Pain That Life Will Bring Once You Enter Society." Twitter, July 17, 2021. <https://twitter.com/PLDroneOperator/status/1416488472802521088>.
- [67] Pettigrew, John (@jrpmusicinc). "Alpha Male, insecure narcissist that will forever be dancing to the beat of someone else's drum. Sigma Male, does not need to compete, warm and empathetic and beats his own drum, confident with who they are." Twitter, Oct 10, 2022. <https://twitter.com/jrpmusicinc/status/1579313819788382208>.
- [68] pluto ♡♡ (@heartsy__). "shaming a woman for having an only fans isn't the sigma male type of move some of you think it is. it's embarrassing really. let people chase a bag!!!" Twitter, July 13, 2023. https://twitter.com/heartsy__/status/1679594425532678150.

- [69] Post, Matt (@MattPostSaysHi). "I feel like some dudes are not gonna know how to feel about all of this. Because they think all comedians should be able to make jokes without consequence, but Will Smith just did the most sigma male shit that they idolize." Twitter, March 28, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/MattPostSaysHi/status/1508285589522718728>.
- [70] PROFESSOR (@SIGMAPROFESSOR). "A lot of people ask me; What's a sigma male?? The one who cannot be impressed and cannot be manipulated by anything whatsoever!!" Twitter, March 4, 2024.
<https://twitter.com/SIGMAPROFESSOR/status/1764425822654378412>
- [71] Rath, Lyle (@LyleRath). "The phrase "fuck around and find out" is not the least bit intimidating to a sigma male like myself, who enjoys fucking AND learning. Yes, you CAN do both." Twitter, February 2, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/LyleRath/status/1488979845807697920>.
- [72] Reis, Ariel (@cousineggplant). "brb going on sigma male reddit to invent a new rule about how liking runny egg yolks mean you're a virgin cuck who still yearns to suck his mother's breast milk or something" Twitter, January 15, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/cousineggplant/status/1614499048979050496>.
- [73] Rhino, Viced (@VicedRhino). "It's amusing to me that the people who invented the "alpha male," "beta male," and now "sigma male" genders oppose nonbinary genders." Twitter, January 25, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/VicedRhino/status/1353816236166160385>.
- [74] rock and roll photos (@yesitsmyaccount). "Yeah I'm a sigma male. Sigma balls in my mouth" Twitter, Nov 12, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/yesitsmyaccount/status/1723566404321092018>.
- [75] Samcasm (@innocentBruh). Sigma male rule no. 99:- Give love to every female irrespective of their caste, religion, colour or age." Twitter, July 5, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/innocentBruh/status/1412073942479634435>.
- [76] Seko! (@SekoPanda). "Right-wing dudes be like: "There's only two genders & you can't change it. So anyway, I'm a beta sigma male, and I can't eat soy because it'll transform me into a catgirl. PS the government's making you gay with corn."" Twitter, Jan 26, 2021. <https://twitter.com/SekoPanda/status/13539955453003898886>.
- [77] Sharma, Ishan (@Ishansharma7390). "You seek cleavage. I seek leverage. We're not the same bro. - unknown 😊 #entrepreneur #sigmamale" Twitter, April 8, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/Ishansharma7390/status/1512294120382894087>.

- [78] Sheth, Viraj (@viraj_sheth). “Elon spent 44 billion USD literally so he could ratio everyone on the platform. Sigma male grindset.” Twitter, Nov 3, 2022.
https://twitter.com/viraj_sheth/status/1588040407770091520.
- [79] sid 🍷🍌🌻 (@lilbabygandhi). “If my girl cheated on me I wouldn’t get mad. I would take the guy out for dinner, I would listen to him, learn what he’s about, find out what makes him better than me, probably even fuck him just to learn his moves. It’s a sigma male mindset.” Twitter, November 5, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/lilbabygandhi/status/1588867511222951937>.
- [80] Sinha, Rudra (@Iamrudra_sinha). “A true sigma male doesn’t compete with others; he competes with his own limitations” Twitter, March 9, 2024.
https://twitter.com/Iamrudra_sinha/status/1766422622995398749
- [81] soda, cream (@creamsoda). “Ninten is genuinely a sigma male. Unlike Mother 2 and 3, theres no prophecized or predetermined events. He simply grinded his way to the top and saved the world cuz he wanted to.” Twitter, August 9, 2021.
<https://twitter.com/creamsoda/status/1424779876603629569>.
- [82] Solaris (@oversaltedcat). “my gender identity is sigma male. my pronouns are work/hard. i stim by making money. im hyperfixated on the grind. my special interest is the hustle. i kin success. i don’t have rejection sensitive dysphoria, because rejection is a mindset.” Twitter, Sep 25, 2022.
<https://twitter.com/oversaltedcat/status/1574115148381687808>
- [83] sophie (@netcapgirl). “isaac newton was the og sigma male. not only did he die a virgin, but during the bubonic plague he invented new math & physics in solitude (but didn’t tell anyone, literally made moves in silence) before his interests led him to alchemy research & aping into the south sea bubble” Twitter, Dec 8, 2023.
<https://twitter.com/netcapgirl/status/1733177177233846760>.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ASD Autism spectrum disorder
CDA Critical discourse analysis
CMD Computer-mediated discourse
DA Discourse analysis
DHA Discourse-Historical Approach

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