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**United in misogyny: the manosphere – far-right  
nexus and marginalized masculinities**

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## 1. Introduction

*In 1893 [Freud] reminded his readers that [...] the man who first flung a word of abuse at his enemy instead of a spear was the founder of civilization (Brunner, 2001, p. 503). [Today, however] Monocultural men are dropping their words and taking up their spears. [...] Wearing the false mask of religious dogma, secular ideology, nationalism, [...] remasculinization [is leading] to a reversal of civilization—to de-civilization [...] Destructive masculinity [...] is attacking [...] everything needed to sustain life. It is eating itself into extinction (Honeywill, 2016, p.192-194)*

Despite once being on the fringes, the far-right has recently re-surfed in Western societies. As such, the fear of the “The Great Replacement”, a highly racist and xenophobic conspiracy has increasingly unified a transnational extreme-right and has demonstrated its potential to inspire violent action (Davey & Ebner, 2019). Thus, through public discourses, protests, policies and terrorist attacks, its followers are increasingly threatening minorities and democracy in the Global North.

By focusing on white supremacy, however, scholarship failed to address gender’s crucial role in the far-right agenda. The mostly “gender-less” study of the far-right raises concern, for instance, given the publicly and openly misogynistic narratives of many far-right leaders and the many male perpetrators of violence who are part of this movement (ADL, 2018).

Also, because despite their hatred towards gender minorities, gender has been used to push and justify far-right white supremacy. As such, portraying non-white communities as a threat to women and the LGBTQI+ population, white radical men have depicted themselves as righteous protectors of their nations. In doing so, they have also attracted female and queer members to the movement (ADL, 2021; Mudde, 2019).

Omitting gender is also problematic given the far-right mainstreaming implies potential threats for gender equality. From the banning of gender studies

in Eastern Europe, the prohibition to abortion in Poland, to the US curtailing of women's reproductive rights; the far-right is already influencing mainstream politics targeting gender minorities and women's bodies to counter "The Great Replacement" (Castillo, 2022a).

Finally, and the focus of this research, researchers must examine gender roles and masculinities in the far-right mainstreaming since misogyny functions as a "glue" that connects the far-right to the wider male audience of the manosphere. Even further, as hatred towards women has become a potential "gateway drug" for young boys and men into racist, religious and nationalist extremism (ADL, 2018).

Further assessment is needed to understand the far-right - manosphere nexus and the risk it entails. However, we maintain that the scholarship must go beyond misogyny to understand and combat this threat. An exclusive focus on the subjugation of women and dominant patterns of masculinity needs to shift towards addressing the tensions and interrelationships between hegemonic and marginalised masculinities (Andersen & Wendt, 2015), exacerbated by the neoliberal (re)configuration of gender. This comprehensive and intersectional understanding of gender is needed to properly grasp these extremist groups' mainstreaming, their successful use of misogyny and, much more importantly, to develop effective preventive measures that help secure girls and women young boys and men from extremism.

### **1.1. Research question and aims**

To counter the "gender-less" analysis of the far-right, this dissertation aimed, through a case study of the Groypers, to examine how far-right movements use gender in their discourses aimed at young boys and men in the Global North. On this matter, sub-questions were: how do the ideologies of the far-right and the manosphere cross-fertilise? and how do their constructions of masculinities relate to misogyny?

The investigation focused on the US context as most male supremacist terrorist attacks have been carried out in this country (DiBranco, 2020). Likewise, given that the contemporary US far-right influence beyond the domestic, being now central to the broader trends in the international far-right. At last, the Groyppers were selected due to their close connection with the manosphere and its successful mobilisation of far-right radicals views, which has made them one of the fastest growing far-right group in recent times (Quintal, 2022).

To carry out this research, the objectives were to identify key patterns in the Groyppers' leaders' discourse regarding gender by collecting data from their Telegram public profiles and YouTube clips and interviews. Secondly, to understand how the far-right and male-supremacist ideologies cross-fertilise, comparing the findings with the literature regarding the incels and broader manosphere narratives.

Thirdly, to go beyond misogyny by analysing the far-right - manosphere nexus through a masculinities' lens. To do so, a comprehensive multidisciplinary framework was considered, encompassing concepts such as hegemonic and marginalized masculinities (Connell, 1995, 2000) and their relation to the neoliberal reconfiguration and "crisis" of masculinity(ies) (Garlick, 2021; Maguire, 2021; Shabazz, 2015; Walker & Roberts, 2018). Likewise, addressing "male supremacy" (DiBranco, 2020) and "the cult of masculinity" as vital factors and a "constant bridge that spans across various radicalized groups" (Meiering, Dziri & Foroutan, 2020, p.14).

As such, the research attempts to bridge perspectives used in Psychology, Social Sciences and Criminology, with those more prevalent in Security and Radicalization studies. In doing so, it thoroughly discusses how beyond misogyny, gender roles and masculinity(ies) unify a wide range of radical men, functioning too as a "gateway drug" into extremism. Likewise, considering the male supremacist and far-right material and political capacities to challenge the rights of gender minorities, we emphasise the need to "take



gender seriously” (Meiering et al., 2020, p.14) and promote a de-construction of hegemonic masculinities and neoliberal ideals to prevent and combat these extremist groups’ threat to democracy and human rights in the Global North.

## **1.2. Chapters overview**

This dissertation is divided in five chapters. First, an Introduction that contextualizes our study subject and presents the research aims. Second, a Literature Review encompassing both gender and the extremist groups focus of this study. This section prepares the multidisciplinary and intersectional gender and masculinities framework for our analysis. Likewise, it describes the far-right and the manosphere, their connections and their successful mainstreaming, using the US Groypers as a case study.

Third a Design and methodology chapter that details the research design, and the ethical considerations and procedures taken to carry it out. Fourth a Data Analysis and Discussion that presents the categories and sub-themes discovered after examining the Groypers’ gender rhetoric. Finally, our conclusions and suggestions for further research.

## **2. Literature Review**

To understand how the far-right uses gender in their discourses and why the manosphere is crucial to their gender rhetoric, this chapter summarises the scholarship addressing gender, and masculinities, as well as these radical groups' evolution in recent years. It will do so through four sections. The first addresses radicalisation and the gendered pathways to extremism. The second and third sections discuss the manosphere and far-right groups crucial to our analysis. Attention is given to the incel's terminology and its 'Red Pill' narrative for the manosphere. In examining the far-right, we address the Great Replacement conspiracy, and its relation to ambivalent sexism. As well as the contemporary far-right under Trump, discussing Christianity, masculinities and their (re)configuration under neoliberalism. Lastly, the fourth section combines all the above, addressing the far-right and manosphere connection through the Groyper as a case study.

### **2.1. Gender and extremism: Neoliberal gender anxieties**

After 9/11, radicalization became the dominant framework to understand terrorism and violent extremism. Despite not existing a consensus on its definition, the last decade saw the development of several models to explain radicalisation causes. Although different, these models had significant overlaps and converse when considering extremism as a complex, non-linear and dynamic process originating by multiple pathways product of several factors and their complex interactions. Yet, as asserted by Berger (2018) among the many variables, identity is probably at the core of extremism.

As any other intergroup dynamics, radicalisation emerges from the categorisation of in and out-groups that are linked to particular social identities. For extremists, however, the "us versus them" reductionist binary division intensifies due to the idea that in-group success requires the defeat of the out-group (Berger, 2018). To this end, radical groups strategically exploit their potential recruits' grievances and psychological vulnerabilities to re-construct

their perception of reality. They portray their in-groups as victims and their organisations as martyrs and protectors of their community. But most importantly, they convincingly depict reality as hostile and the out-group as an existential threat to their group's survival.

As an identity that deeply structures the human experience, gender is also integral to extremism. Positioning men and masculinity as superior, the gender “natural” order has been the root of vast discrimination, oppression and stigmatization of both women and diverse identities not considered by its binary logic (Honeywill, 2016; Lamas, 2014; Rubin, 1975; Ruiz-Bravo, 1997). Nonetheless, as gender is neither given nor stable but an endlessly changing socio-cultural symbolisation (Honeywill, 2016), mapping our gender realities requires recognizing the more nuanced and complex ways the sexes interact between and within their groups.

Unfortunately, for many scholars, it is still unclear how gender intersects with other explaining factors and how it is present across different and opposing extremist groups. To address this, we will explore ambivalent sexism and the ways in which gender stereotypes and grievances are used and exploited by extremist organizations to recruit and justify their agendas (Castillo, 2022c; OSCE, 2019). Likewise, we will address masculinities and its relation to violence. And throughout this chapter we will point out how gender express in the extremists' groups we will study.

Despite characterised by inequality, the relationships between men and women are not restricted to violence. Indeed, Glick and Fiske's (2001) Ambivalent Sexism theory argues that, compared to other groups, as men and women need each other for survival, their relationship is characterized by both a power difference and an intimate interdependence. This condition of inter-group prejudice creates hostile and benevolent ideologies about each sex, as exemplified by the Madonna-Whore complex (Castillo, 2022a, 2022b). Hostility and benevolence, however, are not conflicting, but complementary. Thus, being depicted as in need of protection or incapable, as “evil” or “damsels

in distress”, all sexist tales legitimise the traditional gender roles and power imbalance (Castillo, 2022a; Glick & Fiske, 2001).

The benevolent side of sexism has become increasingly important to understand extremism given that, despite women have always participated in it, recent years have seen the increase of female and LGBTQI+ membership into extremist groups. In this regard, Silke and Brown (2016) specifically researched how extremism recruitment “can be highly gendered and operates on two levels”: it critiques gendered globalized societal patterns and norms to later target individuals’ lives. These layers of “propaganda and recruitment reinforce each other and provide a broad alignment of public values with private aspirations” (p.14) (Castillo, 2022c).

Studying the recruitment of militant jihadists, Silke and Brown (2016) show that, the propagation of ideas of oppression and victimisation suffered by Muslims by Western powers was highly gendered. As such, jihadist globalised gendered critiques rely on binary and conservative constructions of masculinity and femininity. Muslim men are positioned as ‘real men’ by enforcing the ‘proper’ gender order, while European men are depicted as emasculated by their governments. Western men are also portrayed as incapable to protect and respect Muslim women, who face discrimination and consider that motherhood and family are not valued in Western societies.

In this crisis context, jihadist extremism proposes a solution: an Islamic ideal society. This implies a Caliphate that respects shari’ah law and offers an opportunity to ensure one’s place in heaven. Here, gendered globalised narratives converge with individual private aspirations. The Caliphate not only offers salvation, but also gives people purpose and value through gender essentialist roles. It consigns women in the private sphere, as supportive wives and mothers that will be protected by men, and who can join a larger sisterhood. And it constructs men as fighters and heroes, as well as breadwinners, who can also belong to a vast brotherhood (Silke & Brown, 2016).

Even when gender conservatism serves to recruit both women and men into extremism, this research argues that masculinities hold a fundamental place when mapping extremism. Thus, our next section will briefly encompass the relation between masculinities and violence.

### ***2.1.1. Masculinities, violence and extremism***

Even when gender analysis of extremism and security is relatively new; Social Sciences, Criminology and Psychology have long recognised that gender is the best single predictor of violence and criminal behaviour. Crimes in general, and the most serious and violent ones particularly, are mostly committed by men (Collier, 1998), which constitute the majority (up to 90%) of the penitentiary population (Maguire, 2021; Shabazz, 2015).

Extremism is no exception to this trend. Most mass shooters, terrorist attackers, leaders and members of extremist groups are men. Furthermore, as we will later explore, male outrage and misogyny is increasingly connecting extremist communities, allowing their cross-pollination and the mainstreaming of their radical views in society.

Thus, to understand masculinities, we will introduce the core conceptual frameworks that underpins this study: Connell's (1995, 2000) theory of hegemonic masculinity and its relational concept of protest masculinities. Following Gramsci's definition of hegemony, hegemonic masculinity is the version of masculinity that legitimises the patriarchal gender system by guaranteeing the dominant position of men over women but also maintain a hierarchy among men. As such, men are not equal but intersectionality shows us that race, class, age, and sexual orientation inform and contribute uniquely to men's performances of diverse "masculinities" that impact their access to power (Andersen, & Wendt, 2015; APA, 2018). Thus, the hegemonic masculinity of a few positions at the bottom the marginalized masculinities of most men, who never live up to the hegemonic ideal, and that, next to women and minorities

beyond the binary pay a price for maintaining an unequal gender order (Connell, 1995; Maguire, 2021).

Connell (1995) further studied the realities of men from impoverished urban environments who mostly resisted through what she called "protest masculinity", an identity linked to their class position, and born in contexts where socio-economic weaknesses negate the claims to power that hegemonic masculinity promises (Castillo, 2021). Responding to their powerlessness in the absence of viable ways for constructing masculinities, like paid work (Maguire, 2021; Shabazz, 2015), men at the bottom used the resources available to construct their identities, usually encompassing: overly masculine performances, violence, and criminal behaviour, as well as misogyny, compulsory heterosexuality and homophobia (Connell 1995).

As a "bad boy" performance to prove to be "real men", protest masculinity allowed these groups to both reject and resist hegemonic masculinity while also picking up its core characteristics and reworking them in a context of poverty (Castillo, 2021). But created in sites of exclusion their consequences made it harder for poorer men to alter these violent performances, establishing negative and cyclical interrelations with schooling, employment, and even crime and incarceration (Castillo, 2021; Maguire, 2021).

### ***2.1.2. Neoliberalism and the “crisis” of masculinity***

Given that class is central to configuring marginalised and aggressive masculinities, this final section will explore the neoliberal impact on the working-class Western men. Neoliberalism is a globally dominant model of capitalism that favours open, deregulated markets and diminishes state involvement in socio-economic affairs (Walker & Roberts, 2018). Scholars have denounced the neoliberal model enhancement of social conservatism and contribution to growing levels of inequality and job insecurity (Choo, 2020; Garlick, 2021; Ging, 2019; Maguire, 2021). Nonetheless, it remains widely accepted, as its tenets of individualism, competition, personal responsibility and

meritocracy have reconfigured the economy and labour, but also gender and our social order.

The shift from manufacturing to service-based economies has been one of the main neoliberal transformations of the Global North. By outsourcing manual labour to the global south, thousands of Western workers' jobs were displaced. As such, the conventional "masculine" heavy manual work was replaced with a "feminised" service sector of temporary, part-time, low-paid and insecure work (Castillo, 2021; Coontz, 2016; Maguire, 2021).

The above neoliberal reconfiguration of labour has affected gender, and particularly, working-class men. This group has historically been expected to fulfil their role as protectors and breadwinners for their families. Thus, manual labour was elemental to construct their masculinities (Andersen, & Wendt, 2015; Kimmel, 2017; Walker & Roberts, 2018). However, as neoliberalism promoted Western deindustrialisation, working-class men have seen their community's numbers and income dramatically plummet (Picchi, 2019).

Given the centrality of training for the neoliberal competitiveness logic, education has been considered a key factor affecting the non-college graduated community (Walker & Roberts, 2018). The working-class tends to disregard training as their fathers and ancestors never required it. But also, as they are among the worst-performing groups in schools, having significantly reduced chances for education (Maguire, 2021).

Lacking the cognitive and social skills needed for the renewed feminised labour market, these groups are among the ones with the highest unemployment (Maguire, 2021). Yet, even when working, the instability, lower wages and reduced benefits of the service sector deeply affects them. Thus, despite their relative racial and gender advantages, white working-class men are more than ever limited by financial and social means, doing worse than their fathers and seeing the future of their children with deep pessimism (Coontz, 2016).

Unable to adapt and lacking stable labour to fulfil their masculine provider role, fears of failure erode their sense of dignity and value (Maguire,

2021) as well as physical and psychological health (Robertson et al., 2018). And in the US it has reach to extreme phenomena such as the “deaths of despair” or the increasing mortality among the working-class due to suicide and drug addiction (Picchi, 2019).

We must wonder, consequently, how the neoliberal order has maintained its power despite its devastating effects. Lindisfarne and Neale (2016) propose three processes that allow this: the naturalization of inequality, increased gendered marking and increased distances between the elite and ordinary people.

Neoliberalism naturalises inequality by attributing responsibility for failure and justification for suffering to the individual. Unsurprisingly, researchers find that working-class men tend to blame themselves for their failure. Individualism has also reinforced gender marking, enhancing essentialist constructions of our social identities, including gender (Choo, 2020). As gender essentialism advances, so do these men’s feelings of shame and anxiety for failing to live up to their culturally valued masculine obligations (Maguire, 2021). Moreover, at a social level its unemployed working-class men has also been constructed “as part of the newly abject” (Walker & Roberts, 2018 p.4), ‘welfare-dependent’, absent fathers and ‘shirkers’ who ‘just avoid the responsibility to work’.

Finally, neoliberalism has increased the physical and cultural distances between the elite and ordinary people, most notably, making marriage and family “values” a marker of class. As such, Carbone and Cahn (2013) study in the US shows that marriage rates have decreased for almost everyone, except people with the highest income. Indeed, as their marginalisation and inability to cope with neoliberalism continue, working-class men are no longer perceived as suitable or reliable partners. Thus, compared to privileged dual-earner couples, those at the middle, and especially those at the bottom have seen marriages disappear or fail, which has produced an increasing gender distrust that further divides marginalised men and women.



Failing at work, failing in relationships, and failing to be ‘men’, Walker and Roberts (2018) argue, that despite their relative marginality the current subordination of the male working-class pulls them away from the patriarchal dividend, and pushes them towards more marginalised groups, while being judged by the standards of more ‘successful’ men.

Doing worse than their female counterparts, and their male ancestors, this new experience of powerlessness further exacerbates the working-class men anxieties and sense of crisis, which become increasingly linked to hostility towards feminism and equality (Choo, 2020). In this regard, alternative masculinities cannot exist when modern gender relations are reconstructed in neoliberal contexts that amplify individualism, frustration and anxieties. Until this is solved, both hegemonic masculine aspirations and neoliberal logic will continue to hinder the social change needed to obtain real human progress (Choo, 2020).

Our next section will further allow us to understand today’s Western men anxieties and how they have developed to reincarnate deep hatred towards women by analysing the online world of misogynistic communities.

## **2.2. The manosphere**

Although violence against women is largely discussed in academia, analysis is still needed regarding its evolution and manifestation in online and digital spaces. As such, one of the most influential online phenomena has been the *manosphere*: an online ecosystem of sexist men’s communities who promote anti-feminist beliefs (Ging, 2019; Van Valkenburgh, 2021).

This ecosystem encompasses several and distinct groups of men (Aiston, 2021). For instance, it includes the ‘Men’s Rights Activists’ (MRA), an anti-feminist misogynistic group who believe men are oppressed, and lead harassment campaigns targeting prominent female figures. It also incorporates ‘Pick Up Artists’ (PUAs), men who teach other men how to manipulate women into having sex with them. Likewise, we found ‘Men Going Their Own Way’

(MGTOWs), a community that believes women are so toxic that they must avoid them altogether.

Lastly, on the most extreme end of the spectrum, we find ‘Incels’ or ‘involuntary celibates’ (ADL, 2018), whose Red-Pill ideology and particular language connect the manosphere communities, and have spread to the outside world, most notably, to the far-right, through an ideology of male shared victimhood and portrayal of feminism and multiculturalism as enemies (ADL, 2018; DiBranco, 2020), as will be further discussed in the following sections.

### ***2.2.1. Incels***

The incel term was coined in 1993 by a Canadian woman who intended to label her perpetually single status and produce a safe space for like-minded people. Her goal was hijacked by a community of mostly heterosexual and misogynist men who changed the restricted ‘inceldom’ to refer only to men who are unable to access sexual relationships with women due to genetic factors and unjust social structures that privileged women (Moonshot, 2020).

Incel-related terrorism has existed since 2014, though law enforcement did not recognize it as threat to health and public safety until 2017, when their attacks became more frequent and expanded in the Global North (DiBranco, 2020). Incels, however, also pose a significant threat to themselves (Wyn, 2018; Moonshot, 2020), as they display very low self-esteem, anger and feelings of isolation, as well as signs of depression and suicidal ideation.

To understand these at-risk and dangerous men is to learn the language they have developed to communicate and spread their ideology. Thus, incel refer to the modern-day dating world as the sexual marketplace, a space where individuals are divided according to a physical attractiveness index called the "Sexual Market Value" (SMV) that is the primary measure of an individual's worth (Moonshot, 2020).

The SMV helps understand the hierarchies among women and men. Women are conceptualized as "femoids", a combination of female and

humanoid, to suggest that they are not human, but "a kind of inscrutable object" (Wyn, 2018) to which incels believe all men are entitled and perceive they have been unjustly denied access to (ADL, 2018).

Incels use misogynistic slurs that relate to resentment over female sexuality. They have coined the term "roastie", which encapsulates their belief that vulvas "become mutilated through repeated penetration by different men (...) thereby come to resemble roast beef" (Wyn, 2018). They, however, consider that not all "femoids" are created equal, dividing them into two archetypes: Becky "average" female and Stacey sexually desirable female (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Anonymous Meme (no date) Becky vs Stacy.

To be attractive to women, incels believe genetic factors, appearance, cognitive and social abilities are key. They explain their unattractiveness through various measurements: height, weight, race, baldness, wrist size, disabilities, and other biologically determined features (Moonshot, 2020). In doing so, they define themselves in opposition to the Chads (Figure 2).

Incels define Chad as an archetypical attractive alpha man with unlimited access to sex with 'femoids'. They embody the Aryan male: tall, muscular, square-jawed and white. Other terms were coined to refer to "Chads" of other races, all constructed through racist stereotypes, namely: Tyrone, Chadpreet, Chaddam and Chang (Moonshot, 2020; Wyn, 2018).

The difference between Chad and non-Chad (incel) is literally a few millimeters of bone.



*Figure 2. Incel vs Chad*

Likewise, considering most heterosexual men have partners despite not being Chads, incels use terms like normies, beta or betabux to describe men who have relationships with women without having the 10/10 SMV. They believe that even when women have relationships with normies, they cheat on their partners with Chads (Wyn, 2018).

### **2.2.2. RedPilled**

Incels constructed a theory of human nature and sexuality known as "Red pill" (Wyn, 2018). "Swallowing the red pill" implies the revelation that women are hypergamus by nature, predetermined to seek the most attractive male, and that only 20% of men are attractive to women, condemning the rest to being financially used. For incels, men are victimized by women and feminism (ADL, 2018; DiBranco, 2020); hence, female oppression is considered a myth.

Moreover, incels defend the idea that women desire traditional gender roles, thus, if a man is aware of these 'truths', he can manipulate women to access sex and power (Moonshot, 2020). The latter can imply using the tricks of communities as the PUAs or combating one's genetic unattractiveness

through a series of changes: work on their personality and charisma, going to the gym (gymmaxxing) or undergo surgery to look like Chads (looksmaxxing) (Moonshot, 2020).

Incels share the red pill worldview with the rest of the manosphere and the far-right. Nonetheless, something that differentiates incels from them is a related narrative, called the Blackpill philosophy, which implies the acceptance of the unequal society proposed by the red pill, but rejects the idea that men can "play the game" to their advantage.

Hence, for those black-pilled, incelhood is hopeless and inescapable, love and sex are out of reach. They see themselves as 'doomed', with no other option but to Lay Down And Rot (LDAR) (Moonshot, 2020; Wyn, 2018), and believe that an attempt to "ascend" or escape incelhood is just a naive and futile "hopecel" approach, which illustrates many incels' perception of being trapped in an unjust world.

Misogyny and catastrophic male victimhood, however, are not unique to the manosphere communities. As we will see in our next sections, gender hatred and male outrage connect this online community with a broader network of extremist currents. For this study, we will especially focus in the Far-right, especially given the allegations of this groups' reliance on the manosphere as recruiting ground (Lewis, 2019), and given they unified effort to push male supremacism in the Global North.

### **2.3. The rise of the extreme right**

This section will review the far-right movement's history, current rise and internationalization. Focus will be paid to the white supremacism, racism and xenophobia that characterises this group by analysing the Great Replacement theory. We will also address the connection between this movement and gender, which is central for the far-right current mainstreaming and expansion, as well as their cross-pollination with the manosphere.

### ***2.3.1. Far-right, racism and xenophobia***

Rather than being a unified block, different stands on democracy divide the far-right into two groups: the “extreme-right” and “radical right” (Mudde, 2019). The extreme-right, exemplified by the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini, disagrees with the main characteristics of democracy like popular sovereignty and majority rule. Given that it does not trust people's power, this group is more revolutionary in its opposition to liberal democracy. The radical right, instead, supports the essence of democracy but rejects its key values, such as minority rights and the rule of law. To oppose liberal democracy, thus, they use a more reformist/populist approach (Castillo, 2022a).

Analysing the history and ideology of the far-right, Mudde (2019) identifies three waves of far-right politics, namely: neo-fascism (1945-1955), right-wing populism (1955-1980) and the radical right (1980-2000). Entering the twenty-first century, he also proposes that a fourth and current wave of far-right politics started, characterised by the mainstreaming of the far-right. This ascension was caused by three major crises: the 9/11 attacks, the 2008's Great Recession, and the migration “crisis” that began in 2015. And had as causes the notion of migration -and migrants- as a security concern to Western nations.

The media has had a crucial role in the far-right's mainstreaming. By framing migration as a “crisis”, they have worked as catalysts to the racist and xenophobic messages of the far-right (Mudde, 2019). Social media has further allowed this, by spreading extremist messages while avoiding traditional media gatekeepers. Both media and social companies have failed to properly address the expansion of this threat, rather, they have profited from the viralisation of its extremist content. As Mudde argues, given that inter-racial, cultural and inter-religious conflicts attract people, “the far-right sells” (2019, p.99).

As their ideas are mainstreamed, radical-right parties have become increasingly normalised worldwide. Entering the government, they have increased their agenda-setting power, implementing stricter immigration, integration and terrorism policies. Normalised in the ideology, politics and

organization of societies, moreover, the borders between the radical right and the mainstream right have become more difficult to establish.

Beyond the securitization of migration and migrants in Western societies, the successful expansion of the far-right's is linked to "*Le Grand Remplacement*" or "The Great Replacement" theory. Created in 2011 by Renaud Camus but drawing on antisemitic and racist traditions of the late nineteenth century, this conspiracy argues that white Western populations face an imminent existential threat: being replaced by non-white immigrants, labelled as invaders carrying a "reverse colonization" through their higher birth rates (ADL, 2021; Castillo, 2022a; Davey & Ebner, 2019; Mudde, 2019). As migration increases, this fringe notion has been positioned at the heart of extreme anti-immigration narratives and has provided an "ideological glue" that unifies a transnational extreme-right (Davey & Ebner, 2019, p.4) as push it into the mainstream (Mudde, 2019).

### ***2.3.2. Protectors of pure "womanhood": far-right and gender***

Research regarding "The Great Replacement" has rightly stressed their virulent racism and xenophobia but has omitted that "like all political phenomena, the far-right is deeply gendered" (Mudde, 2019, p. 132).

As such, an ambiguous relationship to feminism has characterized the current rise of the far-right and right-wing populist ideologies: using and disregarding gender equality simultaneously, termed as the *femonationalism* strategy (Jansen, 2020). Thus, far-right groups oppose gender equality policies and defend nationalist ideologies based on strictly traditional gender roles (Jasser, 2020). All while they present themselves as being in favour of gender equality and exploit gender minorities (Castillo, 2022a; Mudde, 2019).

Indeed, one of its most successful tactics has been the characterization of migrants/non-whites as a threat to white women and gender minorities, while constructing themselves as women's "protectors" (ADL, 2021; Jasser, 2020). A strategy also employed by groups like the KKK to describe themselves as

protectors of "pure womanhood". And that served to establish miscegenation laws that sought to "protect" white populations by prohibiting interracial relationships (Shabazz, 2015).

Another tactic is the far-right extremists' hyper-fixation with "birth rates" "demographics" and "fertility", a language that hides at its core their obsession with controlling women's sexuality and reproduction. Shaped by ethnic and racial ideas of nativism, far-right gender conceptions view the traditional family as a foundation of the nation and restrict individual reproductive and self-determination rights "to the normative demand of the reproduction of the nation" (Grzebalska & Petó, 2019, p. 167).

However, despite being crucial agents to this reproduction, women were denied active roles in the nation-building process (Andersen, & Wendt, 2015). Likewise, nationalist white supremacy claimed to protect but really seek to control white women to ensure the preservation of the pure/white nation (ADL, 2021). Along these lines, behind the Great Replacement obsession with "births", a misogynistic hyper-fixation to control women's bodies and reproduction can be found (ADL, 2021). Thus, in the context of white supremacist fears, concern about birth and fertility rates and "the destruction of the traditional family unit" need to be understood as innately tied to race and misogyny.

Going beyond misogyny, we have observed how racism and gender work together to escalate extremist's crisis tropes and justify radical violence. However, as discussed before, a gender analysis of violence needs to address masculinities and the tensions among the masculine hierarchy. To this end, we need to analyse how men develop hateful worldviews and use violence to perform masculinity and resist their powerlessness. The above, would be crucial in our understanding of the next section, which addresses the revival of the far-right under Trump, and its links to marginalised masculinities.



### 2.3.3. *The White Wing: Trump and the Christian working-class*

*“Filled with rage at the disappearance of the (White) America into which they believe they were born, and to which they feel entitled [...] Powerless, yes, but [still feeling] entitled to power—as White American men—by a combination of historical legacy, religious fiat, biological destiny, and moral legitimacy [...]*

***These guys are America’s White Wing”***

- Kimmel, 2017, p.179-180 [emphasis added]

In 2016, the US presidential election and the UK Brexit referendum produced worldwide shock, disbelief, and despair among American liberals. As the ‘status quo’ was rocked by populist right-wing political movements, the stigmatisation of the working-class identity increased. The political changes were thus “blamed on the racism and xenophobia of a backward white working class, left behind by globalization and resentful” of becoming ‘second-class citizens’ to ethnic minorities (Walker & Roberson, 2018, p.4).

The white working class's role in elections remains more determinant than ever, however, their votes are more complex than discussed. Whites without a college degree were once supporters of the American political "left". Nonetheless, as years passed their votes shifted to the right. Many experts have tried to grasp why their voters changed, sometimes against their own economic benefits (O'Connor, 2020). However, among the factors that could be addressed, we would discuss three particularly crucial elements that shed light on the revival of the far-right, especially the Trump presidency mainstreaming of far-right politics and the alt-right in the US (Mondon & Vaughan 2022). These are culture wars and Christian identity, the neoliberal recognition of labour and masculinities.

The notion of “culture wars” has been crucial for the US far-right and religious radicalisation in the last decades. Popularised in the 90s by James

Hunter, this concept described the profound tensions between US “orthodox” and “progressive” groups. Rather than mere disagreements or political struggles over cultural issues, Hunter saw culture wars as unique conflicts. Firstly, given that they revolved around a crucial matter: “the meaning of America”, the nation’s identity (Duffy and Hewlett, 2021). But also, because even when culture wars don’t necessarily lead to ‘shooting wars’, culture provides the justifications for violence that precede ‘real wars’ (Stanton, 2021).

Unlike political matters, culture wars function as fights “on matters of ultimate moral truth” (Hunter, 1991, p. 46) where compromise between the parties is seen as impossible. Indeed, early US culture wars emerged due to conservatives’ perception of secularisation as an existential threat to the religious status quo (Stanton, 2021) and the gender order. As such, the ‘war’ initially centred on church-state issues and gender matters like abortion, sexuality, family values and gay rights. The out-group worldview was constructed as irreconcilable with what was ‘fundamentally right’, and the conflict became a competition for the future of the US society, which in turn, increased polarisation, and the in-group sense of threat (Duffy & Hewlett, 2021).

More recently, the ‘culture wars’ narratives have been influenced by the mainstreaming of the ‘Great Replacement’ narratives. As such, in recent interviews, Hunter, who created the term, argues that rather than religion, race or the “fear of extinction” is currently the central element to the ‘culture war’ discourses (Stanton, 2021).

However, Trump and their mainstreaming of far-right narratives might show that, despite the importance of race, religion and gender are still vital in today's culture wars and the polarisation they cause. In this regard, and as previously examined, the Great Replacement crucially depends on gender and misogyny for its success. Likewise, the rejection of women and queer populations has historically been linked with US Christianity, as evidenced with the controversial homophobic protests of the Westboro Baptist Church (Cobb

2006), the anti-abortion extremism of the ‘Army of God’ and Christian Identity militias such as ‘The Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord’.

Moreover, the white Christian church has also played a vital role in sustaining white supremacy (Gjelten, 2020; Luo, 2020). The ‘unholy’ connection between Christianity and racism began with colonisation when European Christian theology was used to justify the abuse of non-white groups. Unfortunately, more than 400 years later, Jones (2020) found that higher levels of racism “make an individual more likely to identify as a white Christian”. Unlike non-religious whites, white Christians’ ability to see structural injustice is limited and, they consistently held views opposed to the ones of Black communities, for instance, denying the existence of societal discrimination against this minority.

While some of those most extreme views may be in the minority, they originate from a broader pool of very conservative forms of Christianity practised, with a PEW Research Centre survey identifying nearly a quarter of the US population as evangelical Christians (2015). Given their socio-economic and political influence, as white Christian groups continue failing to address racism, they ‘complicitly’ or complacently help to legitimise it (Luo, 2020). What is worse, the US white Christians limited ability to accept structural injustice facilitates these group’s self-perception as a persecuted community (Jones, 2020), which, as we will examine, might make them perfect targets for disinformation and an important base for those who wish to seed white supremacist rhetoric among the electorate.

Indeed, many scholars argue that white Christian communities were crucial to Trumps’ 2016 victory (Gjelten, 2020; Luo, 2020). And even further, in the post-Trump era, white nationalists and Christian nationalists are increasingly “putting their differences aside in a push to roll back abortion rights and enshrine white Christian dominance” (Joyce & Lorber, 2022) through what Whitehead and Perry’s (2020; Whitehead, 2021) label as “Christian

nationalism”. An ideology that has been considered a better predictor of an individual’s support for Trump than white Christian identity itself (Luo, 2020).

Christian nationalism can be defined as a political theology that co-opts Christian apocalyptic narratives and merge them with American ethno-identity. It asserts the existence of a unique American Christian history currently endangered by the rapid demographic, legal, and political changes. Thereby, it becomes a unique ideology centred on defending the defence of the US perceived Christian heritage (Armaly, Buckley & Enders, 2022; Whitehead, 2021).

Despite its seemingly harmless language of ‘heritage’, ‘culture’ and religion, many experts consider Christian nationalism as a vital threat to democracy due to its discriminative configuration of citizenship and rights. Firstly, as the fixation on preserving US Christianity, entails very religious fundamentalist and discriminative views of other religions participation in the American nation. Second, as this framework characterised by racism and xenophobia. As such, Whitehead and Perry (2020) assert that this worldview considers only white, natural-born citizens and cultural conservatives as ‘elected’ / ‘chosen by God’ individuals worthy of maintaining privilege and power over (and against) the residual “others”. And it seeks to protect this elite civic participation while hindering the opposition and minorities’ possibilities of political involvement (Whitehead, 2021).

After Trump, some of the most hard-line and extreme Trump-endorsed candidates, such as Marjorie Taylor Greene or Lauren Boebert reveals a rampant and growing popularity of Christian nationalism which can help bridge extreme politics to Christian populations. Nonetheless, next to Christianity, economics, and most importantly, the neoliberal reconfiguration of labour and gender are also crucial to understand Trump’s appeal.

The political views of the white working class have been increasingly splitting further from whites with college degrees. Whites with only high school degrees are increasingly voting Republican, while those with college educations

are more likely to vote as Democrats. This, however, was not a reality a few decades ago (O'Connor, 2020), but is a shift that has come in a context of ongoing transformations of labour, of white working class decreasing in population, and of falls in their income standards.

On this matter, the white-working class in the US is at its lowest in population, as only 40% of the US population is today made up of whites without college degrees, in comparison to nearly 75% in 1975 (Hokayem et al., 2021). Likewise, as discussed in our analysis of neoliberalism and gender, compared to the College-educated white workers strong income gains; most white working-class Americans are experiencing worst conditions than their fathers and generations before them (Picchi, 2019). Unable to adapt, failing at work, and lacking relationships and communities, white working-class men are experiencing a legitimate sense of powerlessness, loss and exclusion.

Trump has understood these grievances well, speaking directly to this group for votes, claiming he loved the “poorly educated” and his promises to “Make America Great Again” recalling a “time when their jobs provided greater economic security” (Pruitt, 2022). But rather than addressing the problem, when addressing the working-class grievances, Trump has instead problematised the demographic shifts, demonised his opponents and, furthermore, spread misogyny and male outrage to connect with the disenfranchised working-class male communities.

Following Connell’s protest masculinities logic, as the lack of status and stability among working-class men creates a sense of indignity, shame, and helplessness, these populations will set out to reclaim their masculinity with the few resources they have at hand, normally, subjugating those who are perceived to belong below them in the imagined hierarchy, and turn to radical forms of politics to find answers which can easily explain their circumstances and outline a pathway forward for redemption.

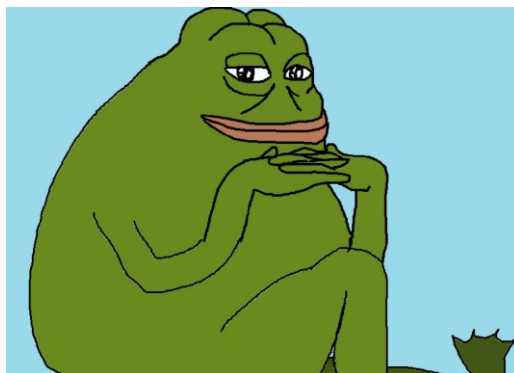
As such, Coontz (2016) argues that today’s political challenge is to find a way to acknowledge these men grievances “while persuading them that re-

establishing racial and masculine privileges is a poor substitute for ensuring secure rights for all workers”. Indeed, their use of violence to regain control is not only detrimental to those targeted by it, but to these men themselves. As discrimination is not a solution to structural socio-economic changes of the market-logic, any attempt to reinstate power will fail to properly solve the root causes of their suffering, condemning them to a never-ending cycle of failure.

In this regard, we will finally examine one of the most extremist, young and fervent Trump supporters within the right-wing constellation: the Groypers and the ‘America First’ movement.

#### **2.4. The Groypers - Manosphere nexus**

This final section will address the far right and manosphere cross-pollination by examining the Groypers as a case study. On this matter, the Groypers can be described as a loose network of white nationalist and male supremacist activists who are followed and supported by a large online ‘troll army’. Their name originates from their co-option and use of the so-called ‘groyper’ meme as a symbol, a variation of the ‘pepe’ the frog meme which was popularised by the alt-right (Figure 3).



*Figure 3. Groyper meme*

The origins of the Groyper movement can be traced back to the alt-right and the 2017, ‘Unite the Right’ rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. The group can be considered as a ‘post-Charlottesville’ successor movement which emerged

from the implosion and fragmentation of the alt-right following the rally. In this event, upon witnessing how scenes of violence and neo-Nazi symbolism had halted the momentum of the alt-right, a 19-year-old Nicholas Fuentes, now Groyper leader, pivoted to becoming an influencer and pushed a message urging activists to present themselves as “normies” (Hayden et al., 2022).

This ethos guided the core mission of the Groypers, who aimed to distance themselves from those who advocated for violence, with a brand dedicated to “good optics” and presentation (Tanner & Burghart, 2020), and aiming to deploy strategic and persuasive rhetoric to reshape the landscape of US conservatism in its image by dragging it further to the right, in Fuentes words:

*“The job of the groypers and America First, is to keep pushing further. We—because nobody else will—have to push the envelope. [...] We’re gonna get called racist, sexist, antisemitic, bigoted, whatever...and when the party is where we are two years later, we’re not gonna get the credit for the ideas that become popular...but that’s ok. That’s our job. We are the right-wing flank of the Republican Party, and if we didn’t exist, the Republican Party would be falling backwards all the time [...] receding into the Center and the Left”*

For the Groypers, their first major battleground was focused on campus activism, in what became known as the “Groyper Wars”. Activists coordinated to infiltrate events held by Turning Point USA (TPUSA), a non-profit founded by Charlie Kirk to campaign for conservative values in schools and campuses, heckling and trolling speakers, often by asking uncomfortable questions like the US relationship with Israel and referencing antisemitic dog-whistles (ISD, 2021). Fuentes also established an annual ‘America First Political Action Conference’ (AFPAC) to rival the ‘Conservative Political Action Conference’ (CPAC), often being banned from the latter’s events.

These stunts aimed to portray mainstream conservatives as weak and hypocritical, while also exploiting schisms and grievances within conservatism to recruit new followers and push Republicans further to the right. To be

successful in pursuing this strategy, the movement relied on an army of loyal trolls to mobilise both online and offline and a loose network of prominent white nationalist activists.

These activists will be the subject of this case study, as they provide the key centres of gravity around which the Groyper followers revolve. The first of these is Nicholas Fuentes, the most central figure and leader of the Groypers. In his ‘America First’ livestreams, Fuentes has expressed deeply antisemitic, anti-vaxx, racist, misogynistic and homo-transphobic worldviews. Many consider him “the most banned man in America”, being de-platformed from mainstream social media, banned from banking and online shopping platforms and he is currently on the American no-fly list. Nonetheless, he still maintains a Telegram account and has migrated to Cozy.tv., a social media created by the Groypers.

Another crucial Groypers are Patrick Casey, leader of the white supremacist American Identity Movement (AIM) and vital to formulating the Groypers’ strategy (Tanner & Burghart, 2020). Vincent James, who holds the second highest following on Telegram and is a former YouTuber and veteran of the far-right ‘Rise Above Movement’ (Lorber, 2022). Alex Jones, a key conservative figure who overlaps with the Groypers (Sankin & Carlessm, 2018), being prominently known as host of his InfoWars website and the spread of conspiracies. ‘Baked Alaska’, or Anthime Gionet, a Groypers live streamer that faces criminal charges for his role in the January 6 Capitol Hill riots (Woodward, 2022).

Other figures are Jaden McNeil, a close acquaintance of Fuentes and founder of ‘America First Students’, a rival to TPUSA (Tanner & Burghart, 2020). He has distanced himself from the Groypers but was included in the study given his formidable role in the Groypers early stages. Recently, Milo Yiannopoulos also joined the movement. He is a prominent right-wing provocateur, establishing his career as an influencer during the heyday of the alt-right. Finally, Michelle Malkin is one of the few women associated with the



Groypers. A self-described ‘mommy’ of the Groypers she has publicly allied with the movement (ISD, 2021).

As part of the American far-right, the Groypers are hyper-fixated on immigration and the alleged “replacement”. However, they stand out for their deep-seated hatred towards liberalism, feminism, LGBTQI+ rights and any other progressive “ideology”, arguing that the American society should become Christian and ‘traditional’ (ADL, 2018; ISD, 2021).

They are also characterised by their strong Generation Z demographic and distinct mainstreaming strategy of pushing conservatives to adopt white nationalist ideas, factors that distinguish them from other contemporary far-right movements and produce two potential outcomes of concern. Firstly, their efforts can shift mainstream conservatism further rightward, causing an adoption of political framings of white nationalist concerns. Likewise, given Fuentes’ views and power in the Groyper network, his extreme misogyny may be fused to these political framings in some part and filter their way into mainstream conservatism. Secondly, as a young and energetic movement focusing on campus activism and capturing Generation Z, there is a risk that future conservative leaders of tomorrow are being radicalised and forged from within the Groyper milieu.

Indeed, the Red-Pill narrative and incel terminology are vital to unify the Groypers’ with the broader male communities of the manosphere. Fuentes describes himself as an incel and borrows the language of the community, but even further, repeatedly express remarkably misogynistic statements which show his utter disdain for women. Thus, although the AF movement and the manosphere, might have different priorities, and worldviews concerning religion, race and politics, once connected through male outrage expressed through the same misogynistic language and narratives, it becomes easier for both groups to interact and cross-pollinize.

In this regard, understanding how they discuss gender and masculinities is crucial for understanding a movement that could potentially be responsible

for policies regarding the queer community and women's rights as a significant force within the Republican party and mainstream conservatism. Even further, due to their rapid and successful growth despite all sanctions, understanding the Groypers is important to grasp the vast appeal of misogyny and generalised violence to lure many boys and men into extremism. Much more importantly, by properly understanding the Groypers and their success, we can develop better preventive efforts that protect gender minorities, and especially boys and men from far-right extremism.

### **3. Methodology**

The present dissertation aimed to understand the nexus between the US far-right and the manosphere's broader online community of misogynist extremists, by analysing how right-wing extremists use gender in their discourses toward young boys and men in the Global North. On this matter, focus was paid to the far-right and manosphere cross-fertilisation and the role of masculinities in their misogyny.

A qualitative approach, specifically, critical discourse analysis was selected to conduct the study. In this regard, the present chapter will detail the research design, provide an overview of the data collected, and discuss the methodology used. It will also address the ethical considerations taken and the limitations of the analysis conducted.

#### **3.1. Research design**

A constructivist ontological approach and post-positivist epistemological tools guided our study of the far-right and manosphere nexus, considering the complexity and changing nature of these socio-political and deeply gendered movements. Seeing realities as constructions and truth as multiple and subjective, this research did not aim to generalize these radical processes but considers that multiple and oppositional understandings are possible and needed (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). Following a feminist critical approach, we also reject the idea of an essential human drive pre-existing its cultural inscription (Foucault, 1976). Thus, beyond biology, we argue that human consciousness and actions develop through changing social forces that define and categorise us (Taylor & Ussher, 2001; Tiefer, 1987).

The research opted for a qualitative technique to understand how the young boys and men who are part of the far-right and the manosphere are constituted by and impact their social world. Thus, language and symbols were considered key to analyse the conceptions and expectations that influence their

feelings, experiences, and actions (Pedraz, 2014), as well as the construction of their sense of self, of others and their surroundings (Taylor & Ussher, 2001).

On this matter, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was chosen as ideal for the analysis of the data. This method understands language as a social practice, and our constructions of reality as constituted in and through discourse, seeking to unravel the processes through which this discourse and the individual's internal world are constructed (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). It also aims to stress the hidden power relations and ideologies present throughout speech (Johnson & McLean, 2020) and maintains an impetus to intervene actively and challenge them and the social problems researched. As such, it urges scholars to engage with their interests and positionality, while practising self-critical reflexivity (Williamson, Given & Scifleet, 2018).

Considering the ethical challenges that a study of the far-right's controversial, damaging, and sensitive rhetoric implies, the CDA was conducted only on publicly accessible statements (audio, texts, images, videos) of the American far-right political figures. Attention was paid to the Groypers as a case study, due to its links and influence on the manosphere. On this matter, the official public Telegram channels of its leaders and interviews conducted with them on YouTube platforms were chosen as sources for data gathering.

### **3.2. Sampling and selection**

Eight public figures of the Groypers were selected for the study considering their prevalence in the scholarship and media addressing the far-right phenomena, and their popularity in Telegram. All the Telegram official channels identified were active and had a following higher than 6,000 people in all cases. Starting from Nick Fuentes, the leader of the Groypers, the research further analysed interventions from: Vincent James, Alex Jones, Baked Alaska, Jaden McNeil, Milo Yiannopoulos, Michelle Malkin and Patrick Casey.

In recent months some other key figures have joined the Groypers movement, however, they will not be included in the present study given that the thesis proposal and permits did not include these new members.

### **3.3. Data analysis process**

After identifying the Groypers' leaders, the research focused on their discourses regarding gender in their official Telegram and in interviews conducted with them and published on YouTube. One interview, one video/podcast and diverse clips of their streamings were selected due to their direct mentioning of the Manosphere. The content was published between 2020 and 2022 and added up to three and a half hours of dialogue.

The interviews and podcast data were gathered by transcribing the discourses, in Telegram, by contrast, the platform's search engine was used to look for keywords related to gender in all of the channels. In this regard, 146 keywords were used, detailed in the Appendix A, related to four main areas: gender/feminism (women, men, sex, gender, etc), sexism (insults used towards women and sexual minorities), incel terminology (femoid, Chad, roasties...) and far-right terminology related to gender (birth-rates, family...).

Considering the high number of messages found (more than five thousand), the study focused mostly on the messages posted in 2022, however, when the number of messages related to a specific keyword was less than ten, the analysis expanded the timeframe up to 2019, when most of the leader's channels were created. After this pre-processing measure, more than one thousand messages were reviewed, selecting 350 representative ones to carry out a detailed examination. Thus, messages and narratives containing these keywords, as well as those related to them, were stored by copying them in Excel, classifying them by date and public figure. Likewise, screenshots and audio-visual content of the most significant ones were saved in a secure folder.

To carry out the analysis of the information, a CDA was conducted to make the discourses, that is, the underlying systems of meaning, apparent

(Taylor & Ussher, 2001). To do so, first, a coding process of the interviews was carried out using Atlas.ti 9.0. and later added manually to the Microsoft Excel file with the Telegram's messages. In this regard, any piece of text which exemplified the discourses of the far-right regarding gender was categorized under one or more codes. Once the key statements were identified and organised, the data was further examined to find initial discursive themes, which were later reviewed referencing the relevant literature. Subsequently, categories were created, and four units of sense were established concerning the general objective of the research (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and evaluated through the lens of gender and masculinities studies.

To ensure compliance with the rigorous criteria of transparency and systematics of qualitative research (Meyrick, 2006), a detailed description of the entire process was made, including, a detailed description of how the data led to the findings of the investigation. Likewise, reflexivity was considered, constantly reviewing the data, and critically evaluating any bias or prejudice regarding the topic and the population under study.

#### **3.4. Access and ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations were put as a priority to minimise any potential risk or discomfort to individuals' part of the study, as well as the researcher. This was especially important given that the subject matter was of sensitive and controversial nature, including significant misogynistic, sexist, racist and even antisemitic narratives that can support discrimination and glorify violence against minorities. The further is even more important when considering the young followers of these groups, whose protection must be ensured.

On this subject, the University of Glasgow's Social Science School Ethics Forum (SEF) guidelines and approval procedures were followed to carry out this study. As this research used Non-Standard Data (online data, social media, social networking or 'big data'), the ethical decision-making had to

include an assessment of the opportunities and risks of conducting Internet Research.

Data protection impact and risk assessments were carried out to ensure the protection and respect of the principles of privacy and confidentiality, as well as the data security and risks of disclosure. As such, clear strategies were developed to deal with the sensitive and inflammatory material collected. The first decision taken in this regard was to not include social media users' interactions with the statements of the far-right leaders in the analysis. In doing so, only publicly available statements expressed by the eight leaders, and content they shared from affiliated Groyper allies or fan accounts (such as images, memes, clips of their own podcasts) were stored in a password-protected file to be used during the Dissertation research. No personally identifying information beyond the publicly known names and political profiles of the leaders was gathered or stored.

The terms and conditions of the specific platforms where the data was collected were also considered. In this regard, both YouTube, as a service offered by Google LLC and its affiliates, and Telegram's Privacy Policies considered that content uploaded to their sites and voluntarily disclosed by the users could be collected and used by third parties.

Consent was not considered to conduct the study regarding the far-right leaders due to the public nature of their roles at the head of big political movements in the US. Indeed, both their interviews and Telegram channels can be reasonably considered as part of the public domain and are spaces where they purposefully share ideas expecting to reach massive audiences. As such, their Telegram channels have links to alternative social media platforms where their followers can provide social and economic support to their projects, campaigns, and messages.

Contact with far-right's leaders was also not envisioned due to academic and security considerations. As public leaders of a highly discriminatory and violent movement, many have been banned on social media, followed by

security forces, and have restrictive mobility and activities. Consequently, their availability and willingness to participate in a feminist research project conducted by a non-white pansexual woman is vastly reduced, very unlikely and could even imply a risk. Furthermore, being criminalised, and socially and economically sanctioned, these figures tend to deny and gaslight interviewers when confronted with their extreme views, a factor that would hinder the study of their narratives.

Additionally, considerations were taken regarding the risks that the research process might have for the researcher. On this matter, Telegram was accessed through a newly created account with no identifying information, and YouTube was accessed freely. Likewise, proper psychological strategies were considered to deal with the inflammatory content, strengthened by the researcher's Psychology background and prior experiences in gender violence research in prison.

Any residual risks were outweighed by the potential benefits of helping the efforts of understanding the radicalisation pathways of these groups, and, in doing so, reducing the risks of future extremist violence to human rights and security.

### **3.5. Limitations**

Limitations of the research include the lack of external validity and expert triangulation. Likewise, time constraints hindered the inclusion of more data and public figures to study the phenomena. Additionally, as both time, ethical considerations and the violent narratives of these groups restrict access to their messaging to just Telegram and YouTube clips, many other messages and crucial ideas might have been lost. Nonetheless, analysing the thousands of hours of content existing in far-right platforms as Cozy.TV and Gab is a challenging task that would require much more time, researchers and resources. Other limitation is that the analysis of the discourse won't be able to fully cover



the engagement or appeal of the content to the followers, which could be useful to properly portray the effectiveness of their strategies and messaging.

#### **4. Analysis and Discussion**

After analysing the Groypers' leaders' rhetoric, four categories were identified that illustrate how gender is used in their discourses aimed at young boys and men and how they cross-fertilise with the manosphere. All the categories reveal the omnipresent character of gender conservatism and 'the Great Replacement' white supremacism in the Groypers' discourses. Thus, confirming that misogyny and racism are intertwined and work together to escalate the far-right sense of threat. Nonetheless, and as previously stated, to counter the gender-less study of the far-right mainstreaming, an intersectional approach to gender and masculinities was the central framework for the analysis. In doing so, the examination focuses on how class, sexual orientation, race and religion intersect with the gender identities of our subjects and influence their hateful and violent attitudes towards their out-groups.

To this end, Connell's (1995, 2000) work on protest masculinities functioned as the unifying thread connecting all the categories found. As neoliberalist consequences expand, we argue that the male members of the far-right and manosphere seem to respond to powerlessness in the same gendered ways men in Connell's study did. Hence, beyond their hatred for women, the boys and men of these radical groups seem to successfully unify through overly masculine performances characterized by misogyny, but also generalised violence, compulsory heterosexuality, and homo-transphobia. Unified by male outrage, we also consider that this violence expands beyond gendered out-groups, towards ethnic, racial and religious minorities.

The following sections will further detail each category and their sub-themes, addressing the Groypers' views regarding religion, gender diversity, women and masculinities, respectively.

#### 4.1. Religion First: "Christ is King"

*“I’m America first [...] We live by two credos: Christ is King, America First. If you’re not down with that then get out of the way or we will crush you” (N.Fuentes, 2022)*

This first category addresses the Groypers’ masculinities and gender discourses and how they connect with religion. Religious fundamentalism is key when analysing the Groypers "America First" (AF) movement given that Christianity and Catholicism are instrumental to the Groypers’ agenda in many ways. First, Catholic religion functions as an identity marker which links them to a legacy of European historical traditions, which is crucial to their self-identification as Western white men. Second, Christianity allows them to appeal to a large part of the US population that has felt threatened since secularism took hold in the country.

Third, religion makes them stand out among the many populist and radical right-wing groups, giving them a moral high ground and a chance to tie their political views to hard-line Christian grievances. Finally, and related to the latter, Christianity enables the Groypers to push radical racist misogynistic and homo-transphobic hatred in the right-wing mainstream, all while allowing them to claim they are different from the failed largely pagan and atheist alt-right in the US.

In this sense, many experts claim that, after the US alt-right failure, the Groypers were born as an attempt to distance the next far-right generation from its predecessor through religion: “garnishing [the alt-right] core white nationalist principles with the flag and the cross” (Joyce & Lorber, 2022). In the words of its creator, Fuentes (2019):

*“We are not the AltRight— AR was a racist, atheist, post-American, revolutionary, and transnational movement. America First is a traditionalist, Christian, conservative, reformist, American Nationalist movement”*

On this matter, following social identity theory and the “us versus them” dynamics in extremism, we will address how the Groypers exploit their target communities’ grievances and shape their perceptions of reality. On the one hand, portraying their target audiences as victimised and their movement as their righteous protectors. On the other hand, depicting reality as hostile, and the out-group as an existential threat.

Silke and Brown's (2016) study of the gendered recruitment to extremists’ groups will be essential to this end, working for both religious extremist from Salafi jihadist and from white Christian far-right groups successfully. Even further, we will observe that despite their mutual portrayal as enemies, these groups’ gender narratives are closely aligned. This category’s sub-themes will address these authors proposed first level of recruitment through gender: critiques of the gendered globalised societal patterns and norms. In doing so, we will explore how “culture wars”, the white Christian identity, and the ‘failing West’ tropes are crucial to the Groypers’ rhetoric.

#### ***4.1.1. Us versus them: Gendered culture wars***

Religious extremists have notoriously exemplified the importance of crisis narratives to radicalisation. Just as Salafi jihadists do, the Catholic Groypers have successfully used people’s beliefs to depict reality in apocalyptic ways, for instance, maintaining that society is “descending into anarchy” and that “Ppl should fear for their lives and the lives of their children” (N.Fuentes, 2019). Manipulating their group’s grievances and fears, they have been able to establish “us versus them” rigid divisions, usually sustaining that a “spiritual war” is taking place between two opposing forces: The heroic good believers and the evil disbelievers (Smith & Saltman, 2015). As expressed by Malkin: “We stand with the whole armor of God against the wiles of the devil!” (2022).

Unlike Salafi jihadists, however, the Groypers consider that “the most important wars that need to be fought are HERE on American soil” (M.Malkin,

2022). In this regard, the discourse analysis showed the salience of the “culture wars” narrative, which, as previously discussed, has been crucial for the US far-right and religious radicalisation since the 90s. Originating from the tensions between secular and orthodox groups in the US, early culture wars focused on religion and gender. Nonetheless, Hunter, who created the term, has asserted that in recent times, rather than religion, race or the “fear of extinction” is currently the central element to the ‘culture war’ discourses (Stanton, 2021).

Indeed, race and the Great Replacement is key in the Groypers’ portrayal of culture wars. Not only they persistently mention the alleged extinction threat to white communities, but they maintain that “the left [imports] alien cultures to change the culture of the next generations” (V.James, 2022). Likewise, they blame immigration for the destruction of the social cohesion in the West, arguing that confidence and trust can only emerge when humans share similarities, making diverse communities spaces with less trust (V.James, 2022).

However, contrary to Hunter’s argument, the fact race is central to ‘culture wars’ rhetoric, does not mean that gender or religion are no longer central. Indeed, as in previous chapters, far-right racist constructions are deeply connected to gender conservatism, and racial identity, religion and nationalism have become deeply intertwined, for instance, through Christian nationalism.

As such, thirty years after the beginning of the ‘culture wars’, the Groypers continue carrying the gendered and religious wars legacy. For the AF movement, a secular and gender diverse vision for the future is not only irreconcilable with what is fundamentally right for Christians but is even a threat to their nation and groups’ existence. For them, “if we allow the culture of the next generation to become increasingly Pro-LGBT, Pro-Abortion, Pro-Diversity, Pro-Female Liberation, Anti-Gun, and Atheist [...] We lose everything and we will never win again” (V.James, 2022).

Nonetheless, a distinct element in Groypers’ ‘culture wars’ narrative is age, especially, the importance of youth. The use of children in politics and

propaganda is a questionable yet vastly spread practice (Rakusa-Suszczewski, 2021) that, unfortunately, seems to be increasingly effective to push the radical conservatives' agendas. Nonetheless, unlike their counterparts, the 'America First' movement not only uses the youth in their discourses but is determined to attract and influence them. Considering the conflict at stake "is literally a war for the culture of the next generation" (V.James, 2022), the Groypers target young groups to shape the future of the US and Western nations.

After briefly detailing Groyper's portrayal of reality, which is one of 'war' and existential threats to their audiences, we will continue by addressing how the AF movement depicts itself and its role in US society.

#### ***4.1.2. Christian victims, American patriots***

This sub-theme will address how the Groypers define their "us" through religion, politics, race and gender, factors that they exploit to sustain the in-group victimhood narrative and portray themselves as righteous Christian saviours. Illustrated by Baked Alaska's outrage over the documentarist Louis Theroux's depiction of the Groypers as extremists:

*"[...] No you're the extremist Louis. [...] You make money from globalist satanic fag corporations and cover up for pedophiles. Shame on you- you're the godless extremist, I am a real God loving American patriot" (B.Alaska, 2022).*

As observed, religion gives the Groypers a moral high ground from which they construct themselves as righteous God-loving US patriots and anybody else as 'godless' and inherently evil 'globalists'. Moreover, this self-depiction shows that for the AF movement, religion and nationalism are two sides of the same coin. Hence, even when the Groypers' militant Catholic identity is a relatively particular phenomenon in the US mostly Christian/Protestant context, it does not distance them from other strands of Christianity. On the contrary, their political conservatism, racism, and sexism

seem to both unify them with the broader cultural power of the white Christian church (Jones, 2020) and connect them with the “Christian nationalism” ideology (Whitehead & Perry, 2020). In that respect, we will start by examining the connection between the US white Christian identity and bigotry, and how it is used in the Groypers rhetoric.

As previously analysed, US Christianity has been linked to discrimination and rejection of the rights of the queer population, as well as racial minorities (Gjelten, 2020; Luo, 2020). This is particularly true for white Christian identities and their limited ability to see structural injustice, which can even influence their self-perception as a persecuted community (Jones, 2020), making them perfect targets for disinformation and white supremacist rhetoric.

These vulnerabilities have not gone unnoticed by the Groypers, which seem to purposefully exacerbate them through apocalyptic portrayals of reality that depict Christians as victims in a society where degeneracy is the norm. They claim that “within 50 years, the west has been convinced that the Christian moral code [...] was rooted in prejudice and hate” and that ‘as prophesied’, their society has been persuaded to believe “that evil is good and good is evil” (V.James, 2022).

They also assert that the ‘liberal’ elites plot against their group. For instance as ‘Big-Tech’ social media platforms like Twitch supports “softcore porn and gambling” but ban “Right Wing, Christian content” (N.Fuentes, 2022) and Twitter “embraces paedophiles” but ‘purges’ “pro-family, pro-life users” (M.Malkin, 2021). Moreover, the federal Democrat government “hates good Christian men and women who stand for the principles of our Founding Fathers”. This is, all these groups try to “demoralize us and try to ensure we never organize and challenge the system ever again” (B.Alaska, 2022).

Moreover, the ‘America First’ movement argues that even the Republican Party is their enemy in this fight as “The GOP is no longer the Party of God, Family and Traditional Marriage” but rather “corporate slaves” to their

Big-Tech donors, “progressivism, transgenderism and compromise” (M.Malkin, 2021).

Having no allies, and facing an ‘imminent threat’, the Groypers argue that the only thing that can save their community is “a Christian revolution of millions with a revanchist mindset, unapologetically willing to regain the cultural territory we’ve lost over the last 100 years” and in which “America First is at the forefront” (V.James, 2022). In this cultural war, the Groypers claim that no negotiations are possible because “[...] Accommodation is the downfall of political parties and crumbling civilizations” (M.Malkin, 2021).

The Christian revolution the Groypers propose carries the legacy of the initial ‘culture wars’ focusing on an aversion to gender equality: “[we] must fearlessly become openly Anti-LGBT, Anti-Abortion, Anti-Diversity, Anti-Female Liberation, Pro-Gun, and openly Christian” (V.James, 2022).

Nonetheless, the Groypers revolution transcends gender, as for them, religion and nationalism, as well as race, are also crucial. In this sense, the vital role that white Christians played in Trump’s 2016 victory was noted by both researchers and the Groypers themselves. The AF leaders have mentioned that 90% of Trump voters in 2016 were White (N.Fuentes, 2021), and claimed that most of them are “concerned about anti-white discrimination” and oppose multiculturalist attempts to create a “deracinated mass of consumer slaves” (P.Casey, 2021).

Indeed, experts argue that ever since their creation, the Groypers aimed to unify white and Christian nationalist movements (Tanner & Burghart, 2020). This wish seems to sadly become a reality in the post-Trump era, as white nationalists and Christian nationalists are “putting their differences aside in a push to roll back abortion rights and enshrine white Christian dominance” (Joyce & Lorber, 2022) through Whitehead and Perry’s (2020; Whitehead, 2021) label as the “Christian nationalism” ideology. Which, as mentioned, has been considered a better predictor of an individual’s support for Trump than



white Christian identity itself (Luo, 2020) and, is a term the Groypers use to define their movement and create in and out-group categorisations (Figure 4).



Figure 4. N.Fuentes (2022) Christian Nationalism [Emmerson artwork]

Following the Christian nationalist framework, the Groypers hold an extremely rigid construction of Christianity, and consider it to be deeply linked with their nation and politics. For instance, in the context of the overturn of Roe v Wade, Groyper leader Fuentes argued that the ‘victory’ (the overturning) was only possible as Jewish Judge Ruth Ginsburg was replaced by a Catholic Judge. For him, this showed that “religion matters” and that there is no such thing as Judeo-Christian unity, but that: “there’s one God, [...] one way to salvation [...] one way to the truth. [...] that’s the way that people running our society and running the laws need to be” (2022). Hence, he asserted that Jewish people could live in the US but couldn’t be trusted with American (Christian) laws.

The 'AF' leaders also follow the Christian nationalist reduced and racist visions deeming only white, natural-born citizens and fellow conservatives as the only people who should have civic participation in politics. As such, they have openly asserted that race is crucial to politics as “the racial identity of the nation is always more salient than the political or ideological identity” (N.Fuentes, 2019) and therefore, demographics are of utmost importance for (re)defining society.

Additionally, we also argue that beyond Christianity, race and nationality, class and gender also matter in the Christian nationalist depiction of the righteous citizens, as expressed by Fuentes:

*“I don't see voting as a right, [...] its not “just women” there's a lot of people that really should not be voting anymore. [...] people that don't own property. Young people, people that work retail works [they don't] have an idea of how things work [...] how the economy works” (2021).*

The deeply exclusionary configuration of citizenship and rights behind Christian nationalism might show us that rather than central to their worldview, Christianity might be just an instrumental part of the Groyper's 'entryism' strategy. This is a plan to position themselves in mainstream organisations by moderating their appearance and expressed values in order to achieve their true -white supremacist- goals (Tanner & Burghart, 2020). In contrast to their alt-right predecessors, religion allows them to re-construct their violence and discrimination towards minorities as something courageous, brave, powerful, and most notably, virtuous. For them: “Courage is contagious. AF is inevitable” (V.James, 2022).

Joyce and Lorber (2022) state that in the AF movement white supremacist narratives and conspirative antisemitic narratives blend flawlessly with Christian fervour and claims of Christian victimhood. In this context, most of the Groyper's followers, who are young and mostly adherent to conservative or Christian traditions, are first drawn into AF due to its "trad" elements who

imply a rejection of the secular modernity and acceptance of patriarchal, anti-queer values. However, along the way, they become "red" or "white-pilled" on the tenets of white nationalism, which they incorporate into their identities.

In the Groypers worldview, thus, only "straight, white, Christian Gen-Z men are valorised as the rightful heirs to and guardians of the American nation" (Joyce & Lorber, 2022). An in-group categorisation that has allow them to ally with hard-right Christian groups and successfully mainstream their hatred through the construction of themselves as both "martyrs" and "saviours" of Christianity, the US society and even the Western world (Figure 5). Following this masculine and messianic vision of their movement, the Groypers' leader has gone as far as to compare himself to Jesus, to further legitimise his cause:

*I'm the most lied about and censored and blacklisted man in the world 🙄 I'm being crucified for being a real human being 🙌🙄 [...] persecuted by the government [...] Because I keep it real 🙄🙄 Never forget that we are the good guys in this story, [...] The people we are fighting are evil and cruel and liars. We are the light! (N.Fuentes, 2022)*

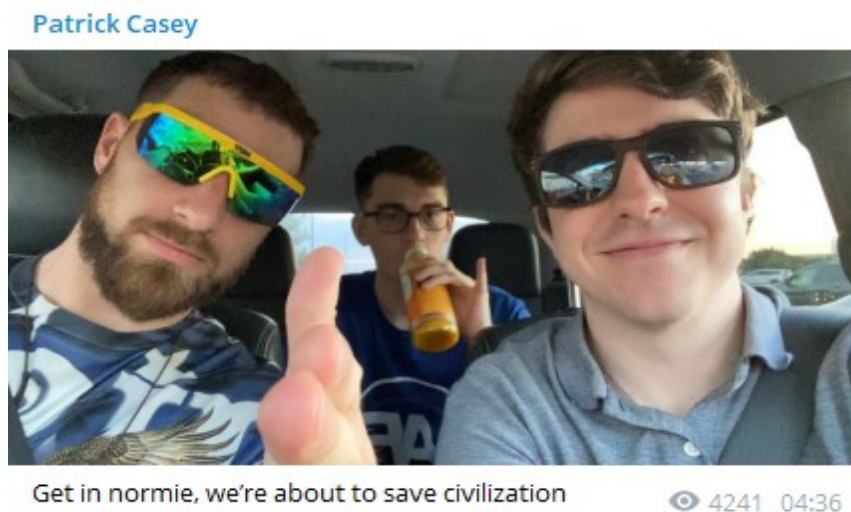


Figure 5. P. Casey (2020) Get in normie

### ***4.1.3. Family decline and the failing West***

Complementary to the Groypers' depiction of Christianity, whiteness, masculinity and gender conservatism in general as central to their in-group, this section will further detail how they construct their out-group. In this sense, Silke and Brown's (2016) work will allow us to see how their gender conservatism, and most notably, the cult to masculinity is a stable and unifying factor among diverse and even opposite extremist currents.

In fact, despite their profound differences, both Salafi jihadism and the far-right Groypers' processes of radicalisation criticise gendered globalised societal patterns by constructing Western societies as failing for their inability to defend the 'proper' gender order. In this sense, and further explored in the following categories, a binary and rigid gender logic is proposed as ideal to continue tradition, and respect both 'nature' and the 'divine' ruling. For the Groypers thus if the movement does not "win over the culture of the next few generations and restore the moral order especially among young western girls, the west will die" (V.James, 2022).

The 'decaying West' trope origins, however, are not religious, but political. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this trope has been one of Russia's most persistent disinformation narratives (U.S. Department of State, 2022). Just as the groups previously mentioned, the Kremlin sustains that the 'Western collapse' stems from the defence of female equality and gender diversity, as well as their departure from family and spirituality "traditional values".

On this subject, many Groypers' leaders have surprisingly aligned with and expressed admiration towards Putin. As such, Fuentes labelled both Trump and Putin as "heroes of the 21st century" (2022) and in this year's AFPAC a Putin chant was carried out. Accordingly, the Groypers have mocked the claims that deem the 'decaying West' trope as false (V.James, 2022), and supported Putin's discourses and declarations of "War On The Left's Anti-Family Agenda" (A.Jones, 2022).

Nonetheless, portraying a 'weak West' is not always related to hostile sexism and homo-transphobia. Like so, its focus on birth-rates, families and parenthood can also be shaped by religion and essentialist 'benevolent' sexist notions. As such, the Groypers' leader shared Pope Francis discourse about the 'demographic winter' in Europe. In doing so, particular attention was paid to the Pope's depiction of families who chose pets over kids as 'selfish' and a sign of "cultural degradation" (BBC, 2022).

Foreseeably, as opposed to the right-wing Catholic pro-family and pro-life groups, the Groypers' depict the 'liberal secular left' as using anti-natalism as "a driving force behind much of [their politics], abortion included" (P. Casey, 2022). The anti-natalist attitudes this opponent group has spread are explained by the Groypers through diverse factors. For instance, as a by-product of the fear of climate change and economic grievances that hinder many families from having kids. Likewise, as consequences of the lack of social belonging and spirituality spread through society. A phenomenon that they argue, produces "a hole in [people's] souls" that can only be filled by "God, family, community and relationship" (V. James, 2022).

Finally, and strongly evidencing the interconnection between race, religion and gender, anti-natalism is also perceived by the Groypers as a purposeful mechanism to replace the West or white populations. Further evidencing how the 'Great Replacement', Christian nationalism and white Christianity culture vastly influenced these extremist white supremacist groups (Luo, 2020; Mudde, 2019).

Finally, white supremacism and religious fundamentalism are crucial for the Groypers' gender conservatism and misogyny. Facing an alleged threat to their racial and religious existence, the group sustains that rigid, essentialist and traditional constructions of gender are the solution to the crisis. Depicting each gender in ambivalent and incongruent ways, however, the Groypers puts all the blame on women's shoulders. Thus, to fight the 'emasculatation' of Western men, and restore their sense of power and control, regulating women's bodies is

portrayed as vital to end the conflict. In the words of Vincent James (2022): “If we don't start to roll back ‘women's rights’ the population will completely collapse. This is not a joke, this is not a theory, this is reality”.

#### **4.2. “Ok, groomer”: the liberal LGBTQI+ agenda**

The second category examines the deep-seated hatred the Groypers have towards gender diversity and their strategies to mainstream it. Although homophobia is still common among religious and politically conservative groups, the ‘America First’ movement take LGBTQI+ hatred to another level. The latter is influenced by the group’s religious fundamentalism and reliance on disinformation and conspirative narratives. But it also relates to their gender essentialist views, and, as we would argue, to their protest, rigid and violent performances of masculinity. Our three sub-themes would also help us to better explore the role of each of the abovementioned factors and the way the far-right capitalises on the population’s fears to push their radical agenda.

##### ***4.2.1. The Christian ‘comphet’ duty to hate***

The first sub-theme examines the Groypers’ depiction of the LGBTQI+ community as unnatural, immoral, and even demonic, which serves to justify and encourage violence towards them. In this regard, we will explore how religion fundamentalism, gender essentialism and particularly marginalised masculinities influence the Groypers’ hatred towards gender diversity.

For the ‘America First’ movement, queer people of any type are never okay. In contrast to mainstream conservatives, Fuentes (2022) argues that the problem with pride month is not merely that “it’s being done in front of children” but that it's objectively, “fundamentally wrong”. For him, showing children a “based, trad gay couple in [...] MAGA hats [will arguably] be worse”.

The Groypers’ notion of queer identities as “fundamentally wrong” is influenced by their religious beliefs, arguing that the Christian moral code “condemned sexual depravity” and “considered homosexuality immoral”

(V.James, 2022). Indeed, the group leaders depict the queer community as ‘satanic’, irresponsible parents and even as child abusers. Moreover, they asserted that the “Monkey pestilence [The monkeypox virus] being spread by homosexuals” might be a punishment from God (N.Fuentes, 2022).

Along these lines, the group has used their religious views to oppose Pride Parade permits, and laws and educational reforms that support the LGBTQI+ community. As such, even when the Florida "Don't Say Gay" bill was approved by the Senate, they stated that it was not enough to just hinder gender education in a certain age group. Instead, they argued that “Teachers and schools should not be able to promote gender studies, LGBT rhetoric, or [...] groups” as a whole because “is in direct violation [...] of the religious beliefs of Christian students” (V.James, 2022).

Beyond religion, however, the AF movement rejects queerness due to their biological determinism and gender essentialism, considering gender diversity as an ‘unnatural’ phenomenon that produces disgust in our species. To this end, they claim that observing two men kissing produces the same “biochemical reaction [...] that seeing hundreds of maggots crawl over food” (V.James, 2022). Even further, they consider that being queer has only become a “social trend” due to lack of violence towards the LGBTQI+ community, and justify homo-transphobic violence as natural:

*“Bullying in itself is not a bad thing [...] it could be evil [but its generally an] expression of disgust toward aberrations from what is natural in our society should not be suppressed. [It] historically has served the purpose of naturally rooting out what’s bad [and] harmful to the health of societies” (V.James, 2022).*

It must be noted, nonetheless, that the mandate to ‘bully’ is not reduced to physical violence. The Groypers set an example by constantly invalidating, disrespecting and ridiculing the LGBTQI+ community gender identities and performances through language. The AF movement consistently use the word “gay” to describe any type of phenomenon they want to denigrate or depict as

negative. Likewise, they use slurs to this community and mock their identities, for instance, changing the letters of the acronym as they please from “LGBT” to “LGBTQWXYZ” (M.Malkin, 2021). They also mock queer individuals’ identities misgendering, misspelling or renaming them. Among the community, they seem to be especially against transexual individuals, using the term “transgenderism” to describe their realities and describing them as a “ridiculous” minority that serves as a leftist weapon “to break down conservative Christian values, thereby paving the way for globalism” (P.Casey, 2021).

The AF symbolic violence towards the LGBTQI+ community also extends to the depiction of gender diversity as a consequence of lack of purpose and clarity in the population. Thus, they argue that transgender individuals only exist because “People are searching for identity, trying to become part of something”, which is why “21% of Gen Z identify as LGBT and there's a 4000% increase in (mostly girls) identifying as trans and then transition to become part of a group” (V.James, 2022).

Finally, and most notably, the Groypers disregard queerness, as they consider that, the reason why it happens in today’s US is that, compared to the past, our present is one characterised by the absence of manhood:

*“Pride month [happens] because of a lack of strong men, strong boys [...] In the past [...] celebrating pride would not fly [as] in school boys would be boys and would take care of it, they would make sure that shit isn't happening”*  
(V.James, 2022)

Thus, the existence and acceptance of gender diversity, is not only a threat to Christianity or the ‘natural biological’ human and gender order, but a phenomenon that endangers their fragile sense of masculinity. As it happens with male aggressors in general (Segato, 2003); to regain control, reaffirm their compulsive heterosexuality (comphet) and, particularly, their masculine identities, attacking those at the bottom of the gender hierarchy becomes a duty for the AF members.



#### *4.2.2. Pizzagate: the liberal demonic paedophile agenda*

Our second sub-theme, addresses the Groypers' reliance on religious apocalyptic tales, disinformation, and conspiracies to produce fear in the population, depict the liberal 'globalist' 'elite' as a danger to children and push deep-seated homo-transphobic hatred. In this regard, experts have noted that in recent years, as distrust in academia has risen and the possession of knowledge is regarded as 'elitist', a highly polarised political panorama has allowed the dissemination of post-truth politics and disinformation. Curiously enough, in this context, the far-right communities have acted as both originators and targets of the fake news disseminated (Bleakley, 2021).

Disinformation, especially regarding the LGBTQI+ community is salient within Groypers' rhetoric. To this end, Alex Jones has played a crucial role, and became viral for its fringe claims blaming plastic, snow and even the water for affecting the sexual orientation of species, from humans to frogs.

Nonetheless, the most important conspiracy in recent years has been Pizzagate. This narrative emerged online in the last weeks of 2016 US elections, after Wikileaks released e-mails from Hillary Clinton and his campaign manager, John Podesta. After allegedly examining this data, members of 4chan claimed that these Democratic figures managed a paedophile sex-ring that involved the abuse and satanic sacrifice of children at the "Comet Ping Pong" pizza shop (Tuters et al., 2018).

This fringe conspiracy gains particular popularity at different moments in time. First, in December of 2016 due to the shooting it inspired at the above-mentioned pizza parlour. Second, in 2019, as Jeffrey Epstein, an American financier heavily connected with politicians, socialites and celebrities in the Western world, was arrested for truly conducting a underage prostitution network, dying a few months after in his prison cell (Bleakley, 2021).

Third, and most notably, Pizzagate became crucial given that, rather than dissipating, the conspiracy has continued to grow in popularity. As such, during

the COVID pandemic this theory helped to give birth to QAnon, another conspiracy theory that, building up on Pizzagate and a centuries-old antisemitic trope, claims that Trump is at the forefront of a mission to dismantle the secret ‘liberal’ paedophile cabal that harvest children blood to extend their lives (SPLC, 2020).

The Groyppers have encouraged their followers to red-pill ‘normies’ on Pizzagate. On this matter, these popular narratives allows them to dehumanise their opponents and exacerbate the rejection of their policies given that “Liberals are not people, they are demonic entities in favor of child sacrifice and pedophilia” (V.James, 2022).

However, what was limited to describe the ‘liberal’ Democrats, has expanded to liberal celebrities who supported the Blue party, and more recently, towards the LGBTIQ+ community and their allies as a whole. To this end, the conspiracy rigid and radical constructions of the out-groups allow a “bizarre leap in logic”, namely, the consideration of anyone who does not oppose liberals and their ‘LGBTQI+’ agenda as advocates of child grooming or paedophiles themselves (Romano, 2022).

In this context, using “Ok, groomer” as a response to any person who supports gender diversity became a viral trend that mainstreamed this radical conservative talking point (Romano, 2022). This narrative has been encouraged by the Groyppers leaders within its networks: “In case there was any confusion, you should absolutely call the people pushing LGBT indoctrination on kids groomers and pedophiles” (P.Casey, 2022).

#### ***4.2.3. Gender ideology: ‘Ok, groomer’ and child indoctrination***

Our last sub-section will examine the consequences of the fear-mongering Groyppers’ strategy and explore how these conspirative narratives align with the AF notions of religious ‘culture war’. To this effect, by depicting gender diversity supporters as “Leftist” death and sex “Cults Obsessed with Baby Sex Torture” or “Attempting to Sever Children from Their Parents”

(A.Jones, 2022), the Groyppers exemplify the way in which this threat narratives can rapidly evolve into a call for violence.

Indeed, one of the most disseminated links among the leaders asserts that society is grooming “your kids” and claiming that “only radical action can stop it”. This implies a need “to return to state regulation of morality”, encouraging people to harass their Republican political representatives to vigorously oppose to gender diversity, and most importantly, to truly attack minorities, bullying “gays back into the closet”, sending “women into the kitchen” and even suggesting the need of arresting queer individuals and allies and never allow them “to participate in normal society again” (V.James, 2022).

Beyond violence, however, their apocalyptic characterisation of reality, motivates their followers to transform the system and win the ‘competition’ for the US and Western future. As such, the AF leaders also recommend three spaces to conquer to successfully combat the ‘globalist’ “pedophilia epidemic” (M.Malkin, 2021) namely, the education system, media and businesses, and parenthood.

The AF movement portrays the education system as an institution infected by the liberal LGBTQI+ “groomer” ‘agenda’. To this end, the group shares news portraying non-straight teachers as child abusers. Most notably, hundreds of their messages show queer teachers and classrooms ‘plagued’ with gender diversity content, hence, claiming that these individuals “like most leftists, care more about indoctrinating children (i.e. grooming) into their ideology than teaching them their ABCs” (P.Casey, 2022). At last, their concern seems to especially focus on the increasing exposure Drag Queens have in US classrooms, portraying it as a measure that “forces” children into the queer community (Figure 6).



Figure 6. V.James (2022) Schools' "evil grooming agenda".

As previously discussed, the Groypers consider the 'Big-tech' platforms as complicit of child abuse. And they expand these claims to the media and any business supporting gender diversity, like Disney (Figure 7), Netflix and Amazon. In doing so, they create generalised panic making individuals feel that:

*"The Media is coming for your kids - Your kids are not yours to educate, your kids are not yours to teach moral values to, your kids are not yours to pass down your religious beliefs to" (V.James, 2022).*



Figure 7. V.James (2022) Disney child indoctrination..

Given that the government's liberal elites', the whole education system and businesses all “conspire” to “groom” and “indoctrinate” children, the Groypers finally argue that a controlling type of parenting is fundamental to ensure the future of the next generation. Thus they tell the present and future parents and family members that, if they worry about the things they “see in school (woke, CRT, etc.)” they should “be on the school board, be politically involved against this propaganda” (V.James, 2022). Furthermore, AF leaders assert that if they “allow your kids to watch whatever and whenever they want on their phone, tv or computer they will still become Liberals and/or LGBT” (V.James, 2022) (Figure 8). For this reason, they must pay attention, use apps to control their kids’ consumption of media, and don't allow them to access streaming and social media platforms that oppose their values.

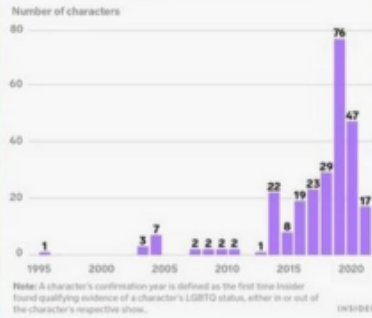
Vincent James



Vincent James

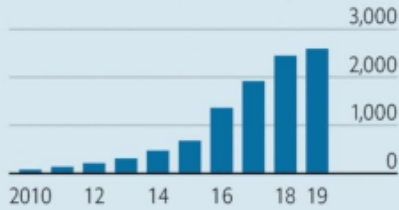
Vincent James | | A messa...

### LGBTQ characters in animated kids' series over time



### Gender-identity clinic referrals

Britain, under-18s, years ending March



The Economist

Remember folks, school is one thing, but what your kids watch in the home is worse. Protect your kids. Use apps like described in the video above.

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Figure 8. V.James (2022) Media and child 'indoctrination'

### 4.3. "Burn witches, not just any women": Ambivalent misogyny

Although ambivalence has been the most accurate depiction of sexism in the last decades, misogyny seems to fall short to describing the Groypers' hatred towards women. Nonetheless, a very subtle but significant evolution of their discourse seems to be taking place, as described by Fuentes (Figure 9):



Figure 9. N.Fuentes (2022) "I said we need to burn witches,

As they have increasingly incorporated women in their narratives and even connected and included radical influential women in their group, their notions of women seem to be evolving in ambivalent ways. In this regard, following the Madonna-Whore complex, they progressively divide women into "Patriotic mothers/victims" and "Childless feminist enemies", a phenomenon

illustrated through the four sub-themes part of this area. Our two sub-themes covered depict the Groypers' hatred towards women considered as inferior, unsuitable for the public space and the ones to blame for the Great Replacement. The last two, however, will show a discreet but increasing "benevolent" evolution of the Groypers' sexism, which can be argued to be a strategy but also a consequence of the group's increasing contact with equally radical conservatives and powerful women.

#### ***4.3.1. Femoids' sin: women are inferior***

While analysing the Groypers' discourses, it is impossible to acknowledge their shocking and fearless expressions of deep-seated hatred towards women. This discourse is most prevalent in the rhetoric of their leader, Nicholas Fuentes, whose quotes are included in this first section. In this regard, in the following paragraphs we will address the Groypers' use of religious fundamentalism, biological reductionism, and "history" to justify essentialist notions of women as breeders 'naturally' inferior and men as inherently superior.

For the Groypers, "Men and women are not equal" (N.Fuentes, 2022). Religion plays a crucial role in the Groypers' sexist binary constructions, as evidenced by their use of Bible narratives:

*"In the story of creation, man is created in the image of god, and the woman is made from man's rib. [...] from a piece of man, so how can a woman have comparable [...] or superior faculties in any way to a man?" (N.Fuentes, 2021).*

The Scripture is also used to blame women for human corruption and suffering, which, as we will see, easily leads to their dehumanisation and consideration as "femoids" (Figure 10): "Women gave us original sin and White Genocide and they ruined Star Wars" (N.Fuentes, 2022).



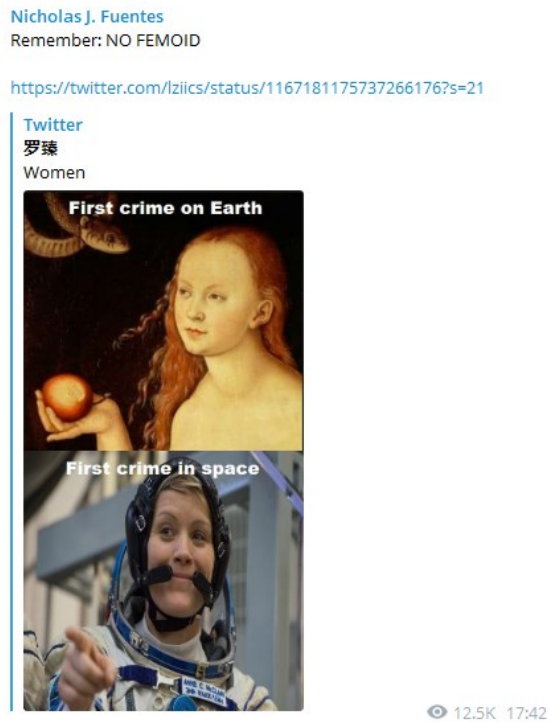


Figure 10. N.Fuentes (2019) NO FEMOID

It can be argued that these degrading depictions of women are essential to constructing a masculine sense of grandiosity and entitlement. Indeed, as a man, Fuentes considers himself “the real inheritor of the legacy of great geniuses, philosophers”, such as Aristotle, who “view women as an inferior gender” (2021).

Reminiscing an alleged Western past, Nick (2021) further argues that women used to be merely important as breeders due to their primal, promiscuous, animalistic and “not fully rational” nature. Thus, being made “with their wombs to bare children”, women’s whole consciousness are bound up on the idea of carrying and raising a child, making “impersonality, rationality and objectivity” a difficult task for women. Moreover, despite the progress made in history, Fuentes argues that, among many, Pick Up Artists’ ability to use “the same bag of tricks [to] hack” women, evidences the remaining simple nature of the female population.

Given that the AF leader considers that women are “by their very nature child-like”, he argues that women’s thoughts are not worth of attention, not existing academic justifications for “being lectured on politics by a women” (2021). In doing so, Fuentes compares women in politics to a “dog wearing a hat”, describing both as hilarious and ridiculous situations in which an animal species is doing something that does not correspond to their nature (N.Fuentes, 2021).

Finally, following the previous logic the AF leader argues that our current rather than representing “women hatred”, his statements seek to show the ‘truth’: “we want a society that is consistent with what we know about human nature” (N.Fuentes, 2022). For the Groypers, this natural order exists only in a society that follows a binary, heterosexual and unequal gender logic, positioning men at the top and putting “women back in the kitchen” (V.James, 2022).

#### ***4.3.2. “Burn witches”: destroy abortion, destroy feminism***

This second sub-theme analyses the hatred the group has towards feminism and women's rights. On the one hand, given they consider women as inferior and unsuitable for public roles. On the other, and most importantly, as gender equality and "Childless" women are considered as root causes of the ‘Great Replacement’ threat to white populations.

The AF movement considers that in today’s Western world “Feminism won, women rule everything, the society is totally upside down” (N.Fuentes, 2022). Aligned with the trope of the ‘failing West’, for the Groypers today’s US is a “feminised” society that lives “in a thoroughly feminist world order” and implies a “worship of women [that] is destroying society” (N.Fuentes, 2022).

It is further argued that, there is no point in Western civilisation in which “obsessing over the weaker sex” has not represented a “MASSIVE weakness of men. From Sophocles to Star Wars, It is our downfall. It is a flaw. It is not something to be proud of nor to aspire to” (N.Fuentes, 2022).

As we have discussed, the AF movements proposal to fix this chaos is to return to the old world. In the words of V.James (2022) “only a social counter revolution and a Christian awakening can save us” by tacking society back 100 years. On this matter, Fuentes made headlines last year for its consideration of Saudi Arabia and the Taliban’s Afghanistan as ideals to shape a future Christian theocracy. For him, the Taliban “were able to defeat the largest military in history” because they were not “distracted [...] nagged, [and] bossed around by women” like it happens in the US.

Consequently many leaders argue that the AF movement seeks to reinstate the proper gender order, “put women on their place”, “back to the kitchen” (V.James, 2022), and destroy the pedestal in which women “are put on by both feminist as well as simps” because the Groypers “don’t have time for political correctness [nor to] pander to the feelings of women” (N.Fuentes, 2021).

Indeed, the Groypers deep-seated hatred towards women also originates from two other beliefs. Firstly, from a consideration of women having advantages in relationships and network support compared to guys. Second, from the idea that women are not trustworthy, but rather, manipulative individuals that seek to exploit men’s power.

In this regard, when discussing the Joker, Fuentes argued that the movie was not only about having a bad life, but that it particularly discusses the issues of being a “disposable men”: “Women can never understand the relentless cruelty and indifference of society. [...] Women will never be disposable in the way that poor or unexceptional men are,” because even if they have a rough life, “many men are out there lining up to throw their coat over a dirty puddle so an e girl can walk over it” (2019).

Considering these alleged structural advantages women have in our societies, the Groypers tend to ridicule women victimisation attempts, which they interpret as egocentric and manipulative behaviour. Which can be summarised in J.Mcneil (2020) statement: “No egirls, ever”. The group’s

rejection of women is reinforced using ‘real-life’ viral cases of manipulative women, for instance, regarding the Johnny Depp trial they claim: “YOU CANT TRUST THESE HOES... [...] never believe a woman ever...” (N.Fuentes, 2022).

However, the gendered distrust expand even to the “tradhots” or “tradwives”, which, “post extremely generic [right-wing] takes” that make “all the simps fall”, however, once conservative guys attack them, they “get defensive and become indistinguishable from feminists” passing from being alleged trad girls to insult their haters as “incel beta males” (N.Fuentes, 2019). In fact, Fuentes has claimed in many occasions that he is approach for “gold” or “power-diggers” conservative women, which he feels disgust for, in his words: “Femoid getting real nasty about me and then she sees people wearing my merch bc im epic and suddenly changes her tune. I see you femoid. (N.Fuentes, 2019)

Allegedly emasculated by the feminist world order, the Groypers consider that “Female liberation was one of the worst things to happen to the US”, and openly call for and celebrate the “Beta Males” (V.James, 2022) uprising against women. Consequently, they have expressed that women need to go out from politics, are not smart or funny enough, and, as above-mentioned, that they shouldn’t even vote (N.Fuentes).

In his “America First” show, Fuente’s has also stated that “women don’t belong online” given that, the online space is our new public arena, and “God demands women to stay in the private sphere”. This logic is what guides the group rejection to “e-girls” and right-wing girl influencers, who are seen as merely vain for posting photos. Fuentes (2019) argues this is especially true for Instagram where women profiles are “catalogues for a butcher [...] displaying meat” to other men, and that goes against monogamy. Yet, Nick even rejects the presence of women in platforms where they just “expose” their ideas, such as Twitter, as he claims that being ‘simple-minded’ and irrational by nature, women’s presence is unnecessary in these spaces.

The Groypers rejection of feminism is also influenced by a combination of male fragility and religion. As such, the group considers that, just as with homosexuality, the Christian moral code “condemned [...] abortion, contraceptives, pornography, and divorce” (V.James, 2022). Likewise, Fuentes has expressed that:

*“Divorce should be illegal” because it’s ridiculous “to see powerful men getting divorced by their wives because the woman feels like it. [...] especially for billionaires, politicians, etc. Rich people should be able to buy a wife and she legally can’t leave the marriage” (2022)*

At the core of the Groypers’ hatred of feminism, however, is a preoccupation with birth-rates. Abortion is viewed as a cardinal sin and an evil which harms the white race. Feminism is cast as an evil which bears responsibility for abortion. The preoccupation with the interaction between abortion and demographics is displayed by James: “If we don't start to roll back "women's rights" the population will completely collapse. This is not a joke, this is not a theory, this is reality” (2022). Other variations of this narrative can merge with antisemitism, such as Fuentes declarations that abortion equals white holocaust.

Rolling back feminism is declared as a solution to the problem posed by abortion, with statements such as “we are gonna put y’all back in chains (you can’t murder babies anymore)” (N.Fuentes, 2022) or merged with Christianity, with celebrations of the overturning of Roe V Wade with “GOD WINS” (V.James, 2022).

The securing of greater rights for women is cited as the reason for falling birth rates of white women. Groypers lament the decision of women to pursue careers over having a family. Women’s rights and the sexual liberation are considered not only as unnatural and as an upheaval of traditional gender roles which divert from the norm, but as fuelling unhappiness among women:

*“Women are less happy these days because they've been brainwashed into believing that healthy gender roles and traditional mores are "oppressive". But*

*it is ultimately the separation from these mores that is responsible for both men and women being more miserable than ever” (P. Casey, 2021)*

The increasing number of women who choose not to have kids are pointed to as presenting a crisis among women which fuels a mental health pandemic, with ‘statistics’ pointing to feelings of unhappiness among women who choose not to have kids or women mocked for choosing not to have children and regretting their decisions once they can no longer have them. Women are also accused of using abortion as a means of birth control rather than to deal with rape or incest related pregnancies. In this regard, the seething rage expressed towards these women is comparable to that of incel communities, who harbour a severe hatred for sexually liberated and independent women. Rolling back abortion is therefore cast as a solution to controlling the sexual agency and bodies of women in a similar manner to that desired by incels.

But abortion is seen as more than a threat to white populations and as a scourge of feminism and gender equality. Abortion is an opportunity by the Groypers to presenting an issue with which conservatives can cohesively rally behind (Figure 11). The overturning of Roe v Wade is considered a template for other issue areas, such as gay marriage and Groypers strict views on immigration.



Figure 11. Vincent James (2022) Biden Liberal pro-choice vs. Trump Conservatist pro-children.

Pro-choice campaigners are characterised as getting away with whatever they want while right-wingers are instead persecuted for similar or lesser causes. In much the same way that far-right and right-wing ecosystems perceive the 2020 Black Lives Matter protestors as getting away with burning cities, while the January 6 Capitol Hill rioters were in turn heavily cracked down upon, the Groypers accuse an “Angry mob” of “far-left abortionists” of storming the Wisconsin State Capitol to intimidate lawmakers but facing no arrests. This was labelled as an example of double-standards: “Laws only apply to right-wingers now” (V.James, 2022).

Following reports that the overturning of Roe v Wade would lead to attacks across the country against churches and pregnancy centres, the possibility of confrontation was met with glee and a call to action “If necessary, we may have to get out and defend our churches tomorrow or Friday evening. Stand back and stand by!” (N.Fuentes, 2022), demonstrating how a fantasy of

violence aimed towards pro-choice activism lay under many of the Groypers views on abortion as well as a claim of ownership over churches, casting themselves as holy warriors on a divine crusade against evil forces.

Similarly, the “stand back and stand by!” comment relates directly to a statement made by Trump related to the Proud Boys during debates in the lead up to the 2020 election. The statement became adopted by the Proud Boys as a slogan. The use by the Groypers in this context demonstrates an overlap within the far-right ecosystem and a direct reference to a right-wing call for a defensive mobilisation against the far-left.

Traces of this fantasy of violence can also be seen in more violent rhetoric aimed at women more generally, often thinly disguised as jokes, such as Fuentes stating that he was “gonna punch a woman in the face at nordstrom” or that enacting violent fantasies against women would kickstart inspiration: “Feeling very uninspired this week and idk why, im in a creative/content slump. Planning on streaming in a bit once i shower... maybe ill do the kill women mission in gta again, that always makes me feel better” (2019), ‘gta’ refers to ‘Grand Theft Auto’, a violent computer game.

After demonstrating the deep hatred, the AF movement has towards women, our next sub-sections will analyse a slight but significant shift in their rhetoric, which can be understood as a more benevolent but utilitarian depiction of womanhood.

#### ***4.3.3. Using women and children “as mascots”***

This third sub-theme addresses the Groypers self-description of using “minorities as mascots” (V.James, 2022) to achieve their agenda, and discusses a more “benevolent” depiction of women in their narratives.

As the Groypers’ fearmongering strategies require creating a perception of their communities as facing existential threats, for the AF movement, using women and children as victims of their opponents’ violence is greatly useful. As such, “Mommy” Malkin is one of the main figures that persistently use this



strategy, framing reality as a “war over our children's minds, souls & bodies” (2022).

As seen in our examination of the Great Replacement, this strategy is especially helpful to push racist and xenophobic narratives. Thus, Malkin (2022) claims that children always pay the highest price for the ‘liberal agenda’ and ‘blind multiculturalism’. Reminiscing cases as the Rotherham sex-ring, and the Cologne 2015 rape denounces, other Groypers further argue that, white people need to “wake up and realize” that “diversity only brings terror and destruction” (V.James, 2022).

They also maintain that non-white populations are the ones who commit the most crimes but are immune to sanctions. In so doing, they blame black people for violence and crimes in the US society and claim that the “capital of rape” worldwide could be in places as India, Pakistan or Africa. Furthermore, they use cherry picked cases to portray the white populations, and more importantly, Western girls and women as the “real” helpless victims of the migrant violence:

*“A white 13-year-old girl talks about the sexual abuse she and her classmates face every day from migrants. If a migrant faced just a fraction of this abuse from white males they would be supported by every celebrity and every politician in Britain. White people are already treated as less than second class citizens” (V.James, 2022).*

However, as seen before, this strategy is also used to portray LGBTIQ+ populations as child predators, as well as to denounce the globalist elite and even the vaccines as dangerous for those more vulnerable (Figure 12).



Figure 12. V.James (2022) Children's COVID vaccine as a danger.

A curious but probably not coincidental fact about the victims they use to push their narratives is that grown men are rarely depicted as victims in the way women, girls and little boys do. It can be argued that, although utilitarian, the AF movement increasing portrayal of women as victims rather than as evil and manipulative beings is a slight shift towards a more “benevolent” depiction of this group.

However, excluding the very few post in which white men are attacked by non-white men, the damsel trend in the crisis narratives, and the equiparation between women and children serves the Groypers to reinforce the masculine ideal of white men as “protectors” defending their nations, families and children. Which, aligns with the AF movement self-conception as "righteous" saviors of families, Christianity and the Western world white population.

#### 4.3.4. *“Not any women”: patriotic mothers*

At last, this last sub-theme builds upon the “benevolent” depictions of white women to discuss the increasing openness the Groypers have towards a specific group of women: right-wing extremist "mothers" in power. From “Mommy” Malkin to Laura Boomer, Congresswomen Marjorie Taylor Green and Wendy Rogers, the AF movement appears to both recognise and concede the key influence women have to the mainstreaming of their group’s rhetoric. As such, Fuentes himself has refer to some of these women as “based”, “bad-ass” and even claim that although “it sounds really gay”, he is becoming “less sexist” (2022).

Certainly, given the Groypers’ dehumanising depictions of women, it is not possible to truly believe that the movement might at any point in time, become one that respects women’s and gender minorities’ rights. Nonetheless, the fact that in a couple of years the movement have moved from completely rejecting women’s membership to form alliances with powerful women and include them as speakers and in their network is an evolution worth noting.

Next to this openness, another interesting shift is that AF hostile and violent messages regarding women seem to have slightly reduce through time, being harder to find in recent posts a more vulgar depiction of the female population. Moreover, now we can also find limited but existent expressions of admiration for this small group of extreme women.

It is up for debate whether this subtle but significant change in attitudes towards women could merely obey political interest or could be a natural consequence of the emergence of successful radical women, and the Groypers interaction with them. Regardless, the women the Groypers claim to admire are at the end useful as a token symbol to “gender-wash” the misogyny that’s deeply ingrained within the AF movement and their male supremacy.

#### **4.4. From incel to hero: becoming a Groyper**

“You know what based means [...] racist, sexist, antisemite [...] It means America bitch” (N.Fuentes)

Our final category discusses the Groypers’ construction of masculinities and its connections with the Manosphere. In doing so, it also proposes three possible steps through which misogynist communities might radicalise into the Groypers cause, illustrated in each of its sub-sections. In doing so it corroborates how the Manosphere, and most importantly, the incel community unifies with the Groypers thanks to male outrage, working next to misogyny as "gateway drugs" into far-right extremism.

##### ***4.4.1. United by male victimhood: Groypers involuntary celibacy***

This first sub-theme describes how the Groypers leaders appeal to the manosphere, and particularly, to incels. In part, by defending and justifying them as "male victims". But also, by reinforcing the identity of the main leader, Nick Fuentes, as an incel and victim himself.

The AF movement discussions regarding incels and marginalised men is always present, however, it increased after two recent events. First, the release of the documentary TFW NO GF in 2020. which title-meme explained as "that feel(ing) when no girlfriend" reflects the “longing for a girlfriend” (P.Casey, 2020) and “one's fragile emotional state as a result of loneliness and lack of companionship” (Know Your Meme, 2010).

Second, the ‘Biden administration’ “framing” of incels as “a GREAT DANGER to America” that “Must Be Rooted Out” (V.James, 2022). Which really refers to a National Threat Assessment published this year by the U.S. Secret Service identifying misogynist incels as a violent threat, based on the case study of the 2018 shooting where a 40-year-old former U.S. Army officer

opened fired at the Tallahassee Hot Yoga studio and then killed himself (Yang, 2022).

For the Groypers “The only people that complain about “incels” are simps and feminists” (N.Fuentes, 2022). As such, they consider this misogynistic group as shouldn’t be maligned or ridiculed, but instead we should “feel compassion for their suffering and seek to remedy the societal factors that result in such alienation and depression” (P.Casey, 2020). In this regard, compared to media and audio-visual content that portrays them as a risk due to their terror attacks, the documentary TFW NO GF was celebrated for truly portraying the incels and general society “loneliness, mental illness, and techno-isolation”, and yet ending “on a positive note” showing that “there's hope for these guys” (P.Casey, 2020).

Just as our study, the TFW NO GF documentary aimed to portray that, “at the macro level”, many societal “structural factors oftentimes outweigh agency” (P.Casey, 2020) of men, and especially, marginalised ones, contributing to their isolation and resulting in misogyny and even off-line violence. Nonetheless, rather than an objective and critical approach, the director’s “non-judgmental” portrayal of incel violence is deeply concerning and dangerous. The same is true for the Groypers.

Their leaders argue that millennials, zoomers, and generally, younger people are isolated and lonely. But that this is especially true for men. Fuentes (2021) claims that as boys and teenagers “who have been oppressed by their parents, overbearing moms, the education system, the media” men feel that everything has been taken from them.

Consequently, the Groypers consider the advice given to marginalised men and incels as naive and patronising, because although ‘Pulling yourself up by your bootstraps’ can be a great advice for individuals, it is awful guidance for marginalised groups (P.Casey, 2020) who have no agency over the factors that oppress them. As such, a previous work of the author (Castillo, 2022b) discussed how Fuentes (2021) respond to criticism of his followers’ violence by

minimising it as an “animated and enthusiastic” nature. Moreover, by justifying it as a defensive mechanism, product of the vast oppression his male audience endures.

Fuentes (2021) also claims that the Groyper followers’ hostility to the conservatist mainstream relates to the fact that they are “strong young men” yet “the people that supposedly represent our side doesn’t represent us, don’t appreciate us and don’t talk about our real problems”. The Groyper also consider that society and conservatists talk down to them and blame them for their own suffering when expressing they should just “learn to code”, “get a job” and “do their part” (N.Fuentes, 2021; P.Casey, 2020). For the AF movement, men should not be blamed for wanting to escape into their own digital universe to protect themselves from “a world that hates them” (V.James, 2022).

Other than lack of social capital and belonging, the Groyper argue that young men have lost their power over women, who “have been alienated and turned against them” (N.Fuentes, 2021). Furthermore, they claim that accusing incels as a threat to women is hypocritical when ‘liberals’ left non-white males unpunished despite persistently abusing women (V.James, 2022). As such, we can see how what starts as a defence to incels, slightly introduce white victimhood and racist narratives.

The Groyper also appeal to boys and men in the manosphere by using their language. The AF leaders mention the RedPill, label women as femoids, roasties, and even discuss the sexual marketplace value to disregard the age of consent as something to respect (N.Fuentes, 2021). And seek to portray men and gamers as superior: All Men are Kings [...] All gamers are kings (N.Fuentes, 2019). Incoherently, Fuentes also expresses to have a stronger jaw line to claim he is better than an opponent. Likewise, the group use terms as Chad to characterise themselves and their “wins” and virginity to portray those who lose (Figure 13):

*“Women be like: tries to be president \*gets viciously smacked down twice by a fat pussy grabbing chad\*” (N.Fuentes, 2019)*



Figure 13. V.James (2020) The Chad vs the virgin.

Finally, to seal the deal, the AF movement seeks to appeal to the manosphere by showing that they share the pain of being victimized by society, and most notably, by reinforcing the identity of the Groyper leader, Nick Fuentes, as an incel and victim himself.

Many Groyper male members proudly define themselves as “misogynists” and “male supremacist” between laughs and trolling. Nonetheless, Fuentes is the only member who consistently labels himself as an incel. This self-portrayal is contentious, as for Fuentes, inceldom appears to be a choice, as we will discuss in the next section. However, when followers have called him a “volcel” (voluntary celibate) or “fakecel” (fake incel), Fuentes expressed that he is not a volcel, because he didn’t choose to be born:

*“Not wanting to be in a relationship is not voluntary. I dont want to but [...] I cant choose what I want [...] women dont like me, nobody likes me. I’m a*

*complete loner, completely excentric, sort of prickly unlikeable, autistic, hermit and thats just he way I am” (N.Fuentes, 2022).*

In fact, another element linking Groypers and Fuentes’ with the incel movement is their narrative of victimhood. As previously examined, the AF movement depict themselves as mistreated by society. In doing so, Fuentes labelling as “the most banned man in America” is useful. He includes himself as a young, disenfranchised male, also rejected by the establishment and, as seen above, he even compares his suffering to Jesus persecution to remind his followers to “Never forget that we are the good guys in this story”, that their critics are liars, but they “are the light!”.

#### ***4.4.2. Voluntary celibacy and Proud incel boys***

This second sub-theme discusses how the Groypers' discourse continues to shift away from the Manosphere and uses instead religion to transform virginity, the source of the incel's suffering, into a virtue and motivation for pride. To this end, white supremacy as well as nationalism will also be crucial factors to examine.

As previously mentioned, Nick Fuentes inceldom is a contested topic because, although claiming to being born that way, the Groypers’ leader has on many occasions contradict his alleged incel nature. For instance, saying that he “could easily get a gf” because he is epic (2021). Likewise, he has confessed to kissing a girl when he was young, and even that he rejected a women who flirted with him in a far-right conference. First because if a woman flirts with him, he considers it a proof that she does it with everybody. Likewise, because “women’s incapacity” makes him see those involved in politics as only seeking to use men to leverage themselves in the political arena (N.Fuentes, 2020). He also maintains that he would only get married for to produce “a male air”, pride and status. But that he “is not thrilled” by the idea of living with a woman since,



even when he wouldn't have to do domestic chores, he likes his privacy and autonomy, and is bothered by women's nagging (N.Fuentes, 2021).

Fuentes also considers that compared to "weaker men", he does not fall for women's signs of interest because he "recognizes his value" and does not let himself be treated as a "cheap [...] fair wheel in the park" that women can ride (2021). Finally, when his virginity became viral at the end of 2021, Fuentes expressed: "The media can call me an incel, virgin, gay, doesn't matter—I will never let a woman have authority over me. They fear the wrath of the awakened goy" (2022).

The AF leader vast rejection to women and relationships is crucial to understand this next step in the pathway of Groyper extremism. Like so, once the connection between the manosphere incels and the Groypers has been made, unified by misogyny and male victimhood, indoctrination starts. It implies to left aside the views of virginity as a symbol of male failure, and thus, as a factor affecting boys and men's self-esteem and sense of value. And it follows by replacing virginity with a notion of celibacy as a sign of virtuosity, a duty of a real Catholic man, an element to produce pride and belonging.

In transforming the core incel and manosphere grievance, the AF movement slightly tries to push boys and men away from the manosphere. They depict these online space as a "cult of provoking envy in others" (V.James, 2022). They further recommend their audience to not get distracted by father and authoritative figures that allegedly use psychology advice to get money out of them. In doing so, they unsuccessfully have tried to discredit figures as Jordan Peterson, deeply beloved by the manosphere.

In contrast to certain manosphere groups which promote sexual 'debauchery', the Groypers expose their followers to religious and conservative narratives, as well as further bigotry and hatred. Indeed, as virginity is no longer constructed as a curse, but as a value and duty, followers are encouraged to deeply commit to celibacy. This means as portrayed by Fuentes to "never cry,

never come” (2019). In other words, to perform a rigid masculinity, and to reject casual sex as well as to not give to the temptations of porn.

AF leaders claim that society should teach abstinence. Condemn mainstream platforms among young gamers, like Twitch, arguing that is filled with “softcore porn and gambling” and bans right-wing expression. Likewise, they denounce that “every major influencer is compromised in some way to the devil” because of their use of “Onlyfans, sports/online gambling, drugs/alcohol” (Fuentes, 2022). In so doing, they portray their media, Cozy.tv, as a platform free of these issues. They further claim that porn “makes you literally ret\*\*\*\*\*” as it allegedly decreases you grey matter (V.James, 2022). Even further, Fuentes (2022) became viral due to his statement claiming that “Having sex with women is gay”, which he used to deny rumours of his homosexuality.

The Groyppers shift the boys and men focus on sex, towards a focus on improving their physical appearance, a strategy that incels label as Looxmaxx. “Mommy” Malkin and Fuentes have expressed fatphobic comments. Claiming that “if food inflation made people skinnier” he would support it (N.Fuentes, 2022). Or claiming that a “dad's contract with the daughter not to get fat” is not problematic, because parents must demand their children to “take care of their bodies”, which is why Michelle (2022) is “always nagging” the boys “to lift weights, do [...] face pulls, and eat right ❤️”.

Other than using incels’ defence to push white supremacy, we evidence how they AF movement pushes different types of extremism with the depictions of opponents vs “Nickers” or Nick Fuentes followers (2019):

*Owen:*

- *Cringe*
- *Attacks family members, dishonorable “left handed” tactic*
- *Gen X*
- *Alcoholic*

*Nicker:*

- *Based*
- *Honorable, stays on target like a man, supreme discipline*
- *Zoomer*
- *Straight Edge*

- Schizoid
- Jewish
- Hollywood origins
- Not Catholic
- Countersignals Race
- Mental Genius
- Castizo Med (Afro Latino)
- College Dropout (based like the album)
- Catholic
- Pro White, identitarian

Related to the above just as Trump, the Groypers frame the lack of education and money of their followers as valuable. Fuentes (2020) maintains that despite people think he have less credibility for not being a college educated ‘wagie’ or a ‘social normie’, that is not truth. Instead, “people that are too immersed in the fake la la land will never see what’s really happening” politically, for example, being surprised by the January 6 insurrection. Thus, he claims that by being uneducated “you don’t belong to the elite because you don’t sell yourself to the big corp that supports the evil child murder apparatus”.

As such, any empathy and alleged concern the Groypers leaders have for the incel and marginalised conservative males empowerment hides an utilitarian strategy, in the words of Casey (2022):

*“I don’t much care for mud flinging at normie cons, I don’t see them as fellow travelers so much as fertile ground, but they must be cultivated. If we allow ourselves to become too cozy with safe views and people, we will quickly revert to the GOP baseline [...]. But [in social media] I am reminded how many people who are at least willing to listen to the far right also haven’t internalized our values... yet”*

The next and last section will detail the limit of celibacy, which is marriage and fatherhood, and how they relate to extremist hatred.

#### **4.4.3. “Be fruitful, and multiply”: All fathers are kings**

The last step in the Groypers pathway describes what they portray as the final ideal of masculinity: fatherhood and activism to counter the Great Replacement. Once Christian celibacy, misogyny and compulsive

heterosexuality are internalised, the Groyppers rhetoric should lead their followers to not only feel empowered and valued, but also to mobilise for the cause.

Addressing the “Crisis of masculinity” and the ‘emasculatation’ of men, the AF movement considers that they need to “deprogram entire generations of men who are emasculated by (women) their moms, kindergarten teachers, and girlfriends” (N.Fuentes, 2022). This implies to:

*“Don’t demean, belittle or discredit most of the male population because they don’t satisfy unforgiving, elite standards that prioritize the superficial over the spiritual. Wealth and biceps don’t matter as much as being a good father— which takes integrity, compassion, sensitivity and selflessness as much as money or strength” (N.Fuentes, 2019).*

For the Groyppers, the West “needs good father figures a lot more than it needs entrepreneurs and bodybuilders” (Milo, 2019). However, when discussing sexuality and marriage, interesting patterns arise. Firstly, male entitlement corrupts the possibility of meaningful relationships that respect women. Believing that divorce should be prohibited to women, and hyperfixating on controlling women’s sexuality, Fuentes (2022) has expressed how ideal it would be to have arranged marriages. Likewise, when having sex, he argues that “it is the woman’s job to please [men], not the other way around” (N.Fuentes, 2021).

Curiously, rather than questioning how their misogyny could be responsible for their lack of success in relationships, the AF movement blames their lack of relationships on feminism ‘liberals’ and social and economic factors that these evils have contributed to. One of these great problems is the absence of communities. For the Groyppers, individualism is portrayed as a fallacy, because humans are by nature social, we don’t exist in isolation but “have a family, ethnic group, religious affiliation, national identity, etc.” and we are defined by them (P.Casey, 2020). In this sense, they consider drug abuse, anxiety, depression, loneliness, our highest levels of suicide ever and even mass-

shootings, as consequences of ‘liberal’ secular legislations and politics that have made the West to lost its identity.

The Western failure to promote the communal nature of humans is also considered a consequence of the Global North being “colonized, demographically and institutionally, by non-Western peoples” which “have a sense of group consciousness” (P.Casey, 2020). Following the logic of the Great Replacement, the Groypers argue that ‘liberal’ politicians have take away: “kids, families, God” and marriage despite those being the solutions to combat the population’s suffering (V.James, 2022).

They emphasise the detrimental effects of reducing matrimonies and less families, allegedly discouraged because of fear of becoming financially bankrupt, which has instead lead the West to be “morally bankrupted” (V.James, 2022). Most importantly, they consider that this all is a plot created by the elites to replace the white population with migrant voters, which endangers the West but especially, men. As such, they denounce that the liberal elites have also taken away “the only sense of meaning that was left” for men: their work. In doing so, they address the neoliberal capitalist reconfiguration of labour, which has de-industrialised the West, however, they omit naming neoliberalism as a problem, and blame the issue on their rivals.

Finally, they express that migration has only served to force diversity, but as white populations cannot longer understand their neighbours, or even talk to them, distrust and insecurity, instead of communities is the norm. Thus, rather than “importing third world migrants”, the solution is to “take a strong nationalistic, pro-family, approach” (JMcNeil, 2019).

To counter the ‘evil elite’, the Groypers persistently encourage their followers to have children, claiming that financial or Climate Change concerns are just “a psyop” that only White People have bought into" (V.James, 2022). In doing so, they argue, men can prevent white people from becoming second class citizens.

However, to effectively achieve this, they also discuss the importance to be vigilant of male fertility. Many leaders mention that men's sperm count is collapsing next to testosterone. This fact, nonetheless, comes next to the same LGBTQI+ conspiracies regarding plastics, water, and even vaccines as “turning your kids gay” and enhancing the “plummeting fertility”. Likewise, even when sex with partners is encouraged, to maintain fertility, porn remains a problem, considering a crucial factor to combat “to save American families and increase birth rates” (V.James, 2022).

## 5. Conclusions

The central aim of our study was to counter the "gender-less" analysis of the far-right, by examining how far-right movements use gender in their discourses aimed at young boys and men in the Global North. Focusing on the US and the Groypers as a case study our objectives were to identify key patterns in the "America First" leaders' discourse regarding gender and observe the far-right and manosphere male-supremacist ideologies cross-fertilize. To do so, it was decided to reach beyond misogyny by examining the far-right - manosphere nexus through an intersectional and multi-disciplinary masculinities' lens (Connell, 1995, 2000).

After examining the Groypers rhetoric we conclude that gender is a vital element of extremists' agendas and mainstreaming strategies. Despite their white supremacy, the far-right threat can transcend racialised realities, jeopardising the security and rights of gender minorities, including white women. Rather than complementary to racism, the Groypers utterly depend on and use gender essentialist and reductionist views to construct and push their hateful worldviews. This is, however, not unique. Next to the far-right, Salafi Jihadists and manosphere communities also depend on gender to recruit members and radicalise them, further emphasising how broader extremism scholarship cannot continue putting aside gender when mapping violence.

Misogyny is a salient and worrying aspect of the far-right and manosphere, much more given their material threats and their increasing capabilities to push back women's rights. However ambivalent sexism allows the far-right to use gender to portray themselves as protector of gender minorities, which makes them more appealing to women and queer individuals and allows them to disregard accusations of gendered hatred.

Despite their extreme misogyny, the Groypers provide a unique case of gender extremism. For instance, while they openly express hatred towards women, female political figures such as Michelle Malkin, Marjorie Taylor Green and Wendy Rogers are hugely influential in strengthening the America

First movement. Future research should explore why these powerful women are willing to adopt such gender essentialist and misogynistic notions of reality.

The analysis also showed that Christian nationalism mediates the group hateful worldviews and victimhood tropes, with Christianity often easily grafted onto their ideological framework of hate. This provides them a moral high ground and helps establish an important identity-marker. Crucially, it risks providing them with a pathway for entryism to recruit further from Christian worshippers, and as demonstrated by the increasing presence of prominent Christian nationalist Republicans allying themselves with Trump today, allows the Groyper's to tap into ongoing political trends.

Perhaps more unsurprisingly the categories of analysis also reveal a dangerous level of hatred towards minorities. However, the 'America First' movement deep-seated aversion to queer communities makes them particularly stand out within the US conservative movement, with a zero tolerance for any member of the queer community, and casting any conservatives who accept homosexuals to be 'fake conservatives', using the issue as a leverage point to further define their more radical in-group.

An ambivalent but mostly hostile rhetoric of women is also prevalent. Indeed, their misogyny targets mostly feminist and 'childless' women, with a concerted effort to promote rolling back access to abortion combined with a preoccupation with birth rates and anti-feminist ideas. This in turn produces an idealised female accepted by the community, that of "mother" patriots.

Finally, their constructions of masculinity are vastly interconnected with that of common incel tropes of male victimisation, with calls for men to fight against what is viewed as their "emasculatation". The Groyper's promote celibacy as virtue and fatherhood as a masculine ideal (while also fused to a distorted sense of religious piety).

All of these points, from the fixation with the nation, to the promotion of traditional family values and discourse surrounding birth rates are fused to their white supremacism and goal to counter the 'Great Replacement'.



To better understand extremism, however, this research argues that we must recognise the fundamental role of masculinities in violence and intersectionality as vital to understand this factor. As mentioned, gender is the best single predictor of violence and criminal behaviour, and extremism is no exception to this trend. Thus, beyond male terrorist, leaders, and members, as this and a small yet crescent number of studies demonstrate, masculinities connect misogynistic communities and even distant extremist currents, allowing their cross-pollination and the mainstreaming of their radical views in society.

But intersectionality is mandatory. “Men are not universally powerful or weak, good or bad, violent or peaceful—angel or beast” (Honeywill, 2016, p.194-195). Boys and men are not inherently or biologically misogynistic and male hatred to gender minorities does not exist in a vacuum. Thus, researchers need to consider how different social identities and pull, and push factors transform some boys into hateful misogynistic and homo-transphobic men.

A comprehensive and intersectional understanding of gender is vital to properly understand and effectively combat the symbolic and material threat male supremacy entails. Yet, three elements need to be considered when combating gender hatred.

First, sanctioning, criminalising, and securitising hateful male communities and attackers will not be enough to counter extremists’ male outrage. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the counter extremism policies after 9/11. Targeting suspect communities further alienates them, failing to counteract the methods through which susceptible individuals are lured into extremism (Lewis, 2019). As such, we can see that despite being “the most banned men on America” Nick Fuentes and the Groypers continue to spread their views, influence politics and radicalise many marginalised boys and men.

Second, we must note that punishment is especially ineffective because sexism and violence towards gender minorities is not unique to extremists and criminals, but a daily reality of our still patriarchal and masculinist societies. Certainly, attacks targeting gender minorities and conspiracy narratives

portraying them as evil and dangerous are radical, uncommon, and mostly socially rejected phenomena. But the Red-pill and similar hateful narratives are successfully mainstreamed because they just amplify remaining and accepted sexism and homo-transphobia in Western societies. This is also why security and radicalisation scholars and security forces have long failed to acknowledge and sanction male supremacy and gender hatred (Gentry, 2022).

Third, to combat male supremacy, an intersectional approach to masculinities must recognise the suffering and grievances of boys and men. Connell's (1995, 2000) work is useful to understand the tensions and hierarchies surrounding men. As such, we argue that, just as the marginalised men in Connell's study, confronted with failure and unable to access the control and power promised by the neoliberal and hegemonic masculine ideals, the far-right and manosphere male communities respond to their perceived powerlessness by performing protest aggressive masculinities that destroy everything in their path, even their own selves.

In this regard, beyond hatred towards women, the Red Pill ideology expands male outrage towards queer communities and includes white hegemony, for instance, depicting 'Chads' as white, and naming non-white attractive males through racist stereotypes. Thus, being "redpilled" works as a "gateway drug" for many boys and men into wider forms of extremism that target vulnerable communities for their race, ethnicity, and religion.

However, the Groypers and incels demonstrate that apocalyptic constructions of reality can expand male outrage beyond the out-groups, to target even conservative allies, and each other. Groyper leader Nick Fuentes, and the recent dissident Jaiden McNeil have publicly expressed how their pathway towards radicalisation have deeply affected them economically, socially and even psychologically. Likewise, the incel community worldview, especially the Black-pill, is not only a framework of hatred towards others, but a narrative that allows an internalised, cruel and distorted way for young boys and men to see themselves. A form of digital self-harm that even produces "sui

fuel” forums, where suicide is contemplated and abusive comments to one-self and fellow incels are found (Wyn, 2018).

Given the privilege and power many men still hold in our world, it is hard for many to assert that boys and men are suffering (Rosin et al., 2014). Nonetheless, as discussed above, despite the persistent patriarchal order, the neoliberal reconfiguration of our societies and the greater inequality it produced has vastly affected white low and middle-class men. Despite not being the most vulnerable group, they are currently doing worse than the generations of white men before them, tragically illustrated by the US increasing “deaths of despair” among working-class white individuals.

By not addressing the real problems that affect these populations, we risk their grievances to be exploited by populist and extremists’ groups that understand their anxieties and fears and are willing to use them to obtain power. Our discussion of Trump’s campaign and our analysis of the Groyppers further demonstrates the latter. Certainly, male grievances might be exaggerated by the AF movement to create mindless narratives of male victimhood. Yet, behind their absurd and hyperbolic crisis tropes, some truths can be found. For instance, this group’s leaders have addressed the lack of work or precarious conditions that tear down many men’s senses of dignity, value, and masculinity. Likewise, they have pointed out the detrimental effects that the lack of belonging to communities and the failure to engage in meaningful relationships has in these men’s self-perceptions.

The Groyppers successful mainstreaming through the call to the disenfranchised and marginalised further evidences the underlying social and psychological vulnerabilities we need to address. Lacking social capital, self-esteem and sense of belonging, the male communities the far-right target are genuinely afraid. Thus, social susceptibilities rather than ideologies, are the factors that lead them to radicalisation in an attempt to gain a sense of certainty and control that is lacking in their lives.

As punitivism, laws and policies cannot fix the social structures that allow the mainstreaming of gender hatred, we need to tackle the problem at its source. We need to take boys and men's suffering seriously, we must take prevention efforts and invest in de-radicalisation and rehabilitation programs.

Without falling into pernicious male victimhood tropes, to understand violence and extremism, we need to address the contradictory experiences of men in the exercise of power. To recognise their simultaneous power and vulnerability, how social and neoliberal reconfigurations exacerbate their fragility and, most notably, why their gendered fears and anxieties turn into violence towards themselves and others.

Many boys and men might be lost, but hope is not. Despite the patriarchal order and violence that characterise our realities, millions of men do not exhibit destructive masculinities. Gender is not fixed, but "a continuous becoming that ends only in death" (Honeywill, 2016). Consequently, if our societies constructed these violent masculinities, they also can and must re-construct them. To this extent, we need to combat neoliberal individualistic and essentialist notions of gender identities, and our ideas of punishment as the final step to solve social problems.

If male supremacy and its inhumanity are the issue, men and boys and human approaches to violence are our solution. After all, the man problem can only be solved by men. To properly counter male supremacy and the cult of masculinity that bridges extremist currents, prevention and rehabilitation programs must include a comprehensive gender approach. In doing so, we need to promote healthier and diverse masculinities that prevent young boys and men from constructing gender identities that see socio-economic status, control, and power as the only means to find value and purpose.

Likewise, we need to combat the neoliberal and hegemonic masculine conceptions of failure and vulnerability as unnatural and unmanly and replace it with an understanding of fragility and emotions as a natural part of being humans. Giving young boys and men tools to face vulnerability without

violence, and enhancing their self-esteem, we can construct masculine identities that foster empathy and respect towards others.

Other than those at risk or already engaged in extremism, we also must recognise the agency and resilience of men and boys resisting violence. To achieve this, academic research is key to give voice to men vulnerable to, involved in and fighting against male supremacy. Likewise, to determine the pull and push factors that lure many into violence and allow others to resist it. Finally, to create effective prevention, rehabilitation, and community capacity-building programs to tackle extremism.

It is hoped that this dissertation's findings and its blind spots contribute to new and innovative research regarding gender, masculinities, and extremism. As such, we would like to emphasise the need to "take gender seriously" (Meiering et al., 2020, p.14). Without addressing gender from an intersectional approach, scholars, policymakers, and security forces are unlikely to effectively combat the threat that male supremacy entails. While fighting this violence, punitivism cannot be our only tool, but human approaches to violence and engaging men and boys in the fight are our solutions. Only through community efforts that include all of us will we be able to develop effective measures that help secure girls and women, queer communities, and young boys and men from extremism.

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## 7. Appendices

### A. Analysis key words

<i>Gender/feminism</i>	<i>Sexism/misogyny</i>	<i>Manosphere</i>	<i>Far-right misogyny/racism</i>
1. Gender	46. Sexism	66. Manosphere	102. Birth
2. Feminism	47. Sexist	67. Incel	103. Birth-rate
3. Feminist/s	48. Misogyny	68. Involuntary	104. Fertility/le
4. Sex	49. Misogynistic	celibate	105. Pregnant
5. Intercourse	50. Homophobic	69. Celibate	106. Population
6. Heterosexual	51. Transphobic	70. Inceldom	107. Nation
7. Homosexual	52. Whore	71. Virgin	108. Mother
8. Bisexual	53. Feminazi	72. Volcel	109. Mom
9. LGBT	54. Hoe	73. PUAs / Pick up	110. Father
10. Pride month	55. Slut	Artists	111. Dad
11. Pride Parade	56. Bitch	74. MGTOW/Men	112. Child
12. Bi-curious	57. Bimbo	Going Their Own	113. Children
13. Gay	58. Fag	Way	114. Kids
14. Lesbian	59. Faggot	75. MRAs / Men's	115. Baby/ies
15. Pansexual	60. Tranny	Rights Activists	116. Daughter
16. Non-binary	61. Unicorn	76. Male supremacy	117. Son
17. Drag	62. Rainbow	77. Marketplace	118. Family/ies
18. Trans	63. girl boy	78. Sexual Market	119. Marriage
19. Transgenderis m	64. Emasculated	Value (SMV)	120. Married
20. Dysphoria	65. Remasculinis ation	79. Handsome	121. Matrimony
21. Hormones		80. Hypergamous	122. Trad girl
22. Testosterone		81. Dating	123. Trad wife
23. Estrogen		82. Tinder	124. Wife
24. Woman		83. Femoid/s	125. Husband
25. Women		84. e girl	126. Spouse
		85. Roastie	127. Abortion



26. Girl/s		86. Becky/ies	128. Pro life
27. Female		87. Stacy/ies	129. Pro choice
28. Chick		88. Chad	130. Womb
29. Vagina		89. Tyrone	131. Sexual violence
30. Pussy		90. Chadpreet	132. Sex trafficking
31. Coochie		91. Chaddam	133. Child trafficking
32. Ovaries		92. Chang	134. Child abuse
33. Femenine/ Feminity		93. Alpha	135. Groom
34. Effeminate		94. Normie/s	136. Porn
35. Men		95. Beta	137. Rape
36. Man		96. King	138. Rapist
37. Boys		97. Simp	139. Pedophile
38. Guy		98. Red Pill	140. Pedo
39. Dude		99. Black Pill	141. Sex-ring
40. Bro		100. Girlfriend	142. Pizzagate
41. Male		101. Gf	143. Weinstein
42. Penis/Dick			144. Epstein
43. Dick			145. Maxwell
44. Sperm			146. The Great Replacement
45. Masculinity/ Masculine			