

CONTENTS

Preface ix

Acknowledgments xvii

List of Abbreviations xxi

PART I. OTHERING GENDER	1
Introduction. Othering Gender	3
1 Gendered Gaps in Extremism and Violence	37
PART II. STRATEGIES OF ENFORCEMENT	55
2 Containment: “Lock Her Up”	57
3 Punishment: “Grab the Bitch”	91
4 Exploitation: #SaveTheChildren	120
5 Erasure: “Don’t Say Gay”	144
6 Enabling: The White Baby Challenge	165
PART III. CENTERING GENDER	183
Conclusion. Centering Gender: What Can We Do?	185
Epilogue. My “Oh! Sorry, Ma’am” Era	210

viii CONTENTS

Resources for Parents, Educators, and Other Caregivers 217

Notes 225

References 263

Index 305

Introduction

OTHERING GENDER

When is terrorism not terrorism? When the political motivations are misogyny.

—SARA MEGER, “WHEN IS TERRORISM NOT TERRORISM”

AFTER A COLLEAGUE followed me into a conference elevator some years ago and tried to kiss me, murmuring “What kind of games are you playing?” as I pushed away and ducked out the door, the first thing I did was call my sister.¹ How could I have possibly sent signals I wasn’t aware of, I wondered? She sighed. “Your problem is that you’re too nice,” she admonished. “You have to be more of a bitch.”

God forbid you are more of a bitch, though, because some men get unpredictably, viciously aggressive when you say no, or don’t reply to their texts, or reject their advances.² This isn’t all men, of course, but as I write, the news is filled with story after story of men who react violently when women or girls reject them.³ Some of these stories are sensational—like that of a California man who made national news in January 2023 for repeatedly slamming a dump truck into his wife’s home during their divorce proceedings, after he learned she had filed a restraining order against him. More often, the stories are so banal they barely register. Thousands of videos and threads on social media document women’s everyday experiences of street harassment, catcalling,

and stalking, including the reactive anger of men when their response (or lack thereof) is not pleasing enough. For these enraged men, women who say no are breaking the rules. For some men (and which men it might be is so unpredictable that women must act as if it is all men), rejection violates an unquestioned sense of entitlement to women's time, attention, smiles, and adoration. It can spiral into shame-fueled rage at the sheer audacity, lack of gratitude, and arrogance of women who reject them.⁴ Women who say no are often called derogatory slurs, threatened with violence, or assaulted. Still others lose career opportunities. In the worst cases, women are murdered by men they reject.

Girls and women have been killed for "offenses" like saying no to a potential prom date, or for ignoring catcalling.⁵ A Wisconsin girl recently was shot in the head multiple times by a 14-year-old boy after his "fit of rage" over their breakup.⁶ In fact, 34% of the nearly five thousand women who were killed in the United States in 2021 died at the hands of their own intimate partner—a rate of almost five women per day and a statistic that is a certain undercount, given that it is based on only 63% reporting from US law enforcement agencies.⁷ In case after case, these men kill not only their partners but also their children, bystanders, or others they target with their rage. In late 2022, a Utah man killed his wife and five children after his wife filed for divorce,⁸ tragically illustrating what the data have consistently shown: The most dangerous time for a woman in an abusive relationship is when she leaves.

It's not that being a Nice Girl—or ignoring men altogether—is necessarily safer.⁹ Around the same time as I was being cornered in that elevator, a 14-year-old girl standing on a Florida sidewalk refused a driver's offer to pay her for sex; the man pulled her into his car by her hair, choked her, threw her back onto the street and then ran over her several times.¹⁰ Even online rejection between people who haven't met in person can make men angry. In one study of online dating, romantic rejection increased men's "hostile tendencies," measured as both aggressive tendencies toward the rejecting partner and hostile attitudes toward women more broadly.¹¹

In other words, being "more of a bitch" is risky, since refusing to give men the attention, adoration, or service they desire makes some men

very, very angry. More than 94% of far-right violent and nonviolent extremists in the United States between 1948 and 2021 were men.¹² Men commit 98% of mass shootings and at least 94% of sexual abuse.¹³ Being “more of a bitch” is even riskier for nonwhite women, who are disproportionate victims of gun violence from intimate partners—data that are clear even with high rates of underreporting in marginalized communities.¹⁴ The overall scale of the problem is staggering, with nearly twenty people per minute being physically abused in the United States by an intimate partner.¹⁵ The outcomes are especially bad for trans women, who experience disproportionate incidents of violence compared to cisgender women, and for girls and women who are disabled, who are twice as likely to experience sexual violence in their lifetime.¹⁶ LGBTQ+ people are often targeted with violence by men who are enraged at them simply for existing in ways that do not conform to their expected norms for gender expression or behavior. This is especially true for trans and gender-diverse people who are assaulted, as one violent attacker later described in trying to justify his violence, for “flaunting” their identity.¹⁷ The very idea of “flaunting”—i.e., of being somehow excessively or abnormally public or flamboyant—illustrates what the philosopher Kate Manne has so thoughtfully argued: At its root, misogyny is about policing the behavior of anyone who does not adhere to patriarchal norms and expectations.¹⁸

But these ongoing, ubiquitous cases of interpersonal violence are almost always treated as wholly separate from the kinds of episodic mass shootings and attacks that fall under the national security mandate of the federal (or any given state) government.¹⁹ This happens even though enraged partners do not only pose a tremendous risk to the safety of their lovers: Their anger clearly can spill over to anyone who gets in the way. In well over half of mass shootings, the perpetrator shot an intimate partner as part of the rampage.²⁰ Relatedly, as many as half of the people killed in intimate partner violence are not the partner themselves.²¹ Violent misogyny, stalking, harassment, and abuse of women or the LGBTQ+ community is a constant detail in reports of mass shootings or terrorist attacks, although it is barely acknowledged and even more rarely analyzed. In 2019, the *New York Times* detailed dozens

of cases of mass shooters from across the ideological spectrum who share a common thread: “a history of hating women, assaulting wives, girlfriends and female family members, or sharing misogynistic views online.”²² Of all mass murders in the United States in 2018, 83% of the offenders had a history of prior violence against women.²³ That year was no exception. In case after case, misogynistic rage against women, the LGBTQ+ community, or prior reports of intimate partner violence are a documented part of perpetrators’ histories, even when their official motives lie elsewhere (or are unidentified).

This pattern holds across a wide variety of violent plots, attacks, and mass shootings. The attackers who killed dozens at a Virginia university, a Florida LGBTQ+ nightclub, a Parkland high school, and a Maryland newsroom all had prior reports of stalking, domestic violence, or harassment of women.²⁴ Before he killed nineteen students and two teachers at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas in spring 2022, the alleged assailant regularly threatened teen girls online with kidnapping, rape, and murder—an online experience so normalized that many youth who observed his digital rage dismissed it as simply a product of, as one teenager put it, “what online is.”²⁵ Later that same year, in November 2022, an attack on a New York synagogue was narrowly averted when two men were intercepted by police at Penn Station with multiple firearms, a ski mask, bulletproof vest, a military-style knife, and a swastika arm patch. The media was understandably focused on the antisemitic nature of the imminent attack. But a year earlier, one of the men had bragged online about violently attacking a transgender person and said he was most proud of being “good at raping women.”²⁶

Some men’s violent rage is directed toward the abstract enemy of “feminism” itself or the idea that women’s gains come at the direct expense of men and white civilization more broadly, especially because white women are purportedly not having enough white babies. This type of misogyny often intersects with antisemitism or the scapegoating of Jews or racial and ethnic minorities for the so-called great replacement of white civilization.²⁷ It also directly targets “feminists” who are perceived to be taking away men’s rights. The son of a New Jersey judge was killed in a 2020 attack on her home by an anti-feminist Men’s Rights Activist (MRA)

who had previously filed repeated unsuccessful lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of nightclubs' "Ladies' Night" promotions. He left behind nearly two thousand pages of written text infused with racist and misogynistic ideas, including a reference to his victim as "a lazy and incompetent Latina judge."²⁸ In dozens of other incidents—at a Black historic church in Charleston, a California synagogue, a Buffalo grocery store, and more—attackers blamed feminism, falling white birth rates, frustration with women who didn't meet their sexual needs, or blamed minorities for "raping" white women as motivation for their attacks.²⁹

Other men become enraged enough to murder people just because women exist in ways that bother them. The eight people killed in a series of massage spa shootings in Atlanta—six of whom were Asian spa workers—were targeted because the 21-year-old man who shot them believed he was entitled to a life without the sexual temptation he felt they created. The victims' ethnicity is also key here, especially considering hypersexualized tropes about Asian women and the timing of tremendous anti-Asian rhetoric and violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. In other cases, men don't even have to be rejected to get angry enough to explode in violent rage—it's apparently enough just not to be invited. While a motive was never released, an early report from the 2023 Monterey Park shooting at a dance hall that killed eleven suggested the gunman was upset that a woman had been invited to the dance hall without him.³⁰

In a growing number of other instances, misogynist and male supremacist perpetrators act out their rage in violent mass attacks that specifically target groups of women. Many of these attacks are committed at the hands of men in the violent, misogynist incel (involuntary celibate) movement, who lash out violently at women in anger at their inability to establish romantic or sexual relationships. Dozens of people have been killed over the past decade in misogynist incel attacks targeting women at a California sorority, a Florida yoga studio, an Oregon community college, and a New Mexico high school—in addition to similar attacks in England and Canada.³¹

It is worth noting that boys and men are not only the predominant perpetrators of violence in a culture that valorizes and rewards domi-

nance and aggression as hallmarks of masculinity.³² They are also victims of that same violence, as childhood victims of domestic abuse, bullying, and street fighting.³³ Boys and men are struggling in a bevy of ways that have only recently gained mainstream attention, including the labor loss of traditional male jobs in a postindustrialized economy, the declining percentage of men relative to women who earn higher education degrees, and the fact that men account for three-quarters of “deaths of despair” (overdose, suicide, alcohol abuse) amid surging reports of male loneliness, depression, anxiety, and isolation.³⁴ Two-thirds of men aged 18–23 report that “no one really knows me,” while 25% of men under age 30 (and 20% of unmarried men overall) say they have no close friends. Half of American men say their online lives are more rewarding than their offline lives.³⁵ Mens’ and boys’ loneliness is also shaped by the fact that people spend less and less time in the company of other human beings more generally. In the United States, 15–24-year-olds spend 70% less time in person today with friends than two decades ago.³⁶ That’s particularly meaningful given that the strength of adolescent friendships predicts a whole host of wellbeing measures in adulthood, from healthy romantic relationships to lower anxiety, aggression, and improved adult mental health overall.³⁷

There has been periodic acknowledgment of how these outcomes are a part of a “masculinity crisis,” with boys and men facing relentless messaging about being the problem while also facing pressure to conform to what has been called the “man box” in a culture that insists men are stoic and hard rather than emotional and soft, are providers and protectors rather than caregivers and supporters, and are strong, sexually dominant, physically tough, and hypermasculine.³⁸ The prevailing message that many boys and men receive is that men are inherently dangerous, violent, and bad in ways that can make manhood itself seem somehow shameful. These messages are rooted in real stories and revelations of the atrocious behavior of some men, from the #MeToo movement to Catholic priests’ abuses of children and the dozens of men recently convicted in France of raping an unconscious woman over a decade-long period after her husband drugged her. But a steady diet of outrage at very real bad behavior by men—alongside too few opportu-

nities to see positive male role models or for boys and men to be able to express pride or engage with meaning and purpose as men—has further contributed to the crisis of masculinity. There has been far less open discussion, however, about how that masculinity crisis is evolving into a misogyny crisis.

There is no question that masculinity is both more fragile and more policed than femininity. Sanctions are stricter for men who violate gendered norms than they are for women—in part because Western culture valorizes masculinity and devalues femininity. And masculinity itself is often performed through that devaluing of femininity, regardless of who performs it—i.e., trans women, gay men, or heterosexual women.³⁹ While girls and women are now allowed broader flexibility in embracing traits and activities traditionally seen as “masculine,” the same is not true for boys and men who adopt traditional “feminine” traits or roles—as evidenced in differences in how parents respond to “feminine boys” or “masculine girls” and in the social sanctions and bullying that each group faces among peers.⁴⁰ In a modern patriarchal system, girls and women have more freedom to breach gender roles and expectations, but are less valued; boys and men have less freedom to reject social expectations about manhood and masculinity, but receive more automatic status and power. The implications for violence are devastating. A culture that rewards and expects boys and men to be dominant, aggressive, and violent ultimately produces and reproduces that same violence in ways that harm all of us.⁴¹ And yet we fail to acknowledge, address, or prevent that from happening in any meaningful way.

The consequences of our inattention to the gendered dimensions of mass violence are not limited to fringe terrorist movements or violent attacks: They also affect and shape our broader democratic crisis, especially related to growing support for political violence. People who hold hostile sexist views are substantially more likely to express support for political violence and violent extremism.⁴² The relationship is robust, reported across a wide range of national and ideological contexts, showing that hostile sexist and misogynist attitudes are often a bigger predictor of support for violent extremism than any other factor—including, in some countries, religiosity, age, gender, level of education, and

employment.⁴³ These factors also affect rising violence against women political leaders in ways that fundamentally undermine inclusive democracies.⁴⁴ Online violence and abuse against women in politics aims to silence or punish women leaders, especially those who speak out about issues of gender equality.⁴⁵ Women politicians have been subject to beatings and killings, blackmail, extortion, and smear campaigns globally.⁴⁶ They also face the constant and quotidian problem of gendered media coverage that objectifies and trivializes women politicians alongside an “adversarial style of politics that enables and foments sexual harassment in legislative chambers.”⁴⁷

Taken together, these varied categories of violent harm rooted in sexism and misogyny reveal a crisis all the more shocking for how it is largely ignored. The data are crystal clear. Women are perpetrators of violence in many ways, including through support for white supremacist and other violent extremist movements and as domestic violent actors. But the most common—and least discussed—feature of mass shooters and violent terrorists is their manhood. And despite all the evidence about how boys and men are encouraged to see violence as “alluring and satisfying,” as bell hooks observes, when individual boys or men are violent, “pundits tend to behave as though it were a mystery.”⁴⁸ In fact, what Rebecca Solnit describes as the “pandemic of violence” is always “explained as anything but gender, anything but what would seem to be the broadest explanatory pattern of all.”⁴⁹ The oversight is strikingly evident across a wide variety of government and non-profit reports on terrorism and mass shootings. In the FBI’s list of twenty-two “concerning behaviors” exhibited before mass shootings, gender does not appear a single time. Instead, warning signs are listed in ways that ignore gender itself, with categories like “interpersonal,” “threats or confrontations,” or “violent media use,” despite the fact that the targets of those problems are likely to involve women or intimate partners.⁵⁰ We fail to see gender-based violence as ideological, in other words, even when it is rooted in dehumanization and categorical, identity-based hate. This is a failure with many ripple effects. We rarely count online or offline misogyny and gender-based harassment as hate speech. We do not classify intimate partner or sexual violence as hate

crimes. Nor do we typically see misogyny included as part of hate group tracking or extremist incident monitoring reports from nongovernmental organizations or government agencies.⁵¹ The silences in the data and reporting are as shocking as they are deafening.

Even more tellingly, the US government doesn't include gender or sexual orientation as categories within our national threat assessment classification of domestic violent extremism. The threat assessment classification system breaks domestic violent extremism into three major categories, with subcategories for specific types of extremism, like sovereign citizens or anarchists. In a variety of formal and informal ways, these categories help shape national security priorities, such as staffing decisions in federal security and law enforcement agencies, as well as attention through congressional hearings and staff briefings. Attacks motivated by gender or sexual orientation are folded into a catchall category of "other."⁵² Even animal rights extremists—who pose a risk to property damage at wildlife facilities and laboratories but are considered a "low threat in the United States"—get a category.⁵³ Not so for gender or sexuality. This oversight is part of why existing approaches have done little to eradicate the problem. Gendered violence, at least in the US government assessment, is "other."⁵⁴

It's hard to see a problem for which there is no category. It's also hard to conceptualize the scope of the problem when expertise about it is spread across many different areas of work. Experts who work at the intersection of gender and violence do so from at least three major starting points, each of which has its own subfields, conferences, associations, and nonprofit organizations developing interventions—too often in isolation from the others. First is work on patriarchy, nationalism, and gender, including research on sexism, masculinities, misogyny, misogynoir, and transmisogyny, often through scholarship in the social sciences and humanities. The second starting point is research and intervention work on violence against women and the LGBTQ+ community, especially through intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and sex and human trafficking, which tends to exist in more applied academic fields and schools of social work and public health. That form of violence is addressed in the United States at the local, state, and federal levels through

law enforcement agencies, local domestic violence and rape crises centers, and the US Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Justice. Finally, work on violent extremism that addresses the growing problem of mass shootings, targeted violence, and domestic terrorist violence directly targeting women and the LGBTQ+ community or otherwise rooted in gender-based bigotry tends to take place in schools or departments of security studies, criminology, and terrorism, and is handled at the US government level by the Department of Homeland Security and its state equivalents. Across these disparate agencies, organizations, and fields, there is too often a lack of cooperation, with competition and turf wars for funding and attention all too common.⁵⁵

One aim of this book is to stitch these areas of work together to see the full scope of the problem more clearly. By connecting these three categories, I hope to demonstrate how ordinary and everyday forms of sexist, misogynist, and anti-LGBTQ+ harm normalize and help mainstream violence in ways that create fertile ground for extreme gender-based bigotry and antifeminist misogynist ideologies to take root. I also connect these escalating patterns of hate and violence to a common thread in the virulent defense of traditional patriarchies, showing how gendered social changes—from increasing women’s political and corporate leadership to a disrupted gender binary—are framed by far-right actors as an existential threat to the nation’s way of life in ways that mobilize violence. But while violence itself tends to emanate from the fringes, the problems are much bigger than “extremists” per se. Extremist violence, as I argue throughout this book, is underpinned by and mobilized through conservative mobilization, mainstream normalization, and liberal silencing of misogyny and gender-based bigotry.

It’s not just the defense of patriarchies in general that is mobilizing surges in political and hate-fueled violence. It is the defense of white patriarchy—in ways that illustrate how different forms of supremacism and hate overlap and mutually reinforce each other. The gendered dimensions of violent extremism are, as an audience member at a Penn State lecture helpfully framed during my January 2024 lecture, perhaps best thought of as “racialized gender”—a concept that is echoed in Francesca Scrinzi’s work on the racialization of sexism.⁵⁶ Sexist and misogyn-

nist online cultures frequently overlap with racist and xenophobic ones—through banal ways like meme sharing and in violent ways like the targeted harassment of women of color or the framing of migrants and Muslims as a sexualized threat to white women. These dynamics are embedded in long histories. Lynchings of Black men in the American South in the post-emancipation era were often linked to rumors of savage rape—or to any perceived sexual advance on a white woman. And those lynchings aimed to both terrorize and emasculate Black men, often through literal castrations.⁵⁷

It's worth noting here that the interactions between racism, white supremacy, and misogyny are complicated and sometimes counterintuitive. In recent years there has been an increase in far-right engagement and even white supremacist terrorist acts by individuals who are non-white. In May 2023, a Latino man who was both a neo-Nazi and part of violent misogynistic communities online shot and killed eight people at a shopping mall.⁵⁸ The former chairman of the extremist group Proud Boys is Cuban American Enrique Tarrio. Nonwhite individuals also engage in white supremacist extremism and terrorism overseas. In Singapore, a teen of Chinese ethnicity was placed under security restrictions in 2024 after being radicalized to white supremacist extremism online and developing an “intense hatred” of African Americans, Arabs, and LGBTQ+ individuals.⁵⁹ There are complex reasons why people of color might support white supremacist ideas and movements, including colorism and racism within and across ethnic groups.⁶⁰ But misogyny also plays a key role as an ideological glue, as scholars have pointed out in describing increasing support from people of color for Trump and broader far-right and ‘alt-right’ movements. As Daniel HoSang and Joseph Lowndes argue, whether expressed as patriarchal traditionalism, “street-brawling bravado,” or online misogyny, “masculinity bridges racial difference for populist, fascist, and even white nationalist politics.”⁶¹

Toxic online subcultures that are misogynistic can easily introduce or strengthen exclusionary ideas about national purity, degradation, and degeneracy that are racist and dehumanizing. And political violence that is ostensibly motivated by ideology has often targeted women leaders and elected officials with particular vitriol, harassment, and harm.

This is why I argue that it is impossible to understand the rise of the modern far right without recognizing how it is fundamentally gendered. Throughout this book, I aim to show how misogyny and other tactics of patriarchal enforcement underpin broader expressions of far-right violence and extremism. These gendered dimensions of violent extremism, however, are inextricably racialized, rooted in and intertwined with other hierarchies of exclusion and belonging.

Before turning to the strategies of misogynistic enforcement that I argue are hardwired into far-right extremism and other forms of mass violence, it is necessary to unpack trends in that violence and in the surging online misogyny that I argue underpins it.

The Rise of (Online) Misogyny and the Violent Far Right

On virtually every measure we have available, political and hate-fueled violence, which I refer to as “far-right violence,” continues to surge in the United States.⁶² Terrorism has fallen in the West overall, with 55% fewer attacks in 2023. But 76% of those attacks took place in the United States—the majority of which were attributed to far-right sympathies. And other forms of hate-fueled and political violence, including hate crimes, death threats, and harassment directed toward elected officials, poll workers, and other local leaders, have surged, with several categories (such as antisemitism, Islamophobia, and anti-LGBTQ+ hate) breaking records.⁶³ As of mid-2024, threats of violence and harassment against local officials were 30% higher than the same point in 2023 and 87% higher than the same point in 2022, with 2024 on pace to surpass the total number of threats from the previous year.⁶⁴ The climate of antisemitism and Islamophobia amid global fallout from the October 7, 2023, terrorist attacks in Israel and subsequent war in Gaza, the fear of political violence in the wake of two attempted assassination attempts on (then) former President Trump, and the threat of violence surrounding the 2024 US presidential election—and other 2024 and 2025 elections around the globe—continue to raise concerns about the threat landscape and possible spikes in violence.⁶⁵ In short, the problem of

mass violence and far-right extremism, including hate-fueled and political violence, is increasing.

These same trends hold true for the gendered dimensions of extremist violence, and for misogyny more broadly.⁶⁶ The past several years have seen a rise in male supremacist violence, including threats, plots, and attacks from misogynist incels.⁶⁷ These developments have emerged alongside what is now understood to be a pervasive and proliferating climate of online misogyny, along with an ever-expanding digital ecosystem that makes it faster and easier to express and share hateful content and harass individuals. While it is difficult to quantify the exact amount of misogyny online or offline, misogyny and hostile sexism are regularly described as a “routine” part of women’s daily lives, an emerging “established norm” of digital spaces, and an “epidemic.”⁶⁸ Scholars have tracked significant increases in online misogyny starting in 2011,⁶⁹ not long after the advent of social media platforms alongside ongoing economic repercussions from the 2007–09 global financial crisis and the impact of significant racism in the wake of the election of the first Black US President. While the misogynistic ideas being expressed online are not new, online spaces and places offer novel ways to communicate those ideas.⁷⁰ Those new spaces, meanwhile, have helped transform previous men’s rights discussions that were focused on family law, child custody, and mental health issues into more extreme misogynistic, violent, sexually explicit, and homophobic ideas.⁷¹

Misogyny is ever-present in offline spaces as well, in public spaces like nightclubs and music festivals and in professional spaces like the military, where scholars have made a causal link between American women’s reduced interest in serving in the armed forces and the “unchecked proliferation of misogyny” that characterizes their lives.⁷² But it is the ubiquitous and unrelenting nature of online misogyny that appears to be shaping patterns of violence. In one study of tweets in four hundred areas across forty-seven US states, researchers found that misogynistic tweets positively predict domestic and family violence.⁷³ A range of studies, as I discuss in depth in chapter 1, show that misogyny and hostile sexist attitudes are correlated with increased support for political violence and willingness to engage in it.

Even when they are not met with physical violence, victims of online misogyny still suffer from vitriolic threats and are sometimes forced out of the public eye. When the *Ghostbusters* movie remake was released in 2016 with an all-female lead cast, the Black leading cast member, Leslie Jones, was forced off Twitter by an onslaught of racist, threatening, and pornographic trolling.⁷⁴ Jones isn't alone. There is solid evidence that US adults are experiencing increased online harassment, often due to gender. Graphic rape and death threats have been described as a "standard discursive move" for expressing disagreement or disapproval of women online, as some men communicate in ways that not only challenge ideas, but also aim to scare and silence women's voices.⁷⁵ Overall, the share of Americans who report having been harassed online because of gender jumped from 20% to 33% from 2017 to 2020, while those harassed for sexual orientation also doubled, from 8% to 16%.⁷⁶ These figures resonate with my own experience online. When I first started writing in mainstream media outlets, a friend urged me to "never read below the line," referring to the comment section, because he knew it would contain not only legitimate critique, support, and engagement, but also ugly, hateful, gendered comments. He wasn't wrong—it only took one curious perusal "below the line" on an op-ed for me to never do that again.

The comment section problem is just one illustration of how easy it has become to harass women (and anyone else, for that matter) online. Direct messaging on social media platforms, live in-game voice chats, and other communication features of online spaces have made the use of gendered slurs, rape and death threats, and other forms of gendered discrimination a ubiquitous part of online engagement. New forms of digital media and the ever-present ease of smartphones enable the effortless sharing of sexually explicit photos and videos, including AI-generated images or videos and revenge porn, alongside cyberstalking, doxing, harassment, sextortion, verbal abuse, and hacking.⁷⁷ Social media doesn't cause these behaviors, but the platforms amplify and increase exposure to harmful and hateful content and spread misogynistic attitudes contagiously—in part because the structure of social media incentivizes angry and salacious posts, which garner more attention and are more likely to go viral.⁷⁸ Influencers and entrepreneurs who make a

living from subscribed content, in turn, capitalize on these algorithms by selling outrage, which then directs additional anger and hostility toward the targets of any given short-form video rant—and when those videos garner tens of millions of views, it's easy to see how hate and threats become supersized. Meanwhile, the anonymity and homogeneous nature of communities online polarize people and also create a disinhibition effect that reduces the barriers to engaging in hateful and harassing ways. Taken together, the digital ecosystem has led to “emboldened and elevated vitriolic forms of misogyny.”⁷⁹

Some of this misogyny occurs at the hands of organized or semi-organized communities that deliberately target women in troll storms or violent plots and attacks. These male supremacist and misogynist incel communities have recently begun to garner the attention of national security experts and agencies, as I detail in chapter 3. But aside from this new attention to organized male supremacist groups, the problem of misogyny—and of women's security concerns more broadly—has “been historically absent” from traditional security discussions.⁸⁰ This is despite evidence, as I discuss in chapter 1, that support for online misogyny makes violent attacks by terrorist and extremist groups more likely.⁸¹

The ubiquitous, rampant experience of online misogyny deserves more attention—especially because not all misogyny can be attributed to intentional attacks by avowed misogynists. Some of it is traceable to changes in attitudes toward feminism, a rise in resentment, loneliness, discontent, and isolation among boys and men, and increased scapegoating of women for supposedly disadvantaging men. These effects are exacerbated for younger boys and men. While the share of Gen Z women who identify as feminists (61%) is higher than for any other generation of women, fewer Gen Z men (43%) than millennial men (53%) identify as feminist.⁸² This means that Gen Z has both a large gender divide on issues of women's rights and a declining level of support among younger men, compared to older men, for those rights.⁸³ It's hard to imagine that those divides and changes are not affecting—or fed by—sexist and misogynist expressions online.

Women's experiences with misogyny, sexism, and other kinds of gendered discrimination are also reflected in shifting views in women's

experiences of their own equality. In the United States, not only is adults' reported satisfaction with the treatment of women in society split along gender lines, but women are much less satisfied than men and their satisfaction has declined over time, from 61% in 2001 to 44% in 2021.⁸⁴ Here too, generational differences point to concerning trends. Gen Z women are the most likely group of Americans to report being treated disrespectfully by the opposite sex.⁸⁵ These trends in online sexism, misogyny, and attitudes toward feminism, women's rights, and other kinds of gendered bias and violence are both a catalyst and an outcome of the developments I trace in the rest of this book.

In the end, you have to be more of a bitch, as my sister argues, but also not too much of one. That's the crux of it. This quotidian navigation is an inextricable and underacknowledged part of the roots of and pathway to violent extremism. In a context with so much mainstreaming and social media incubation of hostile sexism and misogyny, taking a closer look at where those beliefs come from and how ubiquitous they are can help shed light on how pathways to violence begin as well as on where we might best be able to interrupt them. Our failure to connect everyday misogynist encounters and the normalization of sexist experiences with rising mass violence targeting a wide range of groups has left a gaping hole in our awareness of how to prevent it.

Before I turn in the rest of this book to unpacking the dynamics that underpin and drive that violence, some clarification of terms will be helpful.

Defining Violent Extremism, Patriarchy, and Misogyny

The Far Right and Violent Extremism

As in my previous work, I use the term "far right" to refer to a spectrum of supremacist and antigovernment ideologies, including those that set up hierarchies of superiority and inferiority between groups of people where the "other" supposedly poses an existential threat that must be met with violence. This includes white supremacist extremism as well as male supremacism, Christian supremacism, Western supremacism, and other extremist ideologies that justify and naturalize inequalities

between groups. It also includes unlawful militias and paramilitaries and some conspiracy theorists, where the term “unlawful” in conjunction with militia or paramilitary refers to a difference between illegal, private citizen militias and lawful, government-organized militias that are referenced in state law and the US Constitution.⁸⁶

There is messiness and blurriness in the terminology that is necessary and rooted in the ways different terms are used in different legal and scholarly contexts. And, critically, some hateful and supremacist ideologies, like antisemitism and misogyny, exist across the political spectrum. However, “far right” is the term used in databases like the Global Terrorism Index to refer to a wide variety of hateful types of extremism that pose the biggest or fastest growing threat across Europe, North America, and Oceania, making it a useful term to situate my analyses in broader discussions. As a result, in my analysis of the ways that misogyny is hardwired into pathways to mass violence, I maintain that the “far right” remains the best bad term we have available to capture a mix of violent, exclusionary, and harmful ideologies. I also use the term “domestic violent extremism” along with “hate-fueled violence” and “political violence” when I aim to capture broader or more specific forms of violent extremism in the US context, reflecting the terminology used by the US federal administration and expert analysts to refer to specific components of terrorist and extremist violence. I use the term “mass violence” as a more expansive term that captures mass atrocity attacks that are not labeled or identified as extremist or terrorist, often due to a lack of manifesto or motivation, but sometimes due to an inability to see male supremacy as an extremist ideology. And I use the term “violent extremism” more broadly when I am referring to extremist violence that is not exclusively far right.

Finally, while most of the violence I discuss is what I call far right, I also argue that this violence is made possible by actions from everyone. This includes the impact of nonviolent mobilization from conservatives on issues related to women’s and LGBTQ+ rights, the normalization and legitimization of misogyny within the mainstream, and liberal silence about all of it. This book therefore addresses nonviolent ways that misogyny and gender-based bigotry play a role in potentially mobilizing violence,

including through legislative action and erasure through book-banning and the demonization of LGBTQ+ people as “groomers.”

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is simultaneously one of the simplest and most complicated terms I’ve ever had to define. In its simplest form, it is a gendered system that gives some men the power and resources to dominate women and some other men.⁸⁷ What becomes more complicated, however, is describing *how* that system of domination works and what it relies on. First and foremost, patriarchy insists on a rigid male/female binary that is depicted as natural or biologically determined—meaning that people’s intelligence, behavior, or talents are based on genetics rather than by their social environment—and which privileges human capacities that are seen as male over those that are seen as female. Decisions about who falls on which side of the male/female binary rest on sociopolitical ideas about sex (i.e., biological features like anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes) and gender (i.e., social constructions of what masculine and feminine traits should be).⁸⁸

Power is the most important feature of patriarchy, which becomes clear when we understand that patriarchy is more than a set of cultural norms: It is a system of social, economic, and political relations. In patriarchal hierarchies, some men not only hold more power, but they also impose policies and practices that perpetuate that power and the superior status that accompanies it, while ensuring that others (such as women and the LGBTQ+ community) are subservient. The word “some” is important here, because not all men dominate all women; some men who benefit from patriarchal systems also dominate other men who do not embody expected masculine ideals.⁸⁹ Some women, in turn, benefit from, reinforce, and uphold patriarchal norms and expectations,⁹⁰ in their own lives, in their familial and caretaking roles as mothers, wives, or daughters, and in the policing of gendered rules more broadly.

Historically, patriarchal power has manifested in legal restrictions that dictated who had the rights of full citizens, such as voting or the

right to move about freely, enroll in schooling, work, or maintain their own financial affairs. In the United States, for example, women were the legal property of their fathers, brothers, or husbands until 1920, when the Nineteenth Amendment was passed.⁹¹ In this way, patriarchal systems function like other systems of domination and exploitation, such as colonialism, in relying on a logic of supremacy and a belief that some people are entitled to the labor and attention of others because they are superior and therefore both more worthy and more capable. Patriarchy is also deeply intertwined with capitalist processes that have relied on the sexual division of labor and the use of women's "free" labor to maintain households and raise children—often compensating for the lack of broader social safety nets.⁹²

These systems of domination have not been seamlessly implemented or maintained, of course; male-dominated societies based on ideas about justifiable exploitation, dominance, and subjugation have been created, resisted, and dismantled over the centuries—and in the contemporary world today.⁹³ And patriarchy has never been the only way to organize social, political, and legal relations, as Angela Saini argues in her comprehensive work on the complex histories of matriarchal and patriarchal societies in history.⁹⁴ There was nothing inevitable about the fact that patriarchy became the prevailing form of gendered relations in modern society. On the contrary: The world's various civilizations and communities historically had much greater variation in how they understood and classified gender, sex, and sexuality. European, colonial ideas about sex and gender were forced on supposedly "uncivilized" indigenous communities in ways that all but eradicated approaches that were often more fluid and expansive.⁹⁵ This includes Native American "Two Spirit" people who were considered neither men nor women, beliefs about gender diversity that encompassed individuals holding multiple genders, and scores of matriarchal and matrilineal indigenous societies across Native American, First Nation, and aboriginal communities.⁹⁶

Today, Western cultures and societies are structured with a strongly fixed male/female binary, whose rules and expectations must be taught and reinforced throughout the life course. Patriarchal norms and expectations socialize boys and men, for example, to prioritize emotions and

traits deemed sufficiently masculine (like strength, courage, toughness, and anger) while denying themselves a fuller emotional life that includes vulnerability, gentleness, caretaking, and intimate friendship.⁹⁷ Girls and women, meanwhile, are socialized toward submissive traits like being pleasing, demure, deferential, nurturing, and embracing roles as caregivers and keepers of extended kin relationships, and are often depicted as in need of protection. As the writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie puts it, “We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller.” Girls can have ambition, she says, “but not too much.”⁹⁸ These expectations also vary according to race, however—Black women and girls, for example, are often portrayed not as in need of protection but rather as invincible or strong in ways that contribute to a wide range of unequal treatment, from overwork and inadequate medical care to the adultification of Black girls.⁹⁹

Part of the power of patriarchy is that it socializes boys and girls to blindly accept these defined roles while camouflaging those expectations, and inequality more generally, as a natural or God-given way of organizing human life.¹⁰⁰ Patriarchy is not only limiting for girls and women, in other words—it also steers boys and men into narrow “boy culture” ideals that have led to a “crisis of connection” and a lack of intimate friendships, with likely implications for rising isolation, depression, loneliness, and suicide.¹⁰¹ It uses shame, in particular, as a tactic to keep people in line—because shame relies on a belief that we haven’t lived up to an expectation—including societal pressure about what makes a man or a woman sufficiently feminine or masculine.¹⁰² And shame, in turn, is a powerful mobilizer of violence.

Recent years have ushered in some changes in these gender norms, including around how masculinity is perceived and performed. While boys and men are still largely confined to a limited “man box” that insists on “hard” traits like stoicism, strength, dominance, and aggression over “soft” traits like emotional intimacy or caregiving, there is evidence that this rigidity is softening in favor of what scholars call “hybrid masculinities.” But these changes have not helped to disrupt gendered power relations in significant ways.¹⁰³ Social norms about fathers’ roles in parenting, for example, have undergone tremendous change in just a

generation, as men take a more active role in their children's lives. But women still bear the disproportionate share of all caregiving—childcare, elder care, and household management—especially in countries with inadequate social safety nets, like the United States.¹⁰⁴

In sum, there is no single, categorical system of patriarchal oppression in which all men, and only men, dominate all (and only) women. As has been thoroughly argued about race, not all people hold racist attitudes or beliefs, but virtually everyone lives within a system that privileges whiteness. The same is true for sex and gender. Not all men are male supremacists; but all men in patriarchal systems benefit from a logic of male supremacy, even as they also suffer from it. These benefits accrue in part through everyday practices of male domination that defend and reinforce male power in both private and public domains.¹⁰⁵

Nor is it possible to speak of a singular patriarchy that affects everyone the same way.¹⁰⁶ Patriarchies themselves can only be understood—as so many Black feminist authors, including Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and others, have argued for decades—in conjunction with other forms of domination that intersect with gender hierarchies, including race, sexuality, social class, and caste.¹⁰⁷ This intersectionality, as articulated so thoroughly by Crenshaw, means that patriarchies are complex power structures.¹⁰⁸ The intersections across forms of supremacy are clear both in the logic that defines them (superiority and inferiority, a desire to restore or preserve domination, a sense of existential threat from perceived enemies) and in the intertwining of those same enemy groups. Sexism and anger directed at women of color is often not only misogynist but also racist—such as in media and policy depictions of Black women as “welfare queens” or white supremacist extremists’ accusations of white women being “feminist race traitors” who don’t have enough white babies.¹⁰⁹ It is impossible to understand any form of domination without seeing how all forms of superiority mutually reinforce and draw on one another.

Some people argue that the United States and other Western societies are now “post-patriarchal,” with women having historically unprecedented freedom and choices, and outcomes on many measures of wellbeing and education now better for women than for men. It’s only

been a decade since the journalist Hanna Rosin declared, in a *Slate* essay, that the patriarchy is dead—as evidenced by the revolutionary progress of women seated in the US Congress and other powerful positions.¹¹⁰ It's hard to quibble with her, at least if you take the long view. My mother was pregnant with her third child in 1974 before she was able to open a credit card without a male co-signer. It would be years more before she earned the right to legally challenge sexual harassment in the workplace or be protected against being fired because of a pregnancy. I had nearly graduated from college myself before spousal rape was criminalized, in 1993. It took another twenty years for women to earn the right to fight in military combat.¹¹¹ The *Obergefell v. Hodges* case that legalized same-sex marriage happened two years after that, in 2015. The progress we have made in women's and LGBTQ+ rights is undeniable, and worthy of acknowledgment—even as there is still so much more work to be done. That same progress, however, has misleadingly left public culture in a state of denial about ongoing inequality rooted in misogyny and gender-based bigotry.

It is my stance in this book that descriptions of the United States and other Western countries as post-patriarchal are premature. There has been real change in women's and LGBTQ+ rights and some softening of what masculinity and manhood look like (even as masculinity remains incredibly restrictive for many men.) But we have not seen parallel change in societal norms and expectations about gender roles or in the idea of a fixed gender binary itself.¹¹² Research on how peers react to transgender transition illustrates this paradox well. One study found when trans men transition in the workplace, their coworkers adjust relatively smoothly to the individuals' new pronouns and identity, but also quickly engage them in heterosexual gender rituals and expectations that reinforce gender binaries. Women coworkers immediately asked trans men to carry heavy items, unload boxes, or hang things in the office, for example, in ways that were different from when they identified as women. Colleagues' gender transitions, in other words, did not make people rethink the “naturalness of the gender binary.”¹¹³ On the contrary: By treating their trans men colleagues as men, these women reaffirm the dichotomy itself and the “naturalness” of men performing certain kinds of tasks.

Patriarchies are built on two pillars: a set of attitudes, beliefs, and ideas that rationalize and justify hierarchies of superiority and inferiority (sexism), and a constellation of processes that enforce patriarchal norms and expectations (misogyny).

Sexism

Not long after smoke billowed into my living room a few years ago, I was standing on the hearth of our century-old fireplace as a chimney sweep scooped out of it on his back, holding an iPad full of images of the flue and the liner. He frowned, flicking through photos of creosote buildup. And then he looked at me matter-of-factly and said: “I wish your husband was here so I could explain this.”

Every woman I know has a pocket full of stories like this: banal sexist encounters in everyday life in the form of little asides or direct comments from men that belittle, or dismiss, or sexualize. Sexism is the set of attitudes and beliefs that defines women as inherently, biologically inferior to men. These are beliefs that depict women as less qualified, intelligent, rational, and capable than men—as unable, in the chimney sweep’s understanding, of assessing interior chimney damage and deciding on a repair. They position women as not only less intelligent but also less important helpmates to the men who run the world and who make decisions on behalf of their wives, mothers, and daughters. Sexism takes a lot of different forms, both hostile (i.e., the notion that women are inherently deceitful, manipulative, oversensitive, and above all less qualified than men) and benevolent (i.e., the idea that women are inherently fragile, in need of protection, hurt by external roles that interfere with their so-called natural roles as mothers and homemakers, and need to be shielded from harsh jobs and environments for which they lack physical strength or constitutions).¹¹⁴ Not unlike scientific racism, sexist ideas have persisted in part because of the impact of long-debunked research purportedly demonstrating women’s inferior brain size or supposedly natural behavior like sexual chasteness—which subsequent scientific studies have demonstrated to be false.¹¹⁵

Sexism reinforces women’s subordinate roles even as its benevolent form is often cloaked with a protectionist veneer of safeguarding women

from dangerous jobs (like the military) that could harm their reproductive health or would be otherwise too strenuous. Russia, for example, has historically banned women from hundreds of professions—reduced in the year 2000 from 456 to 100 professions—and still does not permit women to work as miners, steelworkers, firefighters, or divers, among other occupations.¹¹⁶ Whether benevolent and protectionist or hostile and dehumanizing, sexist beliefs reinforce and support patriarchal hierarchies. Regardless of the specific form, in other words, sexism is rooted in patriarchal traditionalism—the belief that women belong in the home, as wives, mothers, and in traditional homemaking roles and that they are weaker, less competent, and less capable than men.

Historically—and in some contemporary cases—sexist beliefs restricted women's roles to domestic domains, either through legal and formal policies or through informal cultural and social norms and expectations. The distinction between public and private spheres is central here—with men assuming control of the public sphere and relegating women to the private sphere. Sexist policies enshrined in US law ensured the ongoing subordination of women by restricting their rights to vote, to determine their own medical care, by requiring men to co-sign on leases, bank accounts, credit cards, or by restricting access to certain educational, athletic, or occupational environments to men only. Structural forms of sexist control still exist in some legal ways, including those that came with the loss of reproductive rights post-Dobbs and legislative actions to restrict contraception, penalize women who travel for abortion care, or restrict or ban gender-affirming medical care.

Earlier waves of feminist and LGBTQ+ mobilizing made tremendous progress in broadening access for girls' sports (through Title IX in the United States, for example), creating more equality in employment and pay, and broadening pathways for reporting and prosecuting harassment and sexual assault. But despite these gains in equality and access, sexist policies and practices continue to result in women's disproportionate material resources through unequal pay or retirement savings, inadequate family leave and childcare support, or other informal and formal disparities that lead to power imbalances and differences in wealth or status between men and women. Sexism also persists in in-

formal ways in patterns like documented higher sales prices on cars sold to women or disparities in pay raises and promotions. These disparities disproportionately affect poor and working-class women and women of color, who often face the layered effects of racism, xenophobia, classism, and sexism.

Importantly, sexism is not merely a mode of interaction; it uses the male/female binary to maintain and defend the unequal distribution of social, political, and economic power.¹¹⁷ And this means that eradicating sexism isn't just about gaining access to spaces that have been dominated for men—i.e., breaking through the proverbial glass ceiling. Rather, eliminating sexism requires challenging and unraveling the entire patriarchal system and its intersections with other forms of domination that have helped ensure systemic, structural inequality.¹¹⁸ This also explains why disruptions to the gender binary have been so threatening to so many in the conservative and extreme right. The gender binary itself is an essential part of securing and maintaining power and the inequalities that result.

From the relatively privileged perch of my generation and background, I mostly absorb men like the chimney sweep as a kind of annoying residue, a left-behind legacy in an era when we largely have it better and easier than our mothers did. “I don’t want my wife to be barefoot and pregnant,” a roommate in a college group house once joked. “I want her to wear shoes in case I need something from the store.” It was funny because it was ludicrous, because we knew we were a generation who didn’t face those expectations. We fully expected to live transformed lives compared with the sexist barriers our mothers faced. Indeed, there is no denying that we do. After all, my own mother had attended that same college, a generation before, and paid for it herself by waitressing, after her father told her he wouldn’t pay for college for a girl.

That kind of sexism—the type enshrined in either law or overt social norms—was all but inconceivable for my generation. And indeed, overtly sexist interactions are, thankfully, increasingly rare, at least according to the research on sexist beliefs. More and more people around the world reject overtly sexist ideas that claim women are inherently, biologically inferior to men in ways that justify their unequal treatment

or require a man to make their decisions.¹¹⁹ This is a big shift from just a few decades ago, when sexist attitudes were both normalized and enshrined in legal and private sector policies in banking, medical care, education, and more.¹²⁰

As those formally sexist laws, policies, and official restrictions have gradually been repealed in many parts of the world, other justifications for inequalities between the sexes have endured that are often a result of cultural norms and expectations rather than laws and policy restrictions. Thus, the well-documented era of “girlie-girl culture,” as Peggy Orenstein calls it, helps perpetuate sexist beliefs about women’s appearance and capacities.¹²¹ Sexist beliefs persist in the kinds of attitudes that could lead a chimney sweep to think only my husband could understand the complicated nature of creosote buildup, but also in the kinds of beliefs that place blame for sexual assault on how a woman dresses, how much she drinks, or whether she was walking alone at night.

Many women of my generation squared our shoulders and pushed forward with the optimism of youth who thought we were immune to sexism, rolling our eyes at the occasional sexist aside and the daily acts of cautionary prevention we take for granted as we navigate our personal safety. The more I study acts of mass violence—both directed against women and against other targets—the more I am convinced that what often seems like an irritating daily reality is actually an enabling condition and environment that nurtures, cultivates, and ultimately explains and mobilizes much of the violence we see in the world today. The sexism that underpins attitudes and beliefs about women’s inferiority is just one part of the story, however. Misogyny—understood here as the hostile enforcement of patriarchal norms and expectations—plays an even more critical role in mobilizing men to mass violence.

Misogyny

Early one morning some years ago, a senior colleague who had done a performance review of my teaching the previous evening showed up in my office doorway, before anyone else had arrived. “I was struck by what you were wearing to teach a lecture on gender,” he offered, apropos of

nothing. “That short skirt, tight sweater, and those stiletto boots. It wasn’t quite a catsuit, but . . .” His voice trailed off as I stood there, blinking, wondering how my tweed, knee-length skirt and fuzzy mock turtle-neck could possibly look like a catsuit, while simultaneously realizing the catsuit was a fantasy of his own making and that the lights weren’t even on in the office yet. He slowly shook his head, smiling, and then just wandered away into his own office, not far from the conference room where he would be voting on my tenure case within a few months.

The policing of girls’ and women’s attire—in the workplace, during the questioning of rape victims, or in school dress codes—is one of the most ubiquitous forms of misogyny, which I define (following Kate Manne) as strategies to enforce patriarchal norms and expectations, including the boundaries of acceptable masculine and feminine behavior. This definition differs from how misogyny is usually understood in popular use: as hatred of women. By seeing misogyny not as an individual belief but rather as a form of social policing, the definition I adopt here illustrates how this kind of control defends and maintains patriarchy and the continued subordination of women and dominance of men.¹²² Misogyny is a means of regulation, especially in the face of rapid social change. It is both a continuation of age-old patriarchal values and systems and a backlash against progress and visibility in women’s and LGBTQ+ rights.

Misogyny is intertwined with sexism, especially in its hostile form—but it goes a step further than sexist beliefs to capture the strategies of enforcement directed toward people who step out of line or reject patriarchal expectations.¹²³ Misogyny is the “foot soldier” of patriarchy, working to police the boundaries of acceptable behavior, contain and control violations through hostile threats and action, and ultimately enforce sexist beliefs in order to uphold gendered systems of power and domination.¹²⁴ This doesn’t mean that all violence against women or the LGBTQ+ community is intentionally misogynistic or designed to reassert and defend patriarchies. Some violence against women, for example, is rooted in simple patriarchal entitlement—to women’s bodies, attention, adoration, time, and service.¹²⁵

There are many misogynies, because there are a variety of ways that patriarchal norms are enforced in a vast and diverse ecosystem of online

and offline spaces and places—in ways that inform and mutually constitute each other.¹²⁶ Attacks on the LGBTQ+ community, for example, are part of misogynistic tactics aimed at defending traditional patriarchies and policing the boundaries of acceptable expressions of femininity and masculinity.¹²⁷ I generally use the term “gender-based bigotry” to capture this more expansive set of tactics and strategies, especially as an acknowledgment that misogyny is most often used to refer exclusively to hostile acts directed toward women. For brevity’s sake, I sometimes use the term “misogyny” on its own, although readers should understand the term to include a broader range of gender-based harms aimed at defending and maintaining traditional patriarchies.

Misogynoir is a term coined by Moya Bailey to capture Black women’s experience of anti-Black racist misogyny, especially through US digital and visual media.¹²⁸ It describes the mutually reinforcing racism and misogyny conveyed in popular culture, caricatures, consumer product marketing, and iconography that shapes public and policy perceptions through negative stereotypes of Black women’s domestic servitude, sexual availability, unwillingness to work, or ability to withstand physical pain, to name just a few examples.¹²⁹ These are, as Patricia Hill Collins describes, “controlling images” that “make racism, sexism, poverty and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life.”¹³⁰ Misogynoir shapes both overt experiences of exclusion and violence and everyday microaggressions experienced by Black women,¹³¹ as well as public perception, policies, and media attention, resulting in trends like the erasure of Black women and girls from Amber alerts or missing persons publicity due to “missing white woman syndrome,” which refers to the attention that missing white women garner in the media compared to the silence that often occurs when girls or women of color disappear.¹³² In a moment of rising far-right extremism, Black women and girls are subject to the multiple impacts of what Alexandra Onuoha and colleagues call “far right misogynoir,” which are distinctly layered forms of hate and bias rooted in both antidemocratic, xenophobic, anti-LGBTQ+ and supremacist ideas as well as racist and sexist ones.¹³³

The chapters to come also use the term “male supremacism” and occasionally refer to “toxic masculinity” and a category of violent extrem-

ists known as “misogynist incels.” Male supremacism is a set of beliefs that men are naturally, biologically, and genetically superior in ways that justify and rationalize the logical domination of women and LGBTQ+ people through social, political, economic, or legal hierarchies.¹³⁴ Male supremacism espouses a narrow understanding of masculinity that is sometimes called toxic masculinity—a view of manhood that requires boys and men to be stoic, unemotional, dominant, and aggressive and is associated with sexual entitlement and hostility toward women.¹³⁵ Incel (involuntary celibate) is a label that individuals self-identify with as part of a community of others who are involuntarily not having sex—it includes both men and women. The term “misogynist incels” refers specifically to incels who embrace male supremacist ideas that dehumanize women while simultaneously positioning them as something to which men are entitled.¹³⁶

Whose Progress? The Cost of (White) Women’s Rights

The 2020 kidnapping plot against Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer was what ultimately motivated me to write this book. As the news broke, I fielded media inquiries from the yard of a rental house outside the city, where I had briefly decamped during the COVID-19 pandemic. I paced back and forth across the grass, urging journalists to consider not only the antigovernment premise of the plot but also its deeply misogynistic undertones. Within weeks, the media frenzy surrounding the Michigan plot was eclipsed by the presidential election and all that followed—including the January 6 insurrection. But the idea of a book calling out the misogyny underpinning violent extremism began to bump around in my head more persistently.

As COVID rates surged that winter, I began meeting friends and family at a regional park in Virginia. There, we could hike on the park’s network of trails, or sit and talk, watching the river pass us by. Over the course of several visits, a construction site next to the park’s parking lot gradually turned into a memorial—the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial, housed at Occoquan regional park because that land was home to the workhouse that had been the site of the famed 1917 “night of

terror”—a brutal night of torture and abuse enacted upon thirty-three suffragists who were held there.¹³⁷ That night of terror—and the public attention to it—is often credited with shifting the public mood toward support for the Nineteenth Amendment.

Watching the memorial come into being got me thinking about the century of women’s progress it commemorated, and about the backlash we continue to see in the form of rising misogyny. I was also reminded of how the story of women’s rights has been curated in ways that often obscure the racial costs of that progress. The night of terror brought public attention and helped move the needle of sympathy toward suffrage, but real political will to give women the right to vote only came about because of the efforts of women leaders who made a deliberate decision to sacrifice racial equity to achieve (white) women’s progress.¹³⁸

“White supremacy will be strengthened, not weakened, by woman’s suffrage,” Carrie Chapman Catt, who led the mainstream arm of the US suffragist movement, told white politicians as she worked to secure the success of the Nineteenth Amendment. White women outnumbered Black men and women “by nearly half a million,” Catt reasoned.¹³⁹ So giving women the right to vote would chip away at the patriarchy, but in return would secure the continued oppression of Black people in the United States, because the same methods used to ensure the disenfranchisement of Black men (like poll taxes and literacy tests) would affect Black women.¹⁴⁰ This was a controversial bargain for the white suffragists, who had previously been aligned with the abolition movement. But it was one that enough were willing to strike to secure the right to vote for (white) women.¹⁴¹

The new Suffragist Memorial glosses over that history in its twenty panels of text and photos, celebrating the bravery of the women who fought for seventy years for the right to vote, but ignoring or whitewashing the racial tradeoffs with language like “African American women were not consulted in the parade planning” about the first national demonstration for suffrage in 1913, for example. As a result, memorial visitors likely leave with little understanding about the strategy that white suffragists pursued—aligning themselves with white men in the name of white supremacy to secure rights for themselves, but leaving African

(continued...)

INDEX

- abortion: antisemitic conspiracy theory and, 118; *Dobbs* decision and, 26, 115, 116, 117, 119; male supremacy and, 97; memes conveying opposition to, 82; new restrictions on, 146, 149, 151; penalizing travel for, 26; white supremacy and, 116, 118, 140, 141, 149. *See also* reproductive rights
- accelerationism, violent, 78, 137
- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi, 22, 72, 97
- AI (artificial intelligence), 142. *See also* deepfake sexualized images
- al Aqeedi, Rasha, 88
- Alito, Samuel, 117
- alpha males, 96, 102, 108, 111, 112, 114
- Al-Shabaab, 51, 121
- alt-right, 13, 80, 108, 240n109
- Anglin, Andrew, 105, 107
- antidemocratic beliefs, xiii, 142–43; of Christian nationalism, 148; fears about exploitation of children and, 120; gender-based attacks and, 158; male supremacy and, 97; women's rising engagement with, 173. *See also* democracy
- antifeminism: conspiracy theories based on, 40, 98, 99–101; extreme rage of incels and, 114; mainstreaming of, 50, 101–2; male supremacy and, 93, 109; memes conveying, 82; of misogynist influencers, 88–89; of Phyllis Schlafly, 170; racism and, 102; social media and, 96–97; violent, 93, 101; white women and, 172–73; women's political participation and, 68; young boys' online content and, 81. *See also* feminism
- antigovernment movements, 143; COVID-19 pandemic and, 175, 178–79; motherhood and, 169–70; QAnon and, 178; Ruby Ridge standoff and, 165–66; Sarah Palin and, 169
- antisemitic conspiracy theories, 84, 88, 89, 98, 100, 116, 118, 125, 141; QAnon and, 176
- antisemitism: across the political spectrum, 19; in emails and voicemails, 58; intersectionality with other hate, 161–62; Pepe the Frog and, 80; in reactions to war in Gaza, 14; scientific racism and, 89; violence against women associated with, 6, 105; white Christian values and, 148; white women's social media and, 173
- anti-vax communities, 177–78
- apocalyptic end times, 45, 47, 124
- artificial intelligence (AI), 142. *See also* deepfake sexualized images
- Aryan Brotherhood, 132
- Asian American and Pacific Islander women, and COVID-19, 7, 106
- Asian women: slurs against, 64; tropes about, 7; violently attacked, 105–6
- Atomwaffen, 118, 124
- Atwood, Margaret, 143
- authoritarian trends in US, 47, 97, 158, 173
- autism, among incels, 114

- Babbitt, Ashli, 166–68, 169, 171, 175–76, 180
backlash against social change, 29, 34, 39,
42–43, 45, 49, 145; patriarchal retrench-
ment and, 191–93
Bailey, Moya, 30, 34, 69, 145
Bannon, Steve, 108
Barrett, Amy Coney, 117
Bates, Laura, 61, 69, 89
bathroom usage, 100, 145, 146, 149, 151, 155,
156, 157, 163
Belew, Kathleen, 53
beta men, 108, 111, 112
biblical patriarchy, 45–46
Biden, Joe, 87, 177, 212
“bitch,” 62–64, 67, 92
Black men: first Black president, 15, 72;
lynchings of, 13, 117
Black women: degrading online pornography
of, 83; denied experiences of pain, 62;
expectations for, 22; feminist scholars,
34; norms of feminine respectability and,
71–72; punished for violating patriarchal
norms, 104; racist misogyny experienced
by, 30, 69; raped by white men, 136; sexism
and racism against, 23; systematic rape
of, 131; transgender, 161, 163. *See also*
women of color
Blee, Kathleen, 52, 180
blind spots, 37–38, 122, 163–64, 190
blood libel, antisemitic, 125, 176
Boko Haram, 51, 121
book banning, x, 20, 145–46, 153, 155–56, 159
book burnings, 156
boys and men: as childhood victims of
violence, 7–8; gender-based violence
toward, 53; getting messages about
manhood, 8–9; masculinity crisis and,
8–9; positive role models for, 9; slurs
against insufficient masculinity, 65;
socialization of, 21–22. *See also* loneliness;
young men and boys
bullying, 8, 9, 41, 61, 66, 95, 101; of LGBTQ+
people, 152; resources for help with, 223;
school responses to, 221; of transgender
youth, 161
Bush, Billy, 63
capitalism: antifeminism and, 99; patriarchy
and, 21
Carlson, Tucker, 46
Carroll, Jean, 69
Castillo Díaz, Pablo, 41–42
catcalling, 3, 4, 69, 187–88, 197, 210, 212–13
Catt, Carrie Chapman, 32
centering gender, 185–87; counteracting
harms and, 195–209; in defense of
patriarchy, 186–87, 189–93; in precursors
to violence, 186, 187–89; in reinforcing
many kinds of hate, 187, 193–95
chads, 96, 103, 112, 242n19
Charlottesville Unite the Right rally, 80, 81
child abuse: upsurge during COVID-19
pandemic, 126. *See also* child sexual abuse
childhood exposure to violence, 41; of
white supremacist extremists, 128
child pornography, 95, 121, 135–39
child sexual abuse, 135–39; AI images used
in, 142; in fringe Nazi occult groups, 110;
mostly not by strangers, 147; scapegoating
and fearmongering about, 124. *See also*
pedophilia
child trafficking: believed based on real
cases, 125–26; false information fueling
violence and, 122–26, 167; radicalizing
mainstream Americans, 120–21; women
mobilized to violence by claims of,
177–78. *See also* QAnon
Christianity: memes focused on, 81;
universities as supposed danger to, 157;
white civilization and, 60. *See also*
evangelicals, Christian
Christian nationalism, 39, 45–50, 54;
First Amendment and, 234n45; Florida
legislation and, 148; of Republican
politicians, 234n43; wide-ranging threats
and, 47

- Christian supremacism, 18
- Clinton, Bill, 67
- Clinton, Hillary, x, 67–68, 77, 80, 176
- Collins, Patricia Hill, 23, 30
- colonialism, 21, 39
- Comerford, Milo, 89
- commercial sex exploitation, 121, 130–35
- Condis, Megan, 74–75
- conspiracy theories: about attack on Paul Pelosi, 57; about human trafficking, 121; antifeminist, 40, 98, 99–101; antisemitic, 84, 88, 89, 98, 100, 116, 118, 125, 141, 176; far right extremism and, 19; gendered understandings and, xiii; Great Replacement as, 52, 78, 100, 116, 141, 148, 174, 180; PizzaGate, 120, 123, 125; social media during the pandemic and, 175–76; with Trump as hero, 50; of white supremacists, 116; women game creators and, 239n98; in women's voicemails, 57. *See also* QAnon
- containment, 35; desired for Hillary Clinton, 68; erasure as strategies of, 146; everyday vs. structural forms of, 62; as goal of misogyny, 94; men's rage-fueled need to control and, 57–62; slurs as a form of, 62–70; wide range of tactics for, 61–62; women's appearance and, 70–73. *See also* controlling women
- contraception, 26, 141, 149
- controlling and erasing bodies, 149–53
- controlling women: with deepfake images, 61; with domestic and intimate partner violence, 129; male supremacy about, 106; men's rage-fueled need for, 57–62; through their reproductive capacity, 115–19. *See also* containment
- Cottom, Tressie McMillan, 62, 71
- COVID-19 pandemic: anti-Asian rhetoric and violence in, 7, 106; antigovernment movements and, 175, 178–79; conspiracies during, 175; online disinformation about, 177–78; QAnon belief about, 122; terrorist actions during, 80; upsurge in gender-based harm during, 126
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé, 23, 34, 69, 103
- critical race theory, 157
- Cultural Marxism, 100–101
- Darby, Seyward, 118
- Davis, Bette, 63
- “Day of the Rope,” 140
- deaths of despair, 8
- de Beauvoir, Simone, ix, xii
- deepfake sexualized images, 61, 93, 94–95
- deepfake video, 68
- deep state, 122
- democracy: anti-gender strategies and, 158; damaged by QAnon conspiracies, 123–24. *See also* antidemocratic beliefs
- democratic crisis, 9. *See also* political violence
- DeSantis, Ron, 148, 157
- DiFranco, Ani, 72
- Disney World protests, 144, 148, 159
- diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), 156–57, 192
- Dobbs* decision, 26, 115, 116, 117, 119
- Dobson, James, 102
- domestic violence, 6, 37, 44, 53; perpetrator histories of, 121, 192; risk of public extremist violence and, 126–30; women's sexual purity and, 82
- domestic violence centers, 12; excluded by J. K. Rowling, 163
- “Don't Say Gay” bill, 144, 147, 148, 151, 153
- drug trafficking, 130–31, 133
- du Mez, Kristin Kobes, 50
- Ebner, Julia, 192
- education. *See* higher education; schools
- Elkins, Ansel, 185
- Emezi, Akwaeke, 53
- enabling, 35; white women's roles in, 168–69, 174–75, 181

- entitlement: misogynist incels and, 112; reproductive rights and, 117, 119; sense of, 105–6, 191; violence against women and, 129
- epithets, 62–65
- Epstein, Jeffrey, 125
- Equal Rights Amendment, 170
- ER (shooter's initials), 105
- erasure, 35, 145–46; controlling bodies and, 149–53; of knowledge, 146, 153–58; legislative, 146–53, 160, 162; as powerful tactic of misogyny, 164; violence following erasure of rights, 159–63
- Eurabia, 116, 141
- evangelicals, Christian: anti-LGBTQ+ laws in Africa and, 162; believing in QAnon, 123; fighting perceived culture war, 48–49; patriarchal authority and, 39; supporting Trump, 44, 49–50; wide-ranging threats and, 47. *See also* white evangelicals
- exploitation, 35; overlooked by authorities, 142–43. *See also* child trafficking; trafficking, human and sexual
- extremism. *See* far-right extremism; violent extremism
- family values, traditional, 45–47, 60, 82; anti-trans actions and, 150; homophobia and, 147; motherhood and, 174; Tradwife community and, 173
- far-right extremism, 18–20; attacking knowledge and expertise, 158; calling to protect women and children, 138–39; education as scapegoat for, 154–55; exploitation and gender-based violence in, 142–43; foundationally gendered nature of, ix–xi, 143; global extent of, xiii–xiv; global rise of women in, 170; of mostly men, 5, 166; motherhood used by, 173–74; of nonwhite individuals, 13; online gaming and, 77; organized sex trafficking in, 131; sexual exploitation of women and children in, 54; in the so-called West, xiii–xiv; Tradwife community and, 173; transphobia pervasive in, 161; women as core to the creation of, 181; women's roles in, 38, 166–67, 180–81. *See also* violent extremism
- far-right misogynoir, 30
- far-right violence. *See* violent extremism
- Farris, Sara, 170
- femininity: boys learning rejection of, xi; of women, gay, or nonbinary people, 65; women's appearance and, 70–73
- feminism: of Black scholars, 34; Christian nationalism and, 47; conservative, 169–70; deployed for exclusionary goals, 170; as enemy of male supremacy, 97–103; Gen Z and, 17; men's anger at, 98–99; norms for women's appearance and, 71, 72; of some anti-LGBTQ+ actions, 162–63; some men's rage toward, 6–7; white supremacy and, 141; women game creators and, 239n98. *See also* antifeminism
- First Nation societies, 21
- flaunting, 5, 60, 66
- Franklin, Carl, 166
- friendship: men's lack of, 22; men's wellbeing and, 8
- frozen embryos, 149, 151
- Furie, Matt, 80
- GamerGate, 76, 108, 239n98
- gamification, 77
- gaming, online, 73–79, 89–90; harassment against diversity in, 76; misogynistic narratives in, 76, 77; normalization of hate in, 75, 77–78
- Gay, Roxane, 136
- gay men and boys: gender-based violence against, 53; gender policing of, 66. *See also* LGBTQ+ people
- Gaza, war in, 14
- gender: centering in three core arguments, 185–87; experts on violence and, 11–12; ignored in expert assessments, 186; social

- constructions of, 20. *See also* centering gender; misogyny
- gender-affirming medical care, 26, 144–45, 146, 148–51, 152, 162
- gender-based bigotry, 30. *See also* hostile sexism; misogyny
- gender-based violence, 53; interpersonal warning signs and, 121; overlooked by authorities, 142–43. *See also* sexual and gender-based violence
- gender binary: generational changes in, 48; homophobic bullying and, 66; male supremacy and, 96; patriarchy and, 20, 21–22; radical shift away from, 145; sexism and, 27; unchanged expectations about, 24
- gender ideology, 68, 122, 145, 148, 149, 150, 158
- gender-nonconforming people. *See* transgender people
- gender norms: changes in, 48–50, 65; stricter for men, 9
- gender policing, 65–66
- gender roles: challenge to traditions of, 158; in extremist movements, 38; misogynist influencers and, 88; in Tradwife movement, 173; unchanged expectations about, 24; of white evangelicals, 46
- gender studies, 157–58
- Gen Z: disrespectful treatment of women by, 18; feminism and, 17, 101
- girls and women: with disabilities, sexual violence against, 5, 69; freedom to breach gender expectations, 9; policing the attire of, 29; socialization of, 22. *See also* women
- glass ceiling, 27, 71
- governor of Michigan, 57, 59, 80. *See also* Whitmer, Gretchen
- Grande, Ariana, 42
- Great Replacement, 52, 78, 100, 103, 116, 141, 148, 174, 180
- Green, Jordan, 130
- Greene, Marjorie Taylor, 124, 176
- Greene, Mark, 66
- “grooming” of children: by child pornographers, 135, 138; demonizing the LGBTQ+ community, 20, 65; in online gaming, 74, 138; as slur spread by United States, 162; supposedly by librarians, 154, 156; supposedly by queer people, 124, 138, 147
- Guerrero, Jean, xi
- gun ownership, 67, 102–3
- gun-related media, 97, 174
- gun violence, nonwhite women as victims of, 5
- Hamas, 51, 121, 188
- harassment, 187; of LGBTQ+ people, 152–53. *See also* sexual harassment
- Harris, Kamala, xii, 212–13
- hate crimes, 10–11, 14, 54; against LGBTQ+ community, 160; planned by misogynist incel, 114
- hate speech, 10, 60
- Healy, Matty, 83
- hegemonic masculinity, 242n20
- higher education: far-right attacks on, 156–58; of fewer men than women, 8; mainstream’s declining trust in, 158
- Hitler, Adolf, 60, 75, 116
- Holocaust: banned book about, 155; memes making light of, 80–81
- hooks, bell, 10, 23, 34, 103
- HoSang, Daniel, 13
- hostile sexism, 25; predicting violent extremism, 9–10, 40–42, 44–45, 54, 186
- immigrants: deployment of feminist themes and, 170; framed as threat to white women, 13, 138; gender fluidity linked to, 150; purported sexual violence from, 52–53; as threat to “Western values,” 39; white supremacy and, 116, 139; white women’s sexual purity and, 90
- imperialism, 39

- incel (involuntary celibacy) community, 7, 15, 17; belief system of, 112–13; blamed for their personal problems, 114; misogynist, 31, 188–89; praise for violent shooters of, 108; racist, 112; violent misogynist, 91–92, 93, 111–13; violent pornography and, 84; women in, 111
- incest, groups promoting, 135, 138
- indigenous communities, 21
- intersectionality, xi, xiv, 69–70, 103; of antisemitic and racist tropes in anti-LGBTQ+ incidents, 161–62; of anti-transgender bias with racism, 161; of hate fueled by misogyny, 193–95; patriarchies and, 23
- intimate partner violence, 5, 6, 10–11, 41, 44, 53; against minorities, 226n14; perpetrator histories of, 121, 192; risk of public extremist violence and, 126–30; women’s sexual purity and, 82
- ISIS, 51, 121
- Islam, Tate’s conversion to, 88
- Islamic State, 51
- Islamist terrorism: child exploitation in, 136–37; of Florida Pulse nightclub killings, 160, 254n83; near-exclusive focus on, 143; sexual and gender-based violence in, 51, 121, 127, 131; women’s advancement and, 41
- Islamophobia, 14, 88, 116, 170
- Israel: October 7, 2023, terrorist attacks in, 14, 51, 188
- IVF treatment facilities, 151
- Jamieson, Katherine, 60
- January 6 insurrection at US Capitol, 68, 80; Proud Boys involved in, 109; QAnon believers and, 123, 124–25, 166–67, 177; women’s active roles in, 166–69, 171, 173–74, 178, 179
- job loss, of traditionally male jobs, 8, 43, 103
- Jones, Leslie, 16
- Kelce, Travis, 61
- Kelley, Jeanna, 61
- Kendi, Ibram X., 189
- King, Steve, 175
- knowledge: erasure of, 146, 153–58; global assault on expertise and, 158
- Krook, Mona Lena, 68–69
- Ku Klux Klan, 116–17, 118, 131, 168
- Latina women, 71–72
- Lauer, Matt, 125
- legislative erasure, 146–53
- Le Pen, Marine, 170, 175
- LGBTQ+ people, 29; antisemitic and racist tropes in incidents against, 161–62; backlash against progress of, 29, 45, 49; belief in “natural order of things” and, 89; books banned for content on, x; demonized as “groomers,” 20, 65; forced to stay in their place, 60, 61; gender-based violence toward men and boys, 53; global activism against, 162; history of opposition to, 147; Islamist violence against, 51; legislative actions against, 144–45, 147–49, 150–53; mainstream normalizing violence against, 159; male supremacism and, 31; misogynistic attacks on, 30; misogynistic rage against, 6; patriarchy and, 20; progress in rights of, 24; QAnon conspiracies targeting, 176; slurs against, 65; still forced to be in the closet, 60; suicide risk of youth among, 153; targeted with violence, 5, 14, 29; teachers leaving the profession and, 154; white supremacists protesting rights for, 159; women spreading disinformation about, 162–63. *See also* gay men and boys; transgender people
- librarians, 153–54, 157
- “Lock Her Up,” 68, 77
- Lokteff, Lana, 166
- loneliness: of boys, 17, 87; of incels, 113; of men, xi, 8, 17, 22, 196
- Lorde, Audre, 34

- Lowndes, Joseph, 13
- lynchings, 13, 117
- male/female binary. *See* gender binary
- male supremacy, 18, 30–31; benefiting all men in a patriarchy, 23; in both fringe and mainstream spaces, 106–7; broad range of enemies of, 103; broad range of other harmful beliefs, 108; cognitive distortions and, 109; defined, 95, 96; emotions in, 106; entitlement and control in, 104–7; extreme online dehumanization and, 107; feminism as the enemy of, 97–103; Gamergate saga and, 76; gun ownership and, 67; memes focused on, 81–82; nonconsensual images of girls and, 94–95; online misogyny of groups, 17; with other problematic traits and beliefs, 97; punishment and, 107–15; on purity, power, worth, and control, 95–97; reproductive rights and, 115–19; violent extremism and, 92, 93–94; violent pornography and, 84; white supremacy and, 115–19. *See also* incel (involuntary celibacy) community
- “mama grizzlies,” 169, 175
- man box, 66–67
- manhood: messages to boys and men about, xi; rigid definition of, xiii. *See also* masculinity
- Manne, Kate, 5, 29, 58, 68, 94, 190
- manosphere, 96, 108–13, 189, 192; defined, 108; global audience for, 113; male supremacists’ enemies on, 103; red pill and, 88, 109; sexual market value on, 135–36; violent ideas spreading among, 102; violent pornography and, 84; young boys online and, 81
- mansplaining, 62, 69
- “man up,” 65
- masculinity: boys learning rules of, 65–66; bridging racial difference, 13; Christian nationalism and, 45, 47; expressed through violent attacks, 44; gun ownership and, 67; healthy modeling of, 198–202; hegemonic, 242n20; male supremacy and, 96; men’s reduced privilege and, 43; more policed than femininity, 9; recent softening of, 22–23, 24; recruitment and radicalization based on, 38; required of gay men and boys, 66; slurs expressing insufficiency of, 65; slurs functioning for, 63–65; violence produced by rewards for, 9. *See also* manhood; toxic masculinity
- masculinity crisis, 8–9, 49
- mass violence, 5–7, 19; aggrieved sense of entitlement and, 129; conspiracies about human trafficking and, 121; generated from male supremacist thinking, 105; guns giving sense of power and, 67; idealized shooters in online gaming, 78; inattention to gendered dimensions of, 9, 10–11, 18, 37–38; misogynistic rage and, 5–6; mostly by men, 5, 10; overlooked pathways to, 121–22; personal histories of perpetrators, 37–38, 41–42; prior violence against women and, 5–6, 41, 127; punishing violators of gender norms, 94; targeting women and LGBTQ+ community, 53, 94; underestimated potential for, 54; underpinned by legislative and curricular erasure, 146
- masturbation, restriction of, 85, 109
- matriarchal societies in history, 21
- The Matrix* (film), 84. *See also* red pill
- Maus*, 155
- Meger, Sara, 3
- Meloni, Giorgia, 170
- Melzer, Ethan, 137
- memes, 68, 73, 79–84, 89–90, 104
- men. *See* boys and men; young men and boys
- men’s appearance, 85
- men’s rights activists: male supremacy and, 93, 110; online misogyny and, 15; perceiving rights being taken away, 6–7; shifting focus since 1970s, 108–9

- mental health: extremist actions and, 128; of incels, 113–14
- #MeToo movement, 125
- Metzger, Tom, 118
- militias, unlawful, 19, 38, 39, 47
- Miller, Chanel, 163–64
- minorities, racial and ethnic: purported sexual violence from, 52–53; scapegoating of, 6–7, 43–44; white women's sexual purity and, 90
- misogynoir, 30, 69–70, 145
- misogyny, 28–31; as core mobilizer of violence, 54; mainstream normalization of, 18, 19, 69, 146, 188, 189; masculinity crisis and, 9; minimization of violence in, 92; patriarchal norms and, 5, 29, 146; predicting violent extremism, 54, 186–89; punishing violators of patriarchal norms, 94; racist, 30; radicalization and mobilization based on, 39–40, 42–45; reinforcing many kinds of hate, 187, 193–95; as social policing, 29; teenage boys' online influencers and, 86–89; violent, 91–93. *See also* gender; preventing gender-based harm
- moral panic: about control of gender and sexuality, 106; about gender ideology, 122; about school curriculum, 155; around LGBTQ+ issues, 65, 144; destabilizing democracy, 158; homophobic, 147; rape culture alleged to be, 109
- Morgenstern, Erin, 37
- Morrison, Toni, 146, 155
- motherhood: antigovernment position and, 169–70, 179; as mobilizing force for women, 166, 167, 169–70, 173–74, 175, 181; racist uses of, 174; reproductive role of white women and, 180; white supremacy and, 141
- multiculturalism, 100, 116, 141, 147, 174
- Muslims: framed as threat to white women, 13; following Andrew Tate, 88; as threat to the sexual order, 170; as threat to “Western values,” 39; as threat to white civilization, 141
- nationalism: deployment of feminist themes for, 170; gender and, 38; historical research on, 39; on male supremacist spaces, 109–10; white supremacy and, 139, 174. *See also* Christian nationalism
- Native American societies, 21
- “natural order of things,” 41, 49, 88, 89
- Nazis, sex trafficking and abuse by, 132
- neo-Nazi groups: advocating sexual violence against women, 131–32; child pornography and, 135; commercial sex exploitation by, 134; as drug trafficking gangs, 130–31; fringe occult groups, 110; Greece's Golden Dawn party, 132; mass rape of white women and, 118–19; in online gaming, 75; running illegal prostitution, 133; sexual and gender-based violence by, 51–52; violent fantasies and, 93; white supremacists protesting rights for, 159; women politicians of color and, 70. *See also* white supremacy
- Nichols, Tom, 158
- nihilism, 78
- Nineteenth Amendment, 21, 32, 89
- nonbinary gender category, 48, 191; slurs and, 65
- Obama, Barack, 15, 72
- Obama administration, 49, 71–72; transgender rights and, 148
- Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria, 70, 72
- Omar, Ilhan, 70
- online lives, of many American men, 8
- online misogyny, 15–18; making violent attacks more likely, 17; racism overlapping with, 12–13, 16
- online violence and abuse, 16–18; by mass attackers, 6; by nonwhite individuals, 13; racist and xenophobic, 13; with rape and death threats, 16; against women in politics, 10
- Onuoha, Alexandra, 30

- Order of Nine Angles (O9A), 110, 137–38
- Orenstein, Peggy, 28
- Orwell, George, 144
- Palin, Sarah, 169, 175
- parents' rights movement, 155
- patriarchy, 20–25; built on sexism and
misogyny, 25, 26, 27, 28; Christian
nationalism and, 39, 45–50; de Beauvoir
on, ix; deliberate blind spots and, 164;
gendered understandings of the world
and, xiii; gender roles and expectations
in, 9; intersectionality and, 23; male
supremacy and, 95; misogynist policing
of, 29–30, 34–35; perceived cultural
threats to, 145; power and, 20–21, 23, 191;
public and private spheres for men and
women in, 60–61; purportedly post-
patriarchal Western societies, 23–24;
retrenched defense of, 187, 189–93; slurs
to discipline departure from, 63–65;
social control enforcing expectations of,
34; strategies to enforce norms of, 29;
Tate's embrace of Islam and, 88; Trump
campaign and, 50; various civilizations
and, 21; violence against women in, 104–5;
violent defense of, 129; virulent defense
of tradition and, 12; white, 12–13
- Patriot Front, 159
- pedophilia: conspiracies about liberals
and, 147; false claims about LGBTQ+
community and, 120, 122, 124, 138; false
claims about teachers and librarians, 154;
mainstream beliefs in global rings of, 123;
of Nazi's colony in Chile, 132; in QAnon
conspiracies, 176. *See also* child sexual abuse
- Pelosi, Nancy, 57, 68, 168, 188
- Pelosi, Paul, 57, 188
- Pepe the Frog, 80
- Pérez, Raúl
- PERIL (Polarization and Extremism
Research and Innovation Lab), xvii–xviii,
36, 86, 94, 98
- Peterson, Jordan, 157
- PizzaGate, 120, 123, 125
- political violence, 19; gender and, 38–40;
growing support for, 9–10; hostile sexism
and, 15, 40–41; misogyny and, 40–41;
surging in United States, 14–15; targeting
women leaders, 9–13. *See also* women in
politics
- populism: far-right, 38, 39, 40; growing
anti-intellectualism in, 158
- pornography: of children, 95, 121, 135–39;
deepfake, 95; violent and racist,
83–84
- power: men's fear of displacement and, 49;
men's rage-fueled need to control and,
58; patriarchal, 20–21, 23, 191; resentment
over loss of, 42; slurs against women for
wanting, 63–64; unequally distributed
between men and women, 26, 27
- presidential election of 2016, 47, 49–50, 67,
171
- presidential election of 2020, 124–25, 168,
171
- presidential election of 2024, xi–xii, 14, 49,
50, 59, 171
- Pressley, Ayanna, 70
- preventing gender-based harm, 195–98;
calling on men to recognize the prob-
lems, 214; modeling healthy masculinity
and, 198–202; policymakers' role in, 203–6;
resource list for, 221–23; strategies for,
217–21
- progress: generations of women and
LGBTQ+ people and, 213–14; in rights
vs. expectations, 190. *See also* social
change
- pronouns, nonbinary usage of, 100, 144, 145,
151, 156, 161
- prostitution: organized, 121, 132, 133, 134; as
target of far-right attacks, 133
- Proud Boys, 13, 85, 109, 125, 159, 202,
207
- PUA (Pick Up Artist) communities, 110–11

- punishment, 35; male supremacy and, 107–15; men's anger at feminism and, 98; misogyny as, 190; for violating gender norms, 94; for violating patriarchal norms, 94, 104–5, 190.
See also violence against women
- Pushaw, Christina, 147
- QAnon, 122–25, 138, 175–78; book banning and, 155; child trafficking conspiracy and, 177–78; January 6 insurrection and, 166–67; origin of, 176; PizzaGate and, 120; spreading around the globe, 162; subgroup of “QAnon moms,” 177; wellness community connected to, 177–78; white women's social media and, 173
- race mixing, 140
- racism: of ideals for beauty and respectability, 71; intersectionality with other hate, 161–62; memes and, 81; online, 15; online misogyny overlapping with, 12–13, 16; ordinary and everyday forms of, 189; scientific, 25, 84, 89–90; sexism along with, 104; violent extremism and, 12–14; white women's key role in, 180. *See also* white supremacy; xenophobia
- racist slurs, 64
- rape: Andrew Tate and, 86–87; of children, 136; immigrants accused of, 138; increasing rates of, 126; mass rape of white women and, 115, 118–19; media centered on the perpetrators of, 136; online stance in support of, 107; white supremacy and, 116–17, 118–19; of white women by nonwhite men, 116–17
- rape crisis centers, 12
- rape culture, 135
- Rapekrieg, 115, 118–19, 131–32
- rape myths, 40, 83, 89, 99–101
- red pill, 84, 88, 101, 109, 111, 172
- reproductive rights, 26, 115–19; erasure of, 146, 149; male supremacy and, 97; supposedly reducing white births, 100.
See also abortion; contraception
- Roe v. Wade*, 115, 116, 117, 180
- Rosenberg, Alfred, 47
- Rosin, Hanna, 24, 73
- Rowling, J. K., 163
- Ruby Ridge standoff, 165–66, 255n1
- Saini, Angela, 21, 60
- same-sex marriage, 24, 48, 49, 60, 66, 148
- Sandusky, Jerry, 125
- scaffolds, mental and cultural, xiii, 190–91
- scapegoating: of ethnic minorities and society as a whole, 6–7, 43–44; of feminists and Jews, 98; by incels for personal grievances, 114; replacement of white civilization and, 6
- Schlafly, Phyllis, 170
- Schlapp, Matt, 116
- schools: AI-generated images in, 94–95; curricular bans and, 155, 163; fight against integration of, 168, 180; LGBTQ+ issues and, 144; sex education in, 149, 154; unwanted sexual behavior in, 93
- Schroeder, Pat, 68
- scientific racism, 25, 84, 89–90
- Scrinzi, Francesca, 12
- security studies, 12
- self-help influencers, 73, 84–90; some with effective guidance, 85–86; some with harmful content, 86–89
- separation of church and state, 45, 234n43
- September 11 attacks, 174
- 764 network of groups, 137–38
- sex, biological features of, 20
- sex education in schools, 149, 154
- sexism, 25–28; enabling violence, 28; hostile vs. benevolent, 25–26; legal subordination of women and, 26; material resources of women and, 26–27; misogyny as enforcement of, 29; normalization of, 18, 69; persistence of certain attitudes, 28; racialization of, 12–13; with racism,

- xenophobia, and classism, 27; rarity of overt forms of, 27–28. *See also* hostile sexism
- Sexton, Jared Yates, xi
- sextortion, 16, 95, 137, 142
- sexual abuse. *See* child sexual abuse
- sexual and gender-based violence, 39–40, 50–53; blaming women for, 28; as core part of Christian supremacist movements, 53; foundational to violent extremism, 39–40; ideological use of, 121, 139–41; in online pornography, 83–84; promoted by terrorist and extremist groups, 121; as terrorist tactic, 50–51; toward men and boys, 53; upsurge during COVID-19 pandemic, 126. *See also* gender-based violence; rape
- sexual harassment: in legislative chambers, 10; online, 16–17; threatened feelings of dominance and, 43. *See also* harassment
- sex work: choice of, 149; for survival, 161
- shame: and expectations for men and women, 22; of insufficiently masculine boys, 66; of losing to women's gains, 42–43; manhood and, 8; mobilizing violence, 22
- short-form videos, 68, 73, 79, 80–81, 84, 89–90, 172
- slurs, 62–70; in online gaming, 75; racist, 64
- Smythe, Viv, 163
- social change: Christian nationalism and, 45; in expression of gender and sexuality, 145; to gender norms, 48–50; misogyny in face of, 29, 42–43; public attitudes shifting away from, 192; as supposed threat to nation's way of life, 12; wide-ranging targets of violence about, 162. *See also* backlash against social change
- social media: Andrew Tate's followers on, 86–87; antifeminism and, 96–97; conservative women on, 171; presidential election of 2024 and, xii; struggling to weed out harmful content, 81. *See also* online violence and abuse
- social safety nets, inadequate in US, 23
- social sciences and humanities, 11
- social work and public health, 11–12
- Solnit, Rebecca, 10, 62
- Sotomayor, Sonia, 71–72
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, 231n141
- Stewart, Ayla, 174
- suffragists, 31–34; sacrificing racial equity, 32–33, 163
- suicide: men's socialization and, 22; of men vs. women, 8; as risk for LGBTQ+ youth, 153; as risk for transgender youth, 161
- Sweet Baby Inc, 76
- Swift, Taylor, 61, 83, 95
- Tamang, Anish, 48
- Tarrio, Enrique, 13
- Tate, Andrew, 86–89, 110, 133–34, 136
- Tea Party, 169–70, 171, 175, 256n17
- teenage boys. *See* young men and boys
- terrorism: global data on women's subordination and, 128; ideological use of sexual and gender-based violence in, 139–41; inattention to gendered dimensions of, 10–11, 37; motivated by misogyny, 3; studies of, 12; using fears about exploitation of children, 120–21
- terrorist violence: memes and, 80; misogyny and, 5–6; mostly by men, 10; by nonwhite individuals, 13; personal histories of perpetrators of, 37–38, 41–42; sexual and gender-based violence in, 51–53; in United States, 14. *See also* terrorism
- Terry, Randall, 118
- Till, Emmett, 117
- Title IX, 26, 148, 150
- Tlaib, Rashida, 70
- toxic masculinity, 30–31, 38, 40, 66–67, 73, 79, 109–10; Islamophobia and, 88
- Tradwife movement, 172–73

- trafficking, human and sexual, 11; academic fields studying, 11; commercial sex exploitation, 121, 130–35; online influencers and, 85, 86. *See also* child trafficking
- transgender people: antifeminism and, 102; belief in “natural order of things” and, 89; changes in rights of, 48; increasing percentage identifying as, 48; increasing rates of murders of, 126, 161; legislative action against, 144–45, 146, 148–53; mainstream transphobia and, 161; medical professionals’ discrimination against, 146; peers’ reaction to, 24; radical feminist opposition to, 163; as threat to the nation’s sexual order, 170; violence against, 5, 6, 161; witch hunts based on appearance and, 151. *See also* bathroom usage; gender-affirming medical care; LGBTQ+ people; pronouns, nonbinary usage of
- Trudy, 34, 69, 145
- Trump, Donald, x, xi–xii; assassination attempts on, 14, 212; backlash against social change and, 49; boasting about grabbing women, 63, 67; denying rape of Jean Carroll, 69; against diversity and inclusion practices, 156; evangelical support for, 44, 49–50; hostile sexism of supporters of, 40; January 6 insurrection and, 167, 178; majority of white women always voting for, 171; masculinity valued by supporters of, 44, 49–50; online game based on, 77; people of color supporting, 13; QAnon and, 122, 124, 176; racist tweets against congresswomen, 70; revoking transgender protections, 145, 150; Tea Party replaced by loyalty to, 171; toxic masculinity of, 67
- Turner, Brock, 125, 163–64
- The Turner Diaries*, 140
- Valji, Nahla, 41–42
- Vance, J. D., 99, 212–13
- videos. *See* gaming, online; short-form videos
- violence: dismissed as individual psychological problem, 189; experts on gender and, 11–12; against members of one’s identity group, 152–53; nonviolent gender-based mobilization of, 19–20; shame as mobilizer of, 22; shame of insufficient masculinity and, 66
- violence against women: greater for transgender women, 163; hostile sexism and, 40; misogynist pathways to, 73, 89–90; not by all men, 211–12; often minimized by law enforcement, 131; precursors to, 41; as predictor of violent extremism, 128; as reaction to rejection, 3–5; in simple patriarchal entitlement, 29; support for women’s advancement and, 41. *See also* punishment; sexual and gender-based violence
- violent extremism, 18–20; calls to curtail rights leading to, 159–63; centering gender and, 185–87; counteracting, 195–209; of groups operating as 764, 137–38; hostile sexism as predictor of, 9–10, 40; inattention to gendered dimensions of, x–xi, 10, 34–35, 37–38; legislative and curricular erasure underpinning, 146; mainstream mobilization of, xii–xiii, 12, 206–9; male supremacy and, 93–94, 100; memes and, 80; misogyny as mobilizer of, 42–45; misogyny as predictor of, 40, 187–89; online gaming and, 77, 78–79; overlooked pathways to, 121–22; precursors to, 41, 186, 187–89; prior scholarship on, 38–40; racism and, 12–14; and recruitment through QAnon conspiracies, 125; recruiting and radicalizing people to, 188; surging in United States, 14–15; sweeping range of targets of, 164; US government threat assessment of, 11; women held to sexual purity and, 82. *See also* far-right extremism; preventing gender-based harm

- virtual reality, 141–42
- voting rights, 173. *See also* suffragists
- Walt Disney company, 144
- Wayfair shopping website, 123, 126
- Weaver, Vicki, 165–66, 167, 168, 169, 178, 180
- Weidel, Alice, 170
- Weinstein, Harvey, 125
- Western civilization: Cultural Marxism and, 100–101; homophobic moral panics and, 147–48; O9A calling for overthrow of, 137; Tradwife movement and, 173; universities as supposed danger to, 157. *See also* Great Replacement
- Western supremacism, 18
- white baby challenge, 174–75
- white birth rates, 60, 78, 93, 118, 119, 139, 140–41, 174–75
- white civilization: control of women and, 60–61; existential threat to, 78; some men’s rage about, 6; women’s enabling roles in, 168, 174–75, 181. *See also* Great Replacement
- white evangelicals: gender roles and values of, 46, 49; supporting Trump, 50
- white genocide, 99, 103, 116, 118, 140
- white supremacism, 18; abortion restrictions and, 116, 118, 119; actions against LGBTQ+ community and, 159–60; among nonwhite individuals, 13; broad range of enemies of, 103; child pornography and, 135; commercial sex exploitation and, 133, 134; control of women and, 60–61; of drug trafficking gangs, 130–31; exported from United States, xiii; globally interconnected nature of, 143; male supremacy and, 115–19; nationalism and, 139, 174; ordinary and everyday forms of, 189; planning mass murder of minorities, 115; planning mass rape of white women, 115; profiting from sale of women’s bodies, 53; risk of mass violence and, 127; Ruby Ridge standoff and, 165–66; sexual and gender-based violence and, 51–53, 92–93; sexual exploitation linked to, 130, 131–32; of Unite the Right rally, 80; women held to sexual purity in, 82, 139; women politicians of color and, 70; women’s treatment by men in, 180; women supporters of, 10, 119. *See also* neo-Nazi groups; racism
- white women: abused in private settings, 53; accused of not having enough babies, 6, 23; antigovernment beliefs and, 166; calls for mass rape of, 132; enabling violence of men in their lives, 168–69; key role in institutional racism, 180; lynchings blamed on actions toward, 13; majority voting for Trump in 2016, 2020, and 2024, 171; need to protect and control bodies of, 181; as race traitors marrying nonwhite men, 140; racist voting rights strategy of, 32–33; radicalized on social media, 171–75; regulated sexuality of, 53; reproduction of white nation and, 180; sexual purity of, 90, 117, 139, 175
- Whitmer, Gretchen, x, 31, 62. *See also* governor of Michigan
- women: becoming active in far-right extremism, 166; becoming political leaders and violent actors, 167–68; “free” labor of, 21; gains in equality and access, 26; historical legal restrictions on, 20–21; online influencers and, 85; patriarchal norms upheld by some, 20; as perpetrators of violence, 10; progress in rights of, 23–24; traditional roles of, 139–40, 168, 172. *See also* girls and women
- women in politics: harassment and violence against, 10, 68–69; women of color and, 70, 71–72
- women of color: disproportionately affected by violence, 127; misogynist incels and, 112; in PUA world, 111; punished for violating patriarchal norms, 104. *See also* Black women; Latina women

- women's advancement: resilience to violent extremism and, 41; some men's rage toward, 6–7
- women's appearance, 28, 70–73
- xenophobia, 170, 172. *See also* immigrants; minorities, racial and ethnic
- Yiannopoulos, Milo, 108, 157
- young Americans, not planning to marry, 145
- younger women and girls, sexualized, 135–36
- young men and boys: blaming women, feminism, and LGBTQ+ community, 108; and gateway content to hateful ideas, 84; half believing feminism has gone too far, 89; male supremacism normalized among, 102–3; pornography viewed by, 83–84; proving masculinity in online gaming, 75; recruited in online gaming, 74–75; “red pill” worldview and, 84; self-help influencers and, 84–89; violence reacting to humiliation and, 242n26; violent online content about women and, 83–84
- youth culture, weaponization of, 81