

# EXTREMISM FACT SHEET

Male Supremacy and Misogyny:  
Mainstreaming Extremism  
Through Local Government



Mainstream actors exploit public spaces and government institutions to advance extremist agendas that further male supremacy and misogyny in the United States. The growth of this ideology undermines our democracy and threatens the rights and safety of women and the LGBTQ community.

## WHAT IS MALE SUPREMACY AND MISOGYNY?

*Male supremacism is a social hierarchy which places cisgendered—or straight—men as superior to others and justifies their social and political control. Misogyny—a key element of male supremacy—propagates disdain and prejudice against women and perceived threats to this social order. Mainstream misogynists promote policies and laws that restrict the rights of women and LGBTQ communities, whereas fringe elements endorse violence to achieve these goals.*

The United States has seen a roll-back in civil liberties in favor of male supremacist ideals with the end of protections like Roe V. Wade in 2022, and an increase in anti-trans legislation. Recent legislative attacks on birth control, trans student athletes, abortion care, and drag queen story hours all stem from this ideological root.

Misogyny is a driving factor in incidents of gender-based violence, mass violence, and domestic extremism. Nearly half of mass violence perpetrators have a history of domestic violence or misogynistic behaviors, or both.

Male supremacist violence impacts ethnic and racial minorities disproportionately. For example, from March 2020 to March 2021, of the reported 6,600 crimes against Asian Americans in the U.S., the majority targeted women and nonbinary individuals. Likewise, DOJ reports found that transgender individuals face greater threats if they are also a person of color.

## HOW EXTREMISM IS NORMALIZED: KEY MAINSTREAM NARRATIVES YOU MAY HAVE HEARD

*Elements of the broader antidemocratic movement strategically deploy dog whistles under the guise of mainstream narratives to further policies steeped in male supremacy.<sup>1</sup> Three common mainstream narratives deployed to support male supremacy include “parental rights,” “traditional values,” and “men’s rights.”*

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**"Parental Rights":** This narrative advocates for little to no state or federal control over primary education, and has been used since at least the 1950s as a dog whistle for discriminatory policies in schools, including in support of school segregation.<sup>2</sup> Today, under the umbrella of “parental rights,” organizations like the national non-profit Mom’s for Liberty or the Michigan organization We The Parents, promote anti-LGBTQ and anti-civil rights agendas in local legislation and schools.

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**"Traditional Values":** This narrative promotes patriarchal familial structures, anti-LGBTQ hate, and discriminatory laws around reproduction. While this term is used broadly by many groups, it has historically been taken up by the antidemocratic movement to argue against equality. Today, with the resurgence of Christian nationalism in mainstream spaces, “traditional values” are used to justify repeals on civil rights and progressive politics.

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**"Men’s Rights":** These narratives, particularly in online forums, promote vile misogyny including the belief that women should not have equal rights and that rape should be legal. However, by offering this content alongside more palatable narratives, such as the belief that men are victims of feminism, that masculinity is unfairly demonized, and that boys are negatively impacted by public school curricula, Men’s Rights Activists effectively mainstream these ideologies.<sup>3</sup>

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## NETWORKS OF EXTREMISM: ANTIDEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS PROMOTING MALE SUPREMACY AND MISOGYNY

*Male supremacism and misogyny underpin most antidemocratic ideologies and are explicitly and implicitly promoted throughout the broader movement. Prominent voices spread this ideology in mainstream and fringe spaces including virtual misogynist networks, violent male supremacist groups, women’s organizations, and Christian nationalist groups.*

**Virtual Misogynist Networks:** The ‘Manosphere’ is a network of online spaces — forums, blogs, social media groups, etc.—that actively oppose feminism and promote misogyny and male supremacy. This includes Men Going Their Own Way, the Incel movement, and Men’s Rights Activists. These virtual networks promote a radicalizing “red pill” culture<sup>4</sup> and inspire gendered violence, including mass shootings.

**Violent Male Supremacist Groups:** Other male supremacist groups support a rigid gender hierarchy such as the Proud Boys, who self-describe as “Western chauvinists” and have physical chapters across the United States. This group, and others like it, often participate in violence directed at targets perceived as threats to their social power, including the LGBTQ community.

**Women’s Organizations:** Women’s organizations like Mom’s for Liberty use nonviolent tactics and rhetoric to push for the same goals as the broader male supremacist movement, such as anti-LGBTQ policies and exclusionary Christian-patriarchal values in educational spaces.

**Christian Nationalist Groups:** These groups argue for a return to “American values” that include a patriarchal family and government in which women and children are submissive to men. Historically, white women have leveraged Christian nationalist narratives in anti-abortion organizing. Today, groups like the Heritage Foundation, the Alliance Defending Freedom, and the Family Policy Alliance, push Christian nationalism as a key element in election denial. Christian nationalist pastors networks are the major drivers of this rhetoric, including Pastors for Trump, Patriot Churches, and the Black Robe Regiment.



*A selection of books that are under attack by antidemocratic groups like Moms for Liberty for pro-LGBTQ material.  
Giorgio Viera/The Washington Post/Getty Images*

*Jennifer Pippin, president of Moms for Liberty in Indian River County, Florida, stands behind stacks of books her organization wants to ban from school libraries.  
Giorgio Viera/AFP/Getty Images*

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# THE IMPACT OF INCREASED MISOGYNY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND YOUR COMMUNITY

*The recent growth and normalization of male supremacy and misogyny is evident in the rise of discriminatory policies in state and local government and undermines public safety and our democracy. These policies include an increase in anti-LGBTQ policies, attacks on women's rights, attacks on diversity in educational settings, and an increase in hate-fueled violence directed at women and the LGBTQ community.*

**Increased Anti-LGBTQ Sentiment and Policies:** Efforts to isolate and demonize LGBTQ persons are core to the male supremacist movement and are eroding the civil rights of this community. Florida's 'Don't Say Gay' law or the dozens of anti-trans bills proposed and passed in Texas are examples of the movement's attempt to alienate and terrorize this community.

**Attacks on Women's Rights and Reproductive Rights:** Male supremacy and misogyny undergird the anti-abortion movement, which was born not out of faith-based arguments but from efforts to restrict and control women's role in society, with a particular emphasis on Black women and immigrants. Today, this extremism drives many state policies that restrict access to reproductive health care and disproportionately affect minorities.<sup>5</sup>

**Attacks on Educational Institutions:** Education has long been a battleground for civil rights and male supremacy. Today, groups like Mom's for Liberty advocate for elected officials who in turn support their efforts to ban books and alter school curriculums.

**Hate-Fueled Attacks:** Misogyny is now a driver in many forms of violence, which has led some states to add hate crime categories relevant to gender. According to DOJ statistics, hate crimes against gender non-conforming individuals increased by 587% between 2013-2019, and in 2021 over 20% of reported incidents stemmed from bias against sexual orientation, gender and gender identity.

**Attacks on Democracy:** The January 6th attack on the Capitol was a result of many overlapping factors including a rise in Christian nationalism, which has helped mainstream male supremacist and antidemocratic values. Likewise, recent threats to women in political power, such as the attempted abduction of Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer stem from the desire to retain white male power in public institutions.

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# TAKE ACTION: HOW YOU CAN RESPOND TO EXTREMISM

**Reject the Mainstreaming of Extremist Narratives:** We must name hate when we see it and refuse to let its purveyors whitewash extremism and monopolize public discourse. Dog whistles such as “parental rights,” “traditional values,” or “men’s rights,” mainstream misogyny and male supremacy. Whether you see it online, in your community, or among elected officials, call this rhetoric out for what it is: deliberate fearmongering and disinformation. For specific ideas about how to intervene online and in-person, consider [bystander training](#).

**Get Involved in Your Community:** A vibrant democracy represents all of its citizens and requires your participation. At the local level that means getting involved with school boards, city councils and town halls, and other elements of government such as elections administration. Express solidarity with communities that are under attack and join events that uplift their voices. We all have a role to play to ensure all members of our community have equal rights.

**Support Inclusive Policies and Reject Discriminatory Policies:** Advocate for policies that support women and the LGBTQ community. Making your voice heard at the state and federal level in support of inclusive policies, such as the Equality Act, and in opposition to bigoted policies such as those undermining trans rights or preventing trans youth from using public services or resources.

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## ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST

*We work to create a just world in which every person's intrinsic human rights are respected and protected, to build societies that value and invest in all their people. To reach that goal demands assisting victims of injustice, bringing perpetrators of abuse to justice, and building institutions that ensure universal rights.*

## CONTACT US

*To learn more about our work, please visit [humanrightsfirst.org](http://humanrightsfirst.org) or email us: [ExtremismInfo@humanrightsfirst.org](mailto:ExtremismInfo@humanrightsfirst.org).*

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## ENDNOTES

1. The Antidemocratic Far-Right Extremist Movement is an umbrella term for the movement advancing efforts to transform our current multiracial, pluralistic, democratic system into one that is largely authoritarian and organized hierarchically according to race, ethnicity, religion, sex, and/or culture. This includes but is not limited to the xenophobic and anti-immigrant movement and the election denial movement.
2. White, middle-class, Christian mothers have a long history of mainstreaming male supremacist and white supremacist values through women-led organizing around children’s education and safety.
3. Men’s Rights Activism (MRA) is a contemporary backlash to feminism, and to feminist social activism like the #MeToo movement. In response, MRA adherents push pro-rape rhetoric, as well as disinformation about the threat posed by false sexual assault accusations, and claims that fathers’ rights are under attack by feminist legal bias.
4. Red pilling, a term derived from the 1999 film *The Matrix*, describes the so-called experience participants in these spaces have when they become aware of the alleged danger feminism poses for men and society as a whole. Adherents to this movement claim any social privilege based on their gender and/or race and sexuality as false and used to control them. Likewise, being ‘black pilled,’ describes a more overtly misogynistic belief that being an Incel is genetically predetermined, that only an overhaul of the social structure will provide them access to a sexual partner, and that suicide or mass violence is a viable option to attain these goals.
5. The history of anti-abortion political activism and policy stems from both gender and racial discrimination, including eugenicist and white supremacist politics. More recent political arguments are drawn from the same history even if they are now articulated through religious values.