

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF ABDELHAMID IBN BADIS-MOSTAGANEM
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



**AN ANALYTICAL RESEARCH ON THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN THE
EFFECTS OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM ON GENDER CONFORMITY AND
THE RISE OF ANTI-FEMINIST SENTIMENTS**

Presented by: Amira Hammideche

Supervisor : Dr. Houari Mired

Chairperson: Prof. Yasmina Djafri

Examiner: Dr. Abdelhakim Fetnaci

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ABSTRACT

The manosphere is the term used to describe cyberspaces populated by men who preach in favor of patriarchy, traditional gender roles, and capitalist values. These cyberspaces in recent decades have had a significant impact on the proliferation of anti-feminist sentiments, resulting in regressive real-life consequences for the women's liberation movement. In response to the entanglement of the rise of incel communities and anti-feminist sentiments in cyberspaces with far-right politics, this research aims to elucidate the correlation between anti-feminist sentiments and far-right ideologies in the capitalist framework. Building upon the respective works of Marxist scholars and feminists such as Silvia Federici and Angela Davis on the impact of capitalism on the perpetuation of misogyny, this research utilizes an analytical approach of the historical background of the establishment of capitalism and patriarchy. Accompanied by a comprehensive literature review that delves into the emergence of incels and the propagation of anti-feminist sentiments via the manosphere and the far right. Due to the empirical and eurocentric roots of the capitalist system, rigid gender roles were implemented into the public consciousness along with capitalist values, which indirectly hinder women's liberation due to the intricate relations between social structures and power dynamics.

Key words : Capitalism, far right politics, feminism, the manosphere, power dynamics, social structures, Incel communities.

Introduction

According to Angela Davis and Silvia Federici, capitalism cannot be exempt from how it was established. Taking its historical background into consideration, it is obvious to many scholars that capitalism was built on the back of imperialism and unpaid labor of both native demographics, through "primitive accumulation," and women's unpaid domestic labor. The author states : "The cleavage between the home and the public economy brought on by industrial capitalism established female inferiority more firmly than ever before. 'Woman' became synonymous in the prevailing propaganda with "mother" and "housewife," and both "mother" and "housewife" bore the fatal mark of inferiority" (Davis 1981). It is hypothesized that the free-market system could not have been established if it weren't for the elaborate workforce that was created by the gendering of labor, underestimating women's work, and the accumulation of native people's resources. Resulting, in consequence, in these demographics being considered at the lower scale of the capitalist hierarchies, as well as sunk into the consciousness of societies, shaping rigid gender roles and biases, consequently hindering the effectiveness of the women's liberation movement.

According to Adam Smith's work on capitalist values, "The Wealth of Nations," only through liberty, self-interest, and competition can a natural system of economy thrive. He argues that letting each individual be free to pursue his interests would lead to a healthy free market. He states : "Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his interests his own way and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man or order of men"(Smith 903), thus making the system of liberty what essentially constitutes a capitalist economic system. In contrast, Karl Marx, in his work "Capital: Volume 1," condemns capitalism as a system in which the means of production and power are held by the bourgeoisie, one percent of the population, which, therefore, can control the proletariat and lower classes by restricting them to undervalued labor. Karl Marx's criticism of capitalism was crucial to the inspiration of this research, as well as a major influence on Angela Davis and Sylvia Federici's works.

This dissertation will look into how systems of oppression were fueled by the history of capitalistic values and seek to dive into how the feminist movement operates in a capitalist context. Although Adam Smith stated that as long as no one violates the laws of justice, one is free to seek his gains, could it be guaranteed that a system that puts self-interest and

competition at the forefront would not fuel unethical means of production and labor? Further questions that this research aims to answer also include: What is the public perception of the women's liberation movement like? What kind of opposition does it face? Is capitalism itself hindering women's liberation? Specifically, under the lights of the rise of communities like the manosphere and incels online. Could it be attributed to capitalism?

In recent years, within the political atmosphere, there have been a plethora of social movements to call for equality and a more respectful environment for diversity and change. In the current political climate, the world does not lack systems of oppression. Concerning gender, race, or class, whether it is political or economic reasons, such as the wage gap in many countries for women, or cultural and societal issues, like the establishment of strict gender roles that oppress both genders, as Angela David puts it : "sexual inequality as we know it today did not exist before the advent of private property. During the early eras of human history, the sexual division of labor within the system of economic production was complementary as opposed to hierarchical" (Davis 237). According to many researchers on capitalism, such as Angela Davis (1981) or Sylvia Federici (2004), there is a direct correlation between classing people into gendered expectations and capitalism. Establishing gender roles has enabled capitalism to forge a workforce of low-paid, hard-working men, most of whom relied almost entirely on women for emotional, domestic, and parental work. Davis dives into this deeper in a dedicated chapter about women's domestic labor and the commodification of labor theory.

Federici theorizes that the control and oppression of women have been a crucial step in the implementation of capitalism in Europe. Specifically within the era transitioning from the feudal system to capitalism in the sixteenth century by the rarely considered era of the witch hunts, of which according to Federici, a femicide of that level could have only been fueled by the obsession and the need to control and regulate women's reproductive labor by stripping them of their bodily autonomies. She states:"This process required the transformation of the body into a work machine and the subjugation of women to the reproduction of the workforce. Most of all, it required the destruction of the power of women, which in Europe as well as in America was achieved through the extermination of the witches" (Federici 98). Furthermore, the scholar sheds light on the colonial abuse lived by native inhabitants, in which the colonial power utilized a system called by Karl Marx "primitive accumulation" (1867) which substitutes the idea that the colonial powers

collected primary resources highly needed for economic growth from other lands, all the while separating their resources from their true owners, as well as the accumulation of free labor power: "the divorcing of the workers from the means of production, not abstinence of the rich, is the source of capitalist wealth" (Federici 98).

The first chapter will lay the groundwork for the history behind the sequences of events and ideals that have led to the establishment of the capitalist system, as well as its impact on people's perspectives on gender, labor, and women as a whole. A deductive reasoning will be presented of the literature that specializes in the theory of the correlation between capitalism, misogyny, and race as explained by feminist authors Davis and Federic in their respective works "Women, Race, and Class" (1981) and "Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation" (2004) along with other scholars. The second chapter will ensue with the purpose of establishing the link between capitalism's influence and sexism, most notably by looking into the prevalence of anti-feminist sentiments through the years in which the feminist movement existed. The remaining chapter will serve as a case study of the rise of incels and the manosphere within the current political climax and aim to reach an understanding of their perspective, objectives, and the factors that contribute to shaping their ideologies, as well as whether or not capitalism is a part of the equation in their regards.

Chapter One : The Historical Context of Capitalism

This research is based on an existing theoretical work heavily shaped by Karl Marx's ideals. However, the presence of his ideas will be mostly indirect, specifically through other scholars who followed in his footsteps, most notably Sylvia Federici in her work "Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation" and Angela Davis's "Women, Race, and Class.". Both Federici and Davis, in their respective works, advocate for an intersectional approach to dissecting issues like sexism. From a historical and cultural stance, these scholars believe it is important to understand what constitutes the core of the capitalist system and how, although indirectly, it has led to the separation of labor across genders and reinforced double standards and unequal power dynamics across various demographics.

Angela Davis's theories will help make the association between race, class, and gender clear. In her intricate work, she presents ideas that challenge the notions of the current political structures by looking into the biases implemented by the imperial history of the capitalist system. Her work, "Women, Race, and Class," focuses on three essential aspects: intersectionality, historical analysis, and women's liberation and feminism. Firstly, It is important for the author to highlight the link between race, class, and gender and how these three aspects feed off of each other. She argues in her book for the importance of understanding women's experiences by taking into consideration their backgrounds and place within social hierarchies, which is essential to understanding the intricacies of social classes as intertwined with race and gender. Moreover, the historical analysis in the book serves to show the history of the slave trade and dives into how it has shaped the black family unit, all while highlighting how black womanhood differs from other womanhood experiences due to the history and showcases how family dynamics are impacted by the environment and the idea of power and patriarchal presence, or lack thereof. Lastly, women's liberation and feminism, in which she advocates for solidarity through social classes as well as races in order to reach true collective liberation.

As for Silvia Federici, her work also centers on intersectionality but further presents varied theories that discuss the demonization of non-Eurocentric traditions and the demonization of native ways of life by the European imperialists. She presents how puritanism was and is a

critical aspect of the capitalist system, as the religion, traditions, and ways of life of the puritans, as it will be explained, played a crucial part in laying the groundwork for capitalist ideals. Misogyny within those times, from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, was indeed a big part of the politics of that time, paving the way for the transition from feudalism to capitalism, as Federici proposes. She explains that a femicide as defining as the witch hunts in Europe could have only been born out of the desire to control and police women through not only puritan ideals but also as a way to lay the foundation for women's domestic oppression. The author broadens her inquiries throughout her work by exploring the systems implemented by imperialism as a means to the capitalist system. She presents the concept of "primitive accumulation," which explains the purposeful alienation of the lower classes and native people from their own resources and lands, as a necessary tactic to the capitalist system expansion, which relied on the extortion of labor and resources.

In this respect, the focus of the first two chapters is to provide a chronological order of the instances and historical background that could have had a direct or indirect impact on the establishment of the capitalist system. Through a thorough analysis of the historical rundown that resulted in the current political climate, most notably in regards to women, and the consequences that it has on the feminist movement, thus, this chapter will dive into the constancy of white supremacy and its consequences based on the theories of the two feminist scholars, Federici and Davis.

1. The Birth of Capitalism

According to the “father” of capitalism himself, Adam Smith, capitalism is an economic system in which there is little to no government intervention in order to let the natural order of the market take place. Through a free market characterized by private ownership of the means of production and the seeking of personal self-interest, a prosperous and successful economy ought to surely ensue. According to Smith, the tenets of the capitalist system are “private property, free market, division of labor, competition, and laissez-faire “(Smith 1776). However, Karl Marx had a different perspective on the free market system. Although he did recognize the private ownership aspect, he views it as more of a sign of inequality between the people. Indeed, Marx criticized the capitalist system as a socio-economic system flawed by inequality and the abuse of the working class, also known as the proletariat. Characterized by class conflict, the commodification of labor, and the cyclical crises “economic crashes” (Marx 1867).

The way this chapter unfolds is through an analysis of how, historically speaking, the capitalist system affected people's world views by branching world-wide. Especially in regards to women and gender conformity as a whole.

1.1 From Feudalism to Capitalism : a Class Conflict

Karl Marx argues that the proletariat ought to always find a way to overtake the bourgeoisie. Although many discard his theory by claiming that capitalism is still well and present, the argument that lower classes always rebelled throughout the years of inequality still stands.

The change from a feudal society to a capitalistic system took centuries to properly be considered a significant change. The feudal system refers to a societal, economic, and military system based upon agreements between nobility, clergy, and peasants during the Middle Ages. The land, or means owners, would provide shelter and protection in return for labor from the lower classes. The transition, however, happened from the “middle ages feudal crisis”. The feudal crisis happened between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, an era where the “peasants” revolted against the nobility due to fights about payments and landlord treatments. The crisis was an eruption of consecutive social and economic issues at hand during the era. In terms of labor power, the population has been greatly affected by the

plague, which resulted in inadequate labor and rights distribution from the nobility (Rodney 2017). But it was also a natural result that such a fragile system would fall after a period of prosperity, in his work "Marxism and the transition from feudalism to capitalism" rodney explains :

"Was there a series of unconnected crises that shook the social order to the point at which, however basically sound, it was incapable of recovery? Or, on the contrary, were there deeper causes at the root of these economic, social, and political crises? This latter explanation seems better to us. But let us put away one specious hypothesis: that there was some sort of slump in agriculture, industry, and finance, similar to those which our own experience of capitalist society suggests should be expected after a period of prosperity" (Rodney 2017).

1.2 The Protestant Ethic

In Max Weber's "The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism," a distinct relationship is drawn between the work and life ethics practiced by protestants and capitalist values. Weber argues that the Puritans religious beliefs formed the foundation of the American people's embrace of capitalism. In this respect, it can be seen that the beliefs of the pilgrim protestants exemplified themselves in ways that correlate to free market beliefs, most notably the belief in God's gratification of hard work and the seeking of wealth and discipline. The belief in the original sin makes for God to grant salvation only through seeing true discipline and hard work, but also because work within the Calvinist belief is in itself worship. Labor ought to keep the mind and body cleansed in some sense from worldly pleasures and temptations, as he states :

"Labour is, on the one hand, an approved ascetic technique, as it always has been in the Western Church, in sharp contrast not only to the Orient but to almost all monastic rules the world over. It is in particular the specific defense against all those temptations that Puritanism united under the name of the unclean life." (Weber 105)

Consequently, this mindset shaped the perfect personalities needed to correlate with a work-hussle-focused culture, which is needed for a free market-based system. The essential ideals that laid the foundation for the acceptance of the capitalist mindset in Europe and the

western world. "Rationalization" sits at the top of the list. Weber suggests that Calvinist beliefs encouraged the practice of self-denial and restraint from worldly pleasures (Weber 105). The author highlights this lifestyle was characterized by frugality and discipline :

"For sexual intercourse is permitted, even within marriage, only as the means willed by God for the increase of His glory according to the commandment, "Be fruitful and multiply." Along with a moderate vegetable diet and cold baths, the same prescription is given for all sexual temptations as is used against religious doubts and a sense of moral unworthiness: "Work hard in your calling" (Weber 105).

Work was not only God's calling for the hungry, it was an unconditional command, which meant that even the wealthy are not exempt from the call for labor. Even if they did not necessarily need to do labor if their wealth was generational, they still had to obey God's commandment.

Over time, this primary focus on work and sidelining of life's pleasures contributed to the rationalization of economic life, leading to the accumulation of capital and the association of capital with power and status, thus the emergence of capitalist economic systems. Additionally, predestination, as Weber highlights, teaches that God has already determined who will be saved and who will be damned. Wealth and the accumulation of capital and status were means to dissociate one's "saved" self from the unsaved. This played a crucial role in the creation and elaboration of social classes as we know them today, as argues Weber :

"True to the Puritan tendency toward pragmatic interpretations, the providential purpose of the division of labor is to be known by its fruits. At this point, Baxter expresses himself in terms that more than once directly recall Adam Smith's well-known apotheosis of the division of labor. The specialization of occupations leads, since it makes the development of skills possible, to a quantitative and qualitative improvement in production and thus serves the common good" (Weber 107).

Calvinists believed that they could discern signs of their salvation through their worldly success and prosperity, leading them to work diligently and accumulate wealth as evidence of God's favor and as a means to disconnect themselves from the "unfortunate". These world views have had an undeniable impact on capitalism, as Max Weber presents in the Protestant ethic, with its emphasis on hard work, frugality, and rationality, providing the

cultural and psychological foundation for the development of capitalist economic systems in Western Europe and North America. Although many other factors ought to be taken into consideration, protestant ethics played a crucial role in shaping the values and attitudes of capitalist societies (Weber 1905).

1.3 Women, Primitive Accumulation And Commodification of Labor

Work, according to Marxists, is an essential part of the human experience. It can be fulfilling and bring a sense of meaning, discipline, and accomplishment. Especially with the added knowledge that one's work is contributing to their community, as written in capital 1 : "In bourgeois society, living labor is but a means to increase accumulated labor. In communist society, accumulated labor is but a means to widen, enrich, and promote the existence of the laborer" (Marx 47).

However, not all work is recognized within a capitalist context. From Karl Marx's perspective, labor under capitalism becomes a mere soldable commodity disconnected from its producer. This ability to sell and buy labor contributes to an unequal system where the proletariat is reduced to labor power and is, according to Marx, alienated from the classes who buy their efforts. This concept of "commodification of labor" is the result of the exploitative nature of capitalism, according to the economist. This nature dictates that the surplus value generated by labor is essential, however, the laborers are diminished to production power and stripped of any credit for creativity or meaningfulness of their work, making labor power a commodity (Marx 1867).

This is a critical quality of capitalism. Making profitable business calls for generating more profit than your capital; in other words, the less is put into production, the more ought to be made in profit. Belittling labor is a crucial strategy to reel in as much profit as possible while convincing the proletariat that their work and efforts are little and not worthy of decent pay. This is the reason why addressing the devaluation of labor is a core tenet of the women's liberation movement.

2. Capitalism's Impact on Women

In *Women, Race, and Class*," Angela Davis dives into the interconnection of the capitalist system, race, and sex. According to the scholar, the capitalist system operates in a way that structures different workforces to maximize profit and production through an organized work distribution across genders and classes. In her lens, women's oppression is undeniably intertwined with other systems, most notably racism and the free market.

2.1 Historical Context

In order to understand the struggles women face currently, it is crucial to understand the circumstances that have paved the way for the implementation of sexism within the current social diaspora. A significant chapter in Angela Davis's magnum opus explained the exploitation experienced by women of color in the United States of America. Black women never had the "luxury" of being the protected suburban housewife. In that context, women of color worked as much as their male counterparts, if not more, all while still experiencing the exploitations that are commonly associated with women, like sexual assault. In the eyes of the oppressors, women were suddenly an undeniable working power as capable as men, but still women at the end of the day in terms of abuse. She states:

«When it was profitable to exploit them as if they were men, they were regarded, in effect, as genderless, but when they could be exploited, punished, and repressed in ways suited only for women, they were locked into their exclusively female roles" (Davis 11).

Davis argues that this forged the experience of womanhood for many black women, which contrasted the qualities of the nineteenth-century ideology of what womanhood ought to be. On the other hand, industrialization during the pre-civil war era in the United States robbed many women, specifically white women, of productive labor. With machinery, no woman was a match for producing textiles or candles. As a result, femininity became associated with house care and became far detached from any productive work, she explains : "The cleavage between the home and the public economy, brought on by industrial capitalism, established female inferiority more firmly than ever before. "Woman" became synonymous in the prevailing propaganda with "Mother" and "Housewife" bore the fatal mark of inferiority" (Davis 17).

These concepts, however, according to the author, were not familiar to the female slaves or to the black family unit. She explains how the economic arrangements of slavery contradicted the gender roles and gender expectations that prevailed in white suburban families during the era. More often than not, black family units lacked the patriarchal hold that was prevailing in the current ideologies, and even were at times matriarchal. Due to the slave owners' refusal to acknowledge fatherhood, which forces many families into matriarchy. This has created environments in which spirits of independence and self-reliance were forged. In this respect, Davis highlights how the stereotype of the “strong black woman” undermines the devastating effects that slavery had on black family structures and black women as a whole. In order to understand how black women have a significant impact on their communities, it is essential to understand the experiences of these women and how black women were equal to black men in their suffering (Davis 1981).

2.2 Women as a Workforce

Labor, being an indispensable tenet of capitalism, has long been divided under this system. The countless and never-ending chores that are prescribed mostly as women's work have not always been considered as such. Angela Davis highlights the repercussions that the division of labor has had on both the public's awareness of women's image and the impact this unfair workload has had on both sexes as a whole. As mentioned earlier in the passage “How did patriarchy actually begin?” The male hunter and female gatherer myth have been a debate. Women and men in pre-capitalist societies have not necessarily had a division of labor. Maybe it is not harmful to acknowledge that some tasks are easier for some genders than others; nonetheless, this does not dictate the gendering of tasks as a whole. Friedrich Engels states: “Sexual inequality as we know it today did not exist before the advent of private property. During the early eras of human history, the sexual division of labor was complementary as opposed to hierarchical” (Engels, qtd. in Davis 237). Davis highlights the abuse that is caused by the unfair distribution of the workload among the sexes. Naturally, when one individual is forced to put over 40 hours of labor into his work to afford a living, the other party must take over the rest of the lively tasks.

“The housewife” however, was never a luxury enjoyed by most women, as Davis argues. Historically speaking, women have always worked; black women and women from lower

classes did not fall into the suburban nuclear fantasy people like Phyllis Schlafly sought to fight to protect so hard, all while ignoring the belittlement of the labor at hand of women. It is in capitalism's interest to rebrand as much labor as possible as insignificant in order to avoid requests for financial compensation. Bell hooks states on the matter: "Many women in the job market do service work, which is either low-paying or unpaid (i.e., housework). Housework and other other service work is particularly devalued in capitalist patriarchy" (Hooks 102).

Zillah Eisenstein further explores the intersection of the capitalist system, patriarchy, and feminism in her work "Capitalist patriarchy and the case for socialist feminism." Through utilitarian Marxist theory, she aims at analyzing power in terms of class origins and patriarchal roots. She presents the case in which patriarchy and capitalism are mutually dependent, in the sense that, just as workers can be exploited in the labor force, women's exploitation happens due to their relation to the prevalent sexual hierarchy (Eisenstein 22). The scholar elaborates on Marx's arguments on women's issues rising from women being considered an othered class due to their position as instruments of reproduction, further exasperated by bourgeois marriage and the unequal division of labor. Although Eisenstein argues that dismantling the nuclear family or the class system alone would not insure liberation from patriarchy, she nevertheless notes Marx's writing as essential for understanding power dynamics as construed through social classes and sexism (Eisenstein 10).

Like Davis, Bell Hooks's work "feminist theory: from margin to center"(1984) heavily criticized liberal, white feminism as performed by mostly middle-class white women. In her chapter titled "Rethinking the Nature of Work," she advocates for re-evaluating the notion that women entering the workforce within the capitalist patriarchal system is by no means "empowering." Firstly, as already mentioned, women have always been in the workforce, albeit not in blue-collar or influential positions according to capitalist standards; they remained parts of the economy for long before the idea of work became empowering for them. Additionally, Hooks denounces the liberal feminist movement for its focus on high-paying and high-status work positions when speaking of women's "empowerment" via seeking financial stability, arguing that it consequently alienates non-bourgeoisie women from the movement as a whole (Hooks 99). The emphasis of Davis, as reinforced by Hooks, is on focusing on reinventing the idea of work and understanding what it entails within a

capitalist system instead of rebranding it as empowering or liberating. Mostly due to the fact that most women's lives will still be entangled with men's, no matter if they are financially independent or not. Moreover, male dominance through financial means is only one small aspect of what constitutes sexism or abuse in the current political climax. The two scholars call for looking into the complex economic and social aspects, which must be fixed in order to truly liberate women from work commodities. In Hook's words :“We must accept that it is a system that depends on the exploitation of underclass groups for its survival. We must accept that within that system, masses of women are and will be victims of class oppression” (Hooks 101).

In Silvia Federici's study of the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe in her work «Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation», Federicci examines the way women were impacted and became a targeted demography during this transition. Considering the puritanical ideals as explained by Max Weber, there was a very clear attack on the “body” that entailed a demonization of anything non-Eurocentric or non-protestant, which was an essential concept within Federici's work. Specifically, she looked into the restrictions on sexual and bodily autonomy. She defines two characteristics that have exemplified the oppressive nature that capitalism has enabled: primitive accumulation and the attack on the body.

2.3 Primitive Accumulation

This concept explains how capitalism establishes itself through the seizing of land, working power, or, in other words, people and resources. This, of course, puts imperialism at the forefront of the discussion. Federici argues that the Europeans came to fulfill primitive accumulation through, first, the separation of the land or resource from its rightful owners, thus alienating the natives and the lower classes, this naturally goes hand in hand with the concept of “commodification” of labor as well. This concept is essential in order to reap the benefits of exploiting their labor power with little to no compensations without guilt : “ the divorcing of the workers from the means of production, not abstinence of the rich, is the source of capitalist wealth” (Marx,qtd in Federici 98). She further explains how women were especially affected as the concept of “community” fell with the loss of land and the privatization of means. Misogyny was rising at the time, and violence was rampant, women rarely commuted to be vagabond or migrant workers, as it was the most demanded for work.

Moreover, they were less mobile on account of child rearing and pregnancies (Federici 2004); they were also more impacted by land privatization and monetary relations since they were confined to reproductive labor by patriarchal and protestant ideals. All of which served essential in the accumulation of labor power. These historical changes brought about by the transition changed women's position in society as well as their relation to their male counterparts.

The sexual division of labor that emerged from it not only fixed women to reproductive work but increased their dependence on men, enabling the state and employers to use the male wage as a means to command women's labor :“ In this way, the separation of commodity production from labor power also made possible the development of a specifically capitalist use of the wage and the markets as means of the accumulation of unpaid labor” (Federici 98).

2.4 The Witch Hunts and Social Control of Women

According to the author, Silvia Federici, the witch hunts and patriarchal ideals during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries played a significant role in the transition from a feudal system to a capitalist system. The concept of a “ witch” encapsulates more than the idea of magic or superstition. A witch is a symbol of rebellion and non-orthodoxy. There was a reason why the victims accused of witchcraft were most often women who challenged or did not conform to communal norms, like women with knowledge of midwifery and herbal medicine (Federici 2004). It represented the fears and paranoia of the people during the times. Witches, whether real or not, are not the concern, but rather, it was their position and attitudes as holders of such titles. Therefore, the witch hunts were, according to Federici, a form of social control, not only for the policing of women but also, witchcraft or superstitions often gave people an alternative way of living. Spirituality offers a worldview that detaches its believers from the constraints of the consumer mindset under the capitalist system, as she highlights :

“Eradicating these practices was a necessary condition for the capitalist rationalization of work, since magic appeared as an illicit form of power and an instrument to obtain what one wanted without work... Magic kills industry” (Federici 210).

Federici further emphasizes how it should seem obvious how all of these circumstances climaxed during the colonization and the extermination of the native populations in the new world. The protestant ethic theory at play and imperialism made for the perfect conditions for demonizing anything that did not adhere to the European eye. The natives' ways of life, which centered around communal living, complementary men-women relations, non-patriarchal values, and spirituality, were all eradicated in the name of the "free market," in Bell Hook's words:

"Within our society, all forms of oppression are supported by traditional western thinking. The primary contradiction in Western cultural thought is the belief that the superior should control the inferior" (Hooks 35).

Conclusion

Gender roles and gender conformity as they exist today are a result of the implementation of the capitalist system through imperialism. Adam Smith and Karl Marx's present opposing perspectives on the economic system, while Smith advocates for a free market system with minimal government intervention, Marx criticized the system for fueling inequality, perpetuating hierarchies, and abusing people's labor force. Later on, social changes and conflict arose from the transitional phase of feudalism to capitalism, due to the rise of private property and the commodification of labor by the upper classes. Lastly, Max Weber's "The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism" highlights an understanding that the foundation for the adoption of capitalist values by the American people was laid on protestant beliefs such as frugality, emphasis on hard work for "salvation," and conservatism.

The analysis by Angela Davis provides insight on how the implementation of capitalism impacted women as a whole, but specifically women of color, through an examination of the division and gendering of labor that serves as a steady work force to maximize profit. Furthermore, "Caliban and the Witch" by Federici sheds light on how women were historically heavily affected by the implementation of the capitalist system. Through, not only the witch hunts as social control, but also the privatization of land and the division of labor.

Overall, the presented historical recapitulation demonstrates how capitalism has shaped gender roles and an intricate work force through successfully branding some work as "womanly" and others as "manly," exploiting people's labor, and influencing societal structures and public perceptions on work, gender, and conformity.

Chapter Two : The Persistence of Anti-Feminist Sentiment

Within digital spaces crafted to work via algorithms and targeted content, there have been cases in which a noticeable divide between the two genders has occurred. Some studies indicate that women are growing more liberal compared to men, who are leaning farther towards conservatism and far-right politics (Evans 2024). In a survey from the Hill, results showed that nearly two-thirds (sixty four percent) of women respondents identified as progressive or liberal, whereas men were more likely to be associated with the right, as only thirteen percent of men surveyed identified as libertarian, eighteen percent said they were conservative, and eleven percent aligned themselves with Republicans (Sforza 2023).

This is not to imply that being politically right-leaning is in any way alarming or, within itself, wrong. However, this chapter will look into the link that is apparent between the two urban media circles that have been the exemplifiers of rampant anti-feminist sentiments online and far-right political ideologies. In order to conceptualize the real-life consequences they had on the women's liberation movement, notably the manosphere, which is the term that describes cybercommunities of anti-feminism and patriarchal ideologies subgroups of men, as well as incel communities, also known as involuntary celibate men (Farshad 17).

Through a recapitulation of the history of the feminist movement and the opposition it has faced, most notably from conservatives and right-wing politics, the correlation between anti-feminist sentiments and capitalist values ought to become more evident. The opposition to the women's liberation movement is framed as an attempt to protect the traditional values the right cares deeply about. Such as the traditional nuclear family values, gender roles and gender conformity, and a fear of a change within the status quo, especially concerning women's positions in society in relation to men's.

1. Introduction to Feminist Politics

A consensus on what feminism should be defined as is hard to reach within feminist discourse due to the complexities and size of the liberation movement. Bell Hooks defines it as “a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (Hooks 1984). Although the movement holds no official or universal definition, this research will take the Marxist feminist branch particularly into account, which can be described as an ideological and intellectual movement that advocates for the liberation of women and men through breaking patriarchal values and systemic misogyny. This involves a re-examining of gender norms and gendered expectations as shaped by the capitalist system's values and its imperial history (Armstrong 2020).

The word "feminism" serves mostly as an umbrella term, as there are various types of feminist ideologies considering the diversity of religious, cultural, and economic beliefs. In broader terms, it is a social and political movement that fights for the equality of the sexes and advocates for equal opportunities, treatment, and judgment for men and women (Britannica 2024).

The movement was propelled forward in the twentieth century, as women took a significant role in the economy during the First World War. It was an unspoken rule that women would take their “places” back as homemakers after the war; however, a new sense of independence and autonomy was experienced by women. Making for a significant rise in the will for political and personal autonomy for themselves. Although the movement has crossed several significant milestones and has succeeded in regaining the monopoly on the birth rights women were stripped of, it has known its highs and lows and has historically had significant backlash. But why would people, especially conservative-aligned individuals, oppose the feminist movement? And is the movement failing?

1.1 The Establishment of Patriarchy

It is important to establish that although capitalism fuels sexism, patriarchy was established approximately around the time of the invention of private property. In an article written by Angela Saini called "How did patriarchy begin?" She explains how patriarchy, although branded to us as the "natural" order of life, is evidently the farthest thing from the truth. Neither matriarchy nor patriarchy overtake in nature, but it is in fact a mixture and depends on the species, with some species being neither. Most mammals, like lions, hyenas, bonobos, whales, and elephants, are matriarchal. Some mammals, like the chimpanzee, are patriarchal. Some mammals are neither matriarchal nor patriarchal. This being said, it is important to take the natural fallacy into consideration. In other words, humans, with their complex ability to criticize, should not aspire to imitate nature, as nature holds various inhumane aspects, and humans have far distanced themselves from nature since the industrial revolution (Saini 2023).

The term "patriarchy," meaning "rule of the father," reflects how male power has long been believed to start in the family with men as heads of their households, but across the primate world, it is rare. As anthropologist Melissa Emery Thompson at the University of New Mexico has observed, intergenerational family relationships in primates are consistently organized through mothers, not fathers. Furthermore, many anthropologists and scholars, like Frederick Engels, in his work "Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State," have demonstrated and proved that throughout history, the concept of the nuclear family was almost nonexistent. Families and mostly women, took the lead in communities to raise children as groups. Additionally, women were not constricted to specific partners or considered "property." He states, "Every woman belongs equally to every man, and every man to every woman" (Engels 38).

The hunter-caveman and the fire-mending cave woman myths still prevail in popular culture and have severe consequences for the perception of gender roles in public consciousness. Although it has been debunked by various archeologists in several recent studies, according to archaeologist Ian Hodder at Stanford University, analysis of human remains suggests that men and women had identical diets, spent around the same amount of time indoors and outdoors, and did similar kinds of work. Even the height difference between the sexes was slight. This would raise the question of how the biases against women about being the weak, nurturing, caring, or motherly sex came to be so prevalent?

The theory states that it all comes back to agricultural times; women definitely did field work; however, social classes began to form as private property of land, and cattle became a concept. The elite then aspired to give their wealth further on to their legitimate children and restricted women's sexual freedom. James Scott at Yale University, whose research has focused on early agrarian states, argues that the elites in these early societies needed people to be available to produce a surplus of resources for them and to be available to defend the state—even to give up their lives, if needed, in times of war. In consequence, the state needed to control population levels, making the primary focus of young women having more and more babies, especially sons who would grow up to fight. These expectations later on seethed into society as rigid gender roles, enclosing men as the violent sex and women as the home caretakers (Saini 2023).

1.2 The Waves of Feminism

The first wave of feminism spanned from the late eighteenth century into the nineteenth century. This wave of the movement was crucial and can be considered an honorable landmark for the women's movement. Its focus was primarily on obtaining basic primary rights, such as voting and reproductive rights. Nonetheless, it ought to be mentioned that during this time the movement looked severely at diversity and worked to gain rights for cis-het white women, with active statements ignoring the needs of women of color and the exclusion of other social classes.

Later on, from the nineteen sixties to the seventies, the new wave aimed to challenge traditional gender roles. Questioning what was factually feminine or masculine and why it must be a binary, and a rejection of traditional roles and gendered expectations. This era also witnessed a rise in queer theory (addressing gender itself), with a split between institutional reform and reshaping society to be more inclusive and accepting of change. While unfortunately still excluding women of color in mainstream spaces, and thus the necessary rise in black feminism, most notably intersectional movements like Marxist feminism and radical feminism, along with TERF rhetoric,.

Since the nineties, the focus has been on expanding women's freedom of choice with their bodies and lives. The only "rule" is that there are no rules. Rise in "choice" feminism and liberal feminism and in the overall identification with the movement. Kimberlé Crenshaw

coined the term intersectionality with a rise in cultural movements like The Vagina Monologues, the Guerrilla Girls, and punk rock riot grrls.

The establishment of the "Me Too" movement for awareness against sexual harassment, along with an uptick in attacks on women's rights as a reaction from the public, is a new concept within the fourth wave of feminism. Not to mention the still ongoing lack of recognition for women of color and trans women. This, however, resulted in a rediscovery of black feminist thought and an examination of the intersection of racism and sexism. (Gender and Sexuality Resource Center).

1.3. Public Perception of The Feminist Movement

Every ideology and movement should be criticized. It is for the best to be open to constructive criticism to reevaluate one's ideals, goals, and manners of conduct. However, some criticism holds better than others. Although some are meant to be constructive, others are purely out of bias or simply ill-spirited. Feminism has always faced its fair share of backlash as the opposers find it hard to embrace new concepts and accept change, are too blinded by their internalized misogyny, or, in most cases, believe in "sexual determinism." This makes them judge women with far different reactions than men. Historically, men and women from the same age and class demographics have shared political values, even feminist values. However, recently, in the late twentieth century, the gap between women and men's political values has significantly widened, with men leaning farther toward conservatism and women towards liberalism (Evans 2024).

In the year nineteen twenty three, two suffragettes named Alice Paul and Crystal proposed the Equal Rights Amendment to Congress to advocate for political and legal protection for women in workplaces, seeking to end the legal distinctions between men and women in terms of divorce, property, employment, and other matters that plagued that time. The amendment reads : "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." However, the ERA was not ratified by the Constitution because the deadline passed without the necessary support from three-fourths of states. Although the ERA gained ratification from thirty states within one year of its Senate approval, intense opposition from conservative, religious, and political organizations

effectively brought ratification to a standstill. An anti-ERA movement was led by a conservative white activist named Phyllis Schlafly (Kennedy 2023).

2. Phyllis Schlafly and The Fear Mongering Tactic

Fear-mongering is a public manipulation technique that relies on spreading unnecessarily exaggerated rumors or information that fuels fear and an impending sense of doom about a certain situation or aspect. Phyllis Schlafly is an American conservative lawyer who has led several anti-communist and anti-abortion campaigns. Following the proposition that the ERA should be added to the Constitution, Schlafly led an anti-ERA campaign that advertised the idea that the ERA is a danger to American traditional family values.

People are free in their beliefs. One can argue that Schlafly being anti-feminist and against the ERA is her right. However, it is essential to pinpoint how Schlafly embodies the white conservative women's ideal. In her mind, women were privileged enough to avoid wanting actual equality. She painted this idea that women not being forced to sign for the military draft and being able to be provided for by their husbands were privileges that were to be taken away from the equality that feminists wished for. Her blatant blind eye towards lower classes and non-white suburban women, who historically never "enjoyed" the protection white suburban life brought to white women, helped her craft a dystopian vision for her followers, in which the ERA meant the freedom of on-demand abortions, military drafts, and women working. All of which made her argue that greater sex equality would lead to a moral decline in society by changing the roles that women had traditionally held. Although historically, women have always worked, especially black and working-class women, Schlafly made it seem to most women that being financially dependent or enduring some sort of inequality was not as bad as being equal rivals to men. She vividly preached in favor of traditional gender roles and suburban white values, encapsulated in traditional wives and husbands, which she believed were under attack by the ERA. She states : "ERA means abortion and homosexuality on demand; it means marriage out the window; it means freedom from the family; it means no protection for wives or children." (Schlafly 1970).

She was avidly present on the debate scene and exceedingly clever with how she painted the feminist movement. Specifically as a watered-down "men versus women" situation instead of us versus a bigger system, in order to fuel an avid hate campaign against the movement

single-handedly affecting the course of the ERA and spreading long-lasting effects on the perception of the feminist movement (Kennedy 2023).

3. Anti-Feminism as a Gateway to Far Right Politics

Although women often get the end of the stick under patriarchy, men often do not escape the consequences of the system they established. The gender expectation for men under traditional gender classification is of the masculine dominant prototype. Manhood often entails rigid masculine conformation, limiting true self-expression. Along with the expectation of being the sole providers and financials of their home, a lot of pressure can build up while performing the perfect man fantasy. Male suicide rates are higher than women's, typically for variable reasons, but especially within the confines of masculinity. These confines make for a pandemic of solitude among men. Real human connections require vulnerability and openness; however, men are very unlikely to forge true raw connections with other men, making for very unstable and fragile support environments (Kimmel 2013) With the Internet, however, many men could find solace on different platforms, most notably Reddit forums and YouTube communities. Many of these communities start as forums to help young men gain confidence. Through the usual aspects of life, like fitness tips and dating advice. However, due to the nature of the algorithms on many online platforms, it can create an echo chamber effect, where ideas echo and fuel each other. It is common in these cyberspaces to witness a transition from the innocent question “How can I get a girlfriend?” to “Why don't women want me?” (Eero, Salojärvi et al., 5)

"Incel" stands for “involuntarily celibate”. It is someone who believes that being single or incapable of finding sexual relations is due to feminism. Incels embody a blind entitlement towards women, and think that sex is a birthright, upheld from them by women (Eero, Salojärvi et al.6). They believe that the disparity of many men who struggle is far from being the patriarchy's fault, but rather feminism's fault for giving women autonomy and “disturbing the order of life.” According to them, life was all well during the nineteen fifties, when men were providers and women held their places as subservient. They tend to ignore the instability of the mental state of men, which reigned back during that era. They are the victims of feminism, which is making women hold their sexual favors from them and abusing them to gain unfair privileges (Kimmel 115). Thus, women ought to be held

accountable for their "misconduct." In the article, "To learn about the far right, start with the manosphere" Helen Lewis states :

"Anti-feminism offers to address a genuine sense of grievance. Sites such as 4chan, another anonymous message board, have developed a whole language to talk about the hurt young men feel: Staceys" (conventionally attractive, sexually available white women) date Chads" (jocks), ignoring «nice guys» who get «friendzoned» ...What starts as why won't girls sleep with me—an appeal to a wounded sense of entitlement—becomes why can't women be controlled?" (Lewis 2019).

The economy does not allow for one person to comfortably finance an entire family anymore. Women can own property and escape abusive or unfulfilling relationships more easily, as well as education levels are affecting women's choices on having children overall. This in consequence makes the «ideal nuclear fantasy family» out of reach for most regular people. Therefore directly impacts the ego of the self-proclaimed “alpha” man. This evokes extreme hate and detrimental views on the opposite sex in ways that can actually translate into real-life consequences (Bujalka Eva et al, 2).

One could argue that extremism has always existed in one form or another. Cults and hateful ideologies are nothing new and have always been forged prior to Reddit forums or other social platforms. However, there has been a clear correlation between the manosphere and the alt-right rhetoric, as both of these parties share common values. Both sides share common values, most notably the idea of the rigid nuclear family as well as the yearning for a time when women were forced to be more reliant on men's finances. The transition from an online ideology to a political side has been documented by researchers who follow these forums populated by people who name themselves "the red pill" (a reference to the matrix scene where the protagonist has to choose between the blue pill and stay ignorant of the world or the red pill that would make him see the truth). They have noticed that these men who first join the manosphere for a place of grievance and escape from politics inevitably turn extremely politically charged with the right political sides. It transitions from being about men as individuals to men as a group, as an "attacked" group (Kimmel 2013).

4. Bodily Autonomy

Bodily autonomy, as the name suggests, is having the birthright to be in control of one's body. In essence, it is the freedom of consenting to or refusing medical treatment, having the freedom to make body alterations, as well as sexual orientations. It ensures that people have rule over their bodies and are allowed to make decisions that concern them in ways that reflect their beliefs and values without external interference or coercion.

Although this is a clear and rational idea, historically speaking, many people have been denied this birthright. Taking into consideration the history of colonization, many native populations were subjected to intrusive operations by their colonizing governments (the sterilization of people of color in Native American Europe and the USA). However, when it concerns women, it seems like there are still various ways women are subjugated to bodily regulations, either direct or indirect. Women's bodies never seem to belong to an individual but rather can be viewed as being in the public domain.

4.1. The European Witch Hunts Role in The Establishment of Control on Women and Capitalist Ideals

In "Caliban and the Witch," Silvia Federici draws parallels between the witch hunts that occurred during the Middle Ages and the establishment of the capitalist system. She argues that the witch hunts were a femicide so severe in scale, that it could only have been due to the need to impose control and lay the necessary foundation for the capitalist gendered working force. She states:

“Such war against women, carried out over a period of two centuries, was a turning point in the history of women in Europe, the original sin » in the process of social degradation that women suffered with the advent of capitalism and a phenomenon, therefore, to which we must continually return if we are to understand the misogyny that still characterizes institutional practice and male-female relations” (Caliban 257).

Federici's argument aims at showing that for the capitalist system to have a well-aligned workforce, made of men who were abused for their physical power for forty hours a week and women who held those men's lives afloat with underestimated and unpaid labor. These

women needed to be tamed. In other words, the policing and limitation of women's bodily autonomy were necessary, especially in terms of reproduction. A significant element in this context was the condemnation as maleficent of abortion and contraception, which consigned the female body—the uterus—to a machine for reproductive labor (Federici 210). The aftermath of these social constraints cemented the ideals of the perfect woman; the gentle mother, and the pure female for the upcoming centuries, seething into public consciousness. As well as into governmental policies. The idea of controlling a woman's body seems to most people to be the most normal, as the moral ideal:

"Can you think of any laws that give the government the power to make decisions about the male body?" asks Senator Kamala Harris.

"I'm not thinking of any right now, Senator," Brett Kavanaugh says.

This exchange happened between Senator Kamala Harris and Brett Kavanaugh during the political debate that ensued after *Roe v. Wade* was revoked. Only when the roles are subverted might people sense the utter discomfort of the intrusive nature of these policies.

4.2. Docile Bodies

Michel Foucault's work "The Birth of Prison" revolves around the way bigger institutions thrive to stabilize and domesticate the masses in order to create a "proper working" society. The theory argues that establishments such as prisons, schools, and religious institutions work in order to socialize people according to a set of values, which would make them docile and obedient. He presents a criticism in which he analyzes the role of power structures in societal discipline and the shaping of societal norms and principles.

In this respect, one tenet that can showcase the objectification of women that is exercised through social hierarchies is his examination of the production of "docile bodies". As far as women's bodies are concerned, many institutions build on the concepts of purity and shame to direct and police women's body autonomy. Puritanical ideals in which the female body can be subjugated to aspects that could "damage" the cleanliness of said body. These institutions create an environment in which "slutshaming" and purity culture invade women's decisions before any other personal decisions. The social tax women pay for any

decisions they make about their bodies can be consequential, making for the objectification of women as a whole (Foucault 170).

Furthermore, hierarchical systems in this theory, according to Foucault, are essential for the success of subjugating individuals to the disciplinary tenets and punishments. He states:

"He who is subjected to a field of visibility and who knows it assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (Foucault 202).

From the established systems of hierarchies comes the need for validation. Women, or patriarchy, more often than not, is a self-policing system. Women are often the first to internalize the misogyny they experience and thus apply it to themselves and their fellow women in a self-policing manner.

Conclusion

Following what has already been established in the first chapter. It is apparent that gender roles as they exist today are a result of the historical establishment of Eurocentric values and beliefs. First as colonialism and later as it evolved into capitalism, these systems have perpetuated and reinforced anti-feminist sentiment eventually. Utilizing the sources provided, it is evident that gender conformity and anti-feminist sentiment have a correlation rooted in the structure and ideology of the capitalist system.

As the lenses of the two scholars ,Federici and Davis, show, the effects of slavery and the commodification of labor have left a stagnant mark on what femininity and womanhood denote. The gendering of labor is a result of the transition from the feudal system to capitalism, which was implemented through the privatization of land. Consequently, this transition hindered women's economic independence via the destruction of communities, the policing of women's roles and bodies, which later ensued from a mixture of bigger establishments, as indicated by Foucault and as exemplified by Fedirici by the witch trials. Therefore, the capitalist system relies on the separation of labor by gender in order to create a stable and reliable work force in which the work of women is underestimated and utilized at the same time.

Chapter Three : Case Study of The Rise of Incel Culture

In the year two thousand and seventeen, during the Harvey Weinstein affair uproar, Andrew Tate was banned from Twitter on the eighteenth of October, after a controversial tweet in which he expressed his belief that “women should bear some responsibility for being sexually assaulted”. This controversy has consequently uplifted his "popularity” further within the manosphere and far-right advocacy platforms and communities. A few years later, after he built a significant conservative and influential following on various media platforms like YouTube and Twitter, a campaign was conducted in order to deplatform him and have him permanently banned due to his aggravating content against women and other violent tendencies (Independent 2023).

Although he has been banned from social media and was arrested in Romania on accounts of human trafficking, attempts at organized crimes, and rape “allegations” (Independent 2023), it is undeniable that his impact and presence on social media were significant. This chapter will not take into consideration the personal rise of Andrew Tate or other prominent manosphere names. Rather, it will look into the common social attributes present within the current political and cultural climax that could have had a role in allowing the rise of the influence of the manosphere itself. As well as dissect their correlation with the right and far-right conservative ideologists.

For an overview of this chapter, the first aspect tackled will be an understanding of how internet forums and communities are gathered and scattered across the internet via algorithms that target content based on political views and gender. Furthermore, it is crucial to define the right and far right political spectrum itself in order to better highlight the significance it has, as well as put gender, and concepts of masculinity and femininity within a capitalistic context at play to understand how these social structures function as power dynamics.

1. The Spiral of Silence and Echo Chambers

The concept coined “the spiral of silence” was created by German political scientist Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. The idea refers to the ways public opinions and values are formed and maintained within communities. At its core, the theory suggests that people are more hesitant to express their true opinions or values out of fear of rejection by their communities. These individuals would very unlikely be comfortable expressing their opinions in public, which reinforces that the “ideas” or “opinions” they hold are in the minority and that they are aware of it (Neumann 372).

There are two essential factors that influence the spiral of silence, first, the “perceived opinion climate,” which means people are hyper-aware of the prevailing public opinions through various channels, like media, social interactions, and the observation of other people’s behavior. Second is “selective exposure,” which refers to people’s tendency to avoid interactions with people who hold opposing opinions and values to their own. Thus reinforcing their views and pushing them farther to extremism via “echo chambers” (Salojärvi et al, 3).

Cass Sunstein, explains the phenomenon of “echo chambers” as an information bubble in which the individual is only met with information that confirms their already existing beliefs and reinforces their biases. This can hinder people from being exposed to different realities and counter-viewpoints. This is not necessarily wrong, however, it can be a means that pushes individuals towards extremism. When surrounded by only like-minded people, individuals fuel each other’s biases and adopt more and more extreme political or cultural positions, which can also make for group homogeneity (Sunstein 69).

The concept of “echo chambers” is crucial for understanding mass thinking and polarization on social media. The polarization is often due to the exchange of specific types of information, which is predisposed to move to certain areas online. Information is far from harmful, however, as claimed by Cass Sunstein, healthy argument exchange and thought-provoking discussion can be rare within Echo Chambers (Salojärvi Eero5). Thus, echo chambers are a crucial construct that has led to the rise of incel ideology online and the spread of its aftermath. Because social media facilitated the gathering of like-minded people

within enclosed circles, polarization and radicalization, albeit not new to the era, became much easier. In “The “Incel” Phenomenon in the Digital Era” it reads :

“Because the Internet makes it easier to find like-minded individuals, it can facilitate and strengthen fringe communities that have a common ideology but are dispersed geographically. In many cases, their heated dialogues might never have reached critical mass as long as geographical separation diluted them to a few parts per million” (Salojärvi 4).

Concerning the incel movement, this phenomenon has already been shown to lead to violence and terrorist acts. At times, their process of thinking was documented on their media platforms. A pivotal example for this would be the case of “Elliot Rodger.” On the twenty third of May of two thousand and fourteen, a man named Elliot Rodger killed six people and injured fourteen others by gunshot, stabbing, and car ramming at the campus of California University, Santa Barbara, before committing suicide (Garkey 2014).

This case in particular, although it can be seen as a cruel attack committed by an unstable criminal like any other, is a very unique case in which the effects of rampant misogyny fueled by the incel movement are very apparent. Rodger, before committing the heinous crimes, was a known persona on many social platforms. Platforms onto which he regularly updated his “followers” on his ideas and frustrations against the “female” population (Garkey 2014). Although his accounts have long been deleted and have been deplatformed due to severe violations of community security, his digital footprint still remains well documented by other media and journals. Elliot Rodger had an extensive manifesto on his views about women’s treatment of him and the overall social structure of what he perceived to be the way men and women relations operated:

“It's an injustice, a crime, because I don't know what you don't see in me. I'm the perfect guy, and yet you throw yourselves at all these obnoxious men instead of me, the supreme gentleman. I will punish all of you for it” (Rodger 2014).

Many people have come to criticize the fact that Elliot Rodger’s acts were heavily influenced by incel communities and the manosphere as a whole. Although it is easy to attribute Rodger’s acts to mental instability and his psychopathic tendencies, his own digital footprint demonstrates that his actions have been greatly fueled by the cybercommunities he sought “solace” with. His association with the “men’s rights activists” and the manosphere

further implemented his frustrations and mental instability, or lack of security, with his hatred for women. This is not to connote that men's rights activists preach hate crimes; however, their emphasis on typical hegemonic masculinity and "alpha male" regiments establishes a sense of deep hatred for women. Before he acted on his impulses, Elliot Rodger documented his thoughts before the attack with a YouTube video. He stated:

"On the day of retribution, I will enter the hottest sorority house at UCSB, and I will slaughter every single spoiled, stuck-up blonde slut I see inside there. All those girls that I've desired so much would have all rejected me and looked down upon me as an inferior man if I ever made a sexual advance towards them. While they throw themselves at these obnoxious brutes. I'll take great pleasure in slaughtering all of you. You will finally see that I am, in truth, the superior one. The true Alpha Male" (Rodger 2014).

His being a proclaimed "Alpha Male" a term specifically used by the manosphere to refer to a man who has reached maximum masculine capability, cements the idea that his actions were an outcome that followed his entanglement with the manosphere and the echo chambers he was associated with. Moreover, it is also important to state that his hatred for other men, especially men he deemed "alphas" or attractive, was also a side effect of his envy for their "success" with women. This digital footprint of his showcases the fact that his misogyny, which was encouraged by these cyber communities, played a significant role in his terrorist attacks (Garkey 2014). Michael Kimmel in his work "angry white men" explains it perfectly :

"The development of the internet has fueled websites and blogs that keep the conversation going and the blood boiling. the emergence of what one writer calls (the manosphere) is a loose collection of websites that sustain the rage; even the most casual tourist will happen upon a torrent of diatribes, invectives, atrocity takes, claims to entitlement, calls to arms and prescriptions in the service of men, children, families, God,...and all other things non-feminist" (Kimmel 2013).

2. Defining the Far Right

Research that tackles the nature and understandings of the far right political side is plentiful. Cas Mudde is a heavily cited name within the political science spheres that discuss right spectrum politics. According to the scholar, the far right can be defined as having the characteristics of populism, nativism, and authoritarianism. First, the ideology of populism can be encapsulated as a worldview in which the population is either the homogenous group of the corrupted elite and advocates for “the people’s” desires or wants to be taken into consideration within political decisions. Nativism is the belief that the “Native” population is the only righteous inhabitant within the country, and “non-natives” can be a threat to the prosperity of the “Natives” and their ways of life. Lastly, an ideology that argues for strict order and leadership of the populace, with a law that punishes any infringement, is authoritarianism (Mudde 2000). According to Mudde, there is a common theme in the far right way of thinking, most notably the idea of “us” versus “them”. The ideology clearly holds dear the notion that others are an infringement on the existence and liberties of the “native” or non-othered population, which creates a strong sense of opposition to immigration or deviation from the culture that is present within the far right spheres (Mudde 2000).

In Michael Kimmel’s work "Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era," the sociologist dives into the phenomenon of the anger of far-right men and misogynists within contemporary America. His main argument is that many men, particularly those from middle-class backgrounds, feel a severe sense of threat and marginalization from the changes occurring in society in terms of gender roles and multiculturalism. In many of his works, like "The Gendered Society", Kimmel prefaces that men having actual “power” due to their gender is a myth. Indeed, he argues that gender is more than simply a social construct but an actual institution; in other words, the idea that gender is an individual concept is flawed, as it is more of a complementary relationship between individual and institutional. The gender of the individuals shapes bigger institutions, and bigger gendered institutions reinforce those gender stereotypes (Kimmel 124). In this respect, he further highlights how men as individuals do not possess as much power, in the sense that they themselves are constrained by bigger institutions like social class, race, and gender roles; however, as a group, they form an institution that nonetheless requires the subjugation of women (Kimmel 119). Therefore, they may not feel powerful at

all times, but they feel entitled to have power: “And it's this aggrieved entitlement that animates the men’s rights movement” (Kimmel 115).

It is essential to understand that although engaging with the right as a political spectrum is important to encapsulate the core ideology, the far right remains an almost separate entity, and the two, although similar, are not identical. The far right presents some defining traits to their politics. Cynthia Miller-Idriss, Following the steps of Mudde and building off of his definitions, he argues that the far right holds traits of dehumanization, exclusion, anti-government and anti-democratic ideals, conspiracy theories, and apocalyptic fantasies, as seen through social media and online platforms. How often is it that far-right advocates will call for the end of the world or the fall of civilization when they perceive people or practices that do not align with their enclosed worldviews? (Miller-Idriss, qtd in radicalized masculinity).

Miller-Idriss argues the far right is different from the right in the way the far right is more openly anti-democratic than the right. Whereas the right, although exclusionary, still holds democratic and “constitutional” values. She explains how the far right tends to sell a romanticized vision of reality where they can rebuild and save a corrupted and somewhat doomed state due to the threats of unorthodoxy and the "other,” as was the case with Phyllis Schlafly and Trump's “make America great again” and other conservative relics who utilize the concepts and emotions of insecurity and security. The idea of “restoring a natural order” is extremely appealing to far-right ideologies. These emotions, according to Idriss-Miller, are crucial to conceptualizing the drives and ideals of the far right.

3. Defining Gender and Hegemonic Masculinity Within The Capitalist Context

To start discussing the concept of hegemonic masculinity within the current social and economic spheres. It is important to establish gender as a concept and its dynamics. Gender and sex are two opposite ideas that yet go hand in hand. Sex is the biological signifier of male or female (Pryzgodna and Chrisler, 2000: 554), whereas gender is the way the male or female expresses their identity and is mostly curated according to social expectations and the gender norms of the era through masculinity or femininity. Masculinity and femininity are sets of behaviors and ideas attributed to the two sexes. Typically, masculinity is expected from males and femininity from females and are most often reinforced through

socialization. Therefore gender is a social construct, while sex is a biological category (Runyan and Peterson, 2015: 58).

Within the present cultures of the world, the two genders exist as a binary and are often considered in opposition. Masculinity typically connotes ideas of strength, rationality, assertion, and responsibility. Whereas femininity equates to emotionality, dependence, unpredictability, and naivety. This view that encapsulates femininity and masculinity as a dichotomy instead of two separate categories of each other is what fuels the hierarchy that masculinity holds over femininity and, consequently, that men hold over women. Whilst not all men can reach or care to be holders of the dominant status, they still naturally reap advantages from the patriarchal system (ibid., 58 qtd. in “radicalized masculinity”).

Hegemonic masculinity is a concept that was first coined in a field of sociological studies of gender inequalities in an Australian high school. There was discussion of the experiences of men and the roles of Australian men in gender politics. The study results found empirical evidence of hierarchical structures not only between the two genders but also among classes. Later on, there was a plethora of research that dealt with the concepts of masculinity, its types, its nature, and its implications (Connell and James 3).

This theory is a critique of the “male sex role” that most men identifying people seek to reach. It suggests masculinity as a part of intricate power relations with several types that play off of each other. The database on this concept dates back, not only from gender studies and experiments but also from accounts of feminist theories and deconstructions of patriarchy. Feminists like Angela Davis and Bell Hooks have argued that differences solely based on gender can lead to racial biases and discrimination (as seen in the second chapter with Davis’s lens), thus establishing how generalizations about men cannot be accurate as men among themselves fail to be equal (Connell and James, 4).

Even before the women’s liberation movement, literature that discusses the experiences of men concerning their gender expression existed in plenty. Psychological and sociological literature has looked into the changes that can occur in men’s conduct, the nature of masculinity, and the “male role” (Hacker, qtd. in Connell and James 4). The research resulted in findings of criticism of norms and the oppression experienced by men from men, however, the research has failed to take into consideration the impacts of power structures and differences. Power structures and masculinity types is a core concept that has long been

documented within the gay liberation movement, for example, where there is a strong presence of hierarchies of masculinity, especially among conformative heterosexual men. Furthermore, existing research done on cultural, local, and regional levels that looked into several spheres, such as schools, male-dominated workplaces, and village communities, all account for the existence of complex types of masculinities and gender conformities for men, as well as the way they interact with each other, especially as a means to seek dominance (Connell and James 5).

In an interview for the book “Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men” by the American sociologist Michael Kimmel, women were asked to describe what it meant to be a woman. The answers were mixed and diversified, ranging from traditional to empowerment. Showing that women believed womanhood was whatever it meant to the individual. Men, on the other hand, gave specific answers repeatedly (Kimmel 2008). They were also asked to describe what a good man was and what a “real” man was. The answers for a good man referred to a generally good person with answers like “generous” or “responsible,” while a “real” man was “tough” and showed no emotions. Kimmel encapsulated this as a good man being an abstract concept, and “a real man” was a performance (Kimmel and Wade, qtd. in “A Reason for the Rampage”).

In this respect, what resulted from the above was an understanding of the intricacies of the types of masculinity and how they intervene with hegemonic masculinity to hold the status quo and the subordination of women. Hegemony is the ultimate level of masculinity that men ought to achieve, all be it almost unattainable, and very few might seem to embody it. It is still the normative etiquette. It represents the most honorable manhood, thus requiring the global subordination of other men and women alike. Men who do not reach such levels of “dominance” and yet still experience some benefits of the patriarchy fall into the category of complicit masculinity. It is important to keep in mind that these concepts are both descriptive and abstract. They only exist in the nature of the patriarchal system and how it has historically been established to connote such sentiments concerning masculinity. It is then safe to conclude that standards for what masculinity and femininity ought to be are always changing. In other words, in another system or another era of humanity, there could exist a version of hegemonic masculinity that does not require dominance or subordination at all (Connell and James 5, 6).

In order to understand or analyze all of the prior ties to the capitalist system, two concepts need to be highlighted within the “manosphere”. Ontological security theory and white supremacy. The manosphere refers to the gathering of men's rights activists, incels, pick-up artists, anti-feminists, and others on blogs, forums, and various platforms on the internet. They proudly quest to restore and fix what they believe is “the crisis of masculinity” and the threat that feminism poses to the "status", sense of self, and “rights" of men in society. They are often a non-uniform collection of groups, and each proposes different “solutions” to address the “crisis” (Bujalka Eva et al., 2).

The theory of ontological security, as popularized by Anthony Giddens, is used in literature to refer to and look into issues like populism, immigration, terrorism, and international relations as a whole. Giddens argues that confidence or trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be, is the basis of existential parameters of self and social identity (Giddens 375). In other words, it refers to the continuity and predictability of events and ideas. Thus, it can be used to decipher the mindset and beliefs of the manosphere regarding issues of misogyny and hegemonic masculinity (Bujalka Eva et al., 2). Within the discourse of the aggrieved men of the manosphere, the world has become unknowable and distorted for men and is on the verge of the collapse of civilizations. Of course, this belief is due to their underpinnings for a “natural” world order. A world order ruled by “biological determinism” where patriarchy is the natural way of the world, all of which is threatened by feminists. Due to this grievance and the sense that these men are being stripped of their rightful rights and promised lives (gendered assumptions on what a good life ought to be for men or women) through high rates of divorce or the inability to fulfill the roles of providers, many of these men embrace “red pill” politics. Michael Kimmel states on the matter :

“Mostly, though, the men’s rights movement has been an expressive movement, especially in cyberspace, a movement to help men get their balls back. Those howls of pain and anguish that men felt led many to wallow in self-pity before they turned into rage. The men's rights movement became a movement of and for angry white men" (Kimmel 2013).

Thus, with beliefs ruled by biological determinism, patriarchy, and evolutionary hierarchies that are endangered by the blue pill agenda (liberals), the red pill and the manosphere provide guides to help men regain “control” of their lives by “helping” them concrete a sense of self to overcome these insecurities (Bujalka Eva et al, 3).

The tips provided to help these insecure men are wide and varied, but they all amount to the same goal, which is reaching the epitome of "masculinity". A primary example would be the pick-up artists within those spheres who teach men how to "pick up women". Or an essential aspect of being masculine is the importance of anti-feminism and the complete refusal of any "blue pill" ideas. Because their insecurities lay in the loss of male status and traditional roles, it is evident that they must reject anything remotely close to the "liberal agenda" (Bujalka Eva et al, 4,5). Another point that is worth noting is that the men in the manosphere are very conscious of the power that money has within a capitalist system. The idea of being one's own boss and owning capital is not only a tenet to be attained to achieve hegemonic masculinity, it is also a means to an end. In this case, power is a way to gain dominance. They have a fascination with the entrepreneurial. Making "wise" financial decisions and investments. The self-help that is sold by the leaders of the manosphere frames richness, sexual dominance, and physical attributes as the pinnacles of masculinity that will secure men in this ever-changing world. Andrew Tate build his career on the promises of making young men rich and powerful, as he states:

"If you're rich, you are free." If you want to learn how to get rich, find the richest person you can think of and ask them how to get rich. Now, a lot of rich people aren't going to tell you that I might be the richest person you know who's prepared to tell you how to get rich. If that's the case, then you can message me now at any time, and I'm going to tell you exactly how to do it. [...] You get rich on purpose. You get rich on purpose with very specific habits, rituals, and certain things you must do. Things that rich people know and you do not know. It's time to learn."(Andrew Tate, Qtd in Radicalized Masculinity 59)

As for white supremacy within the manosphere, it is more in relation to what it entails, most notably "entitlement". Race does not exist. It is, like many others, a social concept, However, it remains something very real within societal constraints. It was created by colonialism as a means to justify imperialism and the stealing of land and resources from natives and to abide by slavery and domination (Harris 1993:1717). Scholar Cheryl I. Harris, in her work "Whiteness as Property," acknowledges how through seeing the enslavements and the classification of black people historically, whiteness is positioned as the only means of property. Her theory states that whiteness entails a strong sense of entitlement: "it was the interaction between the conceptions of race and property that played a critical role in establishing and maintaining racial and economic subordination" (Harris

1993). Scholar Andrea Smith (2016) describes white supremacy as made of three interconnected pillars: slavery and capitalism, genocide and colonialism, and orientalism and war. Each has the goal of implementing dominance and taking ownership through security hierarchies. Therefore, heteropatriarchy is a result of these interwoven tenets. Bell Hooks states: "If boys are not socialized to embrace patriarchal masculinity and its concomitant violence, then they will not have the mindset needed to wage imperialist war" (hooks 1952:35 qtd in "a reason for the rampage").

In this respect, we turn to the focal point of this thesis, which was to showcase the correlation between capitalism and systems of oppression. Bell Hooks argues that heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and other systems of domination (capitalism, hegemonic masculinity) are interconnected by having complementary relationships. She uses the term "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" to refer to the USA's political system.

Social media is not harmful. Nor does it promote extremism. It is merely a reflection of the people using it. It is society within the digital world. The rise of the incel movement, as promoted by its most famous leaders like Andrew Tate in recent years, was not accidental. But it is a representation of the current political climate in the world.

Conclusion

The presented concepts within this chapter are meant to indicate the complex dynamics and correlation between societal structures, power, and oppression as affected by the historical context of the establishment of the capitalist system and its fueling of gender roles. Because the system has long forged an imbalanced power dynamic between genders and races, the norm has long been the subjugation of women under unevenly distributed labor and the expectation of conformity to gender expectations. As a result, under the implications of patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity creates a new sense of masculinity, which can only function through the rigid current expectations of what manhood entails, like richness, toughness, ownership, and dominance.

The far right advocates for populism, nativism, and authoritarianism. This side of the political spectrum creates an "us" versus "them" mentality, particularly targeting immigrants and cultural deviation. Cynthia Miller-Idriss further defines the far right by its dehumanization, exclusion, anti-government stance, as well as apocalyptic fantasy narratives due to hegemonic masculinity as implemented in the capitalist context. The far right perpetuates gender binaries and hierarchies, reinforcing male dominance and the subordination of women. Due to the way online platform algorithms work and the echo chamber phenomenon, it is fairly common for far-right individuals to assimilate themselves into incel communities and vice versa. Therefore, the incel and manosphere communities share these attributes and have an intertwined ideology.

Overall, there is an underscore of the intricate relationships between societal structures, power dynamics, and oppression. Understanding these concepts helps us dissect the complex interplay of social structures and oppression under capitalism. Most notably, what contributes to the obsession with gender conformity. Thus, we can better analyze and address systemic inequalities and what causes the outrage against the feminist movement as a whole, and leads us to question what would hegemonic masculinity entail in a world deprived of the imperial history of capitalism.

General Conclusion

Silvia Fedirici and Angela Davis present us with a perspective in which nothing exists in a vacuum. Capitalism was built on a flawed foundation. It is rooted in imperialism and is at the base of white supremacy and eurocentrism. Because the system stems from a need for maximum production with minimum investment, it has relied on slavery and the commodification of labor of the proletariat and women. In consequence, it has impacted the populous conceptions of gender and sex. The gendering of labor has made it easier to maintain a stable workforce that utilizes men's work and women's disposition for unpaid and unrecognized contributions, however, the two scholars still call for an approach in which women as a whole ought to counter the problem from its base, and recognize the differing ways women experience their hardships. By taking into consideration class, race, and gender, the three tenets that were solidified by the imperial past of the capitalist system, the feminist movement can stand a chance regardless of the resistance it faces from its political opposition.

Anti-feminist sentiments are a gateway to far-right politics, because the far right idealizes the virtues of hegemonic masculinity. This concept serves the idea of domination, subordination of women, and "traditional" gender roles. The incels and people within the manosphere are drawn towards the political scapes of the far right. The far right remains an avid upholder of capitalist values in their raw form. Incels and the men who identify within the manosphere as a whole are aggrieved by the progress made by society in order to move from traditional gender roles, calling it a "crisis of masculinity" because it goes against their sex determination and patriarchal world views. However, it is crucial to recognize the constraints that men face under patriarchy. One can argue that the statement "crisis of masculinity" in itself holds some truth to it. The male identity is indeed in crisis. The men who have been nurtured into believing that there is only one way to be perceived as "a man" live now in a world where traditional manhood has come under criticism due to its unsustainability. The rise in anti-feminism serves as a way to soothe their grievances; they are, ironically, fighting their true chance of salvation, and hindering their possibility of rebuilding their male identity. An identity far from patriarchal holds.

Hegemonic masculinity exists solely in the context of patriarchy. It entails characteristics that harm both genders, with men hurting themselves by aspiring to reach a caricature of manhood that entails power, dominance, and the objectification of women. The concept

However, is nonetheless abstract; it is ever-changing and changes according to the current societal definitions of masculinity. In other words, if capitalism did not equate power with money and the subordination of lower classes or alienation of others, another standard for masculinity would arise. The manosphere cyberspaces essentially embody the sentiments of white supremacy and entitlement and the paranoia of losing the status quo. If the right political wing did not preach for separation and patriarchy, the incel movement would have remained away from political spheres, and the feminist movement would not face as harsh a backlash as it has over the recent decades.

So much of our identity and conceptualization of reality exist within the realms of what the capitalist system established. Although capitalism is not the only contributor to the hindering of women's liberation, this thesis aimed to showcase whether or not the feminist movement could ever truly thrive under the capitalist system. The seeking of property results in competition and the urgency for power. The subordination of women and other classes is due to the commodification of labor and primitive accumulation, as well as a gender conformity obsession that ties individuals into well-knitted boxes for what they ought to be. Considering the domino effect, it can be fruitful to question what the world would have been like if not for the imperial history of the capitalist system. Thus, gender would entail different expectations, if any. With masculinity and femininity denoting entirely different meanings than the current, women's places in society would not actually require such fighting to be reached.

The digital age has created a new breeding ground for ideologies and extremism, which had severe consequences in reality. A new gender divide has been emerging steadily in recent decades. Although more and more women are globally left-leaning, men are joining the right-wing political side of the spectrum. Understanding the cause at the root of this divide is crucial. Perhaps if the far right did not propagate such clear positions towards women and subordination, this matter wouldn't require an entire thesis. However, the feminist movement has had such regressive results in the current political climax, notably with the rise of Andrew Tate's influence on young men and the revoking of Roe vs. Wade in some states of the USA. The curiosity over how the situation took such a turn naturally arises. This work comes through with an actual curiosity about what constitutes the beliefs of an incel or a man within the manosphere. Through better understanding of the opposition to the

liberation movement of women, it may be possible to address and mitigate the resulting polarization and extremism of the current political climax.

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