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CORPORATE MEDIA, GUARDIANS OF THE
PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM.

A BRAIDED ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S RESISTANCE
FACING THE ANTI-FEMINIST PROPAGANDA

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à ma famille, à mes soeurs,

à mes ami.e.s

à l'amour, à la danse

Aux femmes, à la vie et à la liberté

Table of content

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Theoretical approaches of Propaganda, Capitalism and Feminism.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Sub-chapter 1: Propaganda, a privileged tool to shape capitalist-oriented narrative.....	9
1. Corporate media, meaning-maker and vector of propaganda.....	9
2. The Propaganda Model, revelation of an ideological uniformisation of the media system.....	13
Sub-chapter 2: Capitalism, Conservatism and Patriarchy, interrelated ideology in the gender role representations.....	18
1. Definitions of Capitalism, Conservatism and Patriarchy.....	18
2. Capitalism and Patriarchy interrelation: colonial matrix of gender.....	22
3. The intersection of the women's exploitation system: Rise of masculinism and intersectional discrimination.....	23
Sub-chapter 3: Feminism, definition and resistance practices.....	27
1. Feminisms' definitions.....	28
2. Feminist resistance to corporate media in practice.....	35
Conclusive remarks.....	41
Chapter 2: Media and power: how corporate media uphold the patriarchal backlash against feminism.....	42
Introduction.....	42
Sub-chapter 1: Patriarchal representation and the reinforcement of gender inequality in the media landscape.....	43
1. Inertness: women's marginalisation in the news.....	44
2. Fungibility and denial of subjectivity: female bodies at the service of consumerist necessities.....	49
Sub-chapter 2: Mainstreaming of the manosphere on the web: illustration of media radicalisation against feminist discourse.....	57
1. Media capitalisation on gender identity crisis to promote far-right discourses.....	57
2.2. The spread of a capitalist propaganda: how masculinists merchandise virility.....	69
Conclusive remarks.....	71
Chapter 3: A braided analysis of feminist digital activism against anti-feminist propaganda	72
Introduction.....	72
Sub-chapter 1: Transnational Feminism and social media: creation of a common feminist consciousness through hashtag activism.....	74
1. "Hashtag Feminism": From common-meaning making to the a common feminist consciousness.....	75

2. The co-optation of Black women in cyberactivism: the “oppression within oppression”.	78
3. From the Margin to the Center: Intersectionality within Black cyberfeminism and deconstruction of colonial narratives.....	81
3.1. From Black women standpoint: a massive and intersectional engagement for a common consciousness building.....	83
Sub-chapter 2: Distortion of Vulnerability and use of Sensible: The main strategies to subvert gender representation.....	87
1. Ekbatan’s girl dance: women’s reclamation of their body, from interstitial to transnational.....	89
2. “Las Tesis” Flashmob: Transnational claim for social justice and mobilisation of women’s bodies.....	94
3. @mcdansepourleclimat: disarming far-right rhetoric through joy and dance.....	98
Conclusive remarks.....	100
Conclusion.....	101
Bibliography.....	106
Books, Articles.....	106
Documents, Reports.....	113
Legal Sources and Case Law.....	115
Websites.....	115

Introduction

This research demonstrates that corporate media have today more than ever operated a regressive gender representation, influenced by an entangled system of hierarchies which relies on female exploitation and objectification. While feminist and minority advocacy have displaced the line of gender, achieving more agency in the society, the marginalisation and oppression of minorities, including women across the media landscape have been even more exacerbated since the latest years, representing a backlash against female empowerment achieved through feminist advancements.

To interrogate these mechanisms, this study first investigates the ways in which these systems of exploitation appropriate and framed media narrative to enforce gender hierarchies in a modern context. Subsequently, the study analyses how women might reclaim these meaning-making spheres to dismantle colonial gender paradigms and forge alternative narratives.

This study primarily seeks to identify how patriarchy and capitalism have been deeply intertwined to disseminate through corporate media a common cultural framework, at the origin of the systemic and global gender hierarchy. Next, it will be assessed how this dominant framework favors the marginalisation and objectification of women media representation. Ultimately, the research analyses how women, by the reclamation of a new generation of media, can dismantle this cultural framework to construct alternative narratives.

To this aim, the following questions will be addressed:

Why don't the media, at the global scale, represent social evolution in terms of gender representation?

To what extent does the concentration of media ownership tend to exacerbate cultural patriarchal representation?

To what extent are capitalism, patriarchy and conservatism interrelating?

How do traditional media and social media politics currently exacerbate the gender fractured identity and promote male superiority over women, while feminist advancements have enabled women to empower themselves? What is the impact of these narratives on men's identity and self-determination?

How can women face this fracture and subvert the media narrative, which convey a female objectified representation? In which framework can women inspire to fight against patriarchal frameworks through culture? What are the challenges to overcome within the movements? How would the deep rooted colonial legacy interfere within this feminist movement and to what extent does this limit the subversion process?

Thanks to feminist advocacy, women have imposed a gendered approach within the cultural narrative. Women's rights and empowerment are now recognised as indicators of democracy in society. Female autonomy and presence in diversified professional, research, politics underscore the lower injunction of gender norms. The rise of concepts like "femicide" or the socio-politico awareness about women's struggles, especially thanks to social media, highlight not only the rise of a gendered approach in the international cultural narrative but also the new technology as an instrument to break down stereotypes and essentialism that shape gender hierarchy.

However, gender hierarchical representation in corporate remains adopting a hierarchical gender perspective, particularly affecting women, whose images are framed by stereotypical portrayals, objectification, and dehumanisation. The gap between the gender dynamics in reality and the way they are depicted through media raises different debates.

This gap primarily interrogates the role of capitalism in the frame of gender representation through the corporate media. While a part of the media studies scholars interpret the concentration and homogenisation of the media market as an economical strategy to impose a culture of consumerism, postcolonial scholars go further, asserting that capitalism, by actively maintaining gender and racial hierarchies in the cultural narrative, sustaining a colonial matrix of power at the global scale and therefore impose a segregational gender culture in which gender norms are helpful for the sustainment of the capitalist system.

Analytical and Methodological framework

The study will analyse the dynamics and the components of gender representation across corporate media at the global scale and since the early 2020s. Since then, the misogynistic discourses, embodied by masculinist influencers, exacerbated and found support in the latest years in political spheres across different continents, leading to the regression of women's freedom and the increased threat for their life. In France, masculinism ideology is now considered as a terrorist threat, and the number of masculinist attacks or attacks attempts have multiplied since the decade 2020s. These discourses also find support in the hierarchical gender representation depicted in the media. For these reasons, it appears crucial to analyse the two media ecosystems which both resonate and normalise the objectification of women and gender-based violence. This objectification is examined through three main components: the invisibilization, the sexualisation and the dehumanisation of women through the media. Last but not least, the research will elaborate a braided analysis of the women's resistance investing the digital spaces to confront the anti-feminist discourses and build new narratives.

With regards to the gender representation on traditional media (TV/Print/Radio/Web), the research will examine the disparity between the real gender repartition in the society and the gender representation in media narrative, to determine how deeply gender stereotypes shape the news contents. Furthermore, it evaluates the female agency in influencing the news contents or, in contrast, the extent to which the media narrative is framed by a male perspective. This analysis is crucial to evaluate the plurality of media sources and the credibility of their contents.

The assessment of women's sexualisation in the media will evaluate whether their bodies are depicted in the cultural narrative as a passive object of desire or as a source of self-subjection. The depiction of women's bodies is a crucial element to understand whether the social imaginary gives credit to women's subjectivity or denies it.

The examination of the journalists' treatment of femicide will underscore the societal concern and the politicisation of gender-based violence in a society. It also indicates the level of the journalist's awareness of the systemic dimension of this crime. The way the media treats

victims of femicide in the news has also an impact on women on the self-perception of women and their perception of the institutions effectiveness in their protection and their credibility.

Finally, the analysis of the disparate treatment of a femicide perpetrated on a White woman versus Black woman evaluates the racist bias in the journalist analysis as well as the societal imaginary surrounding Black women.

Next, the study will analyse how social media not only convey but amplify a misogynistic representation of women spread by masculinist discourses. The study will therefore focus on the rise of masculinist ideology, as a backlash against feminist advancements, spreading an essentialist and capitalist conception of gender hierarchy, by reclaiming the ownership of women's bodies and merchandising a “myth of masculinity”.

An examination of the masculinists’ contents virality and radicalisation will underscores the level of threat this ideology represents on social media and to what extent the algorithms contribute to their amplification.

An analysis of this ideological women’s depiction, as an object to purchase, control, and assault reveals the perception of women as a conquered and subjugated Other as well as the ideological incentive to commit gender-based violence.

The trend and the popularity of these discourses are underscored through this research as a symptom of a gender identity crisis which masculinists aim to address by selling a hegemonic virility.

An examination of the promotion of masculinity as a pressure experienced by male audience, particularly through the binary categorisation of men, distinguishing “the real men”, using violence against women, and the Other, who do not and who afterwards will be discredited within the “manosphere” by racist and/or sexist insults. This supports the idea that the colonial and racist lens as a constitutive framework of patriarchy and capitalism.

The study will lastly investigate the intertwinement of masculinist and far-right ideology regarding their conception of women and gender norms. This reveals the role of social media’s algorithms, through the amplification of masculinist discourse, supports far-right and alt-right political agenda.

Ultimately, this research examines the women's efforts across the digital spaces which aim to dismantle the patriarchal narrative spread through corporate media and reconstruct cultural alternatives. The feminist resistance portrayed in this research invests primarily in social media as a cultural battleground. A braided analysis of this resistance will highlight the interconnection of three fundamental feminist approaches: transnational, intersectional and decolonial perspectives.

Through a braided analysis, the research emphasises the necessity of intersecting these theoretical frameworks in order to challenge the global capitalist-colonial system underspinning the exploitation of women, and create a common female consciousness.

An exploration of “hashtag feminism” reveals the role of social media as a bridge between different segments of population, such as grassroots resistance and power spheres, allowing a direct feminist advocacy. It also underscored the strategy of virality and the power of resonance between women's efforts across borders, both enabling a common female consciousness and a transnational raise of awareness concerning women's struggle in a patriarchal society.

An examination of the marginalisation of Black women within both feminist and Black community movements shows the necessity to adopt an intersectional feminist perspective by making visible the specific struggle and experiences of Black women, as the ultimate victim of colonialism, in order to effectively subvert the colonial-capitalist system of exploitation.

Finally, transaffective strategies such as the use of ‘sensible’ through art and embodied resistance will be analysed as subversive strategies against patriarchy, as they leverage persuasion and creativity across borders and subvert the patriarchal narrative which relies on the passivity and conformity of women's bodies.

Methodological framework

The research employed a mixed methodology, including qualitative, quantitative and interpretative methods. It aims at adopting a pluridisciplinary perspective on the topic, in order to combine political science, sociological, psychological, media, cultural, postcolonial as well as feminist and gender studies in order to acquire a wider understanding of the issue of gender representation in the media.

The first stage of the research focused on a conceptual study, elaborated through the collection of data from academic literature, online dictionaries, books, conferences, and the legal and political frameworks provided by international organisations, which offer insight into the concepts of propaganda, capitalism, and feminism, whose definitions are not consensual. This stage was crucial for understanding media functioning and the dynamics of the global media system. During this stage, a set of theories was collected and confronted to create an overall theoretical framework in which the concepts might resonate with each other and create a common understanding, to be observed during the second stage.

The second stage was devoted to the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data provided by international institutions, non-governmental organisations, and private media institutes, published from 2024 onward. Some of the data collected was provided by the Global Report on Media and was used as a comparative model to examine the evolution of global gender representation in the media. This stage was therefore dedicated to the analysis of material gender representation through statistics, and these quantitative data were then compared and confronted with qualitative data produced by the research.

The third stage was devoted to the viewing of content published on media platforms and the identification of masculinist discourses, in order to compare and confront them with the depiction of masculinism elaborated in the research studies. The academic resources provided a real foundation for the investigation of masculinist discourses. Roberts et al. (2025) collected numerous discourses spoken and written by masculinist figures on his Telegram channel. Academic research was also particularly useful in highlighting the exchanges and reactions of

male and female users to masculinist attacks, and the discourses pronounced in society by masculinist figures across different countries, particularly in France, the United States, Mexico, and China. The research on women's acts of resistance was also the object of an experiment on social media. This part was challenging, given the biased algorithms. To collect more information, the research also analysed journalist reportages. These observations enabled us to evaluate the way journalists were treating these subjects.

While feminist movements have successfully blurred gender boundaries and challenged heteronormative frameworks, the capitalist system has simultaneously positioned itself as the arbiter of gender representation. To sustain this, the system exacerbates the objectification of women, while driving men toward an unreachable hegemonic masculinity. This structural reliance on an absolute binary opposition between men and women reenacts the codes of colonial exploitation, designed to subjugate women and prevent them from shaping the cultural narrative. To interrogate these mechanisms, this study first investigates the ways in which these historically colonial systems of exploitation appropriate and instrumentalise media to enforce gender hierarchies in a modern context. Subsequently, the study analyses how women might reclaim these meaning-making spheres to dismantle colonial gender paradigms and forge alternative narratives.

The introductory chapter have emphasised the framework of this research and its main analysis. Chapter 1 examines how the marketisation of media enabled capitalism to impose a cultural capitalist and patriarchal-oriented narrative. This narrative, relying on colonial gender and racial domination, has been lately framed by an exacerbated hierarchical, gender representation, characterised by female objectification.

Chapter 2 analyses this gender representation across digital and traditional media, emphasising the gap between this representation and the gender inequity in reality. Furthermore, research will examine how digital media amplify the contents, especially masculinist discourses, which promote the absolute male superiority over women.

Chapter 3, as a response to the precedent observation, emphasises to what extent women might reclaim these digital platforms in order to disrupt the patriarchal gender representation and build alternative narratives.

Chapter 1: Theoretical approaches of Propaganda, Capitalism and Feminism.

Introduction

The media ownership by multinational companies and billionaire investors allowed capitalism to access cultural spheres across borders and successively to shape a cultural narrative aiming to fuel a consumerist system and a capitalist way of living. Yet, the study argues that this system is not isolated but deeply rooted in coloniality, founded on an entangled articulation of multiple hierarchies. As a matter of fact, capitalist ideology is not a neutral economic structure but a system which actively but insidiously drives the normalisation of gender and racial hierarchies.

In the western minds, the media have been defined as “guardians of democracy”, supposed to depict the world as it is in order for the people to shape their own opinion and beliefs. However, the media have been historically used as a tool of propaganda to promote the ideology of the state and hide its darker sides. Progressively, the financialisation followed by the technology revolution has allowed billionaires investors and multinational companies to buy or create their own media platforms, so-called corporate media, including mass media and subsequently social media (Part A). While these privatisation still aim at instrumentalising media as the main vector of meaning-making (1) the shape of cultural narrative is more insidious than state propaganda but still impose a homogenised and capitalist-oriented cultural propaganda (2).

Yet, it will be emphasised that media concentrated ownership and capitalist propaganda shaped the communication landscape as a gatekeeper of a hierarchical system. This section seeks to define capitalism and analyse how its darker side, namely the exploitation of minorities, can impact globally the representation of women in the cultural narrative. Therefore, the research, based on the postcolonial thoughts, will emphasise the intertwinement between capitalism, patriarchy and conservatism, all relying on a hierarchical gender structure and reducing women to objectified tools for their political project (Part B). A critical definition of these three systems will be provided to emphasise how these systems commonly shape the media landscape through hierarchical representation (1), followed by an analysis of their interrelation, founded on coloniality (2). This conceptual analysis highlights the personification and materialisation of this

heterarch system through masculinist and alt-rights groups, whose misogynistic discourses have been conveyed and recently amplified on social media (3).

Finally, the feminist resistance to corporate media gender representation will be emphasised in the last part of this argumentation (Part C), through a theoretical conceptualisation of feminisms, as a plural and diversified movement (1) followed by a historical analysis of women media appropriation and their efforts to elaborate a counter-narrative and challenge the cultural hierarchical gender representation (2).

Sub-chapter 1: Propaganda, a privileged tool to shape capitalist-oriented narrative

This sub-chapter will analyse how the media system, as the main opinion-shaper and knowledge producer (1) have been progressively homogenised and concentrated under capitalist control, framing a uniformised and capitalist oriented media landscape (2)

1. Corporate media, meaning-maker and vector of propaganda

Mainstream media are commonly defined as traditional forms of information media such as newspapers, television and other news sources that are recognised by and accessible to a large number of people. They play a significant role in shaping public opinion and the political process. Consequently, their contents represent the generally accepted beliefs and opinions in a given society. Finally, they are presented in contradiction with social or alternative media (Collins English Dictionary, n.d). Their differences reside in the hierarchy of influence (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991), their level of concerns about audit, or the amount of funding. Moreover, mainstream media would be more structurally constrained but benefit for more advertising revenue and therefore more budget, while alternative media benefit for more freedom but usually face a budget constraint. But the main relevant difference would reside in the ideology they vehicle. While mainstream media are situated within the ideological norms of society, the alternative media respond to a need for diversity of information sources and to enrich pluralism, influence social change (Downing, 2001).

Since the 1990s, the information communication technology revolution led to a diversification of the news supports, giving rise to social media and new media, giving an accessibility for an increasing number of people to transmit information and go beyond the traditional media. However, these platforms have been progressively acquired by the same elites. Perceived first as an opportunity to plurality and freedom of expression, the new generation of media rather equipped the privileged minority with sophisticated communication tools designed to frame a propaganda tailored to their interests.

Social media refer to « platforms, and digital environments as unfolding at the intersection of narratives, perceptions, and materialities » (Lesage & Natale, (2019) quoted in Rama, 2026). They allow individuals to consume and produce contents which enables local and transnational interconnection. These platforms seem to foster individual agency in the choice of their consumption and also provide them a space of expression and creativity. This digital interconnection enables the creation of a virtual community and raises a diversity of opinion and cultural contents on the web. In this sense, feminist scholars characterised social media as a space of opposition and resistance (Banerjee, S., & Kankaria, L. , 2022). Additionally, New Media has emerged as a significant propeller of transnational feminist activism, referring to any form of media ranging from blogs to podcasts that are delivered digitally. This implies that any internet, based on communication disseminated through websites, emails, streaming platforms, online forums and so on can be considered new media (Siapera, 2017). These digital spaces appear thus as a site of popular agora, as an opportunity to create alternative narratives.

However, social media have been defined by scholars as « algorithmic media » (Bucher, 2018, quoted in Rama, 2026), pointing out the powerful role of algorithms on individual behaviours and content consumption. The algorithms refers to « platforms' extensions » which shape, constrain or even predict individual digital consumption and practices through surveillance and data collection (Airoidi, 2023; Flensburg & Lomborg, 2023; Kaliyamurthy & Schau, 2025; Zuboff, 2023 quoted in Rama, 2026).

The algorithmic system functions thanks to affordances, referring to the « communication properties enabled by platforms, users' perceptions, and the actual practices that emerge during users' interactions » (Kim & Ellison, 2022 quoted in Santos, M., & Valenzuela, S. 2025).

Rama (2026) emphasised that the role of algorithms has been progressively stronger in individual's consumption of contents. Through a view/search ratio, the author observed that the people were watching more videos on Youtube but were searching less from 2014 to 2024. According to the study, while in 2014, 33 videos were viewed per query, in 2024, the users were viewing on average seven Youtube videos per query, the rest of the videos viewed followed algorithmic suggestions (Rama, 2026). The rise of algorithmic influence on individuals' consumption of social media is all the more concerning given that algorithms were emphasised as operators of « culture ranking » (Rieder et al., 2018 quoted in Rama 2026) leading to the promotion of one dominant culture over the others. Since these platforms are owned by a few transnational companies such as Meta, Google, ByteDance, the risk of authoritarian contents manipulation remains high.

In possession of the popular media, companies can shape the main representation of the society, elaborating a common language about any given events which leads to a common and uniform cultural framework. Therefore, the role of creating representations brings a consequent power. Stuart Hall (1997) defines the representation under two perspectives. The representation, in its common sense, offers a depiction of an existent object. In another sense, the verb “to represent” means also “to stand for”. Brought together, these definitions result in the description of representation as “a way in which meaning is given to the depicted things (significant)” (Hall, 1997). In other words, the representation doesn't follow the significance but as soon as it appears, its representation (signifier) constitutes it by giving them a meaning in our world, thanks to a shared-concept that can stand for it. Moreover, Stuart Hall points out that a concept exists only if all the members of a group share the same conceptual map and are able to use a shared language, as a sub-system of representation, that allows them to explicitly exchange meanings. These elements constitute a cultural map, internalised during one's socialisation and shaping social beliefs and behaviours. Yet, Stuart Hall emphasised that the main producer of these

representations are the media. Thus, these actors, so-called “guardians of the ”, became producers and shapers of the culture. Similarly, Bourdieu (1996) defined the television as an arbiter of a social and political existence (or non existence), by arbitrarily choosing what is relevant or not to raise in the public debate. From these perspectives, the media constitute the main strategic tool to impose a cultural narrative tool.

Pierre Bourdieu (1996) thought can be extended stating that the media are the arbiter of the existence of one element in the public debate but also their pertinence in the debate. This power leads to a double standard, particularly suffered by women in the media. Laura Mulvey (1975) stressed that mainstream cinema positions women as an object of desire for the audience, through the sight of the male character in the movie. This concept has since today been transposed to media studies and advertising. In that sense, the mainstream media are more likely to adopt a misogynistic perspective, representing women’s existence as relative to and shaped by male sight and desire (Mulvey, 1975). This research will aim to emphasise how this dualistic representation has been imposed in the media landscape to the extent that they have perceived as natural, in order to define the strategies potentially leveraged by minorities to challenge this narrative.

The cultural map can evolve with a new production of meaning and the capacity of political agents, such as citizens and policymakers, to adjust these sets of meanings. The next section will aim at examining which meanings are produced. While Stuart Hall affirms that there is no meaning without language, Michel Foucault claims that there is no meaning without discourse. News meanings can thus circulate through discourse and images potentially produced by social movements and necessarily through media. Their legitimacy and their capacity of creating meanings and salience make them a particularly relevant canal of political project. For these reasons, across the decade 1960s to 1980s, feminist movements created their own magazine such as “Le Torchon Brûle”. Although these communicative actions aim to reclaim progressive politics, by influencing the public opinion, this meaning production can also be weaponised.

Through abusive or manipulative strategy of communication, it serves to advance an anti-freedom political project.

2. The Propaganda Model, revelation of an ideological uniformisation of the media system

This section emphasises how media proceeds to the creation of meanings and for whose interests. The study argues that the propagation of capitalism at the global scale and in the media system frame the media landscape towards a capitalist-oriented narrative (1). Moreover, the research highlights the narrow control of the media narrative by analysing the pressure and oppression to the reduction of human rights, especially the freedom of expression and information, (2)

2.1 The spread of liberal ideology in the global media system

McLeod (2019) asserts that Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model is more relevant than ever to describe the current propaganda model in our global media system. According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), the relevance of these filters, conceptualised for the analysis of media in the United States, in a global scale media analysis differ depending on the geographical context (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Demonstrating a global convergence of the media system models toward the North American one, the authors confirmed the relevance of ownership and advertising filters within the 21st century propaganda system. The relevance of these filters reflect the propagation of the capitalist ideology throughout the global media system and the opportunity for the media owners' to influence popular opinion and social imaginary.

As Herman and Chomsky (1988) already observed, the media market has become more and more concentrated, leading to a rise of competitiveness and consequently the owners companies to orient their sources of information towards profits motives (Zollman, 2015), going up to use their own subsidiaries platforms (Google Business, 2024) to promote their media and retain their users

to consume a specific. Therefore, the revolution of technology and communication did not really break with the media concentration trend but enabled the companies to subtly reduce their visibility.

The advertising filter, or the reliance of media on advertising from business for revenue, has also been widely intensified, which represents a big pressure for media to survive. Indeed, with the decoupling of advertising, the selection of media from the powerful business, the media have to compete to provide a “business-friendly environment” which seems not compatible with their role of democracy gatekeeper. Indeed, McLoad stated that, in this context the boundary between commercial ad and informational content has blurred.

These commercial advertisements and the selection of media/content which will be “sponsored” are also driven, according to McLoad, by Western audience desire, who are more likely to afford the object of the advertisement. Therefore, the funded (survival) contents/media will be directed to a certain audience to maintain a fund, which lead to a homogenisation of the global media landscape and a narrow selection of the information/representation transmitted, those which confirm the ideology of the conservative dominant elites opinion and maintain it as a good way of thinking.

This news’ selection has repercussions on journalists themselves who experience pressure from the potential person they target but also from the owner of the media, whose interest is the maximisation of their profits. According to a 2000 survey (Pew, 2000), 73% of journalists agreed that they have self-censored so as to not challenge their advertisers. The precarious situation of the professions, due to a lack of funding, intensified by the rise of public relations agencies whose control on the information led to another filter identified by Chomsky and Hermann, the Sourcing. This element is particularly relevant given the observation of a global rise of far-right-wing political parties in power or in the sphere of influence of the corporate media. The ability of media conglomerates to shape public representation through propaganda is bolstered by a significant degree of structural impunity. This impunity stems from the inherent nature of

propaganda, which is designed to obscure the propagandist's true intentions, making it notoriously difficult to prove. A striking example of this occurred during the French parliamentary commission hearings, where the billionaire investor Vincent Bolloré denied the existence of any coordinated political project, despite his vast media holdings (French Public Service Broadcasting, 2025; Blast 2025a)

The lack of accountability is further highlighted by the commission's perceived bias. While the inquiry, led by Charles Alloncle (Union of rights party), intensively scrutinised public service broadcasting and denounced the alleged 'left-wing homogenization' of (Superior School of Journalism) Lille, it remained silent on more explicit ideological shifts. For instance, the Paris School of Journalism was newly acquired by a group of investors, (including Vincent Bolloré, Bernard Arnault, or Jean Saadé). The new president of the school Vianney d'Alençon openly stated that the school should pivot toward a 'pro-corporate and market economy' curriculum. The fact that such overt ideological engineering remains unexamined while other journalism schools are attacked illustrates a double standard that preserves powerful owners from real oversight (Blast, 2025b).

2.2 Impacts of capitalism-oriented media, priority to sensationalism and censorship of non-partisan journalists

The homogenisation of the information seems to rely on financial necessities and the pursuit of *audimat*, which introduced a commercial logic in the media environment (Bourdieu, 1996). According to Bourdieu, this introduction led to a high concurrence between the different sources of information, that were pushed to prioritise the spectacular to the facts. He also states that this concurrence causes a certain speed in the public debate and makes more visible fast-thinkers' ideas, or preconceived ideas. That explains the idea emphasised by Ellul, "reality and truth are now functions of what is broadcast" (Ellul, 1979, p.152).

Bourdieu exposes that a debate shown in the television is never neutral or impartial, conducted by a certain number of biases, more or less visible. Television is not an autonomous media that suffers a certain number of constraints relative to the social relations in a society, the mental

structures of the different actors, and the commercial pressure. The latter element seems to create a significant tension in the media market and a gap between the factual events in reality and how they are told, or not told.

Even though the concentration of media ownership does not necessarily result in propaganda (Ellul, 1976), this strategy remains nevertheless privileged in these conditions. According to McLeod, this intensified media ownership concentration reduces freedom of opinion and space for investigative journalism (MacLeod, 2019). Indeed, many examples show that investigative journalists faced pressure and attacks.

According to the report of Monitoring Media Pluralism in the European Union, journalists across Western Europe are increasingly exposed and subject to harassment, online attacks, surveillance and institutional pressure. They are also victims of physical violence, especially during demonstrations and when they report sensitive topics like corruption, environmental issues and elections (CMPF, 2025). In Chile, on the 1st of May 2022, the journalist Francisca Sandoval was killed by an armed man during the May 1 Workers' Day marches (Nalvarte, 2022). According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), two other journalists were injured in the shooting the same day, while they were covering the protest. According to the Chilean journalist and researcher Magdalena Saldana, the risk of losing your life as a journalist was relegated to the years of Pinochet dictatorship. This risk may lead to a self-censorship of the journalists that cover social movements. This censorship thus contributes to the reduction of plurality in the media landscape serving to construct an oppressive manipulative narrative.

By subsuming the media market into its system, capitalism has more leverage to build and reinforce existing norms, and create a hierarchy between activities, depending on their production economical value. Indeed, capitalism is described by Marx and Engels as a system through which bourgeois class men treat women as their private property and in which the "slavery within family" (Marx and Engels, 1848) is highly valued and thus normalised in the capitalist societies. According to Andrew Bowie and Silvia Federici, one of the main products of capitalism is culture. Indeed, capitalism builds a certain system of values in order to favour the

increase of profits, by increasing sales and reducing the cost of labour. That's why capitalist societies invest in all the structure and the rules to create a societal scale market, increase companies owners liberties and incentivise people to become consumers (Robbins, 2002), animated by the will of self-fulfilment and compulsive spending (Lears, 2000). To reach its goal, the capitalist system has to maintain a hierarchical structure and thus relies on an oppressive and exploitative system, in particular the patriarchy. The next section will emphasise how these systems interconnect, and intersect on extreme patriarchal ideology, which are currently framing the media landscape.

Sub-chapter 2: Capitalism, Conservatism and Patriarchy, interrelated ideology in the gender role representations.

This sub-chapter examines how capitalism, patriarchy and conservatism have similar interests and how they have been imbricated in the production of gender representation through mass media. The key features of these three systems will be analysed (1), to (2) which shape the women's representation in the media (3).

1. Definitions of Capitalism, Conservatism and Patriarchy

This section will anchor Nancy Fraser's *Cannibal capitalism*, in order to define three systems and ideologies which relies on gender and racial exploitation, specifically marginalised women. These systems have the particularity to be socially and politically constructed and reinforced through corporate media.

1.1. Capitalism, a "Cannibal" cultural system

This research tends to define capitalism as an exploitative system, relying gender and racial inequity to exploit minorities. In this sense, it will be argued that this system reinforces itself by influencing the cultural map of gender hierarchy. In this manner, it contributes to the normalisation of female bodies exploitation.

Capitalism, initially delimited as an economical and ideological structure relying on capital (Mignolo, 2007), has propagated in key areas of society, including media, as mentioned previously. While this is perceived as supportive of women and minorities' rights through, for instance, their integration in the legal workforce, making increasing production and consumption, this structure relies actually on minorities' exploitation, writing its script « on the bodies and lives of women and girls from the Third World/South—the Two-Thirds World » (Mohanty, 2003, p.514).

Beyond marxist definition of capitalist exploitation, capitalism would rely on the exploitation of women, and the expropriation of persons belonging to racial minorities and states that capitalism relies on the discrimination and the domination of these populations, aligned with patriarchy, racism and conservatism (Fraser and Jaeggi, 2018). According to the scholar Nancy Fraser (2018), the capitalist system relies on social and political institutions, on nature, on reproductive and domestic work as well as expropriated labour (Fraser and Jaeggi, 2018). Domestic work is defined as « the work performed in or for a household or households » (International Labour Organisation, 2011). Moreover, when this domestic work is done by the person living in this household, this work is neither paid nor economically valued but taken for granted. Yet, this work has been historically done by women. Expropriated work refers to the work done under the constraint, taking the form of slavery, servitude, forced work historically done by a racialised person (Fraser and Jaeggi, 2018).

1.2. Conservatism and Post-modern Conservatism, or the rise of media performative movements

Conservatism refers to a political doctrine strongly attached to social institutions like family and to the maintaining of a traditional culture, based upon religion, traditions and custom (Heywood, 2004). Conservatives claim to preserve these “natural” forms of authorities (Neil, 2021, p. 2) as well as other fundamental elements such as private property or homeland (Giubilei and Stone, 2019).

McManus (2019) emphasised that the communication strategy of conservatism representatives have mutated along the progress of new technologies and gave rise to a Post-modern conservatism. This political style is characterised by its strategy of communication, abandoning historical and evidence-based facts for myth, spectacle and emotional conflict narrative. The author asserts the creation of a Culture of post-modernism, result of a neoliberal shift and a media revolution, where everyone can become legitimate to influence other opinion and where the quality of information is affected by the priority given to the audimat. This next setting rewards therefore the emotional and shocking narratives that provoke reactions. These communication strategies are particularly effective on social media but due to the homogenisation of the media and the high number of people that react on these social platforms, mainstream media borrow their codes and cover subjects that are popular in the other sources of media.

In sum, the doctrine of conservatism, including post-modern conservatism tends to preserve a certain social order based on nationalism and populism, misinformation and discourse that aim less at describing the truth but to provoke emotions. Conservatism confronts traditionally the progress of women's rights and their emancipation, now via different actors, especially the far-right parties and the recent movement of masculinism. Far-right politics and specifically extreme-rights politics has been mainstream since the last decades, and consequently more acceptable in the political debate. Far-rights positions include mainstream, far and extreme right but this distinction is more and more porous (Newth et al., 2025). According to Katy Brown, the far-right can be defined to a position, taken by politicians, media or individuals, characterised by a generalised commitment to inequality, with racism at its core (Brown, 2022 quoted in Newth et al, 2025).

1.3 Patriarchy, the institutionalisation of male domination over women

According to bell hooks, patriarchy is “a political-social system that insists that males are inherently superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially female and endowed

with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of physiological terrorism and violence.” (hooks, 2010). Patriarchy is therefore a system of gender-based hierarchy in which the power is held by men, and that influences structural aspects of the society (Farias et al., 2023), all the spheres, public and private, from the world’s religion to the family’s system.

This system creates norms according to which men and women and particular roles in the society should behave according to preconceived ideas linked to their gender. These norms have been conveyed by the interpretation of men made of religion, or science. As bell hooks stated, girls and women are taught to serve, to caretake and nurture the others and remain passive and submissive. On the other side, boys and men are taught to enjoy violence and express their rage. The one that would cross these lines of behaviour will be punished. These injunctions shape the representation of men and women in the public space, especially in the media. Simone de Beauvoir illustrates these discriminations and the images of the women in the 1940s through an article of the French newspaper *Le Figaro*, written by Claude Mauriac, in September 1948. This article perfectly demonstrates that the women in the mass media were represented as relative to men, stigmatised and openly reduced to a parrot of men and that even the most brilliant women would not be able to create a reflection by herself. That quotation precisely described the way women are treated in the media, relative to men and having less capabilities.

Using the word “patriarchy” is a way, used by feminist, to name an organised system and not only an individual behaviour like “sexism”. Patriarchy also relies on women to remain a perpetual cultural and political system. It relies on women that teach patriarchal attitudes and behaviours to their children, that are then reinforced in schools and religious institutions (Farias et al., 2023). Indeed, patriarchy is a system supported by men and women, especially originated from the dominant class that uses patriarchy to impose their power on the other parts of the population. Like capitalism, it is the system that enjoys the support of the majority, including men and women.

One of the sadly relevant examples is the Epstein case, in which the publication of the evidence had been subject to a political debate and was almost blocked by D. Trump, before half of the

evidence had actually been made public. This case represent one of the example of the global patriarchy, that implies a high number of wealthy men and women that organise together a private system of human trafficking and sexual violence on younger and vulnerable, sometimes minor person, mainly originate from low-class families. Regarding these elements, this case is a relevant representation of the cumulated exploitation and violence suffered by women, due to their age, their gender, their origin, their socio-economical origins. This entangled hierarchies dominated by White/Western/heterosexual men is a product of coloniality, cornerstone of patriarchal and capitalist systems.

2. Capitalism and Patriarchy interrelation: colonial matrix of gender

This section analyses the connection between both capitalist and patriarchal systems and coloniality which has framed a common entangled hierarchy system and a western colonial narrative to maintain this relation of domination.

Lugones (2007; 2023), emphasises capitalism as a modern colonial framework which introduced patriarchal systems into communities which were functioning within another social system. She draws on Oyewùmi's *In The Invention of Women* who acknowledge the existence of pre-patriarchal societies such as the Yoruba communities in Nigeria where no gender principles were organising the community. These findings underscore that gender hierarchy, described as natural and biologically motivated by the modern narrative, relies actually on colonial framework.

Mohanty (1986) asserts that modern patriarchy has emerged alongside colonialism. The postcolonial author already pointed out the creation by Western patriarchy of a hegemonic femininity. According to the author, this model aims at an Other, embodied by Black women but or working-class women, who will consequently be perceived as an antagonist and thus as deprived of femininity. Such as the colonial system, patriarchal gender representation therefore aims to sustain a gender but also racial hierarchy.

Furthermore, Lugones (2023) emphasises the creation of a modern/colonial gender system, after the first conquests of America, which fostered a “differential gender arrangements along “racial”

lines” (Lugones, 2023, p. 37). These differential gender arrangements refer to the different manifestations of patriarchy, influenced by coloniality. While White women, are turned into the reproducer of the race (Lugones, 2023, p. 50) and imposed social and moral obligations such as virtue and subjection, Black women are hypersexualised and dehumanised, reduced to animals and representative of the land to conquer and possess¹. Frantz Fanon was describing violence and rape perpetrated by colonisers over Algerian women, as a the leverage of conquest and destruction of the colonised society (Fanon, 2023). The Western narrative affects more severely marginalised women, especially Black women who have been represented as hypersexual, dehumanised, animalised in order to fracture female groups and justify sexual assaults committed on Black women. In *Ain't I a Woman ?*, hooks (1981), explains that the rape of Black women used to be legally authorised and socially legitimised even by White women. The latter were building their « virtuous and educated » self-perception in contrast with the representation of Black women.

This differential perception of women along the racial line has been shaping European culture and language, including the Western feminist discourses. Indeed, colonialism and the current system of coloniality have universalised the European narrative, enabling the sustainment of racial and class hierarchies, even between women. Accordingly, Lugones (2023) asserts that coloniality of power and the colonial modern gender system co-constructed each other and fragmented solidarity within indigenous communities.

Despite this case having been largely broadcast and that revealed the involvement of personalities like D. Trump, fragilizing his legitimacy with regard to his electorate, especially the religious-right-wing electorate (Judith Butler in France Culture, 2026b), it also revealed the normalised, systemic and globalised aspects of patriarchy. Moreover, this case illustrates also the capitalist ideology according to which the dominant impose a barrier and a despise of those who are not of their group, the women and the poorest. The intersection of these systems resides in

¹ Although sexual violence, rape and femicide are endured by women independently from their race, black women or women of color have historically suffered particular violent crimes and dehumanisation due to the extreme level of violence that constitutes coloniality, as a dispossession of your own land and women's own body.

the most misogynistic ideologies, masculinism and far-right, both promoting White male supremacism.

3. The intersection of the women's exploitation system: Rise of masculinism and intersectional discrimination.

Patriarchal and capitalist overlaps in the masculinist discourses. This ideology reclaims male superiority over women through highly misogynistic discourses and the promotion of a hegemonic masculinity. These movements aligned closely with extreme right-wing and conservative ideologies. They use the same tone of « catastrophism » and describe a « decadent society », « the end of the civilisation » or caused by modern feminism. By settling a feeling of emergency, they impose a regressive solution: a strict return to traditional gender norms. Within this framework, women are reduced to domestic and reproductive work, specifically aimed at the demographic reproduction of White populations and at raising by spreading a dominant narrative. To enforce this gendered role, discourses even target contraception and abortion in order to permanently link their sexuality with procreation. Operating within a post-truth era, their discourses do not rely on facts but on religious frameworks and essentialist theories, rather than empirical facts. Often lamenting the « dechristianisation of France », their claims are also close to the colonial framework. The two ideologies legitimise a racist, xenophobic, and transphobic political agenda.

3.1 Far-right, the rise of an exclusive ideology

Cas Mudde defines the far-right as a combination of four broad concepts: exclusivism (i.e., racism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, or ethnopluralism); antidemocratic, non-individualist traits (i.e., cult of personality, hierarchism, monism, populism, antipartyism, an organicist view of the state); a traditionalist value system lamenting the disappearance of historic frames of reference (i.e., law and order, the family, the ethnic, linguistic and religious community and nation, as well as the natural environment); and a socioeconomic program associating corporatism, state control

of certain sectors, agrarianism and a varying degree of belief in the free play of socially Darwinistic market forces (European Center for Populism Studies (n.d.).

This very specific definition draws the political project of the far-right, based on White supremacy and authoritarian-liberalism. Concerning the media, this project favours privatisation and the freedom of speech, and consistently, freedom to hate speech against minorities. In this sense, the far-right and alt-right are direct heirs of colonialism through the aim of imposing a cultural segregation and exclusion of the Other in order to impose a xenophobic vision of nationalism.

Today, conservative and far-right ideologies overlap with masculinist discourses. Even though certain far-right politicians try to soften their image, the both ideologies traditionally defend a White supremacist political project, excluding the racialised and queer minorities from the political debate. The most visible leaders of this community are explicitly partisan of the far-right or alt-right ideology such as Nick Fuentes or Andrew Tate. Finally, alt right politicians, like D. Trump during his campaign, participated in podcasts or live on masculinist YouTube channels. The two ideologies are therefore amplifying and fuelling each other's discourses. (Voir ce que trump a dit dans le podcast.

According to Nicholas (2023), masculinists and extreme-right wing have shared a fear to see their privileges threatened and therefore radicalise themselves and their speech, using affect and promoting violence against the one that are not part of their group but acquire power in the political debate such as feminist of people of colour. Because their cause remains supremacist, they use effective communication strategy and post-truth in order to convince and therefore impose a favourable narrative.

3.2 Rise of Masculinism, mainstreaming of a performative misogynistic movement

The manosphere is an online space that spreads antifeminist and often normalises gender-based violence. On the other hand, masculinism capitalise on men's discontent as well as the blame to women and feminism (Nicholas et al., 2024)

Lucy Nicholas reports a process of cross-pollinisation between right-wing extreme (RWE) and masculinist ideologues. According to her work, the two ideologies are constituted by an affective dimension around identity, belongings and agreements. After the progressive change that called into question the privileges of the dominant class - mostly represented by White men - this part of the population reclaim the legitimacy and the power that is threatened. Last but not least, two groups fuel hate against any groups that appear as a threat for the White male supremacy, giving rise to criminal groups such as the True Crime Community, valuing ultra violence and mass killings, joined by « incels » members, and planning school shootings (Radiofrance, 2026).

Masculinism movement refers to a counter-offensive and radical ideology developed in reaction against the progress of women's rights and the achievements of feminist movements (Boï and Hiridjee, 2025). They aim at conserving the current and patriarchal order, by insisting on two ideas: first, the existence of biological differences between men and women that would justify the strict repartition of gender roles in the society; secondly, the superiority of men over women, perceived as 'natural'. According to this movement, the male supremacy is threatened by the feminist movement (Boï and Hiridjee, 2025), reclaiming a "crisis of masculinity". Therefore, they position themselves as victims of a system affected by feminism dynamics.

The masculinist ideology also takes a role in the maintenance of the popular and traditional culture that promotes a powerful and misogynistic image of men, taking in example the myths and fictional heroes that shape our popular culture. Also, this initiative is deeply capitalistic. The superiority and the virility of men is presented as a social capital that some representatives propose to transmit through charged and profitable online training (Boï and Hiridjee, 2025).

These trainings represent an underground space for men that enable them to gather, develop hate speech and a common language and codes against women. This language is progressively adopted in the political and cultural language and become randomised by the mainstream media. UN Women expressed in different articles their concerns about the mainstream of masculinism and their consequences such as the intensification of online hate speech, the banalisation of gender-based violence, the harmful impact on men and women psychology and on cyberspace safety (UN, 2025c).

The extreme violence and provocation that characterise post-modern conservatism, far-rights-wing politicians discourses or masculinist representatives is not random. This strategy goes along with the current information system dynamic, that rewards provocative and spectacular discourses, that will provoke reactions, audience and therefore profits, over evidence-based propositions that are perceived as too serious and intellectual. This system of information allows these actors to progressively enter in the political debate, and impose their discourse as “an acceptable idea”. The progressive entrance of provocative and shocking ideas in the public debate is explained by the concept of Overton Window, by Joseph P. Overton. This concept refers to a spectrum of ideas and policies that are acceptable in the public debate at any given time and place (ranked from « more acceptable » to « unthinkable ».). This spectrum can be displaced, in a progressive or reactionary direction and can even lead to the regression of human rights due to its powerful impact on public opinion. That could explain how the discursive shift entails an implicit acceptance, for example, of ‘Great Replacement’ as Newth et al. state. Another example of the acceptance of masculinism in the political debate: in 2024, the Ministry of Interior Affairs was interviewed by the female journalist Apolline de Malherbe. Reacting to a question that highlighted the weaknesses of his political results, the minister repeated multiple times to the journalist “ Calmez -vous, ça va bien se passer” (Calm down, do not worry, everything is gonna be all right)”. The activists and certain left-wing newspapers recognise that this expression was in fact taken from Lorenzo Becker, one of the figures of masculinism culture on the Internet (Libération, 2022). Blink eye for the masculinist community

(also called “dogwithle”) or not, these events show the real presence of masculinist ideology in the mass media, allowed by a structural misogynistic system, the patriarchy.

Sub-chapter 3: Feminism, definition and resistance practices

After identifying how misogyny shapes gender representation and for which purposes, this section will analyse, through the last sub-chapter, the different means to promote women’s empowerment in the media and protect them from hate speech, or any type of violence they suffer because of this misogynistic gender representation. These means have been innovated and inspired by feminist movements. Therefore, the next section will define and characterise the main feminist movements which participate in the empowerment of women in the society and the deconstruction of patriarchy (1), and emphasise the feminist resistance practices to incorporate media and change the patriarchal cultural narrative (2)

1. Feminisms’ definitions

This section seeks to theoretically define the feminisms which brought essential analysis and understandings about the functioning of patriarchal domination.

Generally, feminism is defined as a movement which emerged to challenge the invisibility and the oppression of women and other marginalised communities. However, the study will emphasise that this movement has also originated from discrimination, exclusion and negative representations of other communities different from White women. These divisions gave rise to different feminist movements and definitions.

1.1. Origins of feminism, the assessment of gender hierarchy: an indivisible antagonism

First of all, it is fundamental to mention the conceptual incomes of Simone de Beauvoir, deployed, through her book *Le Deuxième Sexe*, written in 1949. This reference is definitely questionable and theoretical regarding her detached and severe critique of womanhood and her

involvement in minor abduction in the 1930s and 1940s, motive for her exclusion from the National Education in 1943.

Despite her profound ethical contraction, this text offers a relevant insight into the representation of women in patriarchal society. Simone de Beauvoir's work, written in 1949, continues to resonate today. She emphasised that women have been solely portrayed as an Other, in opposition or in relation to men. While the man stands for an absolute, objective, neutral human norm, the woman is burdened with negative and limiting attributes (e.g she cannot wear pants). This systemic bias has been historically mirrored in the medical drugs system in Europe. Until the late 1980s and early 1990s, clinical drug trials routinely excluded female subjects considering that women's bodies were a variation of male bodies with different reproductive organs (CORDIS, 2007). Therefore, for decades, European women were deprived of a tailored medicine treatment because they were medically perceived as a variation from the male standard. This exclusion was also justified by the will of not risking any side-effects on the ability of women to be pregnant, the reproduction being considered as the main female role.

Moreover, Beauvoir (1949) highlights the particular vulnerability of women compared to other marginalised groups. Unlike the proletariat rising against the bourgeois or the Black community mobilising against White supremacy, women have struggled to create a common consciousness and consolidate a common struggle against patriarchy. Simone de Beauvoir explains this singularity by the fact that women are dispersed across different classes, geographic regions, and racial identity, evolving in compliance with the men of their respective groups. This fragmentation causes the non-White women to suffer racial and sexist discriminations from White women, who may choose to preserve their own racial and class privileges rather than build solidarity with marginalised women. This vulnerability is structurally reinforced by powerful institutions, like religion or science, introducing the most severe representations and therefore legitimising the main discriminations against women (Beauvoir, 1949, Introduction) and particularly against Black women. Simone de Beauvoir illustrates these discriminations and the images of the women in the 1940s by quoting an article of the french newspaper *Le Figaro*, written by Claude Mauriac, in September 1948. This article perfectly demonstrates that the

women in the mass media were represented as relative to men, stigmatised and openly reduced them to their parrot and that even the most brilliant women would not be able to create a reflection by herself (Beauvoir, 1949).

The complexity of patriarchal structure lies in the fact that everyone is a socialised and implicit party of this system, making its dismantlement particularly challenging, particularly when it is intertwined with other systems of exploitation, which then multiply the forms of oppression. s. Furthermore, the complexity of feminist advocacy resides in the conflicts with men's systemic interests and the internal friction within feminist advocacy, stemming from its diverse, often conflicting ideological currents. However, the diversification of feminist movements and their confrontation enable them to identify the multiple sources of female oppression, which also affect other minority groups and unify the different minorities and groups of the society against shared sources and mechanisms of exploitation.

1.2. Materialist and Socialist Feminism: the inclusion of women in the dominated working class.

Materialist feminist: definition of women through their material conditions

Materialist feminism suggests that the gender hierarchy does not result from biological differences between men and women but from an economical and material domination, possible thanks to patriarchy and capitalism. This movement adopts a constructivist perspective which enables it to consider its deconstruction and allow women to denounce a common political system of oppression, that is patriarchy (Delphy, 2013).

Referring to Marxism, this approach considers that women are victims of exploitation within the patriarchy system and compares them to the working class, victims of exploitation by the capitalist system. According to Christine Delphy, women accumulate the sources of exploitation proper to the patriarchy and capitalism. Indeed, women are subject to a lower wage than men and then the profits made on their plus-value are superior. Then, they suffer a psychological and

physical exploitation through domestic work and the care of their family, that represents free work to the profit of their partners and family. In the intersection, women used to work as “family (or partner) assistants” in the farms, notary office, medical office and were not paid for their work (Delphy, 2013). This exploitation is justified by the law, which for a long time legalised the fact that women could be treated as a minor, but also the stereotypes that are perpetually conveyed in the society, describing women as weak, in need of protection and assigned to care activities (Human Rights Council, 2025).

Even though the material conditions of women have evolved through feminist activism, progressive change in the legislation, this approach is still relevant in the current global context. That enables women to define themselves through their material conditions, and not their biological attributes, but also to situate them as subjects in the political space, able to deconstruct the patriarchal system (Bidet-Mordrel et al., 2016).

Socialist feminism: inclusion of women in the exploited working class

Socialist feminism is a feminist movement that aims to bring an intersectional perspective between the gender hierarchy and the domination relationships based on the race but also on the class or the sexual orientation. Barbara Ehrenreich (2020), one of the main theoretician of this movement, states that “the liberation of women must be sought in conjunction with the social and economical justice for all people” (Ehrenreich, 2020). This perspective is necessary for the social justice especially regarding that population that accumulate the exploitation and the discrimination are the working-class women and the third-world women (Ehrenreich, 2020; Crenshaw, 1989).

This approach is also based on the Marxist theory and the antagonist relations between capitalist class and working class. Barbara Ehrenreich (2020) reminds that, in the Marxist theory, capitalist class and working class are irreconcilable antagonists, in the sense that the profits of the former rely on the exploitation of the latter. Considering that the main sources of women exploitation concern unpaid work and were completed within the household, the economical plus-value

criteria was not completed. However, the symbolic, social and psychological “plus-value” is real, even though invisible. From this perspective, socialist feminist tends to integrate women within the working-class, in the sense that they are, as well as the dominated working class workers’ in the Marxist theory, suffering capitalist-dominant-class exploitation. Socialist feminists then displace the criteria allowing dominated class identification. The integration of women in the working class enables a certain unification and a common strength, that already have been “atomised” by the capitalist class (Ehrenreich, 2020), across the activist movements in order to address the limits of an economical, cultural, political and oppressive system.

1.3. Intersectional Feminism and Queer Feminism: deconstruction of the discrimination system and affirmation of the Black women and the queer community in the feminist movement.

Intersectional feminism

The intersectional feminism refers to the framework highlighting the multiplication of discriminations suffered by women situated at the intersection of plural marginalised groups. The understanding that marginalised women discrimination suffered by Black women has been described firstly by bell hooks in her book *Ain’t I a Woman ?* published in 1981. She describes how Black women have been dehumanised, how their image in the society were affected by the stereotypes and a combination of racial and gender stigmatisation, reducing Black women to “sexual savage” (bell hooks, 1981). The research work of bell hooks has been followed by the work of the legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, considered as the pioneer of intersectional discrimination theory.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, a professor at UCLA School of Law and Columbia Law School, theories for the first time the concept of intersectional discrimination in her work *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex*, published in 1989. According to Crenshaw, while mainstream feminism focuses on White women, mainstream anti-racism centres on Black men. Consequently, both exclude Black women struggle, who face a cumulative and intensifying range of oppression.

This marginalisation is reinforced by institutions which refuse to recognize Black women as representatives of groups in cases of sex and race discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989). She illustrates her point with cases in which judges are categorical: they cannot base a ruling on intersectional discrimination or grant Black women a degree of harm greater than that of groups subject to discrimination based on a single unlawful ground. For instance, in the case of *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors*, five Black women brought an action against General Motors, seeking to have the court recognize that discrimination was being perpetrated against the group of female individuals of color. The Court's response was definitive. According to the institution, the plaintiffs were not permitted to combine statutory remedies that would entitle them to greater compensation than those provided by law.

Kimberlé Crenshaw highlights a new facet of inequality between men and women. Indeed, according to her, even if a Black man suffers from discrimination, he will not be as disadvantaged as a woman who risks facing discrimination based on both her gender and her origin. She thus established the idea that the harm resulting from unequal treatment based on multiple personal characteristics is more significant than that caused by other forms of discrimination based on a single motive.

Queer feminism, or the deconstruction of a binary social-built gender system

The main theorist of the queer feminism is Judith Butler (1997). According to this author, gender is constructed by society. Therefore, male or female identity is formed by society rather than inherent attributes. In other words, being a woman depends on a number of systemic and systematic features of larger society that lead to the creation of gender norms shaped by an homophobic, misogynistic, transphobic and racist representations, fixing what a person should be according to their physical attributes. These representations are normalised thanks to the repetition of image, performances that makes behaviour randomised, or even look natural.

Queer Feminism attempts at legitimising marginalised sexual identities as alternative to traditional sexual identities (Naseer and Majumdar, 2026) and debunking the stable system in which gender is constructed. In this aim, they develop ideas about how a person's physical attributes are interpreted by the society and how various roles are written for the genders. This

movement also stands in opposition with racism, immoralism, homophobia as part of the patriarchy. The feminist movement fights in a progressive inclusive approach, promoting gender equality but also social justice for all.

While feminist movement highlighted how the gap between men and women's representation in the media affects an important part of the population and their ability to participate in the political debate, the international institutions recognised that would affect the principle of democracy. Some of them have been committing to urge the states to address this representation gap in the media. Feminist and LGBTQIA+ organisations have invested in traditional and social media in order to subvert the dominant patriarchy narrative but these interventions are sometimes framed by an imperialist gaze especially on formerly colonised women which leads to the essentialism of these women and the repetition of the oppression on marginalised women. Spivak (2010), there is a lack of dialogue between mainstream feminist and underprivileged feminist such as workers, Black women or queer women. To address these limits, different feminist thinkers developed decolonial feminism.

Decolonial Feminism: how to decolonise the Western feminism

Decolonial feminism refers to a feminist theory focused on marginalised and subalternised women, the ones who live outside the margins, in the borders (Lugones, 1992). Spivak (1988) developed the concept of subaltern, retaken for Gramsci meaning marginalised population who do not have access to a common consciousness. This concept is fundamental to recognise the specific oppression of minority women, formerly colonised women, who also suffer the stigmatisation of Western feminist. According to Chandra Mohanty (1986), Western feminist have exercised a form of discursive colonisation towards Third World women. The post-colonialist thinker stressed three problematic analytical elements which frame Western feminist thought. First, according to Mohanty, Western feminist assume that Third World women constitute one uniform group regardless of their differences of location, class or race. The former construct therefore a « monolithic image » of the latter as poor, sexually repressed, ignorant and tradition-bound ». This representation aims at creating a contrast with Western women self-perceived as « educated, modern and free ». These images have real world consequences,

especially the intensification of marginalised women oppression and exploitation by capitalist society.

In order to create a common consciousness, Western women should be aware of their role in the oppression system and recognise that the patriarchy imposes singular forms of exploitation around the globe, depending on the context. Social media appears as a crucial tool to raise awareness about common struggles between women who evolve in different contexts, within Western and Third World. Additionally, Mohanty (1986) and Spivak (1988) suggest that the feminist solidarity should start by adopting the perfecting of the « Two-Third-World ». Indeed, in order to decolonise the feminist discourse, it seems crucial to recenter the most marginalised women. This idea was developed by bell hooks (1984) who emphasise an epistemic privilege of the margin. Accordingly, those on the margin have a unique perspective that allows them to demystify and subvert systemic power in ways the privileges cannot. As mentioned below, the investment in media, and especially in social media for those who can access, is a useful leverage to recenter subaltern standpoint and amplify their voices.

2. Feminist resistance to corporate media in practice

After an impact analysis of gender-based violence resulting from a tentacular system led by the interrelated interests of patriarchy, capitalism and most of the time conservatism, the study will analyse the medium used by feminist movements to resist these systems held by corporate media.

The feminist movement has always been discredited and women's rights have always been called into question by men. As noted above, women are suffering a representation from men that is reductive and relative to the latter. This is the core element of anti-feminism propaganda. Throughout history, feminists have had to be strategic to avoid the violent and oppressive reaction from men and sometimes from other women. For instance, the redaction of the magazine ELLE used strategies to spread information about the history of feminism and more generally to raise the awareness without being too controversial : l'Encyclopédie de Elles, which

was a monthly secret manual, was slipped in the magazine between the pages about femininity, home cooking etc. It was a means to inform women, without catalysing the reaction of the anti-feminist (Blandin, 2023) This strategy has also been used in Iran, through a feminist magazine that had been closed in 2008 but that has the time to progress from a general feminine magazine to an activist newspaper.

2.1. The feminist wave model, heuristic instrument in the analysis of media counter-narrative

The feminist movement has had to adapt along the evolution of technological progress of communication and information media (Blandin, 2023). This evolution is generally described through 4 “waves”, during which feminist fought to progressively acquire different types of rights. According to some scholars, this model is theoretical and doesn’t represent the reality of feminism, from a temporal and space perspective. However, this wave model has the merits of following the evolution of technological progress, and thus, the evolution of the media landscape. This aspect of this model is relevant in this research. Therefore, this section will identify the boundaries of the model in order to use it to minimise their effects.

The first wave is characterised by feminist reclaim of gender equality in their civic and political rights (right to vote, property right, right to education, right to financial autonomy).

The second movement is characterised by the claims of the right to bodily autonomy, but more generally the sexual and reproductive rights and the right to private life, highlighting the slogan “the private is political”. These claims are along with the denunciation of the structural and normalised sexism and discrimination in all the sphere of the society (political, social, economical...).

The third wave, covers more diversified subjects as inequalities in the labour market and in the field of labour in general (against sexual harassment), the sexual and sexist violence but mainly the intersectional aspect of discrimination (Blandin, 2023). This trend claims not only women’s rights but LGBTQIA+ rights and non-White people’s rights and amplifies the voice of

marginalised women (Forte and Leconte, 2023). The main trends of this wave are Black feminist, post colonial feminism and queer feminism. It is illustrated by the “Zine Culture”, Grrr Riot movement that aimed at creating an inclusive counter-public space.

Finally, The fourth wave, whose existence is not consensual, is characterised by the transposition of the feminist activism and claim online, helped by the rise of social media since the 2000s. These tools allow feminist movements and individuals to launch for example online campaigns such as #NiUnaMenos in Argentina or #NousToutes in France, that made visible sexual and sexist violence suffered by women and highlighted the structural aspect of these violence, made possible by a patriarchal system that affects all women.

Nevertheless, this approach of feminist evolution is bounded by its euro-centrism. First of all, this model imposes a linear approach of global feminist movement, based on the dynamics of the occidental one, while women in the global south do not have the same tools of actions and some of them still fight for the rights associated to a previous period, giving the impression that they are late. For example, the so-called Fourth Wave or the second part of the Third Wave is characterised by the transposition of the activists initiative online. These actions and the necessary furniture are not accessible for every woman in the world. Moreover, concerning the right to vote associated with the first wave (1850-1940s), is still not effective in different countries such as Pakistan or Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, this model represents the different waves in isolation. But, in reality, the acquisition of women’s rights is not always effective, their claims are rather continuous in practice and they cannot be taken for granted. Women’s rights regression is illustrated in the United States by the overturn in 2022 of the judgment Roe vs Wade (1972), that guaranteed the legalisation of abortion in all the states. Since 2022, different conservative states have been able to prohibit or restrict the practice of abortion. This regression can also result from a rupture in the political regime, illustrated by the annihilation of women’s freedom in Afghanistan since the talibans took possession of the power in 2021. The model does not either take into account the continuous

intensified discredit and violence suffered by women all along the different periods of “feminist wave”.

Last but not least, this model omits the racism and exclusion of Black women from women from White or privileged towards Black women, non-White women in general or women who originated from an inferior socio-economical class (Forte and Leconte, 2023).

Despite these boundaries, the feminist wave model distinguishes the different periods of change in the communication technologies and the means of feminist resistance in the media, which will be useful to find a point of reference in the feminist resistance in the media.

2.2. The evolution of the feminist counter-narrative in the media along the technological progress

First Wave, Birth of a feminist counter but racist narrative.

The first feminist wave, pursuing the goal of acquiring political and civic rights, was a response to the absence of women’s representation in the media but also in the media discourse, which was narrowly linked to the exclusion of women in the political sphere.

In France, the feminist first wave evolves along with the legislation of press freedom (Legifrance, 2021) and the awareness rise about the importance of democracy in the society. The technical progress in the XIX century provided for the media to become mass media, accessible and read by the highest number of people, that will develop a political consciousness and opinion to fulfil their duty to vote. Their role, in sum, the press was a way to recreate an “agora” thanks to the technical progress, by holding the values of the republic and covering the different political ideologies and trends (Blandin, 2023).

During this period, different societies assisted in a hybridisation between mass media and alternative media. Indeed, feminist movements or individuals created the first feminine and feminist magazine, such as *La Fronde* (1897) in France, first feminist magazine published by a redaction composed by women only. The first wave was also marked by Mary Ann Shadd, who became the first Black female publisher in the Western world, establishing the newspaper

Provincial Freeman (1853) in Canada. However, the first feminist wave is also characterised by a bourgeois feminist grouping and the exclusion of non-White women.

Second Wave, Feminist incursion on the television

The Second wave, situated between the 1960s and the 1980s is marked by the democratisation of television and the fight of feminist to participate in this information window. Their goal was to influence the representation of women and the evolution of the gender role. In the Western world, feminist mainly call into question the sexualised and objectified representation of women in the media and the participation of feminist in the traditional forms of media. To illustrate the former aspect, Laura Mulvey theorised in 1975 the concept of male gaze in the cinema that had been transposed in the media and advertisement images since then. Also, some feminist integrated the traditional forms of media, creating radio programs such as *Womankind* that counts among the first radio programs with feminist leanings (Malinowski, 2021). According to Malinowski (2021), this period was also characterised by the exclusion of women from authority positions who were reducing them to administrative or technical tasks. According to BBC data, the gender ratio in TV related jobs in the end of 1980s was 5 women to 150 men (Calvert et al. (2007).

Third Wave, Reclaim of Feminist Intersectionality and Reappropriation of the media language through networking

From 1990 to 2010, the period corresponding to the third wave, alternative media were created, through cyberspace, which aims to open the public debate and give a voice to the marginalised group. These actions aimed at creating a network and creating a counter-narrative through their alternative media, which is aligned with Edward Bernays wish “the open concurrency in media”. For instance, the Iranian journal *Zanan*, created by Shahla Sherkat in 1998. While the Khomeini claims the creation of an “Islamic” feminine magazine in 1979, Shaba Sherkat create what will become me a platform of dialogue between different classes of the society (elites and “ordinary people” about women’s and children’s rights, the gender-discriminatory constitution of Iran and in order to create an alternative deliberative public sphere (Ghoreishi, 2021). According to

Ghoreishi (2021), this example depicts Habermas model of deliberative public sphere, in the sense that Zanan pursued the objective of increasing social awareness and the formation of public opinion hoping to initiate reforms in the field of women's rights.”(Ghoreishi, 2021, p. 72) and was part of larger committed magazines that replied to one another articles (Ghoreishi, 2021, p. 77). This model is also followed by the different feminist actions that characterised the third wave and the beginning of cyberspace. The emergence of the Zine culture enabled any minority group to take part of the social and political debate through “self-published low budget magazines” (Chidgey, 2021, p. 1639) that aim at including and connecting the different minority groups, subject to racial, gender, homophobic, transphobic or ableist discriminations. Moreover, the zine culture was made visible thanks to the Grrr Riot movement, whose role was to connect young people and challenge the status quo in the media. This period will be followed by an intense wave of cyberactivism but also impactful actions against gender stereotypes.

Fourth Wave, Transnational Feminist and online mobilisation

Since 2010, feminist actions have been commonly used by women, reflecting a transnational female solidarity. Through cyberspace and in the street, women gather under the same flag. This unification reflects a trans nationality of the movement and the raise of awareness about sexual harassment, rape, inequalities. For example, North African feminists create forums such as Revolution against the Patriarchal Society and Uprising of Women in the Arab World, as a space where they can use a common radical language approach, denounce the condition of women and to challenge the cultural pillars of gender inequality such as religion, gender segregation or gender norms (Al-Rawi, 2014). These movements have remarkable impacts, especially the hashtag activism, that gave rise to the hashtag #WomenLifeFreedom in Iran from 2022, to fight against the oppression from the government against women and femicides perpetrated by the police, the hashtag #MeToo in the United States and in France since 2017, to denounce and make visible the sexual harassment suffered by women in all the sphere of their lives. These initiatives shape the cultural sphere, despite the power of the aggressors such as Harvey Weinstein who was condemned in 2020 for criminal sexual acts.

These common actions are also visible in the streets such as the initiative of “Slutwalk” initiated in Canada in 2011 and taken over in different countries such as South Africa, to fight against slut-shaming, sexual harassment and rape, all concerns that women can face in any part of the world. These initiatives participate in reshaping the representation of women, as part of an international community and facing the same risks due to their representation in the social and political space. But this feminist internationalism, despite the difference between the different movements, tends to displace the representation of women as strong, combative and protected by each other.

Conclusive remarks

This chapter analysed the mechanisms of modern propaganda through mass media, as a political project supported and funded by dominant classes. After demonstrating that among the privileged groups of the population, the owners and founders of corporate media impose a more conservative, capitalist and therefore patriarchal ideology, rooted in a colonial approach. These ideologies affect minority groups, including women, represented as objects, through stereotypical and inferiorising portrayals. These systems rely on the maintainment of the exploitative system, depriving oppressed groups from self-subjectivity and leaving them out of the knowledge production. These methods are close to the colonial system, relying on the denial of colonialised political history in order to impose their own narrative and knowledge. To come back to media, Bourdieu (1996) emphasised that these interfaces constitute the arbiter of social and political existence. The marginalisation of women, from the cultural narrative aims at denying their existence and insidiously maintaining a system of gender exploitation. Despite this pressure, feminist movements did fight throughout history to integrate the media production spheres in order to create a counter-narrative in gender representation. These initiatives gave rise to legal instruments across the continents that promote this new narrative in the media, as a guarantee of democracy. These historical movements have triggered during the latest years an reintensification, in the female marginalisation and an amplification of the violence directed to women through the corporate media.

Chapter 2: Media and power: how corporate media uphold the patriarchal backlash against feminism

Introduction

This chapter will focus on how the representation of women in mass media is serving the agendas of patriarchy, capitalism and conservatism. In the previous chapter, the study emphasised that mass media have the power to shape our beliefs and orient the political debate. In that sense, it is crucial to understand and report the way they represent and treat issues affecting different minorities, including women. Moreover, even though women have had a crucial role in the public debate and in history, mass media are reinforcing stereotypical gender representation by invisibilising or dehumanising them. Additionally, since marginalised women² are at the crossroads of a patriarchal and racist domination, they are particularly vulnerable and under-represented. By misrepresenting the social structure with sexist and racist bias, mass media are used by the dominant class to maintain its privileges and perpetuate social hierarchies leading to inequalities.

Social reproduction requires the reproduction of a specific culture (Weiss, 2021). As explained in the first chapter, media are a tool used by the privileged to maintain a system of exploitation by adopting a dominant-oriented lens. In the first chapter, the study emphasised how the proponents of the far-right/religious/nationalist dominant are weaponising the media narrative to control public opinion. This chapter seeks to analyse the mechanisms adopted by the media that reinforce gender inequity and strengthen a patriarchal cultural map in individuals' minds. The first mechanism is gender misrepresentation and invisibilisation of minorities, especially minoritised women (Part A). The report of the Global Media Monitoring Project released in 2025 observed that gender inequality on the news was more acute than in reality, illustrating the strong influence of patriarchal and conservative ideologies over media narratives, leading to

² The terms 'marginalised' and 'oppressed' will be preferred throughout the following argumentation.

female under-representation in the news as well as an insufficient disruption of gender stereotypes (section 1). Furthermore, female bodies have always been depicted as an object of desire or intrigue. The media have exploited women's objectification and have used it to increase their audience. This 'commercialisation' is visible especially through media advertisement but also through the coverage of femicides, usually treated as a miscellaneous news item (section 2).

This trivialisation of violence has accompanied a global rise of the 'manosphere', spread across digital and traditional media (Part B). The chapter will emphasise how corporate media have amplified these radical misogynistic discourses, particularly in Western countries (section 1). Secondly, the chapter aims at analysing the language and practice of the manosphere through the media and underscoring how this alt-conservative and misogynistic movement impacts women safety online and offline (section 2).

Sub-chapter 1: Patriarchal representation and the reinforcement of gender inequality in the media landscape

In chapter 1, patriarchy was defined as "a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating and superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially female and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of physiological terrorism and violence." (hooks, 2010).

According to the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) released in 2025, gender representation in the media is currently characterised by the under representation, the objectification and the sexualisation of women. Therefore, the media landscape is characterised by a male gaze and male over-representation. Hence, the media adopt a patriarchal gender representation to depict the social world, risking women's safety and social legitimacy. Yet, Santoniccolo et al. (2023) state that media have a prominent role in people's identity development and socialisation process and in the normalisation of violent and misogynistic behaviours and discourses (Santoniccolo et al., 2023). As a result, it is crucial to analyse how media portray women to later identify the consequences of these portrayals.

Nusbaum (1999) pointed out seven dimensions of objectification, and some of them are characteristic of women's treatment in the media: the inertness, lacking in agency or activity, is characterised in the media by women's lack of space of expression. The fungibility, interchangeability with others of the same type - is characterised by the sexualisation of women that reduce them to a body. The denial of subjectivity - absence of consideration for the person's feelings or experiences - is often produced while journalists treat femicide as a miscellaneous news item, favoring sensationalism over victim dignity. These topics are explored in depth over the next sections.

1. Inertness: women's marginalisation in the news

The GMMP report found that 30% of gender inequity in the news is related to gender social norms in society and vice-versa. It also shows that gender inequality is more acute on the news than in reality: the report emphasised that 70% of the variation of gender inequity in the news cannot be explained by lived experience. Already in 2010, the share of women employed in the media industries, across seven regions of the world, represented 35,1% of the people employed, which is lower than the female share in the labour market found by the International Labour Organisation (International Women's Media Foundation, 2011, p.23). Thus, a correlation can be determined between gender inequity in the news media and the gender social norms. This aspect shows that the media are not a mirror of society but are a reflection of common beliefs and opinions shaped by patriarchal mentality. Indeed, even though women represent half of the world's population, they only appear in a quarter of the news (1). This under-representation is reinforced by the spread of gender stereotypes and traditional gender norms which lead to the dehumanisation of female bodies (2). Through biased, sexist, and discriminatory media treatment, the media deny the female's capacity for reasoning and, consequently, their capability of participating in political debates.

1.1. Strategy of women's invisibilization : half of the world, only a quarter of the news

UN Women (2025f) deplored how women are still globally marginalised in mainstream media, standing for 26% of the individuals appearing on these media, while they represent half of the global population.

According to the United Nations, this under-representation limits the presence of female models in the collective imagination. Moreover, the reinforcement of gender stereotypes prevents social and political progress towards gender equality. Minorities are even more absent and thus inert in the media landscape. While women represent 26% of the news, women being part of ethnic, racial or other minorities represent only 2% of the news in print, radio and TV media (WACC, 2025, p. 25).

In this context, journalists struggle to adopt a gendered and inclusive perspective and trivialise the inexistence of women in the media landscape, preventing them to have a voice in the political debate, challenge stereotypes and address female vulnerabilities. Indeed, only 2% of the news treat gender-based violence.

Moreover, while women are under-represented, the few who are present are globally disproportionately associated with “soft news”, in binary contrast with “hard news”. The GMMP (2025) report states that hard news stories that are holding more societal and political importance are mainly presented by men. In opposition, “soft news” tends to blur the line between information and entertainment. The term ‘soft news’ originally referred to general topic areas including entertainment, arts, celebrities, and other culture-related subjects (Deng, 2023). That disparity leads to a common association between salient subjects and men, contrasting with the entertainment news contents that will be associated with women. In this way, the process of representation risks to affect any subjects’ significance described or covered by a woman and leads to the marginalisation and the discrediting of women’s opinions in the public debate.

The GMMP also reports a gender-biased portrayal in the media that does not reflect the

progressive change in the real world regarding gender inequality. Indeed, while women are more likely to work outside the house, at the global scale, the media continue defining them through their domestic role. The type of content they are asked to formulate in the media landscape has also a key role in the boundaries of women's empowerment. In order to challenge stereotypes, it is necessary to have a high-valued role in the media landscape to influence the public opinion, such as a subject, an expert, a spokesperson, or ideally a top editor whose participation is a core element of the news or requires a certain level of knowledge. The Reuters Institute reports that, in 2025, women represented 24% of the top editors among the 240 brands surveyed across five continents (Reuters Institute, 2025). However:

“The most common function that women have in the news is as “popular opinion” providers, with 40% in 2025, down from 42% a decade ago. The second most common function for women is as persons speaking based on personal experience (39% in 2025, 41% in 2020, and 38% in 2015). Both roles provide unremarkable information on the news topic, in contrast to the expert and spokesperson functions. In third place is the eyewitness role, 34% women in 2025 and the highest proportion since 2015. Online, women remain least likely to participate as expert and spokesperson sources, albeit appreciable progress in the expert role across the decade.” (WACC, 2025, p.33)

As GMMP (2025) reports, the proportion of women presented in the news fluctuates depending on their role. If 42% of the personal experiences were told by women in the news, they only represent 23% of the experts heard in print, radio and television news. On website news, the gap is smaller but still significant: women's voices are heard in 39% of personal experience and 28% of expert comment. Last but not least, women represent 24% of the subjects in the news (print, radio, television) and 29% of the subjects covered by the news on websites (including the news related femicides). The report explains this gap by the insufficient rise of the women's share as reporters in the media (only 12 points since 2000). Although gender parity has been achieved in North America, the Caribbean and the Pacific, the report suggests that the news system is not willing to “cede to full numerical gender equality (among the news reporters)” (WACC, 2025, p.3).

Concerning marginalised women, the statistics for web-published articles are 4%, implying that minorities are minimally more likely to be featured in digital than in traditional news. This lack of representation prevents challenging gender and social stereotypes; on the contrary, it tends to reinforce them.

1.2. Reinforcement of gender stereotypes in the media : strategy of women's delegitimation

Still in 2025, the news continues to portray women through stereotypical and patriarchal lenses, thanks to female invisibilization in hard news topics and the concentration of their representation in motherhood and caring-related news. Even the topic that is supposed to challenge gender stereotypes the most - gender-based violence - does so in only 17% of the news (WACC, 2025, p.66).

More generally, women representation is shaped by stereotypes, starting with their profession: *“Women are underrepresented in every occupation coded by the GMMP except for three – as homemakers, students (50%), and in social work/childcare/health support roles (59%). Homemaker/parent – with no other occupation given – remains the highest “job type” for women, peaking at 81% in 2000 and still at 73% in 2025.”* (WACC, 2025, p.34)

These findings indicate how the media reinforce gender stereotypes by describing women mainly through their domestic labor, which is not paid, and social work, while 49% of the female population was part of the labour participation in 2023 (World Bank, 2023).

A gender gap is also observed in the representation in news topics, highlighting female over-representation in soft news and their under-representation in hard news. They overly appear in news that cover the beauty and cosmetic fields (68%), family relations (57%) and gender violence (52%). In contrast, they are under-represented in news related to the economy and politics or national defense, security and military spending (9%), sport (11%), or war (11%), even though they are the most exposed and affected by conflicts (WACC, 2025, p. 31).

Feminine presence in the news is even decreasing in some fields. Concerning international

news, the presence of women rose from 17% (1995) to 26% (2010) then decreased to 20% in 2025 (WACC, 2025, p. 32). Thus, the news distorts the reality of women in the workforce: while women are increasingly present in diverse sectors of the economy, their representation seems limited to low-valued professions and labour.

As mentioned above, gender inequality is more acute in the news than social gender inequity. For example, women represent less than 30% of educators and 25% of legal professionals in the news. In reality, studies found that women represent, in the teaching workforce, 94% in pre-primary education, 68% in primary, 58% in lower secondary, 52% in upper secondary, and 43% in tertiary education (WACC, 2025, p. 32). In legal professions, women constitute 47% of lawyers and 38% of senior lawyers (International Bar Association Legal Policy & Research Uni., 2024).

Therefore, women's representation in media, and therefore in social imaginary, is framed by stereotypical portrayals, reducing them to the private sphere, especially motherly and care roles, even though their participation in society is way more diversified. Hence, the report concludes with considerations about the entrenchment of stereotypes in reporting and a consistent journalistic failure to produce content that challenges stereotypical narratives and a more general failure of the media to "*transform the harmful norms that perpetuate such violence*" (WACC, 2025, p. 71)

Since the media system is dominated by men, from the owner to the presenter, the media cultivate a "cultural blindness" (Herscovitz, 2023) about women's experiences in order not to adopt a gender-oriented approach in the news. This perspective would certainly lead to the transformation of the mainstream narrative, a possibility that is completely excluded by the dominant class.

To conclude this section, the report provided by GMMP in 2025 emphasised that the media reinforce gender stereotypes, even beyond reality. The report observed a decrease of women's representation in the media landscape since 2010 as well as the entrenchment of gender stereotypes, caused by the monopolisation by men of the information source and high-valued

topics. Ultimately, while narratives produced by women are more effective at raising awareness of gender-based violence, intrinsic structural biases continue to favour unrealistic portrayals that prioritise the audience's desire and external projections over the authentic identity of women. This objectification is a media strategy to pursue their commercial necessities, linked to audit constraints, at the cost of women's humanity and dignity. This trend relegates women to the private sphere, or the topics and contents that allow to exploit women's physical image as desirable for the audience. The exploitation of the female body has allowed media to meet their profit motives, which constitutes the fungibility and the denial of female subjectivity.

2. Fungibility and denial of subjectivity: female bodies at the service of consumerist necessities

This section aims at demonstrating how media reinforce patriarchal norms by portraying women as interchangeable and sometimes by dehumanising women through the spread of sexualising advertisements (2.1) and the reporting of femicides (2.2). These two aspects are visible around the world, which reinforces gender discrimination and benefit to global elite classes but also worsens the intersecting forms of discrimination by a double standard proceeded against marginalised women (Noustoutes, 2024). The persistent selectivity in media representation demonstrates that female identity does not rely on their self-representation but on external projection and male gaze. The media proceed to a double standard towards transwomen or sex workers, who are more likely to be invisibilised or blamed for their own murder. These processes, relying on gender essentialism, strengthen gender discrimination and intersectional discrimination. Indeed, by reducing social empathy and political will, these representations prevent the effective enforcement of the legislative mechanisms, supposed to protect women against violence (Fuentes, 2020).

2.1. Sexualisation of women in the media, a consumerist strategy

Sexualisation is defined as a phenomenon in which a person's value is based solely on their

sexual attractiveness or where sexual behaviour is unwantedly imposed on them (American Psychological Association, 2007). Although sexualised contents and advertisements are sanctioned by national or local authorities, the media are still conveying sexualising and discriminatory contents via advertisements in order to attract public attention and meet ‘commercial necessities’.

According to Sihori and Khurana (2025), gender stereotypes and women’s sexualisation in the media reinforce the consumerist system. This “commercialisation” of female bodies contributes to their dehumanisation (Shapovalova et al., 2024, p. 118). By reducing women to tools to drive product sales, the media constructs female identity as the product itself, shaped by the consumerism system.

This sexualisation and commodification are based on gender essentialism, referring to the assumption that people have natural and essential common characteristics which are inherent, innate and unchanging (Sahin, 2018).

Sihori and Khurana (2025) point out a double effect of corporate media on women’s representation. Even though the media seem to encourage female empowerment, the authors state that this progress is still bound by “necessity of consumerism”. Indeed, they observed that women’s fulfilment is always represented through media by a woman that physically corresponds to an heterosexual and essentialist paradigm. According to Parameswaran (2014), mainstream media frequently describe empowered women as urban, upper-class, able-bodied, and fair-skinned. Indeed, the valorisation of women is conditioned to their socio-economical-physical conditions and excludes old women, women of color, transwomen, or women with disabilities. Therefore, the media weaponise women's identities - even though female empowerment is part of the content. In other words, women empowerment relies on consumers’ tastes that do not valorise the diversity of women’s representations.

Essentialism and sexualisation are even intensified towards racialised or queer women. Vance et al. (2015) stressed that African-American women are portrayed in advertisements as having the least facial prominence of all demographic groups and are more frequently depicted as animals, while Asian-American women are more frequently depicted as exotic and subservient, when

compared to other groups. In Western countries and Latin American advertisements still explicitly promote the image of White women over others (Mensa & Vargas-Bianchi, 2022) which has been progressively raised in the public debate.

Moreover, companies seem to capitalise on the current strongly polarised context by exploiting these topics to attract audiences' attention, as illustrated by the advertisement "Good jeans" released by American Eagle. In 2025, the company released an advertisement featuring Sydney Sweeney for the release of the company's latest jeans models. For two minutes, this ad stages the actress, who is blonde, skinny, has blue eyes and closely corresponds to Western beauty standards, in an indoor decor. The camera focuses multiple times on her buttocks and once goes along her body, while she is closing her jeans buttons, attracting the public attention to her genitals then suggesting her breast under her jeans jacket. Apart from its evident sexualising aspect, the ad is creating an uncomfortable atmosphere, playing on the ambiguity between the beauty of the jeans and the genes of the actress, multiplying the sonorous slogan "Sydney Sweeney has good jeans", which may be understood as "Sydney Sweeney has good *genes*". Left-wing militants denounced a promotion of White supremacy through the body of Sydney Sweeney. In that case, women's bodies become weaponised to promote and make acceptable a political project that only includes a certain nation-elite and excludes the Other. These discriminations are highly visible with regards to the media coverage of femicide, as it will discuss in the next section.

2.2. Sensationalism in femicide coverage: priority to audit and banalisation of gender-based violence

Femicide media reporting often dehumanises female victims by prioritising sensationalism and audit rate over the victim's dignity, especially when the victim does not conform with the conservative standards of the nation.

UN Women defines "femicide" as the worst manifestation of violence, placing it in the continuum of gender-based violence and referring to the intentional killings of a woman or a girl with a gender-related motivation and driven by gender discrimination unequal power relations,

gender stereotypes or harmful social norms (UN Women, 2024). The definition and the media coverage of femicide differ from region to region.

While the Islamic Republic of Iran's laws enable "femicide of honours" (Farhadi & Janjevic, 2024), Latin American countries have adopted the Belém do Pará Convention in 1994 to protect women against gender-based violence, including femicide. This phenomenon has been studied all around the world, with recent additions from East Asia (Institute of Development Studies, 2025) and East Africa (Achieng' Booker et al., 2025). Although UN Women states that 50,000 women and girls were killed in 2024, it is only a rough estimate due to limited methods of investigations and a lack of information provided by national institutions (United Nations, 2024). The lack of information is also caused by a will from states to invisibilise the issue of femicide on their territory. But when femicides are treated by the media, they are often instrumentalised in order to increase audience numbers. Indeed, the coverage of killings of women has generally been characterised by gory descriptions of the victims. Finally, journalists generally treat victims differently, according to the saint-sinner dichotomy, depending on their social status, which highly marginalises women who have migration background, queer women, women with disabilities or older women. As the research will detail through the following sub-sections, although femicide coverage is really different from one region to another and journalists tend to humanise female bodies, it is globally characterised by sensationalism, victim blaming and/or double standard between 'good' and 'bad' victims.

Progressive humanisation of the victim of femicide in the media

Some studies carried out in Europe, Latin America or East Africa report notable progress in the media coverage of femicide, in favour of a more empathic description of the victim. By mentioning the victim's name, surname and their socio-economical condition (Noustoutes, 2024) or by investigating through the victim's relatives, the media generate empathy (Maio, 2023) and restore the victims' human qualities and dignity. This process helps to create a common feeling of loss and injustice within society, and indirectly to raise the salience of femicide in the political debate. The rehabilitation of the victims of femicide has been promoted

by feminist movements. However, scholars and activists still stress the boundaries of the media coverage of femicide, which remain characterised by the use of sensationalism - when journalists describe the victims through police reports which are gory, shocking, and particularly dehumanising - and victim-blaming. These aspects are intensified when the victim is part of another minority, adding another layer of victimisation

Sensationalism

Maio (2023) studied the media coverage of femicide in Argentina after the #NiUnaMenos movement. She observed that most newspapers will describe the femicide with shocking and crude details. According to the author, these descriptions deflect public attention from the structural and systemic dimensions of femicide. Media coverage of femicide has traditionally been characterised by a sensationalist discourse, proper to miscellaneous news items³¹. Therefore, women murders have been described following commercial strategies of the media, at the cost of their dignity. By way of illustration, journalists frame article's title around the method of the murder or center the killer's testimony. The French organisation #NousToutes reported an article from *Midi Libre* titled "femicide by beating with a spade: 'it was horrific' the accused finally admitted". Through this title, the journalist reduces the victim Akila Khalid, 73 years-old, from Villemagne d'Argentièrre in Hérault to the blows she received from the spade, as well as to the feelings of her murderer (Noustoutes, 2024, p. 17). This bias - aiming at catching readers' attention - denies the victim's humanity while it subjectifies the killer. Alive or dead, female bodies are consequently always depicted accordingly to increase the audience resulting in the denial of humanity, while the killer will be more likely to be subjectified. This contrast is more striking when the victim belongs to a minority group. The difference of media treatment between victims belonging to the dominant class and a minority group illustrates the dichotomy between the 'good' and the 'bad' victim which will be discussed in the following subsection.

Good and bad victims

Despite the growing awareness of the significance of femicide phenomena, scholars still observed a selectivity among the victims resulting in a hierarchy of victimhood performed by

journalists. Indeed, media coverage of femicide is globally made up with victim blaming or invisibilization, especially when the victim is racialised, queer or is a sex worker. Aldrete (2020) emphasised that murdered women are differently represented by mass media, as good or bad victims³². Therefore, if the victim embraces the stereotypes of vulnerability, motherhood or even nation-elite characteristics, then her murder will be treated as a societal issue. Otherwise, the victim will be more likely to be dehumanised and blamed.

In the French media femicide are limited to the killing of a woman by their partner or ex-partner (Gutiérrez Aldrete, M., 2020): journalists have described as ‘femicide’ only the murders perpetrated in the domestic sphere, by a partner or ex-partner. This paradigm invisibilises 28% of the femicides and the victims who are trans, racialised, queer or sex workers. NousToutes reports that in 2022, no articles mentioning "femicides" treat the murder of sex workers. In addition, murders of sex workers - when they are covered - are usually described as a “tragic story” and not as a structural crime. Margot Giacinti (2022) explains this selectivity by the traditional dichotomy between spouses' crimes, purportedly caused by passion, and other femicides, characterised as terrifying, nobly justified by the violence and the hate of the author. In other words, French media still invisibilises the victims that are not the spouse (or ex-spouse of) the killer in order to preserve the humanity of the killer while marginalising non-spouse victims.

In Brasil, scholars observed that racist biases are also affecting the media treatment of femicides. Herscovitz (2023) emphasised that Brazilian media treated femicide differently depending on the social class and the race of the victim. She analyses the media coverage of two cases. The first case occurred on December 24, 2020, in Rio de Janeiro, and it involves the murder of Viviane Vieira do Amaral, a white female judge from Rio de Janeiro. The second case occurred in São Paulo on September 6, 2021, and it involves the murder of a Black female social media influencer, Bruna Quirino.

Concerning the femicide of the judge Vivian Vieira Amaral, Herscovitz stressed that, because the victim was white, her killing was described in the media as “unacceptable”, “horrible” and highlights the “constant risk” of patriarchal system on women, including white women. Finally,

the media did not suggest the responsibility of Vivian Vieira do Amaral for her own murder, but insisted on the fact that her ex-husband and killer planned her killings.

The femicide of Bruna Quirino, although highly covered, received a quite different media treatment. Indeed, while the first case created a shock linked to the victim's social status - White and judge (upper-middle class) - the blackness of Bruna Quirino was mentioned only once by one journal, the outlet *Amla Preta* ("black soul"). Other media did not give importance to the victim's skin colour: while Black women represent 62% of the victims of femicide, they rarely make the news³⁴. This invisibilization shows either the journalists' ignorance of the intersectional and thus multiplied vulnerability endured by Black women or the will to hide the particular vulnerability of Black women in Brazil. Also, in contrast with the first case of media treatment, police and media did not include information from Black feminist organisations and did not specify the motive of the crime, leaving space for victim-blaming interpretation. Indeed, whether there was no clear motive for Bruna Quirino's femicide, the journalists specified that the killer was confused and sick, which is a way to grant him a degree of subjectivity. In contrast, they judged that Bruna Quirino "awakened the rage of his husband" (Herscovitz, 2023), which constitutes a strategy of victim-blaming. This frame shows explicitly how the mainstream discourses would like to represent Black women as being submitted to their husbands. Women like Bruna Quirino call into question this narrative and, according to the media, this narrative reversal would create such a grievance to her partner that would justify her murder. Victim blaming is therefore more likely to target women who challenge the dominant narrative by demonstrating their independence. Since oppressed women are usually invisibilised and depicted as submissive, altering the narrative carries more risk and is frequently met with harsher scrutiny from the media.

The exclusion of racialised or queer women from the politicisation of femicide is also due to the presence of racism and transphobia within feminist organisations, which prevents an effective inclusion of all women. Therefore, racism, transphobia and whorephobia are well present in the media which reinforce the saint-sinner dichotomy. Consequently, the discrimination and fragmentation of female identity perpetuated by the media obscure the root causes of

gender-based violence, such as power dynamics linked to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or social class (Fuentes, 2020).

This cultural map fuels the narrative of male domination over women in which women have to fulfill the male desire or be punished. This gender representation has a lot of repercussions and prevents women from seeing themselves as agents of their life and in the political debate, since their subjectivity is shattered. They internalised this male gaze as the main source of their self-esteem which maintains them in an objectified position. According to Nusbaum (1999), internalised self-objectification by women also creates self-barriers. Then the power they have on their own life and on society looks restrained, to the point that some anti-feminist movements advocate for the abrogation of women's right to vote, considering that women's opinions are subjected to their husbands. More generally, the current media gender representation is damaging democracy, denying the legitimisation to half of the population, and spreading intersectional discrimination by stigmatising even further marginalised women. Accordingly, the media narrative favours the dominant and privileged population but particularly the one who aligns with the exploitative capitalist system and who knows how to proceed with algorithm mechanisms. The next part of this chapter will focus on the mainstreaming of masculinist ideology, in which the leaders understood how to take on these new technologies. Masculinism, based on misogyny, has been raised by the media to the public debate by promoting a capitalist-centric approach to social relations. Even though this ideology was born in the U.S. is particularly significant in Western countries, it extended its influence in other countries like in Mexico or in China.

Sub-chapter 2: Mainstreaming of the manosphere on the web: illustration of media radicalisation against feminist discourse

Over the last few decades, the concern of gender equality has been progressively brought on the table and mainstreamed thanks to feminist advancements. Particularly in Western countries, the emergence of progressive and liberal masculinities and femininities has been observed (Flood, 2015). Women's independence and empowerment in all spheres of society went hand-to-hand with the progressive, but not complete, inclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community (Botto & Gottzén, 2023), as well as with marginalised populations in the political debate and cultural map. These shifts contradict patriarchal narratives, in which men dominate over minorities. Following this narrative transformation, scholars emphasise how men have felt grieved, threatened and replaced by women and minorities in their exercise of power, be it in public or private spheres. These feelings of grievance, combined with the rise of social media, gives credit to masculinism in the political debate as a radical backlash against feminist discourses. As a matter of fact, the 'algorithm radicalisation' allows masculinist discourses to invade all social spheres, including schools (Ayad & Frances-Wright, 2026). The radicalisation in social media and traditional media provided them with legitimacy in the political debate, allowing at the same time a popular desensitisation towards violence against women and the promotion of a far-right capitalist project. In this context, the study will demonstrate how media amplify and capitalise on masculine feelings of grievance, prioritising the profit of their influencers and partner companies and risking the safety of women and young men (section 1). Then the study will analyse the misogynistic language and practices of the 'manosphere' spread across media as a way to reimpose a capitalist and patriarchal centered narrative (section 2).

1. Media capitalisation on gender identity crisis to promote far-right discourses

The masculinist ideology is based on an unachievable myth of masculinity that illustrates the intersection of all the exploitation systems endured by women. Indeed, the 'manosphere', a term referring to the online space of masculinist ideology, claims for men's vulnerability and

victimisation in the context of a so-called ‘crisis of masculinity’. However, this movement embodies precisely all the codes of domination system and therefore enjoys particular support in the public debate, notably from far-right parties that adopt its rhetoric, but also from social media platforms that amplify its discourse. By capitalising on the men and women’s vulnerability (1.1) and the glorification of wealth (1.2), ‘manfluencers’ are far from representing an oppressed minority; rather, they form a metapolitical sphere which serves to perpetuate the dominant narrative.

1.1. Masculinism: from an identity crisis to the radicalisation of anti-feminist discourses across digital media

As seen in the first chapter, the rise of masculinist discourses has been described as a serious and dangerous political phenomenon, given the number of men that interact within the manosphere and also the consequences suffered by women in reality, from hate speech and cyberharassment to femicide and terrorist attacks: In June 5th 2026, the General Directorate for Internal Security (GDIS) has officially categorised masculinism and particularly “incels” subgroups as a terrorist threat (RadioFrance, 2026). Three weeks later, on June 22th 2026, a man, after shooting 2 male police officers and injuring one female officer in Montreal, left a manifesto in which he expressed his hatred for women, in reference with “incel” ideology (Le Monde, 2026a).

Despite the research demonstrating that masculinism and far-right ideologies are based on misinformation, stereotypes and hate-speech (Roberts et al., 2025) these discourses seem to receive more and more credit from the public opinion. Botto and Gottzén (2023) state that recent research emphasised that young men have a more negative opinion on women and gender equality than older men. According to Avala et al. (2024), the endorsement to this extreme violent content is explained by the simplistic and essentialist gender norms scheme they bring to the debate. Indeed, anti-feminist contents reinforce patriarchal stereotypes and strengthen naturalist justifications of gender inequality that have been socially internalised among men and women until now (Alava & Chami, 2025). The visibility of these discourses would be explained by the feeling of crisis caused by that shift in the gender norms system and the phenomenon of

women's empowerment. This crisis shows how women's empowerment is perceived as a threat for men as they built their identity on the domination of women and other minorities. Therefore, feminist progress choked these relations of power and men seem to be searching for any arguments to preserve a favourable patriarchal gender system.

In order to convince their audience, the creators of the 'manosphere' contents use professional and polished video sets, and claim to be masters of seduction and successful entrepreneurs. Most of the time, they make their body, wealth and charisma noticeable, and criticise women and modern feminism as a source of extreme and intolerant ideology (Alava & Chami, 2025). Their appearances and attitudes fit with gender stereotypes that are spread on traditional and social media. These smokescreens offer a feeling of security and simplicity (Alava & Chami, 2025) to their audience and provide them and their anti-feminist speeches legitimacy in the political debate even though their discourses are not grounded on scientific facts or academic literature but based on personal reflections and stereotypes (Ferrari, 2024). In this context, they do not hesitate to call for violence and use misinformation in their discourses. These tools are typical of post-modernist communication, also used by extreme right-wing proponents, and allow the radicalisation of anti-feminist discourses. Indeed, Lucy Nicholas (2025), points out a cross-pollination between masculinist and extreme right wing groups. These two ideologies fuel one another, leading to a mutual radicalisation against the feminist movement. According to the author, the radicalisation of their discourses against women occurs when their identity - relying on power and domination, is perceived as threatened. This "threat" is understood here as a loss of privileges, that masculinist and right wing proponents describe as a common grievance. In other words, the acquisition of rights and power by minorities impacts their full power and domination. Nicholas emphasised a shared affective dimension related to identity and belonging that triggers a feeling of injustice. This feeling seems to justify, through the media, a rationale for a violent attitude against a so-called common enemy. This violence is fuelled by a high level of emotions prevalent in masculinist discourses and more generally post-conservative discourses. This emotion is an amplifying parameter in the spread of contents in social media and therefore represents a strategy to appeal to empathy and a feeling of community but also to reinforce polarisation and the salience of their claims. That strategy supersedes the need for

factual evidence, successfully persuading men who are searching for a sense of belonging, imposing a favourable narrative and capitalising on it.

Scholars tried to explain why young men, but also women, were attracted by the manosphere which had such violent and radical ideology against women. Bjorgo (2008) argues that the ‘manosphere’ provides a ‘social glue’ for young men that do not necessarily share masculinist conviction but search for a sense of belonging and entertainment (Bjorgo, T., 2008). Kimmel (2018) and Johanssen (2021) argue that joining the manosphere is a way to find a remedy to the vulnerability felt by young men facing social change (Johanssen, 2021). These leaders therefore do not help men become more empowered but rather exploit their vulnerability by fuelling their resentment towards women (Botto & Gottzén, 2023) to generate a certain number of views on their videos. Butler (2016) also emphasises the social pressure to live up to ideals of what it is to be a man, including denying vulnerability or playing with it (display of vulnerability) while it is considered in feminist, queer and antiracist activism as a way to develop progressive masculinity (Butler, 2004).

According to Botto and Gottzén (2023), two main factors favour the integration of users in the manosphere: their vulnerability and their exposure to “manfluencer” content on social media. Here, vulnerability refers to the difficulties to meet expectations of heterosexual masculinity, including being performant in the dating life and having access to a sex life. However, the authors point that the ‘manosphere’ could also contribute to the young men’s lack of sexual access since they encourage them to deny all forms of vulnerability or softness. Therefore, the manosphere seems to perpetuate its users’ vulnerability in order to optimise digital content consumption. Indeed, masculinism became a profitable business for ‘manfluencers’ thanks to the monetisation of their content, membership fees or pseudo-trainings (Rossignol, 2019).

Within the manosphere, influencers often present themselves as mentors or coaches of seduction in order to steer male behaviours towards misogynistic, toxic and violent attitudes against women. In France, a group of journalists from Kombini infiltrated diverse masculinists groups. They observed how self-claimed seduction coaches organise lucrative training - costing

hundreds of euros - and how the consumers were actually suffering from the patriarchal system promoted by the coaches. By infiltrating discussions on discord and other digital platforms, the reporters could meet the participants of these training sessions. They noticed that masculinist narratives did not really address the consumers' identity crisis and the difficulties in their dating lives. On the contrary, the participants were incentivised to consume these training sessions but did not notice results. Therefore, masculinist leaders appear to capitalise on the current masculine identity crisis to foster a feeling of belonging and push their followers to buy their training courses. In this sense, women and men are both victims of capitalist exploitation by masculinist ideology. Moreover, this exploitation is encouraged by 'algorithm radicalisation' that amplifies masculinist discourses.

1.2. Algorithmic radicalisation: a strategic amplification of masculinist ideology across digital media

As mentioned above, masculinist ideology generally overlaps with far-right/alt-right ideologies. Even though certain far-right politicians try to soften their image, both ideologies traditionally defend a white supremacist political project, excluding racialised and queer minorities from the political debate. The most visible leaders of this community are explicitly part of the far-right³ (Mudde, 1995, 2007, 2019; European Center for Populism Studies, 2026) or alt-right (Ganesh, 2020), ideology such as Nick Fuentes or Andrew Tate.

Finally, alt-right politicians, like D. Trump during his campaign, participate in podcasts or live streams on masculinist YouTube channels.(BBC News, 2024) The two ideologies are therefore amplifying and fuelling each other's discourses. Even though the masculinist ideology is not recent (Ferrari, 2025) , scholars emphasised that this movement has been highly mainstreamed thanks to social media.(Roberts et al., 2025) Roberts et al. (2025) stresses that the masculinist

³ Mudde (1995; 2007; 2019) defines far-right as constituted of, but not limited to, the following components: exclusivism (i.e., racism, xenophobia); antidemocratic, non-individualist traits (i.e., hierarchism or populism); a traditionalist value system lamenting the disappearance of historic frames of reference (masculinity, family structure); and a socioeconomic program associating corporatism, state control of certain sectors, varying degree of belief in the free play of socially Darwinistic market forces; authoritarianism, anti-communism and nativism.

community, which used to be reduced to forum and blog posts, is now represented by “manfluencers” like Andrew Tate that are propelled by social media algorithms (Baker et al., 2024). Furthermore, the scholars found out that the “infamous and obscene” contents concerning women as well as content about subordination were particularly amplified by algorithms (Baker et al., 2024). As one of the main figures of the masculinist ideology, Andrew Tate is also the most radical. Through TikTok, Instagram, and Telegram, he addressed his community glorifying violence, rape against women and shaming the men who do not fit with gender stereotypes or do not use violence against women (Baker et al., 2024).

Baker et al. (2024) studied how social media platforms recommended manosphere contents to 16 and 18 year old men and measured how toxic these contents were. They created different types of accounts : manosphere-curious accounts and gender-normative accounts and, among them, 16 year old and 18 year old boys accounts. First of all, they found that toxic contents constitute the majority of the contents recommended to manosphere-curious accounts (about 74% of the contents) compared to gender-normative accounts (51%). Secondly, the study reports that « on YouTube Shorts, the gender-normative (generic) 16-year-old and 18-year-old accounts were recommended manosphere content after respectively 17 and 2 minutes of viewing. On the manosphere-curious accounts, this happened after 8 minutes and just under 2 minutes of viewing, respectively. (Baker et al., 2024)

Finally, Regehr et al. (2024) report that these discourses are also spread in the media by users themselves who repost influencers videos. The amplification of masculinist ideology is therefore algorithmic but also user-led and prevents the control or the removal of these contents on social media. Therefore, influencers whose accounts are deleted do preserve an influence thanks to their followers. The main illustration of this uncontrollable ideological spread are the discourses of Andrew Tate, currently in jail for human trafficking: even though his account was deleted as well as his contents, they are still used and shared to glorify the “manfluencer” and contribute to the masculinist propaganda (Instagram, 2026).

The authors of the study express their concern about the widespread diffusion of misogynistic contents created by the manosphere, currently visible through “soft cultural forms” such as memes and parodies—expressions that aim to hide the toxic roots of the content (Regehr et al., 2024). This strategy is illustrated by the recent trend on TikTok and Instagram of the ‘AI Fruit Videos’, which are AI-created stories that depict anthropomorphic fruits in scenarios reminiscent of reality shows, or more generally scenarios of infidelity, domestic conflict, and even sexualised aggression. While appearing harmless at first sight, these videos spread toxic and misogynistic contents by portraying women as sexual objects but also as vicious, cheaters, and manipulative with men as victims of such behaviours. The cartoon goes even further, staging men punishing women with violence and even murdering them. These contents go along with masculinist speech and give them visual support. The radicalisation of the AI-Fruit contents is strategically engineered through an addictive mechanism - used by TV shows - in order to keep the attention of the viewers with sensationalism and suspense. The audience is therefore highly exposed along with the parody to toxic gender representation and tends to get used to it. This mechanism tends to liberalise and banalise violence against women and their sexualisation and frame masculine violence, anger and toxicity as necessary qualities.

That process of desensitisation to gender-based violence primes the opening of an Overton Window performed by masculinist language.

This shift of radical and marginalised ideas to mainstream public discourses is clearly illustrated in Spain by the rise of far-right Vox in Europe, the election of Donald Trump in North America or the election of Yoon Suk-yeo as president of South Korea in Asia. Indeed, during his campaign, the current president of South Korea used anti-feminist discourses, denying the systemic dimension of violence against women and blaming the country’s low birthrate on feminism. (Amnesty International ,2022) It appears that masculinist language allows misogynistic figures to access the political sphere. As Stuart Hall demonstrated, language is a crucial variable in the construction of common cultural meaning. The next section will focus on the masculinist language and practice spread across media seeking to control over women’s bodies.

2. Language and Practices in Masculinism: Promotion of Women's body control and financial success

Masculinity is an ambiguous and political concept that has been transformed throughout history. Presented as all-powerfulness, virility and masculinity seem to disappear - from the masculinist point of view - when other parts of the population empower themselves. Consequently, male masculinity seems to rely on the submission and exploitation of others and their empowerment represents an existential and total negation of male virility. For this reason, the main target of masculinist discourses is female empowerment, which exists thanks to feminist progress. Associating male powerlessness with female empowerment is one of the strategies of masculinism in order to incite its audience to control women. This narrative is constructed through YouTube videos, Telegram channels, publications on social media, and private channels where masculinist leaders - mainly called The Pick Up Artists - provide advice and methods to dominate women. They teach their audience how to reduce women to obedience and submission by controlling them. This authority is presented as a duty to the male audience and consists of possessing women, raising them and even revoking their rights and decision-making power, something that is indissociably linked to property rights and capitalist claims. Even though masculinist speeches are conservative, the 'manfluencers' are actually promoting a liberal and capitalist political project, based on the exploitation of women. This trend will lead masculinists to gradually banalise all types of gender-based violence, through incitement to manipulation, rape or to femicide. The next section will emphasise how the language and practice of masculinist across media promote a far-rights political project by promoting the abrogation of women's rights and other minorities' (1). Then, the discussion will focus on how masculinists associate virility to capital in order to promote a capitalist way of living (2).

2.1. The alignment with the far-right political project : the ambition to control female bodies

As demonstrated in the first chapter, masculinism and far-right are the two core ideologies

intersecting to promote a minority exploitation system, including women. These two movements adopt similar rhetoric such as the call for catastrophism (Bujalka et al., 2022) and the claim that their privileges are threatened by the inclusion of minorities in the political debate. Their rhetoric and strategies are intertwined and follow a common misogynistic and racist goal : a nationalist project, connotated by religious references and essentialism. This results in the reduction of women's freedom, starting with reproductive and sexual rights.

Essentialist and naturalist conception of gender inequity

Masculinist ideology aims at spreading an essentialist and naturalist conception of gender, by claiming male domination over women. Masculinist ideology uses biological differences between male and female to justify gender inequity. They do so by claiming that men are naturally suited for courage, decision-making power, authority, and sexual power, whereas women are biologically defined by caretaking, submission and weakness. These differentiated characteristics aim to fuel a narrative of complementarity between men and women, imposing heterosexual relationship models and forcing women to remain in a submissive position. In this aim, masculinist leaders will objectify their female partners, by depicting them as a reward of hard work in the manosphere⁴. For instance, this sentence can be read in Andrew Tate's telegram channel: "the lazy man gets the leftovers [. . .] women who've been with countless men before you" (Roberts et al., 2025) . Here women are represented only through the social-value they can bring to men. Moreover, this narrative depicts women as interchangeable. Masculinists describe women as a uniform common enemy in order to easily spread gender stereotypes and demonise women. The Mexican 'manfluencer' El Temach claimed on TikTok "lo que funciona con una funciona con todas" (Modo Guerrero, 2025) (*what works with one works with all of them*) before advising that "si no funciona, no cambia de compartamiento, cambia de morra" (Modo Guerrero, 2025) (*if that doesn't work, don't change your behaviour, change the girl*). By denying female subjectivity, 'manfluencers' are incentivising their male audience to reduce women to objects.

⁴ "Hard work", according to the 'manosphere', mainly consists of being a 'real man', by dominating women and other minorities, corresponding to the codes of virility and succeeding financially to be a money provider.

The Chinese platform HuPu became an exemplary forum of masculinity hegemony and female sexualisation. On HuPu, users exchange information about women mainly by evaluating their sexual appeal. This sexualisation is carried out with different practices such as ranking women based on their physical attributes but also according to their virtue.(Sun & Dai, 2024) This strategy of ranking women to create male cohesion is a long-established practice: an early example is the first social network - Facematch - created by Mark Zuckerberg, now CEO of Meta, in which male students from the university of Harvard could rank their female counterparts according to their attractiveness (Kaplan, 2003). Therefore, the manosphere seems to focus on the attractiveness of women, reducing them to sexual objects while imposing their hegemony.

The core contradiction of the masculinist narrative is the reliance of male dominance on female submission. To mask this paradox and secure female collaboration, manfluencers employ a saint-sinner dichotomy, contrasting the virtuous and feminine women to the deviant 'sinner'. The latter category describes women who do not comply with the traditional gender model and are automatically considered out of the virtual 'relationship market'. Religious references are used to render indisputable the narrative of a vertical organisation ruled by male domination, as preached by Andrew Tate on his Telegram channel "I believe that Men have the Sacred Duty to raise kind, feminine, and virtuous daughters" (Roberts et al., 2025, p. 14). As a matter of fact, masculinist leaders promote a return to the traditional norms, where wives and children belong to the father,(Gazalé, 2025) who leads the family and, thus, society. This male authority in society involves, according to masculinist ideology, the reduction of women's rights in order to control women's bodies.

Control over women's rights and bodies

Masculinist speeches directly attack women's rights and significantly their sexual and reproductive rights. The regression of sexual and reproductive rights on media is mainly run and made possible by far-right parties and online masculinist actors that are progressively shaping the social media landscape. For example, while Argentina and other Latin American countries

have legalised abortion after the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*, the Argentinian far-right president Javier Milei's anti-abortion rhetoric in the media has disincentivised numbers of doctors in Argentina to carry out pregnancy terminations (The Guardian, 2024).

Indeed, masculinist and far-right parties seem to evolve hand-in-hand across digital and traditional media in order to reduce women's freedom. As a matter of fact, contents that incite for the control of women's rights can easily result in the incitement to control women's bodies and entire lives. The spread of the slogan "Your body, My Choice" is one of the illustrations of mutual rhetorical reinforcement between masculinist and far-right parties but also of the impact of such a campaign on female safety. "Your Body, my Choice. Forever." was pronounced by Nicholas Fuentes, a Trumpian masculinist figure, on social media a few seconds after the election of Donald Trump for the presidency of the U.S. in 2024. Claiming that this political victory will allow the United States to prohibit abortion for good, this slogan has been highly spread on social media. It symbolised the backlash against feminist discourse, by distorting the "My Body, my Choice" slogan that led to the legalisation of abortion in different parts of the world. This backlash has been shaped by online and offline harassment. Only a few hours after the pronouncement of the slogan, women received threats of rape or even death threats on their social media accounts

On TikTok, a female user wrote "I had to delete a video because I was being threatened and several men commenting [sic] saying they couldn't wait until I get raped or 'your body my choice'" (Ayad & Frances-Wright, 2026).

When the comments were reported by female users and creators, social media did not react: "In a TikTok forum on Reddit, a (female) user posted: 'Last night I reported one of the many comments I've seen saying 'Your body, my choice.' The comment has been left up and the report has been marked as not a violation.'" (Ayad & Frances-Wright, 2026).

Therefore, social media such as TikTok did not try to counter the wave of male harassment against women which allowed the slogan to spread - reaching 52,000 posts in 24 hours (Ayad & Frances-Wright, 2026) even in offline spaces like schools.

"One parent stated: 'Today my daughter was told three separate times on campus 'your body, MY choice.' The third group of boys told her to 'sleep with one eye open tonight.'" (Ayad &

Frances-Wright, 2026)

The ‘manosphere’ did not wait for the pronouncement of this slogan to attack women, but the waves of misogynistic comments on social media could justify gender-based violence, under the pretext of punishing them for not complying with their social obligation which is fulfilling male desire. Indeed, the interpretation of the slogan « Your Body, My Choice » may even go further, referring to a right to decide about a woman’s life or death claimed by a part of masculinist movements, particularly the Involuntary Celibacy community (Incels).

Trivialisation and tribute to gender-based violence

As Pauline Ferrari (2025) states, “masculinism kills” (Ferrari, 2025). Indeed, women were attacked and killed by men in the name of ‘involuntarily celibacy’ (‘incels’) that justified their acts by women’s refusal to have sexual relations with them. These attacks are not hidden but rewarded by the masculinist community. In 2014, Eliott Rodger, a 22 year-old man, killed six women in the street before killing himself in Isla Vista in California (BBC, 2018). Before his act, he posted a “retribution video” in which he blames women for his sexual failings then states “I will all destroy you”. After these killings, the ‘incels’ sacralised him as “Supreme Gentleman”, a symbolic figure through whom the community will achieve “Chad”. This veneration manifested in the creation of t-shirts for his effigy and tribute videos (BBC, 2018) and these femicides were framed as an act of valor. In this case, violence was marked as a marker of ideal masculinity. In France, the banalisation of male violence is illustrated by the wave of support brought to M. Philéas, a French leader of the masculinist movement who killed Melanie Ghione, his ex-wife, with 80 knife blows (Ferrari, 2024). Indeed, the ‘manosphere’ promotes male hegemony which is concretised by the most brutal gender-based violence and imposes to women to accept this violence. The following post of Andrew Tate strongly illustrates this radicalisation of masculinity: “Men are angry. Real men, with real problems are FULL of temper. How would they affect the world without it? Real women understand it, respect it and help calm it when the time is right. Good women never tell powerful men to not get mad. They calm with love.” (Roberts et al., 2025).

This characteristic statement aims to impose masculine hegemony by trivialising acts of violence to women but also by discriminating against men that do not use violence. Within the manosphere, users police each other and insult the ones who do not comply with the criteria of radical masculinity. These insults heavily rely on sexism, racism and colonialism, such as “soy boy” in Western countries which refer to effeminate plant eating but also to Asian and non-western culture (Gambert & Linné, 2018). In China, the platform HuPu hosts memes and exchanges that discredit men who do not conform with stereotypically masculine criteria. These men are insulted for “king dogs” (referring to ‘sim’) with a turtle body (referring to the unfaithfulness of their wives) (Sun, L., & Dai, L., 2024) meaning that men who are not stereotypically masculine are totally submitted to their wives. This shaming against men that do not comply with masculinist ideology aims to polarise and radicalise the audience to impose a manichean narrative. Masculinist leaders seem to position themselves as the ‘good’ to sell radical masculinity as a product to purchase.

2.2. The spread of a capitalist propaganda: how masculinists merchandise virility

Masculinist ideology spreads a highly narrow definition of masculinity, driven by physical strength, sexual performance and extreme wealth (Regehr et al., 2024). Indeed, the male capability of providing for a family is crucial to the masculinist narrative, presented as the main leverage to seduce women. This aspect participates in gender essentialism, depicting women as necessarily economically dependent, or even purchasable. Through their advertisement or their contents on social media, they associate their financial success and their success with women, reducing the latter to a “thing” or “pussy”, like assets in a sexual market.

In South Korea, in March 2020, journalists revealed the existence of a secret forum known as ‘Nth Room’ on Telegram, hosting 60,000 people, where thousands of unconsented, sexually exploitative videos of women, including minors, were diffused and being sold using cryptocurrency (Amnesty International, 2022). This case represents the social misogyny endured by South Korean women but also reveals how sexual abuse is unpunished, banalised and even

lucrative thanks to social media.

On the other hand, masculinist influencers differentiate a “real man” from a “pussy” based on their income, in other words their capacity or to afford women. Roberts et al (2023) reported Andrew Taste’s communication on Telegram:

“When women say they don’t need a man. They don’t mean it. What they mean is they don’t need a sniveling pussy who earns less than 5 million a year” (Roberts et al., 2023, p. 476)

In this manner, masculinist propelled-contents promote a transactional approach of heterosexual relationships. The latter are considered as expensive products in a ‘sexual market’ which can be bought by rich men. They are therefore considered as an incentive for men to become rich by working hard. These contents are both driven by a wealth-centric discourse and an exploitative approach of females as an indicator of a social and sexual performance. There is evidence of this in a way female value is estimated in the manosphere. Not only are they objectified but also that their ‘sexual capital’ (Kaplan & Illouz, 2022) decreases with the number of their sexual partners. On the contrary, men’s sexual capital increases with the number of sexual partners. Some ‘manfluencers’ go even further, stating that men who rape and neglect women are even more desirable (Konbini, 2023).

The Organised crime and corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) reports in 2025 the presence of Andrew Tate and his entrepreneurs relatives in Marbella - after Andalusia abolished its wealth tax in 2022, where they have created a network and are self-promoting their wealth-centric, virilist and misogynistic propaganda among “celebrities, oligarchs, organised crime (groups)” (OCCRP, 2025) To this aim, they create social clubs for male entrepreneurs, such as Marbella Casa Creative with a membership costing between 6,000 to 25,000 euros (OCCRP, 2025). These clubs offer to their members educational contents about cigars, representing the stereotypical traits of masculinity promoted by masculinists. Among them, Conor McGregor, MMA fighter, representing the stereotypes of masculinity, has been found liable for sexual assault by a jury in Ireland. In this ‘elite community’, as they called themselves (OCCRP, 2025), financial success

therefore legitimates violence against women. Consequently, these groups tend to merchandise masculinity, imposing a market-driven logic on human interrelations. Therefore, women are not the only product but masculinity itself is presented as buyable, giving the power to its owner to use violence with impunity. This imbrication between financial capital and sexual capital promotes an exaggerated misogynistic vision of heterosexual relations and intensifies the objectification and the inferiorisation of women within these clubs.

The OCCPR also reports that the settlement of these ‘manfluencers’ in Spain is not limited to economic reasons, but also to political purposes. The reporters emphasise the influencers' arrival to Marbella could be correlated with the rise of concern observed in Spain against misogynistic discourses expressed in the public debate, especially by far-right Vox. The alt-right rhetoric is reinforcing the idea of a masculinity crisis by adopting masculinist argumentation which is highly rejected by feminist movement and the left-wing Podemos (RTVE, 2025). The presence of manosphere leaders in Marbella and their strategy of networking could be a way to support and normalise Vox discourses in the international opinion. In conclusion, this report highlights that the ‘manosphere’ is developing into a structured and politicised economy of misogyny.

Conclusive remarks

In sum, despite the significant feminist advancements to further gender equity and female empowerment, the media continue to depict women as a consumer good, through the male gaze. Indeed, the media amplifies a patriarchal and capitalist narrative in which ‘real men’ are capable of purchasing women. This narrative is made possible thanks to the marginalisation and objectification of women in the news and the radicalisation of a consumerist and misogynistic ideology spread through social media. Indeed, this research shows that women, particularly oppressed women, were under-represented in the hard news compared to men. Moreover, female bodies are used as a tool to increase and entertain the audience even when it comes to femicide. This media representation is not reflecting reality but promotes the dominant narrative of male domination over women. This patriarchal and capitalist propaganda culminates with the proliferation of masculinism on social media. Amplified by algorithms, masculinism promotes

in different regions of the world but particularly in Western countries, a radical and toxic gender norms structure in which women are reduced to trophies, in which feminist proponents are shamed and in which masculinity is commodified. Facilitated by media platforms, these radical ideologies further alt-right political projects and progressively enter mainstream political debate. Based on Lucy Nicholas' arguments, this study determined that the radicalisation of these ideologies is caused by feelings of grievance due to feminist progress. This reaction shows indirectly the advancements of feminism but also the necessity to preserve a social cohesion between minorities. Based on these observations, the next chapter of this research will explore new forms of feminist resistance capable of transforming the dominant narrative and will highlight inspiring examples of feminisms that intersect with anti-capitalism, anticolonialism and intersectional struggles.

Chapter 3: A braided analysis of feminist digital activism against anti-feminist propaganda

Introduction

This chapter seeks to elaborate a braided analysis of women's digital resistance efforts, as they appear necessarily constituted by transnational, intersectional and decolonial perspectives, against anti-feminist discourses conveyed by corporate media.

Drawing on Zerb Enns et al (2021) works, transnational feminism can be defined as diverse experiences of women who live within, between and at the margins of nation-states around the globe (Benerjee, 2022). In order to completely subvert the dominant narrative, this transnationality should be combined with decolonial⁵ and intersectional⁶ perspectives. The combination of this perspective pursues one goal, claimed by bell hooks (1984): moving marginalised voices to the center of feminist thoughts and by extent to academia and spheres of

⁵ Decolonial feminism refers to a feminist theory focused on marginalised and subalternised women, the ones who live outside the margins, in the borders (Lugones, 1992)

⁶ The intersectional feminism refers to the framework highlighting the multiplication of discriminations suffered by women situated at the intersection of plural marginalised groups (Crenshaw, 1989)

power, or even give a voice to the women in the margin and let the rest of the world move over them.

Thanks to social media, feminist resistance efforts can transcend borders and resonate with others, making visible specific and common strives against patriarchy without subsuming and eclipsing specific struggles.

Social media provide rapid interconnection across geographical, social and gender borders as well as a new space of invention and expression for the minority population. Although the struggles and strategies are different from one context to the other, feminist actions on the web seem to resonate between each other and reinforce the salience of women's rights on a global scale and reinforces a sense of belonging and an affective and united community (Mendles & Dickwal-bot, 2020). These movements make visible the violence of patriarchy which threatens every woman, from every socio-economical status, every colour, every class. They additionally tend to raise awareness among all humans, including men who are victims of capitalist exploitation systems and patriarchal injunctions. In this sense, hashtag constitutes the favoured tool of cyberfeminism, representing an emancipatory and recentering instrument of epistemic and materialistic subversion of the dominant narrative (Part A). Hashtag activism generates three main outcomes. It aims at politicising slogans and making them visible in the online and offline sites of resistance. It enables to build a transnational common consciousness about a common source of oppression. Ultimately, it contributes to the politicisation of the masses and puts pressure on media and political spheres to commit in favour of the contestation movement (I). However, feminist resistance is not spared from the risk of reproducing the main dominant framework by eclipsing and excluding the most marginalised women (II). Research indicates that the visibility and legitimacy of black female digital activism within traditional media often depends on the involvement of White women in the movement, who frequently become the public face of the struggle. Furthermore, feminist militant groups like Femen France mobilise colonial visual-grammars on social media to challenge patriarchal cultural norms whilst simultaneously excluding minority women from their struggle (Derbez, 2023). The study argues that Black women cyberactivism is fundamental for the feminist movement and the liberation of marginalised women from the colonial matrix of power since they are the most subalternised and

marginalised from the public debate, since their struggle intersects and highlights a diverse range of issues (III). Their witness and their presence on social media are crucial to understand and realise the effects of the total and absolute exploitation resulting from the colonial matrix of power.

Digital feminist activists also use emotional and embodied engagement and storytelling in order to attract and retain followers' attention. Social media also facilitate the transmission of emotions, utilising sensitivity as an empathetic tool to connect users, share information and challenge the misogynistic stereotypes through collective virtual education (Part B). These approaches yield three other outcomes. First, they enable women from the margin to repossess their body through spontaneous filmed and published act of defiance (I); they deceive algorithms by setting the virality of videos set to movement, affect and joy (II); and finally they provide a transnational mean to denounce systemic violence and social injustice through the resonance of common embodied engagement (III).

Sub-chapter 1: Transnational Feminism and social media: creation of a common feminist consciousness through hashtag activism

The digital space appeared to activists as a new site to invest in, promising an equal access and opportunity to be read and heard, compared to traditional media where marginalised women represent only two per cent of the person seen, heard, or spoken (WACC, 2025). In other words, social media enables to fill the gap maintained by mainstream media, by giving visibility to invisibilised populations and giving credit to struggles that are partially covered.

According to Duggan (2015), Twitter represents twenty-three per cent of Internet users (85 % of adults over eighteen). Most Twitter users (56 %) identify as Black or Latino while twenty per cent identify as White. Even though the owning of Twitter by Elon Musk triggered a severe censorship of the progressist and/or left-wing militant and the valorisation of hate speech and aggressiveness lead to the escape of Black activists to alternative social media (The Washington Post, 2023) scholars still describe social media as a crucial leverage for activism. Moreover, Liinason (2024) emphasises that digital space is both a site of vulnerability and agency for minorities. Drawing on Veronica Gago's works (2020), she states that digital spaces support a

massive and radical feminist collectivity. According to Gago (2020), international feminist strikes, made possible by the coordination of protest through social media, build bridges between different struggles. Hence the emergence of a large-scale radical struggle through a political process. Indeed, technological advancements and especially social media provide various tools to marginalised women in order to connect with each other and fight a common enemy, which is patriarchy. Baer (2016) positions hashtag activism as the preeminent digital instrument for modern political mobilisation. This digital tool functions to politicise women's systemic struggles through impactful slogans, thereby seeking to unite and amplify female voices.

1. “Hashtag Feminism”: From common-meaning making to the a common feminist consciousness

Initially designed as a tool to facilitate finding of information, hashtag is now an unmissable leverage of digital activism. Hashtag movements indeed dismantle isolation and leverage activism and advocacy across digital networks (Basmehi et al., 2022). Creating an “ambient affiliation” (Zappavigna, 2012) between users, it also creates bridges between virtual and real activism. In this sense, Xong (2019) stressed that the effects of the hashtag increase when it gives rise to real actions. Hashtag activism is therefore used to spread common meaningful slogans across online and offline sites of resistance (Coesemans & De Cock, 2017), fostering female empowerment and a sense of belonging among women.

This activism is even reinforced when the hashtags are juxtaposed and associated with each other, inviting all the users to give voice to their slogan during protest. “Hashtag feminism” enables to foster resonance between different and singular movements launched in different regions of the world, which reinforces the accuracy of their claim: harassment and sexual violence with #MeToo, #Cuéntalo or #MeiPrimeroAsedio, police and institutional violence through #SayHerName, femicide with #NiUnaMenos.

Additionally, this social media feature allows to identify a specific struggle and foster global solidarity through #WomenLifeFreedom, the Iranian movement launched in 2022. Thanks to

hashtag, women can highlight shared issues whilst bearing in mind the specific forms of oppression and exploitation perpetrated by the patriarchy depending on the regions or the specific political situation in a country. These perspectives prevent the subsumption of distinct struggles into the general feminist movement usually associated with Western feminism. It highlights the singular feminist struggle that emerges in a specific social and political context. They can thus create a global community in a virtual space through the transnational feminism fostered by social media, without subsuming local efforts. Moreover, hashtag activism allows a certain fluidity in feminist activism by circulating through different and sometimes contradictory concerns that can trap or limit real-life activism, such as the need to be political but necessarily partisan or to rely on a solid expertise without falling in the path of intellectualism. According to Bedrosian (2022), the #NiUnaMenos movement succeeded in reaching and resonating with the masses, as well as giving credit to their cause within the political sphere, thanks to its communicative and discursive strategy.

Bedrosian (2022) identifies a strategy of deconstruction of the violence within the Argentinian movement. First of all, the intervention of feminist writers and academics during a reading marathon event organised in March 2015 to denounce the femicides. As the author reports, one of the speakers, Lopez, was skilled to present feminist ideas in an accessible way (Bedrosian, 2022, p.105). She proceeds to a pedagogical identification of the different sources of violence particularly the discursive one, conveyed by mainstream media. This deconstruction allows to raise awareness but also recognise the chain of violence that is not bound to femicide but to media treatment of the murder which usually leads to essentialism and normalisation of women killings.

Furthermore, Bedrosian emphasised that the feminist movement succeeded in shifting the narrative from viewing individual victims as an isolated tragedy within a sea of femicides to recognising them as a consequence of a systemic matrix of violence against women. In the same manner, the other speakers denounce the hetero-patriarchal system in order to show the collective story of feminist. However, as Bedrosian observes, it is the tweet of the journalist Marcela Ojeda that sparked the revolutionary June 3 demonstration (Bedrosian, 2022, p. 102).

This tweet is one of the evidence of social media's discursive power, catalysing within two and a half hours the organisation of the demonstration (Ojeda (2015c) in Bedrosian, 2022). Oleja's tweet is the following:

“Actrices, políticas, artistas, empresarias, referentes sociales: mujeres, todas, bah. no vamos a levantar la voz? NOS ESTAN MATANDO” [*“Actresses, female politicians, female artists, businesswomen, social workers: women, everyone, bah. Are we going to raise our voice? THEY ARE KILLING US”*] (Ojeda (2015a) in Bedrosian, 2022).

Through this tweet, Ojeda calls for a collective, active and massive action. She first addresses the segment of the population best positioned to give the issue visibility, like actresses and female politicians. The capitalised phrase “THEY'RE KILLING US” highlights the author's escalating emotions. The use of the continuous present and the pronoun “us” underscore the imminent danger threatening all women. She then addresses all women directly, asserting that this collective issue demands a collective response and the rise of a unified voice (Bedrosian, 2022).

Ultimately, hashtag activism allowed the public to pressure politicians who were merely instrumentalising the movement for election campaigns. As noted above, this tweet triggered a massive and collective protest in Argentina, conducted by the slogan #NiUnaMenos which has been disseminated in parallel within virtual spaces. The popularity of this movement and the hashtag led politicians from distinct parties to co-opt the hashtag #NiUnaMenos by posting photos on Twitter with a #NiUnaMenos poster (Bedrosian, 2022). In response, the collective published five demands and launched the hashtag #DeLaFotoALaFirma, putting pressure on the politicians to commit to fulfilling these demands. Twitter became a site of negotiation for women's rights and witnessed the confrontation between grassroots resistance and the political game. At the end, some politicians played the game, such as the Progresistas' presidential candidate Margarita Stolbizer, who shared a photo of herself signing the five demands (Bedrosian, 2022, p. 110).

In sum, hashtag feminists open a new arena for feminist resistance, in which they can share common issues, raise awareness about women's rights and drag along the masses into their

cause. Through hashtag activism, feminists can proceed to common meaning-making across geographical and social borders. Mass cyberactivism can even push politicians to adhere to a struggle, which creates a direct bridge between grassroots cyberactivism and the power spheres. Nevertheless, scholars have observed that digital activism excludes Black women or women who face intersectional oppression and stressed the necessity for feminist movements to adopt a decolonial perspective in order to effectively subvert the dominant narrative. Marching (2024) emphasised that the ineffectiveness of the #MeToo movement demonstrated that the achievements of the decolonial perspective and feminism are interdependent. Indeed, the marginalisation of Black women even affects the impact of their struggle, like the subversion of the #SayHerName and #MeToo movement illustrated.

2. The co-optation of Black women in cyberactivism: the “oppression within oppression”

#SayHerName is a transnational campaign, funded in 2014 by Kimberley Crenshaw, devoted to raising awareness of Black female victims of police violence. During this campaign, social media activism used intersectional consciousness (Terriquez, 2015) via social networking sites and made visible a systemic issue that has been overlooked in mainstream media (Brown et al., 2017). Indeed, while the movement #BlackLivesMatter, one of the most popular hashtags released in the decade, focused primarily on Black men, this movement showed the necessity to recenter in the public debate the condition of Black female victims of police violence that had remained in the margin of the public debate. Naming the victims of violence enabled them to rehabilitate individually but also to raise the issue violence against Black women as a systemic and salient political topic. Police violence against Black women combined with silence from institutions symbolises the institutional and state violence against the subaltern women, who suffer entangled multiple oppressions. Social activism allowed to recenter this issue in the public debate. This movement gave rise to a massive mobilisation of the Black women’s community across borders. Brown et al. (2017) found 237,448 tweets containing hashtags and referencing names of victims, 98,1% of these tweets concerned Black women. The scholars also found 13

themes of hashtags associated with #SayHerName. The authors also highlight the significant intersectional and transnational dimensions of the #SayHerName campaign. Indeed, this mobilisation aimed to recenter Black women and the minority within Black identity, by raising the names of victims including disabled women, queer women, and the LBGTQIAP+ community (Brown et al., 2017, p. 1833).

However, Allen et al. (2024) point that, although the #SayHerName movement aimed at denouncing the specific police brutality against women, hashtags such as #SayTheirName or #SayHisName have co-opted these same movements' goals by recentering Black male victimhood. The authors stress that this co-optation, together with the use of the #SayHerName hashtag to denounce White women killings, underscores the ongoing Black women and girls struggle for recognition and justice in the context of police violence (Allen et al., 2024, p. 1008).

Allen et al. (2024) associate the marginalisation of Black women and girls within their own movement to the invisibilisation of Black women victims with the #MeToo campaign which originally echoed the Me Too movement initiated by Tarana Burke, a survivor and Black woman from the United States (Burke, n.d.). Me Too particularly aimed to highlight the victimisation of Black women, who face additional intersecting challenges related to economic disadvantages and low socioeconomic status (Burke, n.d.). However, the movement gained widespread attention primarily in response to the sexual victimisation of White women, especially Hollywoodian White women who became the prominent face of the movement (Marching, 2024). Morris (2020) reports that Burke did not have any issue with this eclipse, considering that it was the only way for the movement to go viral and gain international attention. The mainstreaming conditionality to the presence of White women seems problematic and symptomatic of the dehumanisation of women constitutive of the modern/colonial gender system (Lugones, 2023).

The eclipse of Black women activism and the way the main concern compromises their visibility gain widespread visibility illustrates the western framework assumption in which Black women struggle require the intervention of western women to save them.

Silveira de Oliveira et al. (2023) argue that the interconnection of hashtags with Black women's rights, app delivery workers rights or LBGTQIAP+ rights are associated, they highlight how the hegemonic network of power maintains Black people, and especially Black female bodies to subalternity (Silveira de Oliveira & Orlandini, 2023). The author reminds that capitalism is founded on slavery and that the exploitation of women's bodies is significant and constitutive of the capitalist and patriarchal power. Consequently, a racist bias and the invisibilisation of Black women into the women's rights struggle were constitutive of the Western and modern gender/racial representation. In this sense, Allen et al. (2024) argue that the cultural prototypical group member for the category "women" is represented by White women, and the prototypical group member for the category "Black" is represented by Black men (Allen et al., 2024). Therefore, Black women are situated in the invisible intersectional category, not fitting with any of the prototypes associated with their race or gender (Allen et al., 2024). This marginalisation even affects the impact of their struggle which relies on the participation of upper-class popular White women. In sum, collective and global movements are more likely to raise a hegemonic feminist symbol as the face of the movements and to push minorities, especially Black women, to the margin. These dynamics do not serve the feminist cause, still trapped by media patriarchal and Western centric bias of hegemonic femininity. Moreover, the necessary mention of White women into a movement heightens the perception of White women as a savior of women of color. In this sense, Mohanty (1986) stressed that Western audiences essentialise Black women as a monolithic image of poor, ignorant, hypersexual, who would need the intervention of Western feminists, self-perceived as educated, free and virtuous. This antonymy, creating a gap and leading to the exclusion of Black women, are inherited from colonialism and persist through a colonial gender system (Lugones, 2023). For this reason, Marching (2024) asserts that feminism should go hand in hand with decolonialism. The scholar still asserts that the awareness of these limitations can help to overcome these boundaries.

Hashtag activism contains additional and non negligible limits. First, using a hashtag exposes the users to hate speech, threats and other online violence (Silveira de Oliveira and Orlandini, 2023). Furthermore, since this instrument measures the number of people using a slogan and gives access to their identity, militants who use it can be exposed to political risks. This identification, in the context of higher political risk, makes it easier for authoritarian regimes to catch the rebels and detain them (Dadpour & Shewly, 2025). Moreover, the former can also co-opt social media to spread their own narrative to maintain legitimacy and marginalise digital activism (Rudnik, 2024).

Nonetheless, although governments reinforce their regulations and instrumentalise social media to spread their narrative and punish digital dissent, these spaces became undoubtedly sites of resistance which subvert dominant power structures (Brown, 2017). In this sense, activists combine hashtag activism and embodied engagement in order to trigger empathy and global solidarity. Performances and e-zines are a way to give voice to women and minorities but also to create and spread a new narrative of gender representation. These visual and more sophisticated tools provide a stage for marginalised women as a place of expression and subversion.

3. From the Margin to the Center: Intersectionality within Black cyberfeminism and deconstruction of colonial narratives.

Cyberfeminism, based on the observation that digital spaces have been designed through a masculine framework and as a tool of patriarchy, aims at developing a digital strategy, such as counterpublics, to create a more inclusive and equitable social space (Roberts, 2025). Counterpublics refer to alternative spaces where marginalised groups can create knowledge, culture, and ideologies that challenge dominant narratives. These arenas, supposed to deconstruct and subvert the mainstream narrative, have been actually monopolised by White feminists who excluded Black women's experiences (Roberts, 2025). Paradoxically, in the aim of recentring feminist narratives, White women intensify the marginalisation of women of color, as well as queer and trans women, non-binary persons and women with disabilities. Therefore, these

minorities, situated at the intersection of discrimination and oppression and whose voice and discourse is crucial to fight for equality, are actually shattered within their own movement. In this sense, scholars demonstrated how Black women are particularly oppressed by the platforms' algorithms (Noble, 2018). This oppression has even been labelled as "misogynoir" (Bailey, 2021), depicting Black women as hypersexual, defeminised or even non-human. These preconceived-ideas, framing the algorithms system, have already been denounced by scholars as a discursive colonisation (Mohanty, 1986), still disseminated by Western framework and Western feminist. Mohanty (1986) asserts "They are not "women"-a coherent group-solely on the basis of a particular economic system or policy. Such reductive cross-cultural comparisons result in the colonization of the conflicts and contradictions which characterize women of different social classes and cultures." (Mohanty, 1986, p. 344) These parameters are not developed from within the real conditions of the societies they claim to analyse, but simply imposed on societies that are internally hierarchized and profoundly different from one another. Therefore, transnational feminism encounters limits when Western audiences essentialise Black women as a monolithic image of sexually repressed, poor and tradition-bound, who would need the intervention of Western feminism (Mohanty, 1986), taking a savior role with respect to "brown women" (Spivak, 1988). In this case, the Western feminist's concern is not to participate in a transnational, intersectional movement, highlighting the systemic effect of patriarchy but to intervene to save the "brown women" from Black men. This perception represents a limit of transnational feminist activism. Higgs (2015) emphasises how the movement #JusticeforLiz illustrates the consequences of using social media in campaigns addressing issues such as violence against women in the African context. Indeed, the author demonstrates that the use of social media leads to an oversimplification of these issues, particularly due to the character limits imposed on Twitter campaigns for example, which constrain users to an over-simplification of women's rights issues which can lead to hasty conclusions and essentialism.

However, this essentialism has been more and more challenged by women who create accounts on social media in order to actively recenter their individual knowledge and share their own experience, by writing their own narrative, as the creation and celebration of Black Women's

3.1. From Black women standpoint: a massive and intersectional engagement for a common consciousness building

The Black Women's Day, fixed on July 25, has been created to discuss the various struggles of Black women and indigenous populations, in reaction to the neglect of marginalised women in the movement of March 8 (Silveira de Oliveira & Orlandini, 2023). Emerged from the margin, this action enabled to create alliances across diverse marginalised groups which makes them a strong force for mobilisation and intersectional movement building.

This day has been celebrated in Brazil since 2014 and gave rise to a massive mobilisation of hashtag activism on Twitter, which amplified the voices of Black women and created a virtual space for solidarity. According to Silveira de Oliveira and Orlandini (2023), Black feminist movements in Latin America consolidated themselves in a digital network to connect across geographical borders and create their own space of expression. These drivers enable marginalised women's concerns to be raised in the public debate. Black cyberfeminism aims to address the marginalisation and the under-esteem of women's activism within the Unified Black Movement in Brazil (Do Espírito & Viana, 2010), on the one hand, and the neglect of Black women's claims within the feminist movement on the other hand (Silveira de Oliveira & Orlandini, 2023).

According to Collins (2020), hashtag activism facilitates the creation of virtual safe places across geographical borders in which Black women can exchange experiences and viewpoints. Zimmerman (2017) also asserts that social media represents an indispensable tool for Black women to fight oppression and gain a voice. Indeed, Silveira de Oliveira (2023) argues that transnational cyberactivism through hashtags provides discursive power to Black women. This contributes to the visibility of intersectional oppression resulting in the colonial matrix of power and therefore to democracy at the global scale. Indeed, the use of a hashtag participates in

generating and disseminating knowledge through various types of actions, such as collective education or online protests.

bell hooks (1989) used the notion of "privilege of the margin", showing that marginalised people can see the contradictions of the modern system unlike White people who imposed and never had to acquire power of action. This notion emphasises the necessary adjustment and the creativity of marginalised people to be recognised and gain a voice in this racist/sexist/colonialist system. The necessary intersectionality of the struggles finds evidence through the mobilisation of various hashtags during Black Women's Day 2014. As Silveira de Oliveira reports, 15% of the hashtags used on social media were related to class struggle or 36% of the tweets were associating Black women struggle and the fight for the rights for application based delivery workers ([#Brequedosapp"]. This imbrication of various issues under the umbrella of Black women's struggle highlights how the hegemonic networks of power maintain the Black body into subalternity (Silveira de Oliveira & Orlandini, 2023, p. 116).

Given that the modern system is defined in "the shadow of [Black women's] exclusion (Silveira de Oliveira & Orlandini, 2023), p. 116) and their silencing, freedom of expression enabled by the internet through social media is crucial in minority self-empowerment. This empowerment can trigger self-recognition and the construction of an alternative narrative that challenges and replaces the colonial narrative which aims to demonise and dehumanise Black women. This new meaning-making process is possible thanks to collective consciousness and the reclaiming of one's own subjectivity through the sharing of marginalised women's personal experiences.

3.2. From the standpoint of Black women: radical subversion of the mainstream narrative through personal stories on social media

Personal stories hold a potential of enriching reflection and deliberation within the public debate through the creation of a space of solidarity (Chen et al., 2018). In this sense, social media allows users with similar experiences to interconnect, creating a mutual sense of belonging (Collins,

2020) and raising awareness about common trauma and systemic oppression. By now, expressing means also taking part of a collective entity. In this way, the transposition of an individual's experiences into a collective condition can forge a common consciousness, a key condition to carry out a revolution. More broadly, the sharing of experiences on social media can increase the listener's empathy and understanding as well as raise awareness about the most marginalised population. bell hooks (1984) observed that Black women, left out from the feminist movement, actually appear now to reshape the social media landscape to subvert the epistemic and materialistic dominant framework, which could lead to dismantling the system of coloniality of gender.

This act of resistance, enabled by social media, counterbalances the inequality of visibility on traditional media and makes visible the standpoint of marginalised women when they have access to the internet. In this way, minority women have created spaces in which they can express their standpoint and engage in an intersectional understanding of activism and transversal struggle. Roberts (2025) argues that Black feminist, by taking possession of the digital space and sharing their standpoint, raise themselves as producers of knowledge, reclaiming their humanity and their main role in modern society, initially based on slavery and exploitation of Black people (Gilroy, 1993).

In sum, Roberts demonstrated, through these portrayals, that Black women can share their experiences, even within a sexist and racist digital space, to build a new identity and empower themselves. These creators of contents, according to the author, create a space in which the users can identify with them and reflect on their role in the challenge of the exploitative dominant narrative. Therefore, their personal stories enable them to recenter and resituate their role in society by subverting colonial and capitalist narratives. These accounts have a direct influence on the way social media users self-reflect and position themselves in their role in the challenge of dominant narratives through a radical intersectional perspective.

To illustrate her demonstration, Roberts (2025) depicts three content creators on Instagram that engage in an intersectional understanding of their own experience in order to denounce an

imbricated system of exploitation and marginalisation. For instance, Tricia Hersey, owner of the instagram account @thenapministry, considers herself as a Black womanist and promotes the rest as resistance against capitalism (contradiction with the content and the support to detail if needed). Roberts also portrayed Ericka Hart, who is a “Black, queer, non-binary femme (they/she)” (Roberts, 2025, p. 5) and former instructor at Columbia University’s School of Social Work, whose experience is a symbol of real-life/online centering. According to Roberts, Ericka Hart was pushed out by the university and decided to continue their courses on the Internet. They are now followed by X followers and share her experience through “posts often about their life as a Black women queer, non-binary femme, everything from political thoughts to trans-inclusive sex education workshops, to videos of their son trying a cookie challenge.” (Roberts, 2025, p. 6). These wholeness of contents and perspectives allow the user to access another standpoint and connect with the content creator through similarities of daily life. From their standpoint, Ericka Hart produces knowledge about their own experience, identity and conditions also by situating them through the comment of political news. These portrayals show the importance of naming and showing the experience of marginalised populations in order to raise awareness of their condition and create empathy between distinct parts of the population through images and daily-life stories.

Finally, Roberts demonstrates how one Instagram account can subvert a whole dominant narrative, by rehabilitating the knowledge of Black and indigenous people but also the agency of women. She does so through the example of Alexis Nikole Nelson, owner of the account @blackforager, accumulating 2 millions of followers. Through this account, Alexis Nikole Nelson, reclaims her intersectional identity of Black women and forager, considered as incompatible with the modern dominant narrative. By presenting herself as Black woman and giving advice about forage, she challenges the preconceived idea according to which forage is reserved to White people and reclaims humanity and the essential knowledge of indigenous and Black women in the survival of humanity.

Other accounts launched by women are subverting the narrative and aiming to raise awareness on invisibilised topics in order to foster a transnational solidarity with those whose voice has

been silenced. Among them, Zahra Abbasi, owner of the account @behind.chadari, is an afghan activist who moved to Germany and works to raise awareness about the situation in Afghanistan and particularly the deprivation of Afghan women of any freedom and rights. Through Instagram she wants to give a voice to Afghan women who are prohibited from speaking or showing themselves, their face or any part of their bodies in public, forced to wear the full-veil to remain invisibilised. Zahra Abbasi raises awareness about their daily-lives, by regularly posting videos of her speaking directly to the camera while wearing the full-veil, or filming actions through the veil. These videos make visible the daily-lives of Afghan women and how the Taliban regime aims to control and reduce what women can see, or what they can perceive through the veil, or what they can be, through other's gaze. At first sight, these posts highlight Afghan women's loss of subjectivity but the direct-to-camera content allows the audience to humanise the person talking through this social barrier, breaking down the stereotypes of the "Third World Women" (Mohanty, 1986). She also advocates for the use of art on Instagram, which has been forbidden in Afghanistan because it "give (them) meaning" (Abbasi, 2023). Through her publications, she pays tribute to Afghan society and culture, by posting photographs, poetry, music. Not only does Zahra Abbasi actively campaign to expose the oppressive condition of Afghan women but she also rehabilitates both their identity and her country's identity for a global audience. Through her account, she creates bridges between her country and her international community, leveraging social media to prevent the isolation of women and trigger a global solidarity. Leveraging vulnerability and art serves as a crucial strategy to highlight that boundaries have been broken and call on humanity to protest.

Sub-chapter 2: Distortion of Vulnerability and use of Sensible: The main strategies to subvert gender representation

The distortion of concepts' meaning such as vulnerability, traditionally associated with femininity, enables to blur gender epistemic norms but also to empower women's efforts. While dominant patriarchal frameworks construct vulnerability as a feminine weakness in binary

contrast with masculine strength, feminist scholars and activists reframe this concept as a powerful catalyst for political mobilisation. Rather than a mere susceptibility to harm, vulnerability refers, through feminist lens, to a shared responsibility rooted in collective care, intimacy, and affective dimensions. This shared state of vulnerability propels an emotional and embodied engagement that drives women to coordinate, build collective identities, and develop new digital communication practices, shaped by the social imaginary of the Internet (Fotopoulou, 2016). Through these embodied digital practices, women can enact as a particular gender, humans can realise their gender anew (Butler, 2023). In this sense, Banerjee et al (2022) assert that the use of social media enables these transversal feminist discourses to resonate from the local to the global scale and fundamentally challenges established concepts of gendered space.

Transnational feminist activism leverages affective and embodied engagement to foster global learning, raise awareness, and organise against systemic oppression. This “networked feminism” (Fotopoulou, 2016) utilises diverse range of media tools, including hashtags, viral campaigns, digital communities, do-it-yourself cultures, and coordinated protests to circulate symbols and dialectically construct meaning within social life (Fotopoulou, 2016). However, digital vulnerability alone is insufficient for creating a fully transnational, intersectional, and decolonial activism. As seen in movements like #MeToo, thousands of users failed to receive acknowledgment, creating a hierarchy of visibility where certain experiences were validated over others (Kanai, 2020). Nevertheless, as Kanai (2020) stresses, digital feminism is framed by a digital knowledge which is in perpetual renovation.

By transcending both geographical and social borders, transnational cyberfeminism transforms gender categorisation and individual self-definition, allowing it to reach and interact/influence a broader audience and potentially members of right-wing and masculinist groups. Munde (2022) and Adams et al. (2024)’s research indicate that disengagement from these extremist groups is often triggered by internal crises, emotional turning points and a shift in self-categorisation. According to the study, these turning points occur when men become fathers or when they interact with out-groups, which alters how they evaluate external social groups (Munden, 2023). Similarly, exit from "incel" subgroups often follows prolonged periods of poor mental health and

disillusionment, leading individuals to reject harmful dominant masculine norms and recognise the toxic, "impossible avenues of identity" within those spaces (Adams et al., 2025).

Ultimately, these findings expose the limitations of anti-feminist ideologies and underscore that both men and women can subvert the binary socio-politically constructed gender norms. This highlights the critical importance of cross-group dialogue to blur artificial social categories, positioning the feminist struggle not as a gender isolation task, but as a universal human endeavor to dismantle entangled colonial and patriarchal oppressions.

The following section seeks to demonstrate that emotional and embodied engagement in digital spaces represent a meaningful leverage for women situated in the margin to reclaim their own body and foster a transnational and intersectional solidarity resistance. A diversity of feminist embodied engagement will be explored whose nature depends on the risk taken, due to the local context, and its relevance within feminist resistance. To this aim, the next paragraphs examine, drawing on Dadpour and Shewly's (2025) analysis, the Ekbatan girl's dance as a every-day life dissent act situated in the continuity of the "Women Life Freedom" movement which emphasise the importance of a daily and do-it-by-yourself resistance which can be embodied and spread through social media (1).

The performance of "Las Tesis", examined by Liinason (2024), which has been retaken across various countries, represents a collective and unifying enactment which strengthens women's interconnection across borders, empowering them through cathartic choreographies and political lyrics.

The argumentation will be then completed with an ode to joy and movement as a force of mobilisation within social media and offline protests against a paralysing and repressive movement.

1. Ekbatan's girl dance: women's reclamation of their body, from interstitial to transnational

The title of Dadpour and Shewky's article, "Dancing in-between: interstitial feminist defiance in Iran's public and digital spaces" (2025) and the reference to the "politics of in-between" through the paper echoes with the concepts of "in-betweenness" and "interstices" that are the core ideas of the post-colonialist thinker Homi. K. Bhabha. In his "The Location of Culture" (1994), he describes this interstice, as a liminal space where the colonised interact with the colonisers, and which becomes a space of negotiation and subversion of the colonial hierarchy (Bhabha, 1994). The reference to the postcolonialist author seems evident since the authors quote the concept of "internal colonisation" drawing by Bayat (2023). Therefore, by presenting Ekbatan girls' embodied transnational resistance, they position them through a decolonial and transnational perspective in the continuity of the movement "Women Life Freedom".

As Dadpour and Shewly (2025) observe, the "Women Life Freedom" movement in Iran launched in 2022 after the killing of Mahsa Amini by the police, made visible the layered oppressions that Iranian women faced, pushing back the cultural norms around bodily behaviour and gender norms through an embodied engagement on social media. Hatami (2022) describes the performance of dancing as a gendered form of resistance in Iran. Since Iranian women have been prohibited to dance since 1979 and the Islamic Revolution, using embodied resistance appears ultimately meaningful but also risky, triggering the punishment and censorship of the Islamic regime.

Despite the regular and strategical electricity and Internet shutdowns operated by the Islamic regime, the voices of "Women Life Freedom" crossed national borders gaining international attention. This transnational resonance extends the impact of any act of dissent by Iranian women as political and meaningful, triggering not only global solidarity but also a rapid reaction of the regime. Therefore, even though an act of an Iranian girl is situated at the interstice of society, social media provide an impulsion capable of triggering transnational and intersectional awareness. According to Dadpour and Shewly (2025), interstitial feminist defiance refers to a "framework that captures the hybrid forms of activism that arise between formal mobilisations and everyday resistance" occupying "a fluid, networked space bridging the spontaneity with the

historical continuity, organised and structured mobilisations.” (Dadpour & Shewly, 2025, pp. 1233-1234). From the digital interstice, the performers self-define themselves and express their identity through a spontaneous but networked act of resistance.

In sum, the fluidity of these everyday acts provide reach and bring a massive audience to the struggle. These informal acts of resistance are not isolated but situated in a broader Iranian feminist movement, interconnected with pressure from other co-existing struggles (Shewly & Gerharz, 2023). For these reasons, digital spaces are crucial in the catalyst of transnational solidarity but also a common consciousness building that fosters a “cross-generational and cross-class” (Dadpour & Shewly, 2025, p. 1240) solidarity and protest.

In 2023, a group of women, known today as the Ekbatan’s girls, posted a video on social media, in occasion of International Women’s Day, in which they perform a choreography without headscarves on the song “Calm Down” from Selena Gomez and Rema and within Ekbatan residential neighborhood, Teheran. On the recording, the synchronicity of their gesture, their joy and engagement, as well as their matching outfits create a collective bodily agency (Dadpour & Shewly, 2025, p. 1238). This collective empowerment challenges cultural gender norms and authority. By whipping their hair, moving their hips freely and performing “booty-shaking”, they assertively claim their freedom and reclaim their body.

Women also reclaim their freedom through the song they choose to accompany their choreography, “Calm Down” from Rema and Selena Gomez released in 2022. Written in English, this popular song is heard internationally and accumulates billions of views on social media platforms (NewsDesk, 2023). The love story lyrics lay on mid-tempo beats, calling for sensual and rhythmmed moves which makes it popular on social media. By using this song, the Ekbatan girls emancipate from the moral constraint imposed by the regime, which aims to isolate women from the rest of the world, and assertively take part in the international and virtual community.

The site of this performance also carries its own significance and reinforces the meaning of the choreography. Indeed, the girls perform within Ekbatan, a neighborhood in the West of Tehran. As seen on the recording, this neighborhood appears as a massive and impressive residential building but also gives a quiet and private atmosphere. According to Dadpour and Shewly (2025), Ekbatan is a famous space of social cohesion and resistance against the regime, fostering a strong sense of community. Thanks to its urbanism, it represents a hub for social gatherings and cultural events and provides both an inconspicuous environment to protest and a charged stage of collective assertion and shared empowerment (Dadpour & Shewly, 2025, p. 1238). Ekbatan therefore represents a public site of radical performance, where women can appropriate their body and public spaces. By filming themselves and performing a public spectacle, they challenge the confinement of dancing in private places, imposed by the regime (Meftahi, 2016). Ekbatan's instagram account was the first to share the video on social media⁷, showing that this space co-constituted a politicised terrain of dissent by creating a real and virtual social cohesion.

As Dadpour and Shewly asserts “Almost immediately, the Ekbatan dance transcended national borders ” (Dadpour & Shewly, 2025, p. 1237). This transcendence was, according to the author, reflected by the surge of solidarity across social media. TikTok, Instagram and X served as conduits for a viral wave of support through videos of people around the world reenacting the girls' choreography from their kitchen, squares, parks in Toronto, Berlin or Washington. Therefore, solidarity emerged through the act in itself which raised awareness about the repression women were/are facing when they dance in public spaces. This global solidarity invites emotional and political support and puts pressure on national and international media to make visible the Iranian feminist struggle and support their narrative.

This global support consolidated the political meaning of the Ekbatan performance by engaging with grassroot international resistance. The authors analysed 204 posts on X, Instagram, Youtube

⁷ The video is still available at the following link:
https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cpj_pp5Idvt/?utm_source=popular_topic_grid

and TikTok, revealing three main themes; advocacy for women's rights, solidarity through embodied imitation and critique of state repression. Even after the detention of the girls, the digital community mobilised by sharing even more of these videos and maintaining the joyful, committed, free and resilient image of the girls while the regime tried to reduce them to subjection and forced them to apologise in public. Dadpour and Shewky conclude that political resistance is not confined to its original context but gains traction through affective resonance and tactical circulation. In this case, social media allows users who cannot gather to connect and create a common consciousness.

This performance not only transcends borders but also generations and the stratification of society. Through social media, the Ekbatan' girls incentivise their co-nationals to resist with their own means and at their own level. As illustration, some women recorded videos of themselves in an indoor environment and blurring their face and body and hid any identifying features, reflecting high cautiousness and awareness of surveillance. Nevertheless, these acts still create an echo with dancing performance by an embodied engagement "we cannot risk showing our face but our body will still speak" (Dadpour & Shewly, 2025, p. 1239). This balancing between self-preservation and defiance conveys a meaningful image in itself, showing the particular pressure women endure and the control of the regime over their body.

As the authors stressed, this feminist movement of solidarity raised especially men's awareness. The author quotes a 50-year-old man who witnessed the movement and said "I never thought I would dance as a form of protest but when I saw the videos, I realised it was not just about women, it was about all of us fighting for our dignity." (Dadpour & Shewly, 2025, p. 1240). Therefore, social media constituted a tool for women's resistance to rally men along with their struggle.

In sum, the viral dissemination of solidarity videos on social media across class and ethnic lines enabled the Iranian community to produce common meaning, what Dadpour and Shewky call an intersectional and nationwide chorus of feminism (Dadpour & Shewly, 2025) through democratical and embodied engagement. These artistic performances can also serve a

transnational cause, raising awareness of a common struggle through a unified organic movement that echoes across borders. In a similar way, the movement of “Las Tesis” is particularly relevant since it created a common choreography performed as flashmobs by women. This flashmob has been reenacted by women in various countries, showing the heightened symbolical and effective meaning. This transnational and sensitive act of resistance will be analysed in the next section.

2. “Las Tesis” Flashmob: Transnational claim for social justice and mobilisation of women’s bodies.

Flash-mob performances leverage physical proximity to assemble participants and collectively reclaim public spaces. As Albacan (2014) notes, these events are characterised by a wide diversity of topics and performative approaches, producing a playful and liberating impact that challenges mainstream societal or political values. In contrast with entertainment-focused performances, “cause flash mobs” are designed to highlight social, environmental, or political issues. By utilising symbolic gestures, slogans, and theatrical acts, these movements strategically aim to raise awareness, influence public opinion, and encourage collective action on specific socio-political crises (Flashmobbers, 2023).

“Un Violador en tu camino” was staged in November 2019 by the Valparaíso-based feminist collective “Las Tesis”, and was subsequently performed by several feminist groups in various countries shortly afterwards, following the circulation of videos of the performance on social media. This flashmob performance aims at denouncing gender violence and particularly rape as a systemic cultural issue. It was triggered by the human right violations perpetrated by Chilean carabinieri in 2019, including torture, rape, sexual assault and abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Worldwide, these performances respond to particular human rights violations on women perpetrated by the institution's representatives, including police brutality (Liinason, 2024).

“Las Tesis” adopted the flashmob as a form of resistance. As Liinason (2024) argues, the form of the flashmob is significant, depending on the physical proximity of participants, enabling them to

reclaim public space collectively. The performance constructs a unified group and shared silhouette, emphasising collective demands and shared conditions, rather than individual expression. Given that women have historically been socialised in relation to men and denied a sense of collective consciousness (Simone De Beauvoir, 1949), this act becomes even more meaningful as an effort to foreground feminist struggle as a collective uprising.

As mentioned above, the digital and physical spaces mutually expand one another. This is illustrated by the viral circulation of the performance across numerous countries propelled by the widespread sharing of videos on social media. Through Youtube recordings, women in different national contexts appear no longer fragmented but more interconnected both physically, by moving and singing at unison during the flashmob, and identitarily across borders, against a common enemy.

This transnational act of resistance was characterised by common visual grammars which co-construct a process of collective meaning-making and constitute key-building blocks of these enactments (Liinason, 2024)

First, “Las Tesis” propelled significant and cathartic choreography. Through this political performance, female bodies become an active and subvertive weapon of resistance. This is reinforced by women’s reappropriation of their own bodies in a public space through cathartic gestures. The choreography contains gestures that mimic physical torture perpetrated by police against women in the events of 2019. Drawing on Chilean women witnesses, Linnason argues that “the squats is a citation, a choreographed reenactment, of the violence done by the policemen who say they are protecting women, but who are doing the opposite by intimidating women protestors, forcing them to undress and sit in a low, crouching position, fully naked, during police searches” (Liinason, 2024, p. 437). The author describes the sexual violence restaging as an “epistemic disobedience”, a concept developed by decolonial thinkers in order to dismantle the dominant Western epistemological framework and rewrite history. The utilisation of this concept is not anodyne but marks the necessity for feminist movement to subvert the

institutional and dominant narrative. To this aim, protesters embodied these gestures and accompanied them with denouncing lyrics: [“It’s feminicide. Impunity for the murderer. It’s the disappearance. The crime is rape.”] (Liinason, 2024, p. 437). By the restaging the gender-based violence they endured, “Las Tesis” perform a powerful act of resistance which highlights the “emancipatory power of the body” (Liinason, 2024, p. 439) and subverts the dehumanising and objectifying female representation conveyed by the mainstream narratives.

As noted above, the flash-mob of “Las Tesis” is cadenced by political and revolutionary lyrics laid over electronic beats. The structure of the lyrics and the song enable to verbalise powerful emotions and provide collective empowerment (Butler, 2015). These lyrics aim to make visible the violence suffered by women, adjusted across various national contexts without losing the structure and nature of the lyrics. Although the various performances are commonly targeting the patriarchy, the lyrics give the opportunity for women from different countries to express patriarchal oppression. For example, the performance enacted in Puerto Rico was singular in the lyrics, addressing U.S. colonialism and the Senate as a source of gender oppression⁸. In the same manner, the lyrics were also adapted in the performances enacted in India and Turkey. This personalisation of performances enables women living in a specific environment and facing specific forces of oppression inherent to this context to identify and reinforce with their co-nationals a sense of belonging, whilst ensuring that the transnational movement remains coherent and meaningful. It also highlights the necessity to address a transverse range of oppressive forces that impact women’s condition, including sexism, racism, capitalism, and colonialism. This radical and transversal performance had consequently an impact at different levels of the global society. At the micro-level, the lyrics were reposted on social media and readapted by individuals based on their own experience. At the macro-level, including the political sphere, these lyrics were reused by a Turkish deputy in the National Assembly to denounce patriarchal oppressions in Turkey. Furthermore, following these transnational

⁸ “¡Son los puercos, es el Senado, es la colonia, es Wanda Vázquez. El Estado opresor es un macho violador!” [“It’s the pigs, it’s the Senate, it’s the colony, it’s Wanda Vázquez. The oppressive state is a male rapist!”], [Link to performance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0996UtVrbXI&ab_channel=Todas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0996UtVrbXI&ab_channel=Todas), accessed June, 21 2026.

movements, Chilean women decided to create the first Chilean Feminist Political party, *Partido Alternativa Feminista*, in order to politicise women and then change the constitution.

“Las Tesis” holds a powerful meaning by the instrumentalisation of symbolic and recognisable visual elements. The blind-folds is the first visual element identified by Liinason (2024) as representing both the Chilean materiality of gender violence and a common militant symbol and weapon, since it has been retaken by other performers across different countries. Therefore, these visual-grammers create bridges and common-sense across the world. Concretely, the use of blind-fold during the Chilean performance mainly referred to the torture methods operated by the Chilean police during the Pinochet dictatorship (Martin & Shaw, 2021). However, used in other protests, the blind-fold can also be interpreted as a tool to preserve anonymity (Liinason, 2024), to represent the denial of justice towards gender-based violence, the invisible way the institutions facilitate this violence (Minutaglio, 2020). More generally, scholars interpret this symbol as a tool for unifying the performers and identifying a transnational meaning performance (Liinason, 2024).

Finally, Liinason (2024) observes that flash-mob performances are enacted within significant places, mainly sites of power which are generally crowded. According to Butler (2015), the protest exposes the vulnerability within authoritative regimes of power at the same time as the performers’ bodies impose themselves as powerful. Indeed, while the denial of justice towards rape or the second victimisation of the victim make these places of power vulnerabilising and oppressive for women, in particularly for marginalised women (Cusmano, 2018), these performances enable women to empower themselves and each other.

Serafini (2020) emphasises how artistic performances can enact political change. Adopting a prefigurative approach renders art as a medium for identification. Furthermore, Boyd and Duncombe theorised the concept of ‘ethical spectacle’ as a tool of communication both ethical and emancipatory (Duncombe, 2007). These techniques consist of using modern tools of communication, as post-conservative representatives do, such as musical or rhythmic content, or

the use of fantasy and emotions, but preserving these tools as ethical thanks to a high level of activist participation and transparency. This spectacularisation of the activists' contents can be set through dance, electronic beats leverage joy as an empowering emotion.

3. @mcdansepourleclimat: disarming far-right rhetoric through joy and dance

This section will portray the French militant Mathilde Caillard, alias @mcdansepourleclimat, who distinguished herself by leveraging dancing movements on social media platforms to drive video virality and maintain collective joy within the activist community, offering a counterweight to the fear and sideration triggered by the rise of the far-right and its policies in France. The following section draws on two interviews given by the activist to Reporterre and Leaf Media on Youtube. Mathilde Caillard, owner of the instagram account @mcdansepourleclimat, gained international notoriety through a video she posted on TikTok in which she danced to techno music during the protest against pension reform in France. Through dancing and political slogans set to techno beats she aims to engage and politicise both protesters and onlookers. Against anxiety, shock, fear, which are cultivated and developed by far-right parties through mainstream media, she reclaims individual and collective agency made possible by a space for expression and joy at demonstrations and on social media (Leaf Media, 2015). According to the activist, dancing provides a resistance tool to face the political strategy of maintaining fear, sadness and discouragement. Drawing on the transnational performance of “Las Tesis”, she stresses that the body’s movement and lively rhythms in protests cultivates joy and the resistant movement in contrast with the sideration.. She warns that joy is not naivety but a revolutionary tool which, combined with dancing, serves as a disarming strategy against the violent and armed repression of police forces but also against the dominant narratives which tend to criminalise those who protest. By dancing, the protesters can thwart the political narrative in which police are legitimised to use violent means to maintain the order as well as the media portrayals of protesters as aggressive and disturbing. Indeed, Mathilde Caillard points out that dancing allows to displace the media’s focus by offering them a spectacle and highlighting

creativity rather than disruption (Reporterre, 2025).

On social media, she uses dancing to make her content viral. Drawing on studies demonstrating that the human brain is attracted by rhythm, choreographed, living contents, she posts videos in which she is dancing on electrobeat to disrupt the algorithm, attract the spectator's attention and incorporate political messages in the video, associating them at the same time with joy and movement. This strategy allows her to raise awareness on some topics to camouflage their discourse on platforms which tend to invisibilise militant publications and amplify racist and anti-feminist ones. About that, she is aware of the contradiction of resisting on platforms owned by Big Tech which also feeds the latter's capitalist interest by situating the place of resistance precisely in the belly of the capitalist system. On this subject, she points to the necessity of occupying these spaces, used by the majority of the population, even though they serve anti-feminist, racist, capitalist and colonialist discourses, in order to convince a wider audience to resist these discourses and create an alternative culture and social order within the system. Finally, posting joyful and lively content on social media enables re-enchanting the struggle, by promoting the world women are fighting for, in the same way as advertising and explaining the functioning of capitalism, as an opposing force that undermines the legitimacy of these struggles.

However, although she emphasises the utility of social media in collective action and organisation, she stresses the necessity of the real life collective agency in order to concretise a new social order out of the virtual borders controlled by platforms pursuing a capitalist project.

The three case studies constitute illustrations of a grassroots digital act of resistance aiming to be reproduced in order to organise and build a common-consciousness. Indeed, the three performers were positioning their cameras on the floor or were filmed spontaneously by their friends to remind the do-it-by-yourself meaning of these acts, making them accessible to anyone who would like to get involved and who possess a phone. Even though the actions were part of specific and distinct struggles, from the reclaiming of one's body within an

“internal colonisation”, to the denunciation of globalised female struggles, the three examples highlight the necessity to challenge the dominant gender representation through effective engagement, empowerment and bodily agency.

Conclusive remarks

In sum, digital feminism on social media deploys various strategies in order to deconstruct the ambient colonial/patriarchal/capitalist/alt-right framework. First, hashtag activism serves as the main leverage of digital activism, enabling media activists to create a transnational community in which local and global efforts resonate with each other. These tools also give rise to politicised and memorable slogans designed to be chanted at unison during protest, through unified voices. Moreover, hashtags conveys subverting and meaningful messages, holding a particular history and background context in a few words. Moreover, the example of #NiUnaMenos demonstrated its capacity to create a bridge between grassroots resistance and the power spheres. However, experience highlighted the limitations of transnational feminist activism through social media algorithms and Western feminist colonial bias. While algorithms worsen the marginalisation of minority women by prioritising popular Western feminist contents, Western feminist themselves share responsibility for neglecting and essentialising marginalised voices within the movement, sometimes by enacting a discursive colonisation. This reality demonstrates the necessity for feminist movements to adopt a decolonial lens, by unlearning racist bias which marginalise Black women and prevent intersectional resistance. Black women activism establishes a radically transformative framework which empowers to empower themselves and the wider Black community.

By recentering their specific struggles and sharing their personal stories, they directly subvert the colonial narrative. Finally, emotional and embodied activism on social media, to create a common meaning-making process. These actions ultimately blur the borders between women and across humanity, breaking down gender barriers to build new inclusive frameworks.

Conclusion

Corporate media, particularly traditional and digital media serve as battlegrounds between feminist advocacy and the proliferation of misogynistic discourses. This research identified the influential frameworks of female representation in news contents, examining how these influences manifest within the news and trends within mainstream and social media. Finally, the study analyses how women can invest in social media in order to subvert the dominant narrative. Facing the rise of misogynistic culture through corporate media, how could women invest social media as a battleground to subvert the dominant narrative ?

The first chapter analysed the extent to which capitalist ideology and colonial legacy shaped the cultural media framework globally, especially through the maintenance of a hierarchical gender representation. The study emphasised how cultural gender imagery has been framed through the media by a colonial lens as a foundation of the capitalist system. The media amplified the misogynistic masculinist ideology which intertwined with the systems of capitalism, patriarchy, and conservatism. The most striking manifestation of this entangled gender system of domination is situated at their intersection, embodied by masculinist and far right ideology. Recently highly conveyed in corporate media, this ideology relies on and reclaims white, cis, male, Catholic, and Western supremacism. These discourses have been traditionally diffused by the media landscape, which has served as a battleground between misogynistic discourses and feminist advocacy. The final section of Chapter 1 therefore examined how feminist movements have historically leveraged media to pursue the advancement of women's rights and challenge the cultural patriarchal framework.

Chapter 2 emphasised how this hierarchical gender representation is currently materially conveyed through corporate media, particularly through mainstream and social media. Despite feminist advancements and the progressive involvement of minorities in various sectors of society, it has been observed that corporate media convey an objectified female representation. Through the lens of the male gaze and the use of stereotypes, this fuels the idea of women being

dispossessed of their bodies through mechanisms of sexualisation and dehumanisation. This representation gap has been emphasised as a consequence of corporate media adopting capitalist oriented politics, leading to the reduction of female representation to meet commercial necessities.

These findings have been reinforced by comparing them with the orientation of social media algorithms. Indeed, the research has observed that social media platforms provided a stage for and are now amplifying extreme misogynistic discourses conveyed by masculinists online, which are then taken up by far right parties offline. Through antifeminist and sexist discourses, these groups claim a hegemonic masculinity.

The third and final chapter seeks to demonstrate how feminist movements have used digital spaces and social media to fill the gap in mainstream media female representation, create a common consciousness among marginalised groups and women, dismantle this dominant narrative, and promote an alternative framework. This study suggests that the alternative framework follows three main perspectives of struggle: transnational, intersectional, and decolonial. To this end, digital spaces provide a useful tool to operate a collective epistemological deconstruction of the colonial system and the female representation it shaped.

This chapter focused on specific digital activism tools to understand the complex dynamics within feminist movements. Hashtag activism was an essential tool of cyberfeminism, allowing the movement to create a global sense of belonging while also highlighting the lack of visibility given to marginalised women, particularly Black women. Therefore, the combination of different digital tools and actions made possible by social media appeared necessary to enable marginalised women to take up space and provide their own stories and narratives. Finally, digital feminism subverts the dominant framework of gender stereotypes and female objectification by employing emotional and embodied engagement through different types of actions in order to reclaim identity, body, and freedom. From this analysis, the study emphasised that embodied engagement enables women to rally humanity in the struggle. This analysis shows different ways of resisting and different alternative frameworks depending on each context.

Unlike the dominant narrative, which is imposed as a universal one, a decolonial deconstruction gives rise to different narratives that resonate with each other.

The results of this research suggest that postcolonial and decolonial perspectives are crucial to understanding the balance of power operated between individuals and the media industries, who hold the power and for whose interests. Understanding the articulation between capitalism, patriarchy, and conservatism and how they impact the cultural imaginary and popular opinion seems essential to preserve self sovereignty as women and as humans in general. Racism and sexism are not innate, nor are they an end in themselves. Raising these dynamics to a higher level of systemicity than has been understood until now is a crucial way to emphasise social behaviours, cultural traditions, and political decisions.

All spheres of society are moulded by these dynamics, impacting the rights of minorities who, as Mohanty (2003) noted, represent the two thirds world, meaning the social majority. It also impacts dominant groups whose identity is shaped by volatile concepts whose meaning changes with the rhythm of capitalist interests, as exemplified by the concept of masculinity. These findings also demonstrate how the control of women appears essential to controlling the social order. This was already foreseen by Fanon concerning the colonisers' project to control Algerian women in order to control Algerian society. Women represent the land and the culture which is spread through reproductive work, which is still socially acknowledged as female work. They also represent the capacity for self empowerment, especially for marginalised women, since they cannot find legitimacy within the epistemological and material oppressive dominant framework (bell hooks, 1989). In this sense, the meaning of vulnerability is inverted, since those who are perceived as vulnerable are actually capable of creating their own identity, while heterarchal groups' identity relies on the domination of others (Gilroy, 1993). Reversing this balance of power and showing that racism, sexism, and capitalism in the media are due to coloniality allows for the unification of the struggles of racial, gender, and sexual minorities, since they face a common oppressive system and have a collective interest in dismantling it.

These findings also show that algorithms and affordances are political. The way we interact and navigate digital spaces is not neutral; it is influenced by the efforts of content producers to create

virality and capitalise on it, alongside the owners of the platforms who rule them without regulation, putting users at the mercy of personal interests.

The findings point to a uniformisation of the media system worldwide and a weak adoption of a gendered approach within the media, prioritizing commercial necessities. Nevertheless, since the media shape opinion, there is no limit to changing the narrative while still meeting financial requirements. Furthermore, regulations should change concerning the acceptability of alt right and masculinist ideology in the media.

The study highlighted that social media regulations do not effectively guarantee online safety to users, especially female users, against hate speech. This creates a gap in the risks taken by men and women when expressing themselves on social media, thereby affecting the diversity of representation already highlighted in mainstream media. While women feel in danger and censor themselves to avoid risking their safety, men feel invincible, fuelling a feeling of overpowering impunity that allows them to commit terrorist attacks.

Since the study seeks to employ a multidisciplinary perspective on a global scale, it does not provide a deep analysis of different cultures and countries. Consequently, even though this research specifies that the patriarchal system operates differently, it does not provide a specific analysis of gender representation in every country. Concerning masculinism specifically, this movement was born in the United States and was particularly present in Western Europe and Australia, but it is also visible in Mexico and China. Therefore, an analysis of female stigmatisation on social media is missing regarding the continent of Africa and the main part of Latin America. Consequently, the rise of masculinism should not be observed as a global phenomenon, but rather as a symptom of coloniality and capitalism aiming to spread worldwide.

Finally, future research could be oriented towards recent digital activism operated by women who create their own computers, called “cyberdecks”. These actions aim at reclaiming digital tools, preserving data, and ceasing to feed platform algorithms. This directly confronts the Big Tech companies, which seemed indispensable until now, allowing women to acquire complete ownership of their data and their navigation within the digital space. This movement holds a

digital revolution that makes accessible a radical alternative way of using digital space outside the capitalist and colonial digital framework.

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