

## **Misogynistic movements are not aberrations**

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Throughout the literature review conducted for this project, there was discussion about the media's reluctance to frame issues within the context of misogyny.

Claiming that women are subjected to misogyny can be demonstrated quite simply when a male counterpart is held up as a comparator. Holding fixed the intersections of identity related to race, class, sexuality, age, ability, etc., one need only demonstrate that the male counterpart is not subjected to the same hostility in terms of tone, frequency, or intensity.

There are a number of movements that encourage misogyny and have not been reported on appropriately in and of themselves or when they lead to deadly events.

In defining these movements, we hope to make clear that the violence perpetrated by men against women and gender- and sexually-diverse people is not a series of aberrant, unrelated events but part of a societal structure that does not adequately address and prevent the harms of misogyny.

Incels (involuntary celibates) are devoted to violent hatred of women and blame women for being romantically/sexually rejected by them. This community is made up of a majority of members who hold views that are far-right, white nationalist, or white supremacist in nature. Racially-marginalized women are particularly targeted with violence and harassment, though they are not the objects of sexual desire for these men. Rather, they are women who would not be permitted to "breed" if incels had their way. The entire focus of these groups is violence against women for depriving men of that to which they feel entitled.

Pickup artists (PUAs), as a movement, are not what we imagine when we think of cheesy pickup lines. Instead, PUAs are a multi-million dollar industry of self-proclaimed experts (ironically, usually single) who sell their tips, boot camps, and books to men who have been unlucky in love and are looking for advice. When you do a deep dive into what is being sold, it is advice on how to harass, stalk, and sexually assault women. While incels despair of ever having sex, PUAs pursue it relentlessly.

Men going their own way (MGOTW) are men who have decided they want to be far away from women or, at least, far away from meaningful romantic relationships with women. They are men who might have friendships or one-night stands with women but generally adhere to an isolationist approach to life. They are considered important enough a movement that we recently saw the new leader of the federal Conservative party – during his leadership campaign – surreptitiously trying to reach these men through targeted tagging of YouTube videos, which is deeply problematic, given that their ideology is based in the belief that women are toxic and dangerous.

The men's rights activist (MRA) movement was co-opted from what used to be the men's liberation movement, which was supportive of feminist principles and intended to deconstruct

harmful stereotypes and behaviours that are commonly referred to as toxic masculinity and the ways in which patriarchy also harms men. In the early 1990s, the movement began opposing feminists and became a reaction to the emergence of feminist and multicultural activism as a mainstream political force.

These are all movements that blame women for their various woes and failings in life. These are all movements that actively promote the hatred of women. Men who follow these movements have killed women for being women.

Given the critical role that media plays in forming public opinion, there is an opportunity to undermine and delegitimize these movements and their hate-fueled extremist ideologies by reporting on them as more significant parts of our societal structure rather than as isolated and aberrant.

And that will save women's lives.