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*'More than a housewife'*  
**Tradwives: The Influencers of Right-Wing Extremism**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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## Acknowledgments

*“Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari kē he toa takitini”*

My success should not be bestowed onto me alone,  
it was not individual success but the success of a collective.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and that couldn't be more true in this instance. Twelve months ago, I decided to leave a budding marketing career to pursue a little thesis on Tradwives. Some would consider that a poor decision in the early 2020's, but I've always considered myself a sink or swim kind of person. Here are a few of the people who helped me swim when I found myself floundering out at sea...

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## Abstract

The right-wing landscape is vast with a variety of expressions, communities and cultures existing within its realm. Understanding the extent of Right-Wing Extremism and its association to not only violence, but also to ideological radicalisation is a prominent and important area of research for Aotearoa New Zealand and the world. Globalising anti-globalism and modernising the anti-modern, the Tradwife phenomena is a new and uniquely social media-based movement. Tradwives are an influential community of right-wing women that espouse the traditional feminine lifestyle of being a wife and mother and capitalise on contemporary social media marketing strategies to promote a uniquely feminine persona that is equal parts ideology and aesthetic. This thesis explores a moment in time of the Tradwife community and seeks to conceptualise their ecosystem, understanding how Tradwives have attempted to mainstream their ideologies through processes of radicalisation and social media influencing. A Netnographical analysis positions the Tradwife phenomena within the right-wing landscape and presents four key findings or ‘holons’ which cohere into a holography of the ‘who, why, and how’ that fuels Tradwife culture. Observing the Tradwife community not as its individual parts, but as a whole creates in-depth understandings of Tradwife culture. As an alive and growing ecosystem, Tradwife culture offers women distinct norms for action, and actively works to grow reach through nuanced techniques of influencer marketing and online radicalisation. This research finds that despite a continuum of right-wing affiliation existing within the Tradwife Landscape, the very subscription to Tradwife culture by definition promotes right-wing and at times extremist thought in an attempt to influence other women to take up the Tradwife cause.

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## Introduction

*“There is no question that ideas and language of division and hate have existed for decades, but their form of distribution and tools of organisation - they are new”*

(Jacinda Ardern, 2019).

Aotearoa New Zealand is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world (The Office of Ethnic Communities, 2016). Home to more ethnicities than the world has countries, Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa NZ) strives to maintain a harmonious society with strong social cohesion and actively creates opportunities for cultural growth. In 2017, the nation ranked as the tenth most socially progressive country in the world and scored highly in terms of freedom, human rights, tolerance and inclusion (Social Progress Index, 2017). However, as our population continues to diversify, we increasingly face challenges which threaten social cohesion and national security. Extremism is one such challenge.

The Royal Commission of New Zealand (RCNZ) defines extremism as ‘belief systems that exist substantially outside the more broadly accepted belief systems in large parts of society’ (RCNZ, 2020; p 7). Although any belief system can result in extreme interpretation, some are more prominent, threatening, and influential than others. Despite Islamist extremism and terrorism dominating international counterterrorism efforts since 9/11, the rising threat of Right-Wing Extremism (RWE), and resulting acts of terrorism have warranted increasing government and scholarly attention (Dier & Baldwin, 2022). Right-Wing Extremism (RWE) is an increasingly dominant form of extremism that threatens security and stability across the world. In 2019, the Global Terrorism Index reported a global 320% increase in acts of terrorism in the name of RWE over the last 5 years (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2019). Operating with fluid boundaries between ideological extremism, hate crime, and terrorism, the extreme right-wing is a complex milieu of movements, groups,

and individuals espousing widely different, yet intrinsically related ideologies including fascism, anti-Semitism, anti-immigration, chauvinism, nativism, xenophobia, anti-globalism, anti-immigration, racial or ethnic supremacy, traditional values, nationalism and threats to national sovereignty, patriarchal social order, reverence for individual liberty, traditional gender roles, anti-LGBTQIA+<sup>1</sup>, and the sanctity of life (Agius et al., 2020; Grant, 2022; START, 2017).

There are many ways the breadth of ideology and severity existing within RWE can be conceptualised, however for the purpose of this research the contemporarily used; *Conservative Right*, *Alt-Lite*, and *Alt-Right* has been chosen. The Conservative Right is the least extreme iteration of RWE and refers to those who subscribe to conservatist value systems including traditional gender roles, and the rejection of progressivism<sup>2</sup>. The Conservative Right have been included as this group holds steadfast to inflexible and traditional beliefs, which distinguish them from other right-leaning groups or individuals (Miller, 2018). The Alt-Right is the most extreme iteration of RWE and is where much of the contemporary acts of right-wing extremism and terrorism have risen. Existing offline, but increasingly influential online with its roots in social media and online meme culture (SPLC, n.d.), the Alt-Right are defenders of ‘white identity’ and the preservation of the white race. Somewhat in the middle, Alt-Lite provides an intersection between Conservative Right and Alt-Right and can be used to identify those more radicalised in their right-wing ideology than conservative individuals. Generally, the Alt-Lite are seen as promoting a hard-line version of

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<sup>1</sup> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Takatāpui, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual. The “+” reflects diversity, signaling that not all people fit into one of the commonly used terms. Other commonly used abbreviations are LGBT, LGBT+, LGBTQIA (Outline, n.d.).

<sup>2</sup> Also referred to as the ‘progressive left.’ Progressivism is open-minded with subscribers espousing liberal views across a range of issues including ethnic, gender and sexual freedoms and equality (Pew Research Center, 2021).

nationalism, with a functional focus on traditionalist national identity - but they do not necessarily subscribe to the white supremacy, racial exclusion, and violent rhetoric of the Alt-Right (Hawley, 2017).

At its most severe, RWE can manifest in threatening behaviour targeted towards those perceived by right-wing extremists as threatening or undermining their worldview (Liang & Cross, 2020). This violent action is most prominently incited via racial, ethnic, faith-based, white identity, or political motivation and has resulted in some of the most devastating attacks on social cohesion in the last decade (Liang & Cross, 2020; RCNZ, 2020). Racially and Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremism (REMVE) is an example of a violent byproduct of RWE and is defined as violence resulting from extremism regarding the role of diversity in society (Counter-terrorism Executive Directorate [CTED], 2020). Encompassing racist, Islamophobic, homophobic, xenophobic, misogynistic, and/or anti-Semitic ideology, subscribers to REMVE see their identity, race or ethnicity as under active threat by the very idea of social cohesion (Williams et al., 2022). The March 15 terrorist attacks committed in Ōtautahi Christchurch have been labelled as, ‘one of the most devastating REMVE events in modern history’, and were incited by beliefs rooted in right-wing extremist values of faith, racial and ethnic minorities (CTED, 2020).

Politically Motivated Violent Extremism (PMVE) is another belief system embedded in RWE and is extremism that can create an anti-authority, anti-government, anti-media and anti-science environment that has, at times, been articulated through violent, and threatening rhetoric and illegal protests (Combined Threat Assessment Group [CTAG], 2022). Evidence of PMVE in Aotearoa NZ has been seen within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were restrictive and often lengthy lockdowns, vaccine mandates imposed for many workers, and the introduction of vaccine passes which denied unvaccinated people access to particular places. The overarching uncertainty around how the virus would and could spread,

and what the government and/or Ministry of Health response might be, led to social backlash by a minority of New Zealanders (Corlett & McClure, 2022; McClure, 2022; Trigger, 2022). From February to March 2022, Aotearoa NZ's parliament grounds were occupied by protestors from a wide variety of groups, mobilised under the common goal of an opposition to government imposed COVID-19 restrictions (Trigger, 2022). Extreme right-wing groups frequently subscribe to conspiracy theories and anti-government sentiment that can typically be linked back to the exclusionary, xenophobic, and at times racist roots of their beliefs (Grant, 2022). Amongst the protest organisers there were people, communities, and groups who openly espoused white supremacist and fascist ideals (Manhire, 2022). There were calls for the murder of government officials, and an intentional sharing of COVID-19 dis&misinformation that in turn promoted both widespread mistrust in Mainstream Media (MSM), and strengthening of extreme right-wing ideologies (UnderstandingNZFarRight.com, 2022; Manhire, 2022).

It is important to emphasise that RWE does not always involve or evoke violence. Those who subscribe to extreme right-wing ideology often exist in small pockets or echo chambers of internalised messaging oriented specifically towards that group's particular right-wing expression (Grant, 2022). Encompassing the characteristics of RWE mentioned above, expressions of right-wing ideology act as vehicles for members to communicate their beliefs and values. Fierce defenders of their worldview, those who subscribe to the extreme right often uses hypermasculinity as an important defence against the perceived left-wing agenda and often racialised "other". The "natural" gendered hierarchical order of men and women based on ideas of biological sex differences has traditionally limited women roles to reproduction and for the Alt-Right - preservation of the genetic heritage of the "white race" (Blee, 2003; Dier & Baldwin, 2022). Yet, from as early as 1920, women have held significant positions in some of the world's longest standing Alt-Right movements. Occupying familial,

social, and operative roles (Blee, 2003), women may not have been publicly acknowledged in these movements, but that does not negate their activity and commitment. In modern times, women appear to be increasingly taking on positions of influence within RWE, providing a so-called 'soft face' for the movement's often violent and hateful rhetoric (Ebner, 2020). Consequently, women's roles in RWE have received greater attention over the last decade in particular (Blee, 2020; Kisyova et al., 2022; Llanera, 2023; Zahay, 2022). A significant role that contemporary extreme right-wing women appear to be adopting in increasing numbers is that of the Tradwife.

Tradwives are an influential community of women that espouse the traditional feminine lifestyle of being a wife and mother (Couric, 2022). A portmanteau of the words 'traditional' and 'wife', Tradwives adopt and promote a housewife persona to highlight their commitment to heteronormative gendering where the man protects and provides for the family, and the women cooks, cleans and bears children (Proctor, 2022). Adopting feminist rhetoric to combat outside criticisms of misogyny, Tradwives position their identity as the product of choice and promote this choice through personal blogs and social media (Proctor, 2022). Although the concept of the 'Tradwife' has been around for decades, the contemporary understanding of the term and distinguishable persona has only recently gained traction. Thought to have originated from a 2020 BBC interview, where well-known British Tradwife Alena Pettitt described her lifestyle as "submitting to and spoiling her husband like it's 1959", the contentious elements of the term have since generated widespread media discussion and debate (Sitler-Elbel, 2021). Although some elements of Tradwife culture are controversial and extreme in nature, increasingly it appears Tradwife communities are as varied as the right-wing landscape they exist within. The Tradwife phenomena can be found across the right-wing landscape, adhering to varying ideologies and levels of extremity. It is

important to note that not all right-wing women are Tradwives, but all Tradwives are right-wing women.

Although its popularity is evident across much of the English speaking world (Couric, 2022; Iovine, 2022; Kato, 2023; Kelsey-Sugg & Marin, 2021; Kilgallon, 2023; Lang, 2022; Mandel, 2023; Pigg, 2023; Rottenberg & Orgad, 2020), the number of active Tradwives remain unknown. What is known, is the global success of the contemporary Tradwife movement is largely driven by Tradwives' clever use of social media and unique positioning as an online influencer. Capitalising on contemporary social media marketing strategies, Tradwives curate uniquely feminine online identities that are equal parts ideology and aesthetic. Active across a variety of platforms, Tradwives cleverly navigate theories of social media and influencer marketing to cement their ideologies and grow their audience. With social media increasingly the most dominant space people access information (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019), the impact of the Tradwife movement on both online and offline social cohesion is undefined but undoubtedly present. Leading followings of thousands to millions, Tradwives as social media influencers have globalised the idea of right-wing traditional living in an increasingly liberal online sphere. With women from all ages, stages, and backgrounds in their followings, the virality and transnational nature of social media has facilitated the mainstream growth of Tradwife ideology.

Tradwives actively attempt to extend not only their personal influence, but the right-wing cause more broadly. Taking place largely online (Bamsey & Montasari, 2023), the recruitment and radicalisation of individuals through the right-wing landscape can occur fluidly. Odag et al (2019) argue that "one of the most pronounced features of right-wing extremist websites is their potential for a collective identification that goes beyond local geographies" (p. 268). Tradwives actively engage in attempts at online radicalisation through

techniques such as Redpilling<sup>3</sup>, which is slang for coming to believe something counterfactual to mainstream consensus (Marwick & Furl, 2021). Threaded with conspiratorial thinking, ‘redpillers’ believe the mainstream population (referred to as ‘normies’) are caught up in an illusionary world created by the ‘global establishment’, with supporters going to extreme lengths to expose the ‘truth’ about the society we live in.

This research examines the role of Tradwives within the growing global threat of RWE. As Tradwives are not directly engaged in violent action, this research will explore how ideological radicalisation may impact social cohesion, with Tradwives using techniques of online radicalisation and marketing to curate idealised online identities that are attractive and compelling despite being often rooted in extreme right-wing belief and value systems.

The following chapter uses key literature to position this research within the context of right-wing ideology and extremism, highlighting how RWE has developed and is contemporarily expressed in society. Following the introduction of key theories and processes of radicalisation to RWE, the researcher unpacks how women have extended the RWE cause to date before introducing Tradwives as the key subject of research.

### **Expressions of Right-Wing Ideology**

Ideology is a highly flexible concept used to coordinate one’s dynamic belief systems. There are a number of definitions, but for the purpose of this research ideology is defined as; a consistent integrated pattern of thoughts and beliefs that explains one’s attitude towards life and existence within society (Lowenstein, 1953). Right-wing ideologies are complex and

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<sup>3</sup> Redpilling is an extreme right-wing radicalisation technique in reference to a scene from the Matrix where the character of Morpheus offers Neo (the protagonist) the option of taking a red or blue pill. By taking the red pill, Morpheus shares the ‘truth’ about the Matrix. Redpilling is seen as a euphemism for radicalisation, with recruiters using the above Matrix metaphor as a persuasion technique (Ebner, 2020)

fluid, centred around a number of characteristics including fascism, anti-Semitism, anti-immigration, chauvinism, nativism, xenophobia, anti-globalism, anti-immigration, racial or ethnic supremacy, traditional values, nationalism and threats to national sovereignty, patriarchal social order, reverence for individual liberty, traditional gender roles, anti-LGBTQIA+, and the sanctity of life (Agius et al., 2020; Grant, 2022; START, 2017). Although the adoption of these characteristics is unique to each individual's ideological framework, it can be argued the fundamental premises of right-wing ideologies are broadly based on a broad set of intrinsic value systems. Two value systems pertinent to the right-wing ideologies of Tradwives are heteronormativity, and notions of sovereignty.

Heteronormativity refers to the social and hierarchical ordering of gender and protection of traditional forms of masculinity and femininity (Butler, 1990). It encompasses biological differences between men and women and advocates for distinct gender roles in relation to these biological differences (i.e. men as breadwinners, women as homemakers). Labelled as the 'division of public and private life', under heteronormativity, men hold social and political power, and women are confined to the home (Klein, 1995). Accordingly, the continuation of patriarchy – and by extension, heteropatriarchy - is facilitated and encouraged. Combining the patriarchal (male) and heterosexual dominance, heteropatriarchy is defined as “the social, political, and economic system in which heterosexual men are the dominant group in a society or culture” (Kelley & Trigatti, 2021, p. 256). Within a subscription to heteropatriarchy, indoctrinated levels of gender-based discrimination such as misogyny and sexism are inherently regarded within right-wing ideologies as acceptable and normal core elements of society. Sexuality is also dictated within the fundamental premise of heteronormativity, with subscribers to right-wing ideologies employing a prescribed and dominant version of heterosexual gender roles, sexual identity and sexual practices - ideas which are often expressed through religion.

Sovereignty refers to the notions of autonomy and protection of freedoms and rights that are intrinsic to right-wing ideology. It can be understood in a variety of ways including the protection of national sovereignty. Rooted in one's cultural identity, national sovereignty is bound up in support of border controls and economic protectionism which safeguards goods and services produced by citizens. Those who value national sovereignty (i.e. their way-of-life is tied to their national identity) tend to support the implementation of policies and practices characterised by anti-immigration, anti-globalist and nationalist ideas.

Sovereignty can also manifest in racial sovereignty, which refers to the protection of ethnic identity and manifests in exclusionism for fear of losing the fundamental identities of one's race and culture, or even believing in the superiority of one's own race or ethnicity. A final way sovereignty can manifest in right-wing communities - and one particularly pertinent to Tradwives - is sovereignty of the foetus. Intrinsic right-wing beliefs and values regarding the sanctity of life extend sovereignty to the unborn, where the rights of the foetus are seen as separate and autonomous from the mother. This is a particularly fervent debate for the extreme right-wing and women in these movements more specifically with sovereignty of the foetus underpinning both politically and identity motivated acts of violent extremism such as protesting and vandalism at abortion clinics (Gonzalez, 2022; Lourgou, 2023), and at the most extreme instance in the stealing of aborted fetuses (The Associated Press, 2022).

Interestingly, this intrinsic value of sovereignty of life typically only applies to issues of conception, pregnancy, and situations relating to vulnerable members of society and thus is conditional upon state of being and moral behaviours - i.e. the death penalty for certain crimes is typically considered appropriate for adults who transgress against the freedoms and rights of another individual (Costello, 2014). Taken broadly, these right-wing ideas of sovereignty are intrinsic to many of the systems we use to construct our society. For example, economic systems such as capitalism operate on notions of autonomy and freedom whereby

“private actors own and control property in accord with their interests, and demand and supply freely set prices in markets” (Jahan & Mahmud, 2023, para. 1). Similarly, right-wing political doctrines such as classical liberalism advocate that individual freedom is the fundamental centre of political activity and that while governments may be necessary to protect the individual, there is also recognitions that governments themselves can pose threats to freedom and personal sovereignty (Robertson, 2018).

In order to conceptualise how premises such as heteronormativity and sovereignty have intrinsically linked the multitude of right-wing ideologies within the right-wing landscape, the following unpacks the contemporary ‘rise of the right’ as it pertains to some of the core expressions of right-wing ideologies; religion, politics, the modern militia movement, intentional communities and cults, sovereign citizens movement, counterculture groups, and at the individual level.

## **Religion**

Existing in every global culture, and espousing some form of affiliation for more than 85% percent of the world’s population, religion has survived and thrived in human society for thousands of years (Peoples et al., 2016; Wiebe, 2008). Offering existential meaning to life on earth, the foundational roots of religion exist within much of modern history, influencing global cultures and societal norms. The uniting factor of every religion is theism, the belief in and worship of supreme beings or a divine power that exists for the creation and goodness of humankind (Johnson, 2005). Typically centred around a God, or multiple gods or deities that are seen as the creator(s) of the universe, these divine figure(s) are believed to be capable of influencing, guiding, and directing the daily lives of mankind. Two ways theism can be contextualised are polytheism and monotheism. Monotheism refers to the most traditionally understood form of religion where followers believe in the existence of one single and supreme being, deity, or God. Christianity, Islam and Judaism are classified as

monotheist faiths where followers confess to and worship ‘God’, a divine being that offers everlasting life after death (Nomads, 2021). The emphasis in monotheist faiths is on the oneness or uniqueness of God and the affirmation that there are no other gods existing in the divine world (Assmann, 2009; Muscato, 2021). Conversely, polytheism refers to belief in the existence of multiple deities, gods, and/or goddesses (Assmann, 2009). In polytheist faiths, the universe is believed to be filled with many divine forces who have designated roles of influence over humankind. For example, the ancient Greeks were largely polytheist and worshipped a pantheon of both gods and goddesses. Rather than praying to a single God, the ancient Greek would offer worship to specific deities known to guide or offer assistance on specific issues. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Paganism are popular polytheist religions of today, each worshipping a complex pantheon of deities (Muscato, 2021).

Religious extremism can be defined as theism underpinned by uncompromising religious identity and extreme devotion to a chosen deity and/or religious movement (Saada, 2023). Arising in response to historical circumstances, societal threat, and/or politically and racially motivated challenges to one’s sense of self, religious extremism exists in both monotheist and polytheist faiths and can manifest in acts of violence to protect the dignity of the religious belief system in question (Wibisono et al., 2019; Saada, 2023; Wong, 2011). Typically fuelled by perceived salvation and everlasting reward, acts of violence in the name of religious extremism have influenced some of the most devastating racially and politically motivated terrorist events in modern history. The following outlines the most prominent polytheist and monotheist faiths pertinent to this research; Paganism and the Christian Right.

### ***Paganism***

Paganism (also known as Neopaganism, Modern Paganism and Contemporary Paganism) is an umbrella term for polytheist religious and spiritual movements influenced by prehistoric beliefs of pre-modern people. There is no official guiding doctrine within

Paganism and followers instead are aligned by common beliefs including the aliveness and divine presence in nature, and support for non-authoritarian religion (Jones & Pennick, 2003). Pagans use rituals, fantasy, and visionary activities to advance their beliefs and have an overarching aim of living in harmony with nature (Adler, 2006). In modern times, Paganism has become most strongly associated with the concept of 'Pagan Witchcraft' (also known as Wicca). Wicca is based on a revolt against Christianity and the Christian belief that witches are guided by or followers of Satan. Wiccans are believers in pre-Christian religion and emphasise ritual and spiritual experience (Berger, 2021). They refer to themselves as 'practitioners' rather than believers to further distinguish themselves from Christianity and emphasise their active role in guiding their spirituality (Berger, 2021). Druidism is another form of Paganism that identifies as a loosely connected spiritual movement which reveres nature and aims to offer a 'way of being in the world that avoids many of the problems of intolerance and sectarianism that the established religions have encountered' (Carr-Gomm, 2019).

Nature is the guiding feature in most Pagan faiths and is celebrated through a yearly cycle of rituals and festivals (known as 'sabbats') which worship the divinity in the living world. Each ritual and/or festival encourages followers to engage with how nature changes with the seasons, noting the importance of taking time to reflect on how these seasonal changes influence every day and spiritual life (Berger, 2021). Litha (also known as the summer solstice) is an example of a sabbat and celebrates the sun and its divinity. Falling on the longest day of the year, Litha is a time for pagans to search for their inner power and brightness. It is often commemorated with fire ritual (Bhaget, 2019).

Two hallmark features of Pagan faiths are animism and pantheism. Animism is the belief that inanimate objects, places, and sometimes even creatures possess spiritual essence. Pantheism understands God as only existing within the fabric of the universe, that is, there is

no God or deity which exists beyond the combined substance, forces, and laws of our world (Adler, 2006). Pagan gods and goddesses are therefore more human than the God depicted in monotheist faiths. Pagan deities are known to have complicated relationships, often revealing flawed personalities, just like humankind (Routes North, 2022). The most commonly worshipped Pagan deities can be classified into three distinct groups; Aesir, Vanir, and Jötunn. Aesir are deities of social realities; Vanir are deities of sexuality, fertility and magic; and Jötunn are deities of chaos and destruction. In some Pagan traditions (i.e., Norse mythology), Carl Jung's theory of "archetypes" is also used to understand and describe the roles represented by Pagan gods and goddesses (Aurnyn, 2017). For example, Odin is the lord of all Aesir deities and represents the archetype of 'wise old man.' In Odin's likeness, followers are guided by Odin's wisdom as the superior master and teacher. His function is to offer guidance, instruction, and motivation (Luo, 2022).

Politically, there are two sides to modern Paganism. On the one hand are left-leaning Pagans who often turn to Pagan movements for their more inclusive core values. On the other is the history and influence of Paganism in the extreme right (Koronka, 2022).

Right-wing Paganism (also known as Ethnic Paganism, and Racist Paganism – Gardell, 2003) can be traced back to Vikings and the Germanic people of the Iron Age who believed Paganism – then named Norse Paganism – to be Europe's 'true heritage' (Strmiska, 2018). Adherents to right-wing Paganism classify Christianity, Judaism, and Islam as imported religions, and as such often have strong ties to extreme right-wing rhetoric, nationalist identity, and ideas of racial purity. Odinism is the branch of Paganism most overtly associated with RWE, with many Odin followers sharing beliefs that Paganism is an essentially ethnic phenomenon derived from European ethnic culture. Similarly, many right-wing Pagans are reconstructionist, and share a desire for society to return to supposedly simpler, more traditional times. Greater ethnic, lifestyle, and religious homogeneity,

alongside traditional family roles are all key values of right-wing Pagans (Strmiska, 2018). With this long standing relationship between Paganism and ethnic exclusion, Paganist ties can subsequently be seen in many of the world's most recent acts of racially and politically motivated extremism. Events such as the 2011 terror attack in Norway where Anders Breivik's gun was named Gungnir after Odin's spear; the 2017 Unite the Right rallies in Charlottesville where many protestors carried flags showing Thor's hammer; the perpetrator of the 2019 terror attack in Aotearoa NZ who wrote '*see you in Valhalla*' at the end of his manifesto; and most recently the QAnon Shaman (a prominent figure in the conspiracy circles involved in the 2020 Capitol Attack and known user of Norse Pagan symbology) (Koronka, 2022), all show the dangerous potential of Paganism when interpreted through the lens of both racial and religious extremism.

### ***The Christian Right***

The other group connected to right-wing ideology and extremism explored in this thesis is the Christian Right. A coalition of conservative Christians, the Christian Right can be characterised by support for socially conservative, traditionalist ways of life and family, and an opposition of progressivism, feminism, reproductive rights, LBTTQIA+ rights, and gender equality (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Stoeckl, 2020). Existing within various denominations, the Christian Right has a longstanding history of influence in society, and have contributed to the advocacy and advancement of conservative issues such as state sanctioned creationism and prayer in public education, religiously influenced sex education, restrictions around contraception, abortion, and euthanasia, as well as suppression of LBTTQIA+ rights (di Mauro & Joffe, 2007; Durham, 2000; Edis, 2020). Broadly, the mission of the Christian Right is to influence society, politics, and policy with a traditionalist interpretation of the teachings of the Bible. Whilst academic literature identifying the denominations, groups, and movements involved in the Christian Right is both vague and

varied (Coleman & Hackett, 2015), those perceived to have the greatest influence, and which are most relevant for this research are; Evangelicalism, alt-Catholic, and Russian Orthodox Christianity.

### **Evangelicalism**

With various theological streams influencing its inception, Evangelicalism (also known as Evangelical Christianity and Evangelical Protestantism) is one of the most dynamic forms of Christianity in the modern world (Shoemaker, 2021). Encompassing Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and some Anglican and Pentecostal Christian movements, Evangelicalism is an umbrella Christian identity that takes on many forms, but its core commitments emphasise four key things: The Bible's authority; crucicentrism or Jesus' supremacy as saviour; the belief that lives can be changed by Christian conversion and a 'born again' experience; and the importance of active Christian service and preaching – also referred to as 'Evangelising' (Noll, 2003; Noll et al., 2019; Shoemaker, 2021). Initially centred in Europe and then North America (Coleman & Hackett, 2015), the roots of Evangelicalism trace back to the eighteenth century and have influenced much of the English speaking world. Today, Evangelicalism is a global movement existing in various iterations across Christian communities and cultures (Noll, 2003).

Unlike denominations such as Catholics who have one centralised authority (The Pope), Evangelicals exist fluidly, functioning across a network of largely conservative spokespeople (Shoemaker, 2021), and as such offer a spectrum of extremity. One of the most conservative subsets of Evangelicalism is Evangelical fundamentalism. Characterised by a strict and literalist view of Christian scripture, fundamentalists aspire to replicate society based on the religious principles of their faith. Motivated by social, ethnic, and nationalistic grievances, fundamentalists largely reject secular modernity, instead practicing 'separatism', the act of choosing to live minimalist traditional family lives, often away or protected from

modern society (Jelen, 1987; Kellstedt & Smidt, 1991; Taylor, 2016). It is believed the growth and appeal of fundamentalism in the twentieth century is attributed to the encroachment of progressivism, scientific theory, modernity and secularism into religious spheres (Sargisson, 2007).

An example of Evangelical fundamentalism in action is the transnational non-governmental organisation World Congress of Families (WCF) which exists largely in perpetuating America's Christian Right, but also has strong foundational roots in Russia. Formally founded in 1997 and currently run by RWE influential figure, Brian Brown, WCF has become one of the primary Evangelical influences for fundamentalism, promoting conservative gender roles and a traditional, heterosexual family model (Stoeckl, 2020). Claiming it wants to "*help secure the foundations of society*", two of the core pillars of WCF are defending the "*natural family*" founded on marriage between a man and a woman, and a strong anti-LGBTQIA+ stance (Michel, 2017).

### **Alt-Catholic**

Also fundamentalist in their action, the alt-Catholic is another key influence in the Christian Right. Mobilised between the 1980's and 1990's, alt-Catholics (also known as fundamentalist Catholics, traditional Catholics and trad-Caths) are an extreme right-wing classification of Catholicism (Wetzel, 2020). Most prominently standing for nativism, nationalism, male supremacy, anti-feminism and the demonisation of the LGBTQIA+ community, members of alt-Catholic groups are motivated by society's return to the teachings and law of the Bible. Rather than practising separatism or Christian reconstructionism (as is the case with fundamentalist Evangelicals), fundamentalist Catholics instead practise dominionism. Dominionism is an extension of Christian reconstructionism that seeks to more vividly develop a Christian society based on a literal interpretation of the Bible, biblical law, and when adopted in a Catholic environment – the specific teachings of

Catholicism (Aho, 2013). In subscribing to this ideology, individuals are required to seek dominion over cultural and political aspects of society including government, education, business, media, and the family unit. Naturally, dominionism manifests itself and influences the individual's communication with and action within everyday life including religious belief and political affiliation (Clarkson, 2016), but its influence at the family level is most relevant for the present research. Male supremacy is a key pillar of dominionism where men's assertion over their wives is foundational and traditional family roles are thought to represent the truest depiction of the teachings of the Bible (Roberts, 2020). The adoption of traditional gender roles by traditionalists can be traced back to the Bible, namely their interpretation of Genesis 2:20 "*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him*" (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Genesis 2:20; Peterson, 2005). Some fundamentalist Christian followers who subscribe to dominionism, take their interpretation of traditional gender roles and wifely submission one step further and practice the act of Christian Domestic Discipline.

Christian Domestic Discipline (CDD) advocates an extreme form of traditional gender roles through disciplinary wife submission and male dominance as head of household (HoH) (DeGroot et al., 2015). The wife and namely her body is seen as belonging completely to her husband and she is completely under his control so he can 'better her', both as his wife and in her devotion to family and spiritual life. Manifesting in the use of disciplinary tactics such as spanking, time out, the removal of privileges, and/or lecturing, followers of CDD are reinforced in their belief through a perceived interpretation that the Bible authorises a man to spank one's wife in order to encourage her submissiveness (Audet, 2008; Beusman, 2013). While behaviours within the realms of CDD can be associated with sadomasochism (BDSM), the difference with CDD is the fact sex is not the main objective, it is the creation of a submissive wife through corporal punishment tactics (Rubio, 2013).

Church Militant is a rising media network and key driver of fundamental Catholicism which proudly espouses male supremacy and the perceived value of the traditional family unit. Founded in 2008 by former Fox News reporter Michael Voris under the name ‘Real Catholic TV’, Church Militant holds an annual Men’s Conference during which social, political, and cultural issues of the time are discussed. Voris opened the fifth annual conference in 2019 with the following quote from his talk titled Confronting Toxic Femininity (Wetzel, 2020);

*“Are you being the man God is calling you to be? The salvation of your family, your peers and Western civilization itself depend on it. The forces of evil are attacking true manhood, and it’s up to you to live it and pass on the Catholic faith. Bring your son, your father, your brother, your uncle or your nephew—especially if they have only known what the world calls ‘manhood’.”*

Alongside ‘confronting toxic femininity’ (discussed later), alt-Catholics also reject homosexuality and are at the forefront of the pro-life movement. ‘Resistance’, the activism branch of Church Militant, has been known to attend pro-life protests and counter-protest Planned Parenthood marches across the United States (Joyce & Lorber, 2022; Kennerly & Rogers, 2022). Similarly, in the weeks after the overturning of Roe v. Wade, many within the alt-Catholic movement flocked to their local church to express their thanks to God. One member exclaimed the below outside the Basilica of St. Patrick’s Old Cathedral, an act which was captured on video and went viral across social media;

*“I am the people. The people have decided, the court has decided. You lose. You have no choice. Not your body, your choice. Your body is mine and you’re having my baby”* (Bachom, 2022).

This protester was also a member of the Groyper movement, a collection of white nationalists whose broad goal is to normalise their extreme views by aligning them with Christianity and its traditional values (MacDonald-Evoy, 2022). While Groyper started within meme culture with members using targeted online trolling tactics to share and lighten their extremist content, increasingly they have become more mobilised and affiliated with groups like Church Militant. Most recently and as noted above, the Groyper movement worked with Church Militant to confront pro-abortion protesters at American pro-choice rallies with the aim of growing their subsequent influence and followings (Joyce & Lorber, 2022).

### **Orthodox Christianity**

With a similar anti-abortion stance and subscription to traditional family values, Orthodox Christianity (also known as Eastern Christianity, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Orthodox Catholic Church) is the most widely professed faith in Russia, and the third largest brand of Christianity globally (Pew Research Center, 2017). Coexisting with the Roman Catholic Church for its first thousand-year existence, Orthodox Christianity broke away from Catholicism in 1054 A.D (an event known as the Great Schism) due to theological and political disagreements, and contention over papal supremacy (Diamant, 2017). Today, Orthodox Christians follow an ecclesiastical governance where churches either have their own head (autocephalous) or are self-governing (autonomous). United in faith through a common approach to worship and theology, each church is unique and defined by its geographical location and the cultural tradition of its believers, a characteristic which often leads to strong nationalist values (Makrides, 2013).

Popular also in Greek, Middle Eastern, and Slav culture, expressions of RWE in Orthodox Christianity date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Kelaidis, 2016). Supporting traditional family values, traditional gender roles, male supremacy, anti-abortion, the promotion of large families, a firm intolerance of liberal values including LGBTTQIA+

rights (referring to members of this community as ‘Sodomitics’), and the secularism of the West, the influence of RWE in Orthodox Christianity is profound and rigid (Riccardi-Swartz, 2021). Most notably, the Orthodox Church is highly visible in Russian extreme right-wing groups and is used to add legitimacy to their anti-Semitic, traditionalist perspectives, with members citing their faith as the founding pillar for their conservative political and societal beliefs (Yousef, 2022). In Russia, the ties between Orthodoxy, the rise of Vladimir Putin’s political regime, and the end of religious repression by the Soviet Union is particularly strong with many extreme right-wing views of Orthodox Christian’s etched into Russian politics (Kelaidis, 2016; Makrides, 2013). With the implementation of a societal value system based on patriotism, God, and family, Putin alongside Patriarch Kirill of Moscow have brought the Russian Orthodox Church increasingly closer to the Russian State.

Whilst pronouncing open disagreement with the Western World, the reach of the Orthodox Christian faith and right-wing Orthodox views can also be found in the West. There exists a community of converted Evangelical Christians and Catholics who have joined the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) (Yousef, 2022). Forming due to widespread disillusionment with perceived social and demographic changes occurring in other Christian faiths, ROCOR hail Putin as a king-like figure whose political regime is ‘making the world great’ (Riccardi-Swartz, 2021). Extremely fundamentalist, with strong ties to ideas of nativism, pro-authoritarianism, and rejection of diversity, members of ROCOR, especially in America, increasingly have no Russian affiliation and instead conversion is based on an alignment with ROCOR’s conservative traditional values (Riccardi-Swartz, 2021).

### **Amalgamation of Church and State**

Influences of the Christian Right and conservative Christian values are increasingly seen beyond the religious sphere, in politics. Scholars have argued traditionalism in particular

has become a religio-political ideology that continues to influence the political governance of many nations (Riccardi-Swartz, 2021; Zhuravlev, 2017). Post-Soviet Russia and contemporary America are two key examples of how extreme right-wing religio-political ideologies have become prevalent in the actions of government.

### *Russia*

Over the last decade, the amalgamation of Church-state relations in Russia has seen the Russian State invested in the promotion of interests and values held by the Russian Orthodox Church. Clergymen and those in significant papal power have received wide-ranging support from all governmental levels including funding for the development of new churches, mass media attention, and access to President Vladimir Putin himself (CSIS, 2016). In 2010, the Law on the Transfer of Religious Property to Religious Organisations was passed, allowing religious organisations to claim state-owned property of religious significance. In 2017, domestic violence was decriminalised in Russia, a move argued to be influenced largely by the Russian Orthodox Church and their promotion of traditional gender roles (Chamusco, 2017; Rollins, 2022). Putin and the current regime have even gone so far as to introduce an official government medal for ultra-fertility titled the Mother Heroine award which is given to families who “*birth and raise*” ten Russian citizens (Reid, 2022). Putinism has largely allowed and supported the return of Orthodoxy to mainstream Russian culture in a way not seen since the Soviet Revolution. In turn, the Church has had greater influence in the shaping of societal values in Russia as noted by the recent creation of a specific Christian media outlet that is increasingly given more mainstream airtime (Lassin, 2022). As time goes on, these right-wing values where traditional family and gender roles are celebrated, and liberal secularism is condemned are increasingly broadcast to the Russian public.

### *United States of America*

Influences of Christian traditionalism as a religio-political ideology can also be seen in contemporary American politics. Underpinned by the belief that Christianity is a fundamental pillar of American national identity, American conservative Christians and members of the Christian Right actively promote the amalgamation of Church and State. Since the 1980's, the Christian Right have worked to establish a foothold in the American legal system with the intention of reversing legal secularism, and promoting law rooted in an understanding of Christian theology (Lowe, 2022). Conservative Christian legal organisations such as the Federalist Society and the American Centre for Law and Justice have seen increasing success in their lobbying for the appointment of conservative and religious judges (Stolzenberg, 2020). The history of the Supreme Court judges' religious affiliation shows that of the 116 judges appointed to the Court, 92 have had protestant denomination affiliations, 15 have been Catholic, eight have been Jewish, and only one with no known religious affiliation. Table 1 outlines the religious affiliation of the currently sitting Supreme Court, the highest court in the land (Coyle, 2022; McCammon & Montanaro, 2018; Newport, 2022).

**Table 1**

*Religious Affiliation of the Supreme Court*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>	<b>Year Appointed</b>
Clarence Thomas	Catholic	G. H. Bush	1991
John Roberts <i>(Chief Justice)</i>	Catholic	G. W. Bush	2005
Samuel Alito	Catholic	G. W. Bush	2006
Sonia Sotomayor	Catholic	Obama	2009
Elena Kagan	Jewish	Obama	2010

Neil Gorsuch	Catholic turned Episcopalian	Trump	2017
Brett Kavanaugh	Catholic	Trump	2018
Amy Coney Barrett	Catholic	Trump	2020
Ketanji Brown Jackson	Nondenominational Protestant	Joe Biden	2022

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The Christian Right's impact on American politics and law also exists beyond those sitting in positions of influence. Many everyday Americans who subscribe to conservative Christianity also take up political activism, believing the state must be subservient to God (Conger, 2019). Christian Nationalism is based upon traditional Christian and fundamentalist ideals. Referred to by members as a 'movement of gospel patriots,' the Christian Nationalist movement is driven by the belief that Christian identity is being lost in America, and that the only way to "*make America great again*" is a return to Christian hegemony (Gashaw, 2021). Often Republican, often white, and traditionalist, Christian Nationalist's espouse strong fundamentalist values, and preach the need for society to go back to the fundamental teachings of the Bible, believing biblical scripture to be infallible, uncompromising, and all-encompassing (Coleman & Hackett, 2015). Key Christian fundamentalist groups are lobbyists in promoting their ideologies and interests at political levels. This blurring of religious and political lines is particularly evident between the Republican party and American Christianity. In August 2020, on the closing night of the Republican Party's National Convention, Donald Trump proudly pronounced the following; "*In America, we don't turn to government to restore our souls. We put our faith in the almighty God*" (Gashaw, 2021). For many American Christians, the Republican vote is innate – a support for the Republican party is a support for a Christian America. The Christian vote in America

makes up 64% of the total voting population, with an estimated 79% of those leaning Republican (Gramlich, 2020).

## **Politics**

Analogous to religion, politics is as much social as it is governmental (Gashaw, 2021). In Aotearoa NZ, the political landscape is relatively small compared to other regions of the world. Largely centred with the most prominent parties sitting between centre-left and centre-right, a simplified representation of Aotearoa NZ's current political landscape is shown below. The democratic constructs of 'left,' 'right,' and 'centre' contain a variety of ideological beliefs and societal issues that position the political parties in relation to each other (Edwards, 2003). Broadly, Aotearoa NZ's 'left-wing' political parties are ideologically positioned with a focus on equality, larger government intervention and collectivism, and worker's rights; while 'right-wing' political parties in Aotearoa NZ concentrate on efficiency, smaller government, individualism, and laissez faire capitalism. As a nation, Aotearoa NZ is considered to be fairly socially liberal (Di Maio, 2018; McDonald, 2020). Most political parties are generally in favour of people being able to engage their rights to achieve social equality, the difference is how left-wing and right-wing parties perceive the best way to achieve equality is. Centre-right parties, National and Act lean towards social equality through principles of meritocracy. They believe an individual's right should – in many cases - be determined by their individual merit. Conversely, centre-left parties, Labour and Green believe social equality should consider group differences and thus resources should be

allocated to reduce the disadvantages experienced by certain groups in society (Sibley & Wilson, 2007).

**Figure 1**

*Positioning Aotearoa, NZ's Political Landscape (adapted from Edwards, 2009)*



Globally, the political spectrum is much broader, with right-wing and conservative politics having considerable influence throughout modern history (Gale, 2022). Beginning with Italy's National Fascist Party in the wake of World War I, the 1920's and 1930's saw the rise of extreme right-wing political movements across much of Europe as Mussolini sought to overcome democracy and re-establish an authoritarian state (Albanese & Del Hierro, 2016). Peaking in the 1940's with the rise and fall of Hitler's Nazi Germany, interest in fascism wavered, with many of the world's most conservative leaders adapting their approach to remain relevant to a society swinging to the left (Wright, 2019). In the 1950's extreme right-wing politics began its second rise to popularity. Anti-democratic, neo-fascist parties including France's Front National, Austria's Freedom Party, and the UK's National Front were all developed during the 1960's and 1970's in response to perceived threats of communism, and the belief that foreigners threaten national homogeneity (Norrell, 2008). In Aotearoa NZ, extreme right-wing groups also mobilised over the 1960's and 70's, becoming more prominent and mainstream (Spoonley, 1987). Similar themes of anti-immigration, anti-communism, and white nationalism were supported, with the first explicitly racist and distinctly neo-fascist groups developed during this time, such as the National Socialist Party and New Zealand's National Front (Spoonley, 1987).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the global presence of RWE has moved further into the political mainstream. Since the mid-2010's, democracies across the world have increasingly turned towards more conservative, right-wing political parties and governments. Standing in contrast to the parties and governments that promoted globalisation, international cooperation and widespread social cohesion two decades earlier, right-wing populism has gained significant momentum (Merelli, 2019). American populist leader Donald Trump's 2016 electoral win with his 'America First' and 'Make America Great Again' campaign slogans sparked the resurfacing of previously dormant extreme right-wing groups, and increased the prevalence of overt Islamophobia, xenophobia, extreme nationalism, and nativism (Butt & Khalid, 2018). The pro-Trump American culture has subsequently created a unique environment for RWE to thrive not only politically with the Republican party holding office from 2016 – 2019, but also ideologically, with extreme right-wing movements such as Paleo-conservatism seeing a notable rise with Donald Trump's election and administration. Coined in the 1980's as a way to classify the political affiliation of conservative Catholics, Paleo-conservatism is a conservative political ideology that emphasises tradition and limited government intervention alongside religious, nationalist, and ultimately Western identity ideology (Spoonley, 2022).

Equally influential in the global rise of right-wing politics and in some ways intrinsically linked to Trump's rise to political success, the 2016 vote in favour of Brexit saw the separation of Europe from the United Kingdom and a win for nationalist and populist ideology (Langlois, 2021; Merelli, 2019). As quoted in the Financial Times, "*The Brexit vote and the election of Donald Trump will forever be linked in history. The two events took place within a few months of each other. Both were populist revolts that appealed to similar constituencies*" (Rachman, 2018). Populism as an anti-establishment movement refers to the idea that society is divided into two separate groups; 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite' (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). While it has been used across the political spectrum, populism

is increasingly used to describe right-wing political parties and leaders working against progressivism. Right-wing populists often combine the core ideology of populism with other ideologies such as nativism and authoritarianism to create unique and radically right expressions of populism (Molloy, 2018). At its core, Populism is essentially about a belief in the will of the people, and rejecting the elite (often termed the ‘liberal elite’ in right-wing politics). Both the vote for Trump and the vote for Brexit communicated a growing anti-elite, anti-establishment attitude, and populist vote (Langlois, 2021). Among the societal concerns fuelling these votes were ideas of mass immigration, growing unemployment, a growing living crisis, and a feeling among conservatives that citizens were increasingly being marginalised in their country. As quoted by right-wing populist and leader of France’s National Front Party, Marine Le Pen on the news of Brexit, “*Victory for Freedom! As I have been asking for years, we must now have the same referendum in France and EU countries*” (Le Pen, 2016, as cited in Chrisafis, 2016). Le Pen and her National Front Party are one of a growing number of right-wing European parties lobbying for their own anti-immigration and anti-European Union stances (Chrisafis, 2016). In 2022, Le Pen gained over 41% of the French election with a record 13.3 million votes (Voce & Clarke, 2022).

The growth of right-wing politics, populism, and fascism in Europe has become strong enough that extreme right-wing parties in the European Parliament have formed a new ‘Identity and Democracy (ID)’ bloc, cementing the notoriety of their increased political influence (BBC, 2019). In Germany, right-wing party Alternative for Germany (AfD) has become the biggest opposition party since their inception into the federal government in 2017. Equally, Spain has seen a sudden rise in populist and nationalist influence as the far-right Vox party doubled its seats at the 2019 election to 52. Before Vox, only a single seat had been won in Spain by an extreme right-wing candidate (BBC, 2019). In Italy, Giorgia Meloni has become not only the first female prime minister, but also the first right-wing

leader elected since Mussolini in World War Two (McDonnell & Ammassari, 2022). Meloni rose to popularity for her right-wing values and intention to “govern for everyone.” A historical move considering her party – Brothers of Italy – achieved only 4.4% of the vote in 2018 (Kirby, 2022; McDonnell & Ammassari, 2022). The historically fascist belief held by a growing number of Italians that immigrants are an existential threat to native populations and the growing motivation to suppress immigration has been cited as one of the reasons for Meloni’s success (Guglielmi, 2021). Sweden has also seen a rise in anti-immigration sentiment. The Swedish Democrat party leader Ulf Kristersson is quoted saying, “*Muslim immigration is our biggest threat to democracy since the second World War*” (as cited in Ahlander, 2020). Sweden’s Democrats Party began polling in contention for the country’s most popular party in 2016 and won a surprising 20% of the vote during their 2022 election, a first for this traditionally social democratic country (Ahlander, 2022; Polyakova, 2014).

The rise of the political right and extreme right-wing political ideology can also be found beyond America, the United Kingdom, and Europe. South American political leader Jair Bolsonaro rose to power in Brazil’s 2018 presidential election campaign with a populist agenda and contentious values on gender, race, ethnicity, and religion (Layton et al., 2021). His desire to “*liberate Brazil from socialism and political correctness*” rallied right-wing voters, a support which has continued well into Bolsonaro’s tenure, and further highlights the reach and resurgence of right-wing, conservative politics (Foggin, 2019). In India, right-wing leader Narendra Modi was elected in 2014 and then again in 2019. Modi’s most recent government appears to overtly threaten minorities in India, rallying for a Hindu majority and promoting the abandonment of secularism (Merelli, 2019).

Although it is difficult to pinpoint what is driving the apparent global shift to more extreme right-wing political ideologies like populism, it is thought contributing factors lie within existential societal threats such as rising crime rates, rising cost of living, economic

and social consequences of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and the recent War on Ukraine. Societal inequality, particularly in the West has continued to grow with the top 1% of American households holding, on average, 30% of the country's wealth (Beer, 2020; Tanzi & Dorning, 2021). In response to inequalities and other existential threats, increasingly, it appears people are adjusting to more inward and individualistic perspectives of society so as to protect individual interests and the interests of national identities. In times of threat people tend to cling to the security of their known identities, or their in-group (McNerney et al., 2022; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Theories of social psychology can be used to conceptualise how a societal existential threat can highlight inequalities, leading to more defined in-group and out-group barriers of society.

Coined by social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner, Social Identity Theory offers a continuum of how an individual perceives their belonging and association with others (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). With extremes of association positioned on each end of the continuum, the extent to which an individual lies nearer to one end is theorised to determine the degree they will alter their behaviours to align with others at a similar position; the 'in-group' (McNerney et al., 2022). By extension, this continuum of association is thought to be an important factor in the level of adversity one treats those who identify with the opposite end of their continuum; the 'out-group.' In politics, these heightened group alliances coupled with existential societal threats can be exploited by influential political leaders. Right-wing politics can offer clear and comfortable solutions for citizens that further clarify and protect in-group affiliation at the expense of out-group minorities. Modified from Jay et al. (2019), the below offers a flow chart of how inequality and societal threat can lead to increased affiliation with extreme right-wing political ideologies.

**Figure 2**

*How existential societal threats contribute to inequality and growing support for right-wing politics.*



With much of the world experiencing economic and social inequalities in the last five years in particular, Social Identity Theory offers an explanation for why people may be more likely to sway towards identities that can provide a sense of social security. Extreme right-wing political leaders can use these societal feelings of insecurity to their advantage by clearly conceptualising the problem (i.e., as society is in decline), distinguishing a clear community of blame (elite politicians, migrants, and minority communities), and offering a simple solution that feels comfortable (strengthened social security and national identity

through right-wing political policies and traditional value systems) (Davidson & Saull, 2016; Kinnvall, 2004; Jay et al., 2019).

Although right-wing ideological affiliation appears to be globally increasing in politics, most movements, players, and organisations operate openly as non-violent. Extreme right-wing politics contributes to the subversive shift in societal perspective, however it does not directly contribute to violent action which causes acts of RMVE and PMVE. There are however groups existing behind the mainstream of pluralism that actively prepare to respond with violence to a perceived attack on society. The perspective of these groups is a firm disagreement with the actions of government, and belief that key members of the public are better equipped to address societal concerns. More recently capturing the public's attention with their presence at the 2021 Capitol Attack, the modern militia movement is one such group and has been operating in the United States for the past three decades (Doxsee, 2021).

### **The Modern Militia Movement**

Formed in 1990 and inspired by previous militia groups such as the Christian Patriots Defence League and Posse Comitatus, the modern militia is predominantly an anti-government, anti-law enforcement movement built around preparation for an existential violent threat (Doxsee, 2021). While the nature of this threat varies between militia groups and over time, the unifying factor which ties members together is their support for second amendment rights<sup>4</sup> and opposition to government authority. Defining themselves as defenders of the social order and a last line of defence against perceived threats of immigrants and liberals, militia members typically live in insular family or community

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<sup>4</sup> A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed (U.S. Constitution, n.d.).

environments, consistently preparing for the perceived approaching conflict. With strong constitutional and nationalist identity ideology, violence from the group is not promoted nor overly common, with members instead fitting a more armed survivalist demeanour (ADL, 2020). For example, in a blog post by Three Percenters founder Mike Vanderboeh, the anti-violent stance of the militia movement is clear: *“We don’t fire first, nor second, nor perhaps even third. This does not mean we can’t defend ourselves. We must. What it does mean is that the rest of [us] don’t react until everyone understands that it is collective self-defence. We must not cede the moral high ground”* (as cited in Doxsee, 2021).

Events such as the Ruby Ridge stand-off in 1992, and the 1993 WACO stand-off incited the militia movement, with many members travelling to support and witness WACO in particular. The subsequent gun control laws; 1993 Brady Bill & 1994 Federal Assault Weapons Ban, which were enforced in light of these incidents increased militia membership (ADL, 2020). In 1995, the Oklahoma City bombing further raised the profile of the militia movement more broadly. Although lone actors involved in these attacks were not directly affiliated to a particular militia group, many were inspired by pro-militia rhetoric and their violence subsequently reflected the movement’s cause. While white supremacist ideology is not a compulsory belief system of militia, the 2008 presidential campaign of Barack Obama and his subsequent election sparked a supremacist resurgence. Driven initially by the militia’s white supremacist members, the resurgence was also driven by concerns regarding the Democrat’s position on gun control and immigration. Further, increased involvement in Tea Party events and rallies across the country legitimised the perceived importance of the militia’s cause (ADL, 2020; Doxsee, 2021).

Donald Trump’s 2016 election win further excited and encouraged the militia. Many members saw the Trump campaign, policy changes, and rhetoric as indicating a mainstream validation of their ideology. Some groups even patrolled United States (U.S.) borders for

unauthorised immigrants and subsequently developed relationships with some law enforcement agencies, viewing them as allies. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic allowed militia to lean into conspiracy propaganda and find a niche audience with vaccine sceptics (Thomson-DeVeaux, 2020).

Conspiracism is a common thread in much of RWE, and prominent in the militia movement. Conspiracism is the idea that most major historic events have been orchestrated by secret conspiracies and plots that benefit only elite individuals and groups of society (Berlet & Vysotsky, 2006). For the militia, common conspiracies subscribed to include that the federal government is preparing to confiscate privately owned firearms for the purpose of seizing more power and stealing freedom from citizens. Another theory proposes the existence of a malevolent and diabolically clever cabal who will be used by the United Nations (UN) to erode Americans' individual liberties and national sovereignty through the creation of international laws that make the U.S. Constitution redundant. A further popular theory is the 'false flag' conspiracy which believes that violent incidents of mass killings and terrorist attacks are orchestrated by the government to justify the aforementioned encroachments on civil liberties (Jackson, 2017).

Apocalypticism is another common conspiracy followed by the militia and goes a long way to explaining their 'prepper' mentality. Apocalypticism (sometimes termed the 'New World Order' conspiracy theory) is the belief that there is an approaching and catastrophic event that will end the world as we know it (O'Leary, 1997; Primiano & Boyer, 1997). Manifesting in conspiracy theories of both natural and made-made disasters, apocalypticism tends to catastrophise change and often puts the elite 'cabal' as the mastermind (Barkun, 2013). The concept of apocalypticism has a longstanding religious affiliation traced back to interpretations of the Bible's book of Revelation that makes this form of disinformation common place in RWE. In general, apocalyptic beliefs of those who

subscribe to RWE predict a fast-approaching confrontation between good and evil. While the groups on each side of the confrontation vary, common classifiers within extreme right-wing groups include evil as being people of colour, Jews, race traitors, migrants and the left-wing (Farinelli, 2021).

The militia's lack of trust in the government, resistance to government authority, ideas of national identity, shared group identity, and purpose are not unique and have also led other groups to turn towards similar values of off-the-grid living. Secluded, self-governing communities that represent a general rejection of modernity are another way right-wing ideology and extremism can be expressed.

### **Intentional Communities and Cults**

Named for their intentional shift away from societal norms (Mariani, 2020), an intentional community (also known as a commune or egalitarian community and sometimes cults) is a modern descendant of utopian colonies and communes. Members of intentional communities generally destabilise the nuclear family unit, instead sharing domestic responsibilities and resources with *like-minded* people to live a life separate from materialism (Howard, 2021; Potok, 2013; Smith, 2002). Varying greatly in degree of intensity, interest in intentional community living has seen a unique peak since the COVID-19 pandemic with the reprioritisation of work-life balance and associated value systems having an impact (Bushey, 2021; Howard, 2021; Klocke, 2020). What started in the wake of World War II as a community promoting peaceful, cooperative living arrangements in the hope of eradicating war altogether, is now a global phenomenon existing across ideological spectrums (i.e., right-wing and left-wing; religion and politics) of groups living off-the-grid of mainstream society (Mariani, 2020).

Members of intentional communities exist across the world and generally hold a common political, religious, social, environmental or spiritual set of values. They consequently follow a secluded and alternative lifestyle based on those values. Reasons for joining an intentional community vary across time and culture, but contemporary membership is thought to be founded in response to the influences of industrialism, globalism, and capitalism on modern society. Potok (2013) argues membership to an intentional community occurs from four key motivations: A desire to live with like-minded people with like-minded views and values; A desire to escape feelings of ostracism and/or hostility; A (typically religious) awaiting of a future, often apocalyptic, event; And/or a (more secular) desire to survive a catastrophic future event.

While many different types of intentional communities exist, from liberal and environmentally conscious eco-villages, to historical long-standing communes, a distinct subsection of intentional community culture is thought to present a strong extreme right-wing influence. Although largely secretive in nature and difficult to offer a generalised definition (Barker, 2014), some of the most prominent defining factors of intentional community culture can be interpreted as inherently right-wing. Many communities are conservative in nature, supporting traditional gender roles, family values, male supremacy, and rejecting technological advancement, globalisation, and capitalism. Encompassing militias within the militia movement, examples of extreme right-wing intentional communities include Waco and Intentional Aryan Communities (Futrell & Simi, 2004). Religious intentional communities (sometimes referred to as new religious movements) often follow an influential leader or group of leaders who are authoritative and dictate much of how members conduct their lives from dress and lifestyle, to income earning and relationships (Barker, 2014; Burmeister, 2020; Hurring; 2021). While most members of right-wing religious intentional communities appear to be born into the lifestyle, those who have chosen to leave discuss

traumatic and oppressive experiences justified by an inherently right-wing political, religious, or conspiratorial perspective (Brett Kelly, 2021; Comer, 2022).

Gloriavale Christian Community is an example of an intentional community with extreme right-wing views about gender and religion. Located on the West Coast of the South Island of Aotearoa NZ, the Gloriavale community has lived secluded from the rest of the world since 1969 (Tarawa, 2017). Described as a “withdrawn separatist community” and compared to Amish and the Hutterites movements, Gloriavale families often consist of more than 10 children, with women taking on traditional household duties and men holding more leadership and manual labour roles (Hurring, 2021; Sargisson & Sargent, 2017). Religiously fundamentalist, traditional, and exclusive, the foundational purpose of Gloriavale’s separatist lifestyle is the belief that modern society increasingly excuses things the Bible considers to be sinful (Gloriavale Christian Community, 2022).

Equally exclusive and often rooted in extreme perspectives that go against the grain of societal norms, the sovereign citizen movement are another prominent expression of right-wing ideology and extremism that also use ideas of self-governance to perpetuate their ideology.

### **Sovereign Citizen Movement**

The sovereign citizen movement (also known in the UK and Canada as freemen-of-the-land or FOTL) is another extreme right-wing force who have recently converged with militia and other patriot movements in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and connected conspiracy theories including; one world government, vaccine scepticism and danger, the origin of Coronavirus, government mind control, and geoengineering (Farinelli, 2021; Reeve, 2021). Representing an innate challenge to law enforcement and the criminal justice system, they are most known for committing acts of ‘paper terrorism’ which involves filing pseudo-

legal claims often aimed at government officials (Sarteschi, 2020). Sovereign citizens have a somewhat overlapping ideology with the modern militia movement and are characterised by distrust of governmental authority, paranoid about individual security, and strongly subscribe to conspiratorial thinking (Douglas et al., 2017; Hodge, 2019).

In Aotearoa NZ, the sovereign citizen movement is based largely on the same ideology as global iterations, but adapted to encompass Aotearoa NZ's unique culture and at times ideas of tino rangatiratanga – which prioritises sovereignty, self-determination and governance, and autonomy for Māori. The national Māori (Tino Rangatiratanga) flag is often flown by those involved in the sovereign citizen movement as a symbol of Māori sovereignty (Reeve, 2021). Central to the Aotearoa NZ sovereign citizen movement is the belief that the Government is inherently illegitimate and is actually a corporation – therefore its laws and regulations are redundant. The common law movement is a key action of this group and depicts the rejection of modern laws. Sovereign citizens instead invoke historical laws and principles including the King James Bible and the 1215 Magna Carta (Mitchell, 2022).

Although anti-authority, and often conspiratorial views have existed in Aotearoa NZ for some time, most notably in history through the anti-1080, anti-5G and anti-UN movements (Spoonley, 2022), the amalgamation of these ideas with politics and other coordinated groups and/or movements is relatively new. Beginning to form and surface around the 2020 Aotearoa NZ general election, previous conspiratorial thoughts which existed in silos such as; China's influence, the overreach of government, the influence of large international organisations like the UN and/or World Health Organisation (WHO) on Aotearoa NZ society, and the role of the global elites/a cabal in world domination have increasingly garnered more mainstream support (Donnell, 2020; Porter, 2022; Spoonley, 2022). The pressurised environment of the COVID-19 pandemic combined with the human desire for control, pattern finding, and predisposition for bias (table 2) provided fertile

grounds for these different conspiracies to be combined together to create an equation for greater support for more general extreme right-wing ideologies (Donnell, 2020; De Coninck et al., 2021).

**Table 2**

*Cognitive biases that can lead to susceptibility for conspiracy theory belief (Brotherton & French, 2015; Farinelli, 2021)*

<b>Need for control</b>	When one struggles to find a personal sense of control in life, they tend to look for a form of compensatory control. This can lead to conspiratorial thinking such as believing powerful enemies are in control of some aspects of our lives.
<b>Pattern finding</b>	Human desire to draw connections and find patterns to help make sense of the world. Often occurs unintentionally and can lead to connecting dots that don't belong together.
<b>Intentionality bias</b>	The tendency to assume that things always happen "because someone intended it to." For example, 9/11 happened because the government planned it.
<b>Proportionality bias</b>	The tendency to assume that the magnitude of an event matches the magnitude of whatever caused it. For example, the Coronavirus pandemic was so big and disruptive, it must have been something bigger than a virus transmission from animal to human host that caused it (Douglas et al., 2019).
<b>Confirmation bias</b>	The tendency to look for evidence that confirms what an individual already believes and ignoring evidence or proof of the contrary.

One potential force in the continuation of right-wing ideologies and dis&misinformation which occurred during the COVID-19 lockdown period in Aotearoa NZ

was QAnon<sup>5</sup>. Whilst the thread of QAnon within online conspiracism existed long before the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic (beginning in 2016 with the #pizzagate saga), QAnon found new legs in Aotearoa NZ society in dis&misinformation which infiltrated social media in the quake of the pandemic. Individuals susceptible or consumed by vaccine and government enforced mandate conspiracies were often drawn into QAnon (Comerford et al., 2021; Gunia, 2020; Molyneux, 2020). This example is a key illustration of the reach of American influence in Aotearoa NZ anti-vaxx, sovereign citizen etc. communities. However, with vaccine mandates ending, these groups are increasingly turning their attention to more general anti-government rhetoric, in some instances inspired specifically by the previously discussed American militia movements (Comerford et al., 2021; Stoakes, 2021).

Channelling this conspiratorial, anti-government position, sovereign citizens appear to be increasingly aligning with broader groups who reject the perceived liberal mainstream and consistently question the broadly accepted ‘truth’ of society. Right-wing counterculture groups are another community who promote often extreme and conspiratorial challenges to mainstream rhetoric.

### **Counterculture Groups**

Beginning in the 1960’s, hallmarked by unconventionality, and central to the hippie movement, counterculture groups and their alternative, anti-mainstream approach to life have influenced society from music and fashion to the anti-war movement (Hayes, 2022; Suri,

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<sup>5</sup> QAnon is an extreme right-wing, loosely organized community of believers who embrace the idea that a cabal of Satan-worshipping paedophiles - mainly consisting of what they see as elitist Democrats, politicians, journalists etc. - control the so-called ‘deep state’ government. The QAnon conspiracy theory alleges that there is a battle between good and evil culminating two major events: the Storm and the Great Awakening. The Storm is the mass arrest of people in high-power positions who will face a ‘long-awaited reckoning’. The Great Awakening involves a single event in which everyone will attain the epiphany that QAnon theory was accurate the whole time. This realization will allow society to enter an age of utopia (Forrest, 2020).

2009). Although loosely connected by a resistance to the mainstream, counterculture groups do not follow a centralised organisation and subsequently exist as much in extreme right-wing subcultures as in left-wing progressivism (Lyons, 2022). As Greg Jones writes, “*The hippies of yesteryear and today’s conservatives and libertarians have more in common than most care to imagine. Distrust of government’s motives, a lust for individual freedom, and a foundational belief in freedom of expression all bind the rebellion of the past and the rebellion of the present*” (Jones, 2018).

The traditional, liberal, and left counterculture in recent years has placed increasingly high value on issues such as being awake to injustices, and the lack of inclusivity experienced by people who are non-cisgender and/or not heterosexual (Lyons, 2022). The emphasis on social and political correctness for all has in turn sparked a new counterculture which is a conservative movement of traditionality and free speech. RWE can be expressed as a trans-national counterculture, with affiliates using extreme right-wing ideology to justify a resistance to mainstream worldview (Khalil, 2022).

One extreme ideology perpetuating much of the right-wing counterculture movement is white supremacy, white racism, and white nationalism. While inherently difficult to define due to the personalised nature of cultures, white supremacy broadly refers to the idea that those of white race are superior to people of colour. Coined ‘white racism counterculture’ (Gardell, 2003), the ideological underpinnings of the white supremacy movement combine “*the historical lore of the Ku Klux Klan, national socialism, the culture of White Power and Racist Skinheads, with the ideal of the heroic warrior, conspiracism, anti-Semitism, right-wing populism, and White Separatism*” (Berlet & Vysotsky, 2006, p. 11). Often interpreted as deviant due to their perpetuation of violence and anti-social activity, white racism counterculture exists alongside other expressions of RWE in that members are driven by an indoctrinated set of beliefs contrary to the mainstream (Berlet & Vysotsky, 2006).

One such way white racism counterculture engages in anti-social activity is through their use of memes to counter liberal mainstream rhetoric. Based on the RWE adopted image of Pepe the Frog, Kek (illustrated below) is an example of a meme that has been developed as an amalgamation of Pepe and Donald Trump and is hailed as white racism counterculture's so-called "deity." Kek is ironically worshiped online as the god of chaos and darkness and used as an apt metaphor for the murky space between satire, irony, mockery, and serious ideology (Pettis, 2018). In the lead up to the 2016 presidential election, Kek represented anti-establishment forces fighting for truth alongside Donald Trump. A parody of "The Lord's Prayer" was also created to hail Kek (Pettis, 2018);

***"A Prayer to Kek"***

*Our Kek who art in memetics*

*Hallowed by thy memes*

*Thy Trumpdom come*

*Thy will be done*

*In real life as it is on /pol/*

*Give us this day our daily dubs*

*And forgive us of our baiting*

*As we forgive those who bait against us*

*And lead us not into cuckoldry*

*But deliver us from skills*

*For thing is the memetic kingdom, and the shitposting, and the winning, for ever and ever.*

*Praise KEK*

**Figure 3***Kek*

Although intrinsically linked and ideologically coordinating through online spheres as highlighted above, the action upon extreme right-wing thought is increasingly less dominated by groups and more likely fulfilled in silos. While the concern for well-established online and offline groups and/or movements espousing RWE rhetoric is an ongoing priority for law enforcement, there has also been an increasing and noticeable trend in lone-wolf violent attacks (Michael, 2012).

**The Individual Level**

Coined 'do it yourself terrorism,' this new trend is known more functionally as the leaderless resistance, self-initiated terrorists, and/or lone wolves. This leaderless and often violent resistance has been seen in activism such as the animal liberation movement, anti-abortion, radical environmentalism, anarchism, colonial resistance, and by hate groups and terrorists (Ferrell, 2021; Michael, 2012; Posluszna, 2019). Stemming from white supremacist Louis Beam's 1992 essay 'Leaderless Resistance,' this concept/tactic has also become important to the action of American RWE. Holding sporadic participation in key American far-right groups, Beam was a Klu Klux Klan (KKK), Texan militia and Aryan Nation member who advocated for white nationalists to continue the struggle against the American

government (Smith, 2021). The contemporary leaderless resistance promotes self-directed action for individuals or small groups towards acts of racially or politically motivated violence. Operating without leadership or hierarchy, the leaderless resistance model facilitates a horizontal structure that allows individuals or small groups to act independently. However, research indicates that while these individuals may act alone or in small groups, a relatively low number of terrorists have zero direction from a leader or connection to some form of organisation either directly offline, through online social media and messaging platforms, or through connected historical ideologies (Bakker & De Graaf, 2010). As Belew writes, *“It’s critical to understand that we should not understand acts of mass violence carried out by the white power movement as ‘lone wolf’ attacks. The white power movement is continuous, today’s paramilitary groups and lone-wolf gunmen trace their ideological and organization heritage across decades”* (Belew, 2021 as cited in Smith, 2021). Regardless, for terrorist organisations, leaderless resistance as a movement is thought to be effective in contexts such as law enforcement where the demand of investigating many individual threats subsequently decreases the likelihood of plots being foiled – *“A thousand small phantom cells.. Is an intelligence nightmare for a government”* (Beam, 1992). Groups from across most geographical and ideological frameworks have now adopted the idea that individuals should function autonomously in acts of violent extremism to achieve the most significant impact (Sweeney, 2017).

The internet has been a key driver in the perpetuation of individual extremism in recent years. From mainstream platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, to recently more fringe and encrypted platforms including Telegram, 4chan, 8chan, and Gab, social media has allowed unprecedented access and connection for violent extremists living in silos. While the work of global governments to de-platform violent extremists on mainstream sites has helped reduce the overall reach of RWE propaganda, the migration of users to these

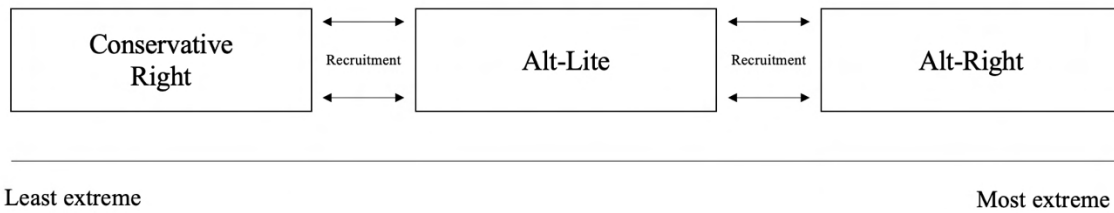
fringe sites has created the production of, exposure, and easy access to increasingly more extreme views and actions (Berger, 2019).

With right-wing thought and action increasingly becoming a powerful counterculture against the liberal mainstream (Lyons, 2022), it is important to understand the breadth and depth of the influence of the right as a continuum of extremity. Conceptualised as the ‘right-wing landscape’, the following introduces the differing levels of extremity within RWE and their associated communities. With as much diversity within RWE as there is outside the landscape, an in-depth analysis of extreme right-wing positioning is important in developing the context for this research.

### **The Right-Wing Landscape**

As shown above, expressions of right-wing ideology and extremism can be seen across a variety of contemporary groups, movements, and value systems, encompassing cultural, social, religious and political philosophies. It is important to note that individual right-wing expressions frequently overlap and are intertwined. For example, Christian Nationalists espouse both a religious and political right-wing ideology, militia groups such as the Three Percentages can be classified also as a counterculture movement, and militia groups such as Waco are also an intentional community. Similarly, levels of extremist support varies both within and between right-wing expressions. To make sense of these groups and any intersections, it is useful to show the right-wing landscape mapped along a continuum of severity or extremism consisting of three distinct levels. There are a number of competing definitions, but for consistency purposes the often used; Conservative Right, Alt-Lite, Alt-Right has been chosen.

**Figure 4**  
*The Right-Wing Landscape*



### **Conservative Right**

The Conservative Right is a political movement that encompasses the right-wing political history mentioned above, combined with social and cultural values of traditionalism, and a rejection of progressivism. Conservative Right individuals may exist within many of the aforementioned extreme right-wing expressions, aligning on political, social, religious and cultural values, but these people do not go to the same lengths in advocacy of their views as others within the right-wing landscape. A Conservative Right individual may believe in conservatist value systems, but they do not overtly subscribe to issues of race (Miller, 2018). In this research, the conservative right women identified can be seen as the most extreme example of conservatism but the least extreme example of RWE more generally. They may criticise the mainstream political system, but do not reject its existence. The influential evangelical Christian leader Billy Graham's wife, Ruth Bell is an example of a Conservative Right woman. Firmly supporting Billy in his ambitions as a Christian minister, Ruth Bell loyally bolstered her husband emotionally and practically throughout her life - tending to the home and children, and writing or proof reading his sermons. Ruth's personal endeavours never compromised her commitment to her husband or children, she was a textbook conservative wife who keenly followed Billy's lead (Poletti, 2022).

## **Alt-Lite**

Alt-Lite (also referred to as ‘Dissident Right’ and ‘Alternative Right’) is used to describe the intersection between Conservative Right and the Alt-Right. It is a relatively new and loosely connected movement with little scholarly security on its definition. The Alt-Lite are dissident in that they are ‘dissidents’ against perceived leftist influences in modern Western society, and/or dissidents against those in the Conservative Right who did not support them or have failed to meet their standards (ADL, 2017). For the purpose of this research, individuals and groups within the Alt-Lite are defined as promoting a hard-line version of nationalism, with a functional focus on traditionalist national identity – rather than race explicit identity.

Experiencing significant growth since its inception (thought to have been coined in 2016 – Hawley, 2017), the Alt-Lite has been successful in recruiting and radicalising disaffected people, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. The Alt-Lite offers a community for individuals who broadly align with aspects of the Alt-Right’s identity ideology, but who are not – or do not perceive themselves – as racist and/or anti-Semitic (Hawley, 2017). In this way, people of colour have a significant influence within the movement as their extreme nationalist identity is held in high esteem. Those within the Alt-Lite may believe in biological racial differences, but this belief does not extend to the endorsement of racial separatism. Overall, it is the belief of the superiority of Western (Eurocentric) culture and values that aligns the Alt-Lite. For example, influential and Black Alt-Lite figure Candace Owens openly rejected the Black Lives Matter movement of 2021 for a promotion of Western culture and identity and in challenge to democratic political correctness (Olsen, 2021). Michelle Malkin is another conservative American political commentator affiliated with the Alt-Lite who has a strong association with key white

nationalist figures, but is Filipino in heritage (Ma, 2021). Both Candace Owens and Michelle Malkin are also conservative Christians.

The Alt-Lite exists largely online with a prolific presence across fringe social media platforms, blogs, and podcasts which are used to promote ideology and recruit a wider following. Alt-Lite groups openly broadcast their dissatisfaction and scepticism of mainstream media and subsequent ideas of globalisation. To offer a strong distinction between Alt-Lite and Alt-Right, Alt-Right member Greg Johnson who frequently writes for the group describes the difference as; *“The Alt-Lite is defined as civic nationalism as opposed to racial nationalism”* (ADL, 2017).

Many within the Alt-Right community also refer to the dissident right as ‘Alt-Lite.’ This is in reference to the extreme viewpoints of these individuals, but in recognition that these views are not quite as extreme or overt as those who subscribe to Alt-Right. Some openly criticise the more moderate Alt-Lite community, believing it weakens the power of the Alt-Right movement as a whole. At a free speech rally in Washington DC, influential Alt-Right figure, Richard Spencer, said the following of the Alt-Lite group; *“they’re liars, they’re con artists, they’re freaks. The Alt-Right will be better when we just cut away these people who are going to weigh us down”* (Al Jazeera, 2017).

### **Alt-Right**

*“This is our home and our kith and kin. Borders matter, identity matters, blood matters, libertarians and their capitalism can move to Somalia if they want to live without rules, in the West we must have standards and enforce them. The ‘freedom’ for other races to move freely into white nations is non-existent. Stay in your own nations, we don’t want you here.”* – Matthew Heimbach (as cited in Young, 2018).

The Alt-Right is the most extreme and racist iteration of RWE and is comprised primarily of groups promoting white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and anti-Semitism (Berlet, 2004). Also referred to as ‘white nationalists,’ the ‘extreme right,’ or the ‘far-right,’ this group is distinct from the Conservative Right, sitting firmly within an identity ideology as an insurgent social movement. As Richard Spencer describes; “*the Alt-Right is identity politics for white people*” (Ebner, 2020). The white supremacist ideology that is rooted in the belief system of the Alt-Right is what facilitates much of the REMT and PMVE committed by these groups. Entrenched in pseudoscientific theories of the superiority of the white race, many Alt-Right believe that biology is the controlling factor in human development, not one’s environmental circumstances (Berlet, 2004).

Since the dawn of the Klu Klux Klan in 1865, REMT and PMVE has been consistent, accounting for most forms of domestic terrorism in the United States (O’Harrow Jr. et al., 2021). The Oklahoma City bombing, the shooting spree across Illinois and Indiana by Church of the Creator’s Benjamin Nathaniel Smith, and recent events such as the 2017 Charlottesville march are all examples of the violent manifestation of the Alt-Right’s identity ideology (Berlet, 2004; Rapoport, 2021).

Largely influenced by William Luther Pierce’s ‘The Turner Diaries’, a 1978 novel which depicts a violent revolution culminating in events such as race war, nuclear war, and the extermination of Jews, gays, and non-whites, America’s Alt-Right have been re-energised over the past decade (Jones, 2018). The election of Barack Obama as the first African American president sparked a dramatic increase in recruitment to Alt-Right extremism, with Alt-Right groups capitalising on the racial sentiment of many politically right leaning Americans – another example of political ideology merging with identity ideology. The subsequent election of Donald Trump in 2016 and his campaign themes of anti-immigration

and anti-establishment brought the Alt-Right into increasingly visible mainstream platforms (Campani et al., 2022).

In Europe, a similar trend of unprecedented Alt-Right mobilisation over the past decade exists. Groups including Soldiers of Odin, the Blood & Honour organisation, Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (Identitaria Movement Germany), and the Generace Identity (Generation of Identity) movement are continuing to strengthen their recruitment. In the UK, REMT has not presented a significant threat until more recently. Rising concerns from Alt-Right groups regarding increasing refugees and asylum-seekers are largely what increased the UK's alert level in 2018 to conclude "*the threat from extreme right-wing terrorism (in the UK) is growing*" (Jones, 2018). Since 2017, counter-terrorism forces in England specifically have foiled 32 plots, 12 of which were from the Alt-Right (Dodd, 2022).

Although highly decentralised, the contemporary Alt-Right appears to have a significant global following, with the internet providing an unparalleled opportunity to engage a broader audience. Groups such as the Proud Boys, Stormfront, and Oath Front all use the internet to supercharge the spread of propaganda, frequently posting content aimed to reduce trust in mainstream media, and isolate individuals on the path to radicalisation. Further, conspiracism within the movement has also been on the rise, particularly within the online propagation of ideas. The Great Replacement conspiracy theory is one of the most prominent within the Alt-Right and holds that the white race are being replaced by minority groups, people of colour, and immigrants (Crawford, 2022; Wilson & Flanagan, 2022). Since 2020, conspiracism ties within the Alt-Right have been further cemented with COVID-19 theories and scepticism circulating, developing a wedge issue which the Alt-Right has used to recruit followers. It is important to note that due to the decentralised nature of the Alt-Right, vast differences occur in defining principles, factors, and beliefs of the movement, with the

term ‘Alt-Right’ used in a wide range of contexts depending on who is using the term and what their interpretation of its meaning is (Hawley, 2017).

In Aotearoa NZ, the Alt-Right has a long and varied history with the March 15 attacks committed in Ōtautahi Christchurch a pivotal point in the contemporary nature of Alt-Right involvement and action (Battersby & Ball, 2019; Halpin & Wilson, 2022; Spoonley, 1981). In fact, Ōtautahi Christchurch has historically held the strongest Alt-Right presence with white supremacist ideology found in groups such as the Harris Gang, the Road Knights, the Brandekreig Skinheads, and the Skinhead Bastards. In the 1970’s, Alt-Right groups such as the National Socialists, White Power, National Front, New Force, Viking Youth, European Liberation Front, White Defence League and the allied White People’s Alliance found some prominence in Aotearoa NZ society, but – apart from the National Front – largely lost traction soon after (Spoonley, 1987). During the 1990’s, the famous Fourth Reich was formed in the now Christchurch Men’s Prison (Gilbert, 2013; Taonui, 2019), and was responsible for hate motivated murders including the REMVE murders of three men (Lynch, 2011). Further, Alt-Right groups such as Resistance, Auckland University European Club, the Western Guard, Dominion Movement, and the National Front increasingly became visible in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but their public presence – especially online – largely dissipated in the quake of the March 15 attacks due to increased Alt-Right monitoring and intervention by police and government.

However, like much of the Western world, Aotearoa NZ Alt-Right activity has experienced somewhat of a resurgence pattern in recent years since March 15, and in response to global political and societal events such as COVID-19, the removal of Donald Trump from office, and the War on Ukraine. This resurgence appears to have most notably occurred online with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) conducting a 2021 study of the Alt-Right activity occurring online in Aotearoa NZ. Analysing 300 New Zealand based

extremist accounts, and 600,000 social media posts, the following offers context for Aotearoa NZ's online Alt-Right landscape: On any given week throughout the assessment period, 192 extremist accounts were active in Aotearoa NZ equating to an average of 20,059 posts, 203,807 likes or up-votes from supporters, and a further 38,033 tweets (ISD, 2021). One of the most prominent and public Alt-Right groups present in Aotearoa NZ is Action Zealandia. Action Zealandia was formed following March 15 and promotes a globalised online white identity (Halpin & Wilson, 2022). Like much of the broader Alt-Right community in Aotearoa NZ, Action Zealandia is influenced by international current affairs rather than political and/or social issues specific to Aotearoa NZ. Rather than these groups holding an exclusive New Zealand European (Pākehā) nationalist identity as seen in some of the Aotearoa NZ Sovereign Citizen movement (Spoonley, 2022), the Alt-Right in Aotearoa NZ is globally motivated and appears to be largely driven by online rhetoric such as Alt-Right white racist counterculture (Halpin & Wilson, 2022).

Alongside contemporary coordination and growth of Alt-Right groups, the internet has also facilitated widespread access to global extreme right-wing rhetoric. Recruitment to RWE is a contested area of debate. While some scholars identify the role of extreme right-wing facilitators in intentionally and systematically identifying individuals who may be on a radicalisation pathway, others determine that there is no recruitment per se to RWE and instead the term "enlistment" (people join because they want to) is used (Borum, 2011). Regardless of whether individuals are recruited or enlisted, radicalisation to RWE and for some to violent extremism appears to occur both nationally and transnationally through a variety of techniques and pathways. The most prominent of which are detailed below.

### **Theories of Radicalisation**

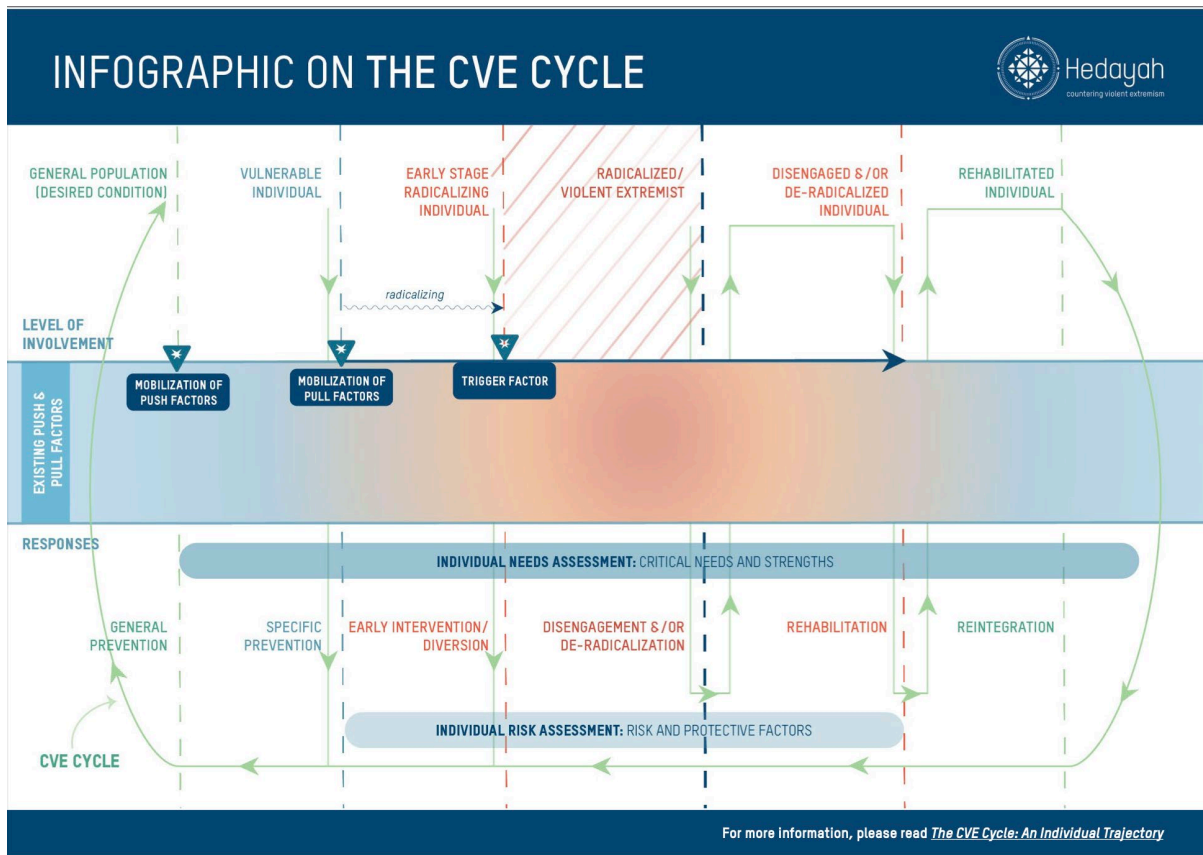
For the purpose of this research, radicalisation to violence is defined as a process of belief and attitude change that subsequently justifies the use of aggression to target a

perceived personal or group-based grievance (Paton et al., 2022; Walker, 2017). Historically, radicalisation has been a term synonymous with Islamist political violence and the War on Terror (Kundnani, 2012). However, theories of radicalisation are increasingly becoming more relevant within the realm of RWE, REMT, REMVE and PMVE as Alt-Right extremism is progressively gaining significant scholarly attention (Davis, 2023; Long, 2022; Trzybinski, 2022). Radicalisation leading to Violent Extremism (RLVE) is defined as a process of association in which an individual moves towards adopting violent extremism in the pursuit of a particular ideology and objectives (Mattheis, 2018). Taking place largely online (Bamsey & Montasari, 2023), the recruitment and radicalisation of individuals through the right-wing landscape can occur fluidly. Individual views, values, and beliefs which begin as a conservative rejection of ideas of globalisation and modernity can turn into overt racism and the inciting of violence. The contemporary process of radicalisation to RWE often occurs through social media, influenced by platform algorithms and their promotion of increasingly radical online content (Munger & Phillips, 2022). The perpetuation of dis&misinformation online has played a key role in increasing both the publication of radical online content, and the number of people who are following or actively engaged with platforms that promote more extreme right-wing ideologies. Through the popularising of conspiratorial thinking, individuals are pulled into a web of conspiracism that is exacerbated the more time they spend within the right-wing landscape (Wilson, 2021). There are several theories of radicalisation which offer explanations for how an individual is recruited and radicalised, and how they can be disengaged or de-radicalised and exited from RWE groups, movements, and ideologies. The following offers a broad overview of known theories of radicalisation; Push-Pull theories, stage theories, and perhaps the most common contemporary form of radicalisation within RWE, redpilling.

## **The Radicalisation Lifecycle, Push-Pull, and Stage Theories of Radicalisation**

The popular Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Cycle below outlines Radicalisation Leading to Violent Extremism (RLVE) as a process dependent on the combination of both individual circumstances and macro-level, societal, and/or environmental influences (Mattheis, 2018). Push-Pull theories of radicalisation are a way influences driving RLVE can be conceptualised. Broadly, push factors refer to structural forces that exist outside the individual and push them towards extremism. These include marginalisation and discrimination, limited socio-economic opportunities, exclusion from democratic processes, and prolonged and/or unresolved conflicts. Pull factors refer to psychological influences and factors linked to the individual that pull them along a radicalisation pathway. These include individual circumstances and/or background, belief systems, political ideologies, membership and belonging with social communities and/or networks (Cherney et al., 2021). While push and pull factors can individually lead to radicalisation, most commonly it is a combination of both (Demirovski & Ristov, 2022). Push and pull factors can also be used to describe the de-radicalisation process. Push factors of burn-out and a loss of faith in group leaders and/or ideology can push an individual away from extremism. Pull factors like family support and social connections existing outside of the extremist group can be used to lure the individual away from radicalisation (Islam, 2019)

**Figure 5**  
*The CVE Cycle (Hedayah, 2022)*

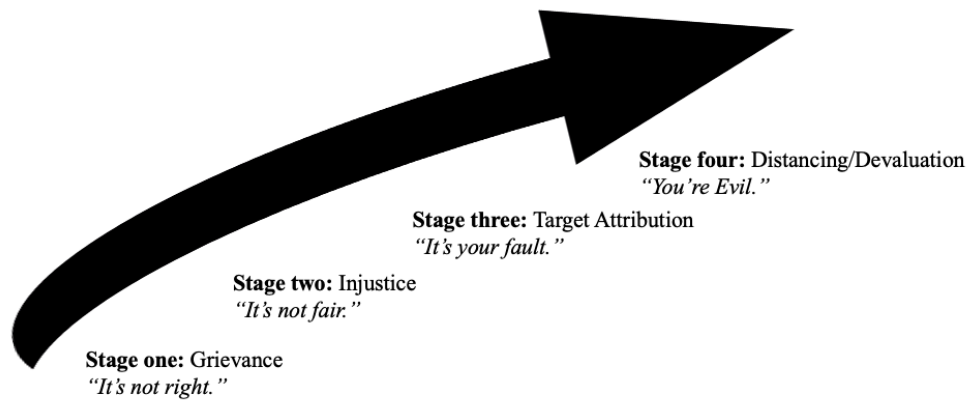


Driving influences of RLVE can also be conceptualised through stage theories.

Illustrated below, the stage theory of radicalisation is a conceptual model that offers insight as to how personal grievances and vulnerabilities can be converted into targeted hatred towards a specific group, idea, and/or movement, and how this hatred can subsequently lead to the adoption of a specific extremist ideology and develop as justification for violence. According to Borum (2003), the four-stage model begins with the individual reacting negatively to a particular condition, event or grievance (Stage one: "It's not right"). Believing this condition, event or grievance to be unjust (Stage two: "It's not fair"), the individual processes the injustice by placing blame (Stage three: "It's your fault"). By placing responsibility on a perceived "other" or "out-group," the individual is then able to vilify and dehumanise them (Stage four: "You're Evil"), and subsequently are radicalised to believing violence towards this perceived other is justified (Borum, 2011).

**Figure 6**

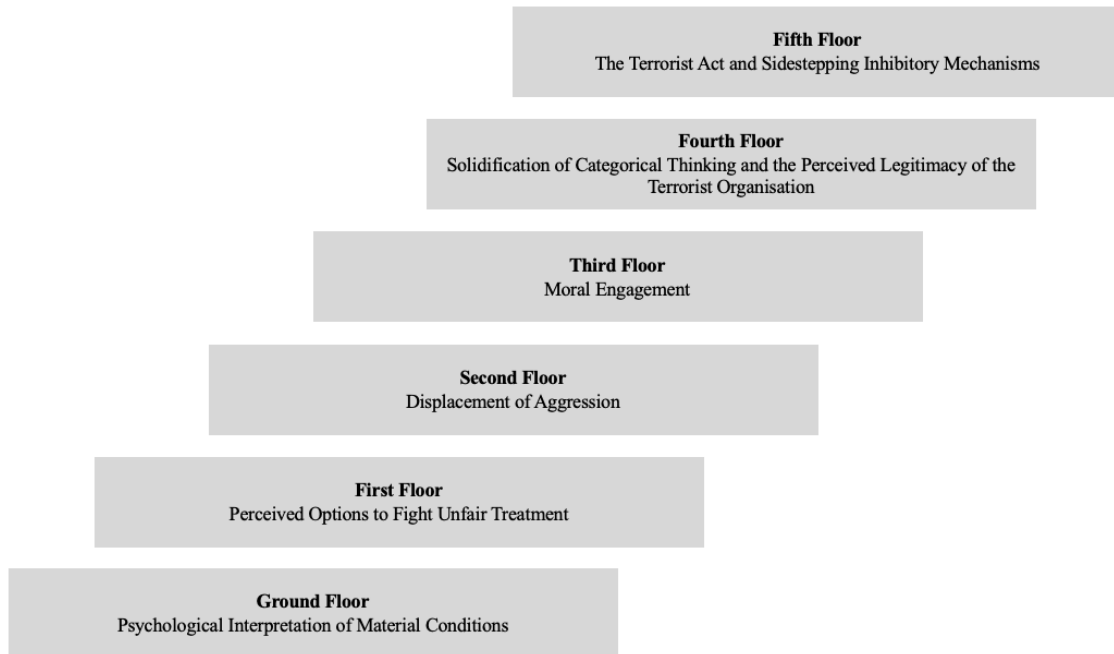
*Borum's Four-Stage Model of the Terrorist Mindset (Borum, 2003)*



This staged approach to radicalisation can be further expanded and conceptualised as a staircase. Moghaddam's Staircase to Terrorism identifies six 'floors' an individual climbs towards an act of terrorism. Similar to Borum's stage theory, it is the individual's micro level feelings of adversity, deprivation, discontent, and/or grievance which form the foundation (framed as the 'ground floor') for beginning the RLVE cycle. Moghaddam's staircase model depicts how the staircase narrows as it ascends, with only a few progressing through all six stages and actually engaging in an act of terrorism (Moghaddam, 2005).

## Figure 7

*Moghaddam's Staircase to Terrorism (Moghaddam, 2005)*

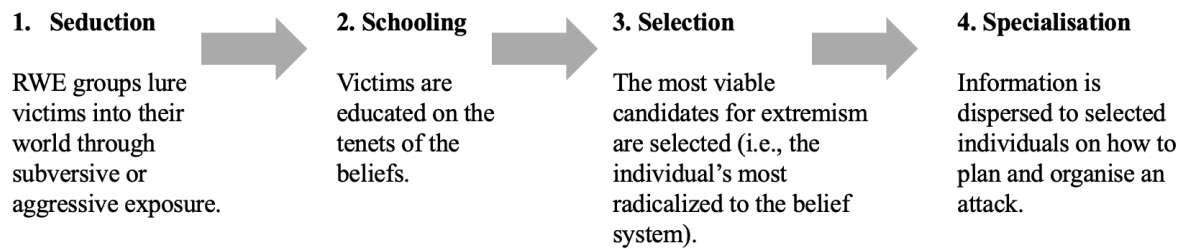


## Online Radicalisation

Many of the recent and most dangerous REMT and PMVE terrorist attacks have been the culmination of online radicalisation (Comerford, Guhl & Thomas; Davis, 2023). Through an analysis of the radicalisation pathways of recent attacks inspired by RWE, a shortened model of Horgan's Child Terrorist Socialisation Theory appears to be relevant (Liang & Cross, 2020). Encompassing four key phases that work together to break down the mental state of the individual being radicalised whilst simultaneously isolating them within the ideology in question, the below details how Horgan's theory can be applied to online radicalisation to RWE (Liang & Cross, 2020).

**Figure 8**

*Shortened version of Hogan's Child Terrorist Socialisation Theory for online radicalisation to RWE groups (Liang & Cross, 2020)*



Prevalent in understanding Islamic State radicalisation as well as RWE, this shortened Hogan model offers a simple explanation for the complex and dramatic shift in belief systems individuals experience on a radicalisation pathway. To facilitate the process from Seduction to Schooling, Selection, and at the extreme, Specialisation, the internet and social media are largely used to propagate belief systems (Liang & Cross, 2020). Aggressive and Subversive Exposure are two online techniques used by extremist movements to exploit pre-existing belief systems and radicalise individuals.

Aggressive exposure is based on the idea of controlling the narrative and ensuring alternative or contradicting voices are silenced. For extreme right-wing movements, aggressive exposure involves providing ‘safe’ spaces on fringe social media platforms like 4Chan, 8Chan, and Stormfront for members to discuss, promote, and engage with radical beliefs without encountering alternative viewpoints and perceived ‘leftist’ rhetoric. This process offers a quick path to indoctrination for individuals with extreme right-wing-leaning views, but for those yet to hold any extreme beliefs, is likely to push them further away from radical views, rather than pull them closer (Liang & Cross, 2020).

For this reason, subversive exposure is a more popular online radicalisation technique used by extreme right-wing groups (Bobin, 2020; Braddock et al., 2022; Liang & Cross, 2020). Subversive exposure is largely founded on the process of normalising extreme right-

wing belief systems and includes the use of disinformation and deceptive techniques to attract vulnerable individuals (Liang & Cross, 2020). Youth and online gamers are known to be particularly exposed to acts of subversive exposure through groups using memes, humorous cartoons and/or relatable pop culture content with Alt-Right undertones that aims to develop a sense of comradeship and culture (Dafaure, 2020). These memes are often created within closed Alt-Right groups and are then subsequently shared on more public social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram to engage a wider audience. Although actions such as the sharing of memes are not intended to fully radicalise an individual, their funny and sometimes evocative nature is intended to spark question in the mind of the receiver; *Is what they have been taught true? Is an alternative story with alternative facts available?* This slow radicalisation technique through the consumption of 'harmless' online content is common in efforts towards online radicalisation to RWE. The individual's world is slowly unwound and extreme right-wing views are subversively introduced (Braddock, et al., 2022; Liang & Cross, 2020).

What almost all theories of radicalisation have in common is the underlying assumption that the process is inherently non-linear. Having extreme beliefs does not automatically lead to violence and many who are on a pathway, staircase, or within a lifecycle will never commit a physical act of terrorism or violence (RCNZ, 2020). Radicalisation is a fluid process that individuals enter, exit, or re-enter at any time and any stage; some individuals radicalise quickly, some more slowly, and some never reach the end of the cycle. Similarly, even if an individual is fully radicalised, the influence, action, and expression of their views are not necessarily physically violent. One unique way in which radicalisation occurs across the right-wing landscape (from Conservative Right - Alt-Right) is Redpilling.

## Redpilling

*“You take the blue pill, the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill, you stay in wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes”* - Morpheus, *The Matrix* (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999)

Redpilling, slang for coming to believe something counterfactual to mainstream consensus (Marwick & Furl, 2021), is an extreme right-wing phenomenon in reference to a scene from the *Matrix* where the character of Morpheus offers Neo (the protagonist) the option of taking a red or blue pill. By taking the red pill, Morpheus shares the ‘truth’ about the *Matrix*. Redpilling is seen as a euphemism for radicalisation, with recruiters using the above *Matrix* metaphor as a persuasion technique (Ebner, 2020). Threaded with conspiratorial thinking, ‘redpillers’ believe the mainstream population (referred to as ‘normies’) are caught up in an illusionary world created by the ‘global establishment’, with supporters going to extreme lengths to expose the ‘truth’ about the society we live in. Many within these communities’ exhaust hours hunting for ‘red pills’ which are pieces of information that they believe reveal migrant crimes, or demographic statistics which provide credibility to their worldview – for example. Red pills are then used to unite communities and recruit others to the ‘truth’ (Ebner, 2020; Paff, 2022; Shullenberger, 2021).

A recent example of the red pill philosophy is the conspiratorial response to Government restrictions imposed to control the COVID-19 pandemic. The sheer speed of changing information about the virus ranged from an unusual crisis occurring in provincial China, to a global pandemic. The unprecedented nature of its impact brought about general situations in most countries where compliance with quickly enacted health orders and related legislation was key. Subsequently, many turned away from the official narrative, feeling pigeonholed into a certain worldview, and instead sought answers elsewhere. In the months that followed, COVID-19 conspiracy theories became increasingly popular and the line

between health information published by health officials and alternative media streams increasingly blurred (Farrier, 2020). In this unique environment, people who may never have come into contact with conspiratorial thinking were highly influenced and subsequently trust in organisations such as the World Health Organisation declined. In this instance, RWE groups actively practicing the technique of redpilling, appeared to put effort into influencing others to believe an event such as COVID-19 was false or orchestrated. Once individuals believe that such an event could be false, they are more vulnerable to believing alternative narratives about other historical or future events. This increasing level of scepticism is referred to as ‘awakening’ within the community and a ‘discovering of the truth’ considered to be a successful red pill (Farrier, 2020).

The Red Pill has also been adopted as the name of a popular Reddit forum for the “manosphere.” The manosphere is a collection of subcultures that sit both within and outside of the Alt-Right who are united by the belief that feminism controls modern culture, and a perception that masculinity is under attack (Shullenberger, 2021). It is not just men who subscribe to the idea that feminism has exceeded its welcome, many women in the Alt-Right are also in agreement, instead supporting the idea of biological gender roles of man as breadwinner and woman as homemaker. Red Pill Women is another popular Reddit channel created as a woman-only response to the manosphere. Discussing everything from anti-feminism to the idea of gender roles being a form of ‘sexual economics,’ Red Pill Women is a 63,000 strong network of women looking for connection (r/RedPillWomen, 2022). Following principles such as SMV (Sexual Market Value) where a quantitative score is used to express one's attractiveness to men, and the STFU (Shut the Fuck Up) method which follows the premise that men prefer women who do not talk too much, the Red Pill Women subreddit is founded in RWE ideology about how women can better serve men (Ebner, 2020). Red Pill Women, like their Red Pill Men counterpart believe the heterosexual community

should be viewed as a marketplace, where women are the sellers and men are the buyers of sex (Ebner, 2020). Claiming to be a community ‘open to all women wanting to improve themselves and their relationships’, rule five of the community’s guidelines states it as a no feminism zone; *“This is an anti-feminist community, and as such, we are not interested in being ‘saved’ by feminism. Anybody stopping in to weigh-in with the feminist perspective will be shown the door, as it is off topic”* (r/RedPillWomen, 2022). With multiple posts being shared within the community every day, the very popularity of Red Pill Women is strong evidence for women’s active contribution to the deeply rooted ideologies and value systems of the Alt-Right.

### **Women in the Alt-Right**

*“It was women that got Trump elected and, I guess to be really edgy, it was women that got Hitler elected!”* – Lana Lokteff (as cited in Darby, 2017).

While violent attacks and indeed much of the ideological rhetoric of the Alt-Right is overwhelmingly perpetuated by and in support of men - often to the detriment of women, increasingly, women are cementing themselves as truly influential members of the Alt-Right’s cause (Darby, 2017). A traditionally hyper-masculine movement that supports dominance over women and their sexuality, women’s roles in the Alt-Right and the entire right-wing landscape have increasingly become an interesting point of research and scholarly attention (Blee, 2020; Kisyova et al., 2022; Llanera, 2023; Zahay, 2022).

Although scholars have discussed women’s participation in Alt-Right initiatives and far-right ideology since the 1990’s, this largely revolved around reproduction control and preservation of the genetic heritage of the “white race” (Blee, 2003; Kisyova et al., 2022; McRae, 2018). It was perceived at the time that women existed within the movement purely to facilitate proper breeding. Any woman who did engage in an act of racially or politically

motivated violence was typically perceived as unnatural, and their motivations forced by male counterparts (Blee, 2003). However, the history of women's involvement in the Alt-Right is far from restricted to the creation of white children. From as early as 1920, women have held significant roles in some of the world's longest standing Alt-Right movements. An analysis of women in Aryan Nations and the KKK identified three key roles they occupy; familial (as wives and mothers), social (facilitating social activities within the movement), and operative (using their influence to maintain group cohesion) (Blee, 2003).

It is only since the recent increase in media and scholarly attention to the Alt-Right's cause, alongside recent devastating REMT and PMVE events, that an additional and more extensive focus on the ways women appear to be engaging with RWE rhetoric and initiatives has been reignited (Eksi, 2021; Llanera, 2023; Kisyova et al., 2022; Zahay, 2022). The past two decades in particular have seen a dramatic increase in evidence of influential women supporters of Alt-Right movements. Female centred sub-groups can now be found within many of the world's most prominent Alt-Right communities and groups. For example, in the Alt-Right organisation World Church of the Creator (WCOTC), a Sisterhood of the WCOTC has formed. Similarly, Women's Frontier and Army of God are two further women-only groups within the Alt-Right (Bowman & Stewart, 2017; SPLC, 1999).

Like in the overarching Alt-Right movement, the internet has also offered a niche for emerging female-led white supremacist sites and social media channels to reach new audiences and grow in popularity. Social media especially has sparked an age of guerrilla marketing that has allowed Alt-Right women to develop a personal brand from which to promote the ideology of extremist movements. Female Alt-Right social media influencers have helped the movement generate extensive viewership and media attention, supporting a concerted effort to make the Alt-Right cause more palatable and relatable to a wider audience (Llanera, 2023; Kisyova et al., 2022; Zahay, 2022). Most notably achieved through a

promotion of more traditionalist values of RWE (i.e., traditional gender roles and the subsequent benefits of these to the nuclear family unit and relationships), the extension of the white race, and an emphasis on conspiratorial thinking of existential threats to Western Civilisation, women increasingly play an important role in recruitment and radicalisation of individuals to the Alt-Right, especially on social media (Llanera, 2023; Kisyova et al., 2022).

Beyond distinctly online involvement, Campion (2020) identifies six broad categories of action women in the Alt-Right appear to be inhabiting; 1) *violent actors*, which includes women acting across a spectrum of hate crime, Alt-Right violence, to Alt-Right terrorism; 2) *thinkers*, who are women embedded in the creation and propagation of Alt-Right ideology, belief, and value systems; 3) *facilitators*, which includes women who take up organisational and/or logistics roles within Alt-Right groups and movements; 4) *promoters*, who are women that act in contrast to the *thinkers* and rather than creating the ideology, actively engage in ideological magnification (often online); 5) *activists*, the most dominant form of female participation and conceptualises women's choice to actively work towards achieving the desired political and/or social change of the Alt-Right; and 6) *exemplars*, a category which highlights how Alt-Right movements are increasingly using women as symbols for their cultural cause (i.e., the extension of the white race through the birth of white children). Membership as exemplars epitomises the desired, gendered and idealised identity of women in the Alt-Right (Campion, 2020).

From Campion's research (2020), it appears a range of factors drive women's involvement in the contemporary Alt-Right. Increasingly it is argued that continuing to view extreme right-wing women as passive actors without agency or choice is limiting our ability to truly understand their power of influence within the movement (Blee, 2021; Campion, 2020). However it is not only Alt-Right women who take up the extreme right-wing mantle, a growing position of influence that right-wing women appear to be adopting is the 'Tradwife.'

## Tradwives

*“..We are very domesticated. We are here by choice. We are not here through oppression or control.”* (Pettitt, 2020a).

While traditional gender roles for women have been prevalent within RWE and the Alt-Right for centuries, the Tradwife phenomena is a new and uniquely social media-based movement of right-wing women that capitalises on contemporary social media marketing strategies to promote a uniquely feminine persona that is equal parts ideology and aesthetic. Tradwives are an influential community of women that espouse the traditional feminine lifestyle of being a wife and mother (Couric, 2022). In a century where feminism advocates for women’s ability to have successful careers outside the home, Tradwives proudly take on a career as exclusive carer of the house and children. Advocating for a woman’s place in society as *“not under a man’s feet, but under his wing”* (Pettitt, 2020b), Tradwives - a portmanteau of the words ‘traditional’ and ‘wife’ - argue that womanly domesticity is the epitome of femininity. It is difficult to determine when the Tradwife culture obtained significant attention, however it appears to have increased in popularity and attracted mainstream media attention over the last few years (Couric, 2022; Iovine, 2022; Kato, 2023; Kelsey-Sugg & Marin, 2021; Kilgallon, 2023; Lang, 2022; Mandel, 2023; Pigg, 2023; Rottenberg & Orgad, 2020). The consistent rise of social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, alongside the growth of influencer culture as a career have also contributed to their online success (Couric, 2022). Motivated by various extremities and expressions of RWE, and promoting themselves almost exclusively on social media, it is speculated whether the fascination with and attraction to a Tradwife way of life can be attributed to the present global climate. Climate change, living crises, and a global pandemic, all have had a significant societal impact on the way we view and value the nuclear family unit (Mandel, 2023; Pigg, 2023). Globally, individuals are making a change from fast paced lifestyles to

one lived with balance as a priority. Tradwives offer the traditional homemaking role of women as a viable career trajectory, and position it ideologically as one that women are designed for. With both online and offline iterations, the Tradwife community market the *#Tradlife* (Traditional Life) as inherently and biologically desirable. However, it is not without criticism (Froio, 2022; Haidari, 2022; Kaur, 2022).

As with any trend, culture, or phenomena, the adoption of its value systems are fluid and differ between participants. Tradwives are no different. Alongside women taking up a *#Tradlife* as a response to an increasing shift away from hustle culture and towards work: life balance, are reports of women taking up the Tradwife ideology as a vehicle to promote extreme right-wing ideology (Kurtzleben, 2020; Proctor, 2022). Kirsty Champion cites that when affiliated with the Alt-Right, one of the key concerns with the Tradwife movement is the way it provides a “*soft face for saying quite extreme things, quite dangerous things; things that are quite divisive and that demonise parts of our own society*” (Champion, as cited in Kelsey-Sugg & Marin, 2021). Some popular Tradwife influencers like Lana Lokteff for example, are overt in their connection to Alt-Right ideology, appearing to use their platforms to disseminate white supremacist value systems (Couric, 2022). Equally, another prominent Tradwife, Ayla Stewart (known online as ‘Wife with a Purpose’) has been known to spread white supremacist ideology and dis&misinformation surrounding the conspiratorial theory of the Great Replacement (Tebaldi, 2021). Ayla was also reported in 2017 to promote a ‘white baby challenge’ on her social media platforms, encouraging white women to conceive as many white babies as they could (Gawronski, 2019; Kelly, 2018; Stern, 2019).

Understandably, one of the greatest challenges pitched by recent reporters of Tradwives is the ability to differentiate women within the movement who are Alt-Right extremists from women promoting a stay-at-home wife and mothering lifestyle. Regardless of differentiation,

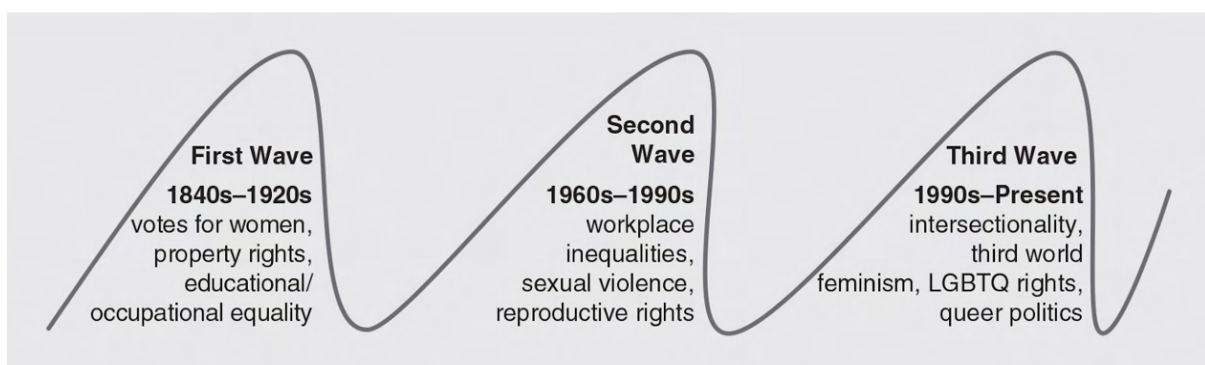
there are two key identifying pillars of the Tradwife community (1) Rejection of feminism and (2) Social Media and Influencer Marketing.

### Rejection of Feminism

A fundamental belief that strings women in the Tradwife community together, regardless of their ideological affiliation, is the rejection of mainstream feminism. Women who identify as a Tradwife often discuss the perils of first, second and third wave feminism (detailed below), believing that we are now in a fourth wave of feminism that is set to further oppress the traditional value of being a woman. This fourth wave is seen by Tradwives as following a *'man-hating ideology striving for female superiority rather than equality'* (Lokteff, 2019). Whilst in academia, categorisation of feminism into waves has been viewed as somewhat limiting (Peiró, 2021), the present research has chosen to use this framework for highlighting the key pillars of the feminist movement. This choice was taken to maintain authenticity with the Tradwife community's understanding and rationalisation of feminism with the main focus shone on fourth wave feminism.

### Figure 9

*First, Second, and Third Wave Feminism (Vijayakumar & Maich, 2018).*



### *Fourth Wave Feminism*

The Fourth Wave of feminism has been identified as the online progression of Third Wave initiatives (Munro, 2013; Zimmerman, 2017). Hallmarked by the concept of Online Feminism, this new-age contemporary outlook conceptualised the speed and connection of

the online universe and social media into a new form of activism (Martin & Valenti, 2012). Unlike previous waves, this wave outlines ways in which online feminism through social media and the virality of the internet can be used as advocacy pathways to achieving ultimate equality (Martin & Valenti, 2012; Munro, 2013; Zimmerman, 2017). Allowing content to be spread quickly and to a wide audience, the internet offers new levels of accessibility and community to feminist movements. However, with the internet's speed of content generation and delivery also comes both a lack of control of messaging, and an array of competing opinions. The power of social media and online feminism in the fourth wave has also brought about the culture of 'call-out.' Defined as the act of publicly naming and shaming misogyny, patriarchy, sexism and other forms of oppression on social media, 'call-out culture' has become a prominent feature of many online communities (Peiró, 2021). Popularised during the 2017 *#MeToo* movement, call-out culture unified a diverse community of women against sexual violence. Initially brought to light when accusations of sexual assault and harassment by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein went viral (Diaz, 2022; Grady, 2020), the 2017 *#MeToo* movement sparked a global sharing of experiences of women's marginalisation and violence that encompassed over 12 million posts on Facebook (Khomami, 2017). The hashtag was used to create a healing space in which women were able to express themselves and call-out their perpetrators (Khomami, 2017).

A recent extension on call-out culture is the concept of 'cancel culture.' Used in its most productive form as a community-based expression of the revolutionisation of social norms and structures, cancel culture is a true illustration of how social media can demand change (Pearson, 2021). Within the fourth wave of feminism, cancel culture has been used to shed light on ideologies associated with minority politics and identity, making way for a new and safe space for inclusive community development, globalisation of ideas, and shared learning. Irreverent and unapologetic, cancel culture is not sensitive to gender. Where call-out

culture and the *#MeToo* movement was positioned largely as a community of women raising awareness of lived experience of sexual violence and trauma, cancel culture goes one step further with vendettas aimed to actively bring down both perpetrators and those subscribing to traditional interpretations of patriarchy.

Although aimed at new levels of inclusion, cancel culture, wokeness, and fourth wave feminism has not offered space for every woman. For many in the Tradwife community, the recent advancement of feminism is seen as squashing the authentic and biological role of women in society as homemaker, mother, and submissive wife (Ebner, 2020; Lang, 2022). Tradwife criticisms of the fourth wave appear to be two-fold: Creating a culture of toxic femininity hallmarked by hating men and condemning choice feminism.

In order to appropriately understand and contextualise toxic femininity and how it pertains to the present argument, it is important to understand the concept of ‘toxic masculinity.’ First appearing in the 1990’s, the term is derived from ‘hegemonic masculinity’ and refers to the way men’s power in society has been systematically institutionalised (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The concept addresses what behaviours and societal actions sustain masculine power and domination, not only over women as suggested by patriarchal theory, but over other subordinate masculinities too (McCann, 2022).

While hegemonic masculinity is common in academia, toxic masculinity has gained more attention, especially on social media. Although toxic masculinity reflects the theoretical underpinnings of hegemonic masculinity, scholars have argued the term has extended beyond its intention in the development of a masculine hierarchy. Definitions of toxic masculinity within media simplifies the initial research conducted by Connell (1987), in using the term to explain violent male behaviour, the misogyny of males in power, and men’s risk-taking behaviours (McCann, 2022). Although research has critiqued toxic masculinity for how it

implies that there is a contrasting healthy masculinity which men should strive for, this term and the opposing 'toxic femininity' are widely used online, especially within more conservative communities.

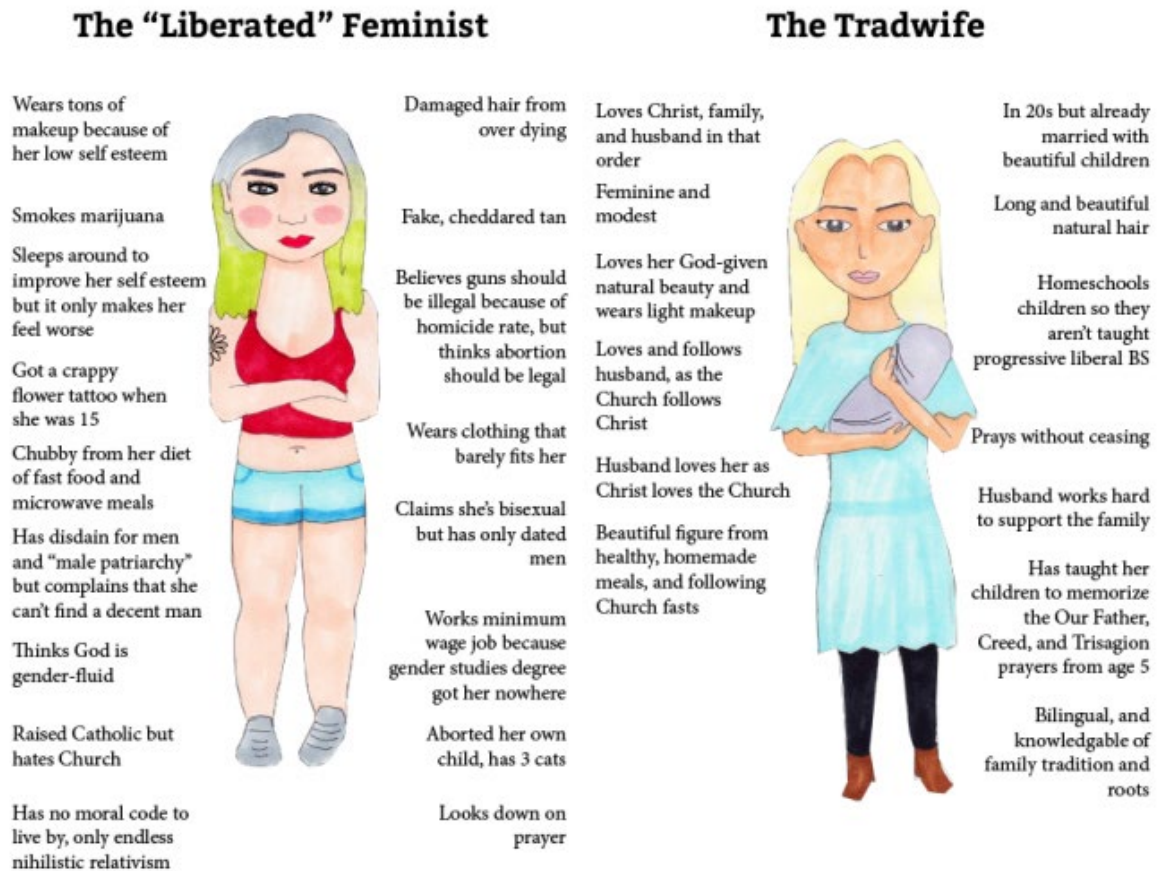
McCann (2022) identified two predominant ways toxic femininity is currently employed; feminist and anti-feminist. From a feminist perspective, toxic femininity refers to the gender expectations that keep women submissive to men's needs and domination. Feminists use the term toxic femininity to express the damaging nature of employing traditional normative gender roles, even going so far as to argue that notions of toxic femininity enable toxic masculinity (Gilmore, 2018). Conversely, the anti-feminist interpretation of the term is used fundamentally as a rebuttal to toxic masculinity, believing feminism has created a damaging culture of hatred towards men (McCann, 2022). By extension, anti-feminist toxic femininity is adopted by women in the Tradwife community to express dissatisfaction with feminism and espouse an alternative discourse of traditional feminine views of homemaking and wifehood. Relatedly, much of the Tradwife ideology whilst renouncing feminism, can be understood in relation to the feminist theoretical standpoint of choice feminism.

Choice feminism is a contemporary form of feminism that encourages women to embrace all opportunities offered to them. Arguing that any choice a woman makes about their wage, work, or home life is inherently feminist (Ferguson, 2010), this theoretical orientation understands feminism as exercising the ability and individual capacity of women to make their own lifestyle choices and sees women's oppression as an 'inability to choose.' From this perspective, a stay-at-home wife and mother is equally as feminist as a career businesswoman because both exercise freedom of choice (Tong, 2009).

Tradwives are anti-feminist because they believe feminism has gone too far and now oppresses women who choose the lifestyle of homemaker and wife. Public figures in the Tradwife movement openly promote the happiness of their choices arguing that they are not oppressed, nor forced to undertake their lifestyle by their husband. A successful homemaker and wife is their personal ambition. Similarly, many Tradwives are inspired by the 1950's era, following the lifestyle and conservative fashion of that time (Kelsey-Sugg & Marin, 2021). A series of educational manuals support Tradwives in their endeavour to live a more feminine life, many of which were created by self-proclaimed Tradwives. Some of the most commonly referenced include; *The Surrendered Wife* (Laura Doyle), *The Darling Academy* (Alena Kate Pettitt), and *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* (Laura C. Schlesinger).

Below is an infographic created by the Tradwife community that depicts how Tradwives perceive their anti-feminism ideology when compared to contemporary feminists (Cooksey, 2021). This infographic or meme is often shared by Tradwives in order to outline the benefits of their cause versus the perils of what they label "liberated feminists". In the infographic, identifiers of liberal feminist thought and action are compared against conservative feminine thought and action to illustrate the inherent difference between these two groups. The aim is to encourage conservative women to align with the Tradwife aesthetic and lifestyle.

**Figure 10**  
The "Liberated" Feminist vs. Tradwife meme (Cooksey, 2021)



By using anti-feminism counterculture, Tradwives appear to have found a key vehicle from which to radicalise or 'red pill' (as they term it) other women into taking up right-wing ideologies. By developing a strong and aesthetic brand presence on social media, these women have curated influence and found an effective mechanism to advertise their standpoint.

### **Social Media and Influencer Marketing**

*"...Their members globalise anti-globalist ideologies and use modern technologies to put into practice anti-modern visions."* (Ebner, 2020, p. 3)

Tradwives use social media to not only express their identities but to inform and teach others about Tradwife culture (Cerezo et al., 2021). Growing in popularity and existing

across many online social platforms (Froio, 2022), Tradwives' aesthetic appearance and ability to develop relatable curated content has contributed to their success. Firmly cemented in influencer culture and sharing a message which fundamentally challenges the increasingly demanding role women have in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (as career women, wives, and mothers), the Tradwife cause appears to strongly resonate with an engaged corner of social media.

While the concept of social networking has been around long before the advent of the internet, the online revolution of user-generated content at the turn of the century popularised networking as a fundamental tool for connection in our society (Mahon, 2019). Known as 'Web 2.0,' the rapid emergence of user-friendly platforms and user-generated content (UGC) framed what we now refer to as social media. Since 2010, the capacity for sharing our lives online has continued to grow exponentially with more than half the world's population now estimated to be active social media users (Chaffey, 2022; Statista, 2022a). For the purpose of this research, social media is defined as a universe of online platforms dependent on an active user-base. Today, there are many different types of social media platforms which allow users to achieve differing levels of online connection. Four of the most popular types of social media are; networking, media sharing, discussion forums, and communication platforms. As these social media platforms are fundamental to Tradwife culture, they are explained in detail below

Networking platforms are designed to allow individuals to associate and build connections with others. Including platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, the main purpose for networking platforms is the negotiation of relationships. The table below highlights two of the most common social networking platforms in more detail; Facebook and Twitter.

**Table 3**  
*Social Networking Platforms*

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Brief Introduction</b>
Facebook	<p>Facebook is a social networking site that allows users to connect with family and friends online. Existing in both public and private forums, users are able to create a variety of accounts with differing purposes (private, business, influential, events, groups) that subsequently allow differing access to followers and/or friends. Through sending messages and posting status updates, users are able to build and keep in touch with their individual communities. One way Facebook is increasingly being used is through its Private Group function which allows the creation of an online closed group where users have discussions pertaining to a shared topic or purpose (Chi, 2021).</p>
Twitter	<p>Twitter is a social networking site that is most prominently used to receive news, engage with friends, and follow high-profile celebrities. The platform functions through users updating information in the form of ‘tweets’ and is targeted towards the promotion of highly skimmable content that allows information to be spread fast. Through the process of ‘re-tweeting,’ Twitter encourages users to share their thoughts with a wider audience and facilitates the spread of knowledge (Forsey, 2021).</p>

*Sharing platforms* are designed to allow users to interact through the use of video, photographs, and other kinds of media. With the focus of connection on content rather than relationships, users on sharing platforms use media to portray their identity. The networking

platforms also offer some of these same features and vice versa, for media sharing platforms however, the development of content and exchange of media is their fundamental role (Kakkar, 2018). Three of the most common social media sharing platforms are Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

**Table 4**  
*Social Media Sharing Platforms*

<b>Sharing Platform</b>	<b>Brief Introduction</b>
Instagram	Instagram is a photo and video sharing platform that allows users to share photos and videos either publicly or privately among approved “followers.” To engage with content shared on the platform, users like, share, and comment, or send private messages. Content can be created on the platform in five unique formats; posts, stories, reels, IGTV, and via live-stream (DIA, 2021).
YouTube	YouTube is a video sharing platform that allows users to create, discover, share, watch and livestream long-format video content. Accessed both via its website and through the YouTube app, different versions of YouTube exists (i.e., YouTube Kids and YouTube Premium), allowing the filtering and monitoring of content (DIA, 2021).
TikTok	TikTok is a video sharing platform that allows people to create and share short-format video up to 10 minutes long. Also allowing in-app messaging and livestreaming, the short-format nature of the platform allows content to be consumed rapidly. Content is largely funnelled through a “for you” page, and this is where the TikTok algorithm constantly learns the most engaging content for the individual,

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serving up more or less of a certain video theme/topic to the user  
(DIA, 2021; TikTok, 2022).

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*Social discussion forums* are used for finding, sharing, and discussing different types of topics, opinions, and news. They offer answers to queries of any domain, acting like a user-generated Google search engine where ‘threads’ are used to coordinate different responses to questions, statements, or opinions. Reddit is one of the most popular discussion forums and markets itself as a ‘network of communities where people can dive into their interest, hobbies and passions’ (Reddit, 2022). Communities are known as ‘subreddits’ with each covering a unique topic and having a management system of volunteer moderators to ensure content shared is relevant. People are able to join subreddits and engage through commenting on someone else’s post, or by sharing their own opinion and/or thought on the subreddit’s topic. In order to be eligible to actively participate and engage with a subreddit, a user needs to meet a specific criterion which includes having an account that is relatively active. The activity of any given account is measured by “karma” points (Widman, 2021).

While communication is a fundamental purpose of all social media platforms, there are a collection of platforms designed purely for *conversational communicating*. Platforms like WhatsApp, Snapchat, Messenger, Telegram, Signal, and Discord are used for direct communication with known individuals. Typically encrypted, discussions and content shared is believed to be less likely to be tracked and monitored on these platforms. Social media is a particularly useful medium for RWE groups to share ideology, beliefs, and news as the very premise of this form of communication allows users to discuss their views and opinions more openly, however regulation is increasing (Ganesh & Bright, 2020). Large platforms like Facebook and Instagram have begun applying layers of regulation and community guidelines to the type of content that can be shared on their sites (Corlett, 2022), while smaller platforms

remain largely unregulated and are subsequently the most common place for extreme right-wing rhetoric. Platforms like Gab, Minds.com, 4CHAN, 8CHAN, Rumble, and Bitchute are particularly popular networking and media sharing alternatives for the Alt-Right. These platforms appear to offer an accessible middle ground between mainstream regulated social media, and the inaccessibility of the dark net. For example, Gab is a networking platform that aims to allow users to #SpeakFreely away from the 'Big Brother-esque model of the internet' (Redington, 2020). In general, however, all social media platforms are bound by the same regulatory ecosystem of any other registered company. In the U.S., this ecosystem broadly consists of federal regulators, state legislators, congress, and European regulators (Coldewey, 2020). What appears to make some platforms more likely to implement and enforce community guidelines and terms of service is the perceived level of monitoring they receive from a regulatory ecosystem. As mainstream platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are more popular with the widest audience, community guidelines are more likely to be enforced.

Regardless of the popularity of unregulated fringe sites for extreme right-wing content and increasingly stricter terms of service on mainstream platforms, extreme right-wing groups and content can still be found across social media with content creators opting to soften their rhetoric on mainstream platforms to avoid being banned. In some instances, mainstream social media are seen as recruitment platforms to engage followers who can then be influenced and possibly radicalised on platforms with less restrictions (Grierson, 2021). One pathway of engagement and potential recruitment on social media is through the growing concept of influencer culture, and influencer marketing. Currently, this is the primary/fundamental way Tradwives appear to be using social media and is discussed in more detail below.

## ***Influencer Culture***

In a world dominated by online relationships and content sharing, virtual word of mouth marketing (also known as electronic word of mouth marketing (eWOM), and digital word of mouth marketing) is increasingly becoming the most successful way for brands to market their products to consumers on social media (Kirkpatrick, 2016). Existing within social media and its communities of hyper-engaged individuals, influencer marketing can be defined as a form of word-of-mouth marketing where brands and businesses capitalise on influential social media users and employ them to share brand messaging with their audiences in the form of sponsored content (Boone, 2020). Known to effectively blur the line between endorsement and sponsorship, influencer marketing is a powerful tool used by many brands to expand their reach to both new and already engaged audiences. Consequently, for those with large social media followings, ‘influencing’ is a career trajectory that allows individuals to monetise their unique online identity, using the publication of their private life to sell merchandise and promote brands. Through the use of influencers, brands have been found to trigger 11 times more return on investment annually than other more traditional forms of advertising (Kirkpatrick, 2016).

### **The Influencer career trajectory – Securing a following**

Defined as social media celebrities, influencers have a unique connection with their follower base that makes them highly engaging. While there is much debate on what turns a regular social media user into an influencer, the ability to tell a compelling visual story, the monetisation of platforms, and the creation of aesthetically pleasing content are key elements (Duffy & Hund, 2019). Further, research suggests that the way followers perceive an influencers’ physical attractiveness, opinion leadership, and credibility of messaging impacts intentions towards influencer recommendations and subsequently the success of the influencer (Farivar & Wang; 2022). A strong aesthetic strategy consisting of key principles

that reflect typical notions of beauty (i.e., proportion, symmetry, composition, and colour) has also been identified as important for a successful social media presence, especially on Instagram (Thömmes & Hübner, 2020).

One way influencer success on Instagram can be buoyed is through the psychology of colour (Yu et al., 2020). Referring to arguments that every colour combination has the potential to trigger the brain to think and react in a certain way, colour psychology has long played an important role in marketing strategy and theory (Aslam, 2006; Karthikeyan & Joy, 2018). Research shows colour can significantly shape buyers' perceptions of products and brands including purchase intentions, brand personality, product meaning, product quality, and price (Amsteus et al., 2015; Huang & Lu, 2016; Labrecque & Milne, 2012; Singh, 2006). As influencers are in essence running a personal brand, it is feasible that theories of colour (leading to marketing success), could be applied to profile aesthetics on visual social media platforms like Instagram. Further, the use of 'presets' (a collection of edits which align all content posted on an individual's social media account to have a cohesive look and feel) are a popular tool, which influencers use to boost the aesthetic appeal of their content (Burducel, 2022; Ferreira, 2022; MacDonald, 2022; McCormick, 2022; Sherman, 2022).

### **Tradwives as social media influencers**

By creating visually aesthetic content aligned with theories of marketing, Tradwives appear to use their influencer status to promote extreme right-wing ideology to an engaged and loyal audience of followers. Tradwives lead their online communities through the publication of their private life, but these communities are also places of discussion and sharing. Tradwives, like all influencers, frequently engage with their audiences through liking, commenting, and directly messaging followers. In understanding the impact of follower : influencer relationships, Social Identity Theory can be applied. Farivar & Wang (2022) found social identity theory has a salient role in influencer marketing and on

influencer-follower relationships. The stronger the social identity or in-group association an individual feels within an influencer community, the stronger their intention to adopt recommendations made by the influencer. Through confiding in their follower communities and disclosing elements of their private life, influencers over time build credibility with their audience. Followers in turn trust the advice and guidance of the influencer, forming a strong in-group association, and subsequently are more likely to engage in purchasing behaviour based on influencer recommendations (Farivar & Wang, 2022). Equally, over time followers can also develop strong and secure attachments with influencers, trusting their perspective and following their guidance (Farivar et al., 2021). When applied to online or virtual right-wing communities, strong in-group associations and secure attachments of followers may act as a perpetuating factor towards radicalisation to more extreme views.

Tradwives are an influential community of women who exist within the right-wing landscape. These women are produced by and reproduce the microcosms of the right-wing communities they inhabit and as such provide a gendered snapshot into the growing influence and presence of right-wing ideologies and practices within national and international landscapes. Globally, these women are challenging the modern role of women in society and co-opting and retrenching patriarchy in both traditional and creative new ways. Using an anti-feminist ideology and social media as a tool to promote their lifestyle, Tradwives have cemented themselves as influential phenomena worthy of research.

### **Research Aim**

An ongoing area of debate within RWE research is the role of gender in the recruitment, mobilisation, and maintenance of national and transnational extreme right-wing groups. The motivation for pursuing research in this area is the mounting evidence for gender as a vital puzzle piece in understanding RWE, and the need for specific research in understanding women's roles in propagating RWE efforts. A central role women appear to be

playing in extreme right-wing movements is that of a ‘Tradwife.’ These women as an online community of social media influencers are sharing right-wing and often extremist content within their versions of femininity. Through their online influencing and public social media presence, Tradwives appear to glorify traditional gender ideals of submissiveness, wifeness, and domesticity. This research aims to conceptualise Tradwife communities, and explore any processes of radicalisation that are offered through practices of social media influence across different online platforms.

### **Methodology**

Netnography is a qualitative research method developed specifically for the observation and analysis of online communities (Kozinets et al., 2014). With its origins in ethnography, netnography is designed to gain a reflexive understanding of online cultures and communications beyond physical spaces or ‘fields’ (Kozinets, 2020). This methodology is in its most generalised form, an analysis of people; why they came to believe a certain way, and how they connect with each other. The Tradwife community is in itself a culture formed by a set of common values and ideology, bound together by the network of communications known as social media. Netnography combines media analysis and observational data from a symbolic interactionist perspective of both Tradwife culture, and the online landscape Tradwives exist within. It was important that the methodological framework selected conveyed the complex development of relationships between Tradwives, their followers, and the social media platforms they use. It was also important to allow for observational analysis and researcher reflection. It is hoped that through the use of Netnography, a clear understanding of how Tradwives are represented and positioned online alongside an understanding of how Tradwife culture may be contributing to influencing other women to take up extreme right-wing ideologies.

## Data Collection

All data for the purpose of this research was collected using unobtrusive online observations and search techniques (Kozinets, 2020). The data collected was sourced from publicly available and readily accessible sites. As Tradwives present themselves as a version of social media influencers, the information shared to their profiles is for a public audience. Tradwives want larger audiences to fulfil their influencer ambitions and women are therefore encouraged to like, follow, and engage. Despite a solicitation of followers and the desire to be publicly noticed, it is recognised that the use of social media platforms to generate research participants could be ethically problematic. While social media users generally agree to a set of terms and conditions (including public exposure and consent clauses) prior to creating their profile, it is important this agreement is not taken for granted when using social media data for research. To assist in ensuring this research was conducted ethically, the Framework For Ethical Research With Social Media Data was consulted (Townsend & Wallace, 2017). The steps listed below broadly outlines the ethics steps taken before conducting the present research. By working through these steps, it is hoped the research is conducted with conscious integrity and conscious protection of the Tradwives observed:

*Consultation with Terms and Conditions* - The relevant terms and conditions of every social media platform used to obtain data were consulted. No violation of these terms and conditions was committed in the development of this research.

*Managing privacy and risk* - To ensure confidentiality and anonymity was ethically maintained, all data collected was systematically confirmed as public. To this end each piece of data was assessed to determine whether the author could reasonably expect their content to be consumed by strangers. All data collected was accessible publicly, and never collected from within a private social media group or thread. The researcher never engaged with any of

the observed Tradwife profiles and thus it can be assumed no social media users were harmed through the course of this research. All data collected was conclusively open to the public.

*Maintaining boundaries* – Some of the content observed during the course of data collection could be considered harmful and/or have an impact on the researcher's personal life. This alongside the fact the researcher was an active social media user for personal purposes meant it was important clear boundaries were distinguished between social media use for research and personal social media use. The researcher managed these boundaries through engagement with the immersion journal (discussed later), alongside regular supervisor meetings to discuss the research process.

*Data sensitivity during publication* - Some of the data collected contained sensitive and/or harmful themes relating to RWE, REMT, and PMVE. To this end, careful consideration was taken when reporting and publishing data to avoid harmful themes (harmful themes included racism, transphobia, abortion, and birth control rights – for example). Where needed, the researcher's supervisor was consulted for guidance to ensure content included in this research was justified.

Although in this vein, the researcher acted as an observer and collected publicly available observational data, it is important to note the very nature of social media influencers means the desire for truly objective research could not be fully achieved. In following along and observing Tradwives over a period of time, a one sided parasocial interaction and/or relationship is developed (Lou, 2021). This one-sided relationship is known to Tradwives through the conscious publication of their life. Tradwives curate and present to an audience who they know is there, but that they never see. An online identity is produced for their audience in order to receive the greatest level of engagement. This awareness was considered throughout the research process and is explored in different places later in this thesis.

The total data collection period lasted 10 months (from January to October 2022) and encompassed two phases of netnography research: investigation and immersion. The investigation period involved the selection of social media platforms, and selection of the Tradwife profiles included in the final dataset. Reconnoitering, and search techniques like scouting were used to refine suitable social media platforms through the identification of Tradwife accounts. This allowed a structured framework to be applied to what is typically an unstructured task. Reconnoitering is a Netnographical approach to data investigation which involves the active mapping of the research territory, ensuring data collection remains focused on *answering* the research question or aim. Scouting is the act of organic searching through methods defined by the focus of the research question (Kozinets, 2020).

The next data collection phase of immersion was completed using three operational techniques; (1) recording, (2) researching, and (3) reflecting (Kozinets, 2020). Recording was undertaken through the creation of an immersion journal that detailed the ongoing research procedure, challenges, insights, and influential findings. The researching stage involved continuously upskilling on key media releases and other influential events throughout the duration of the data collection period. Finally, reflective notes were also included in the immersion journal. These notes offered a critical space for the researcher to capture their own experience of spending time within the Tradwife social media ecosystem.

The following outlines how each phase was executed to collect the data used for research.

### ***Investigation***

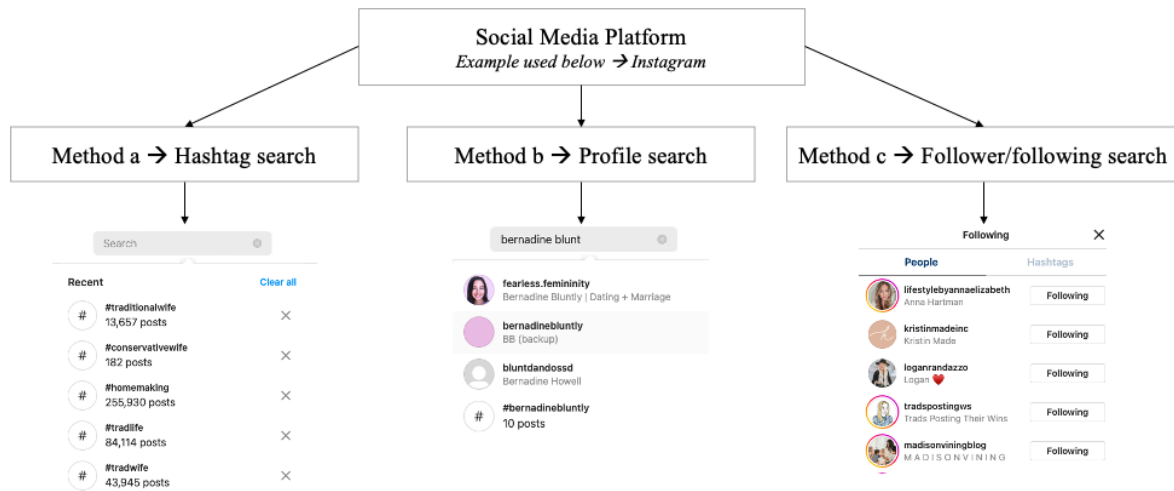
#### **Selection of social media platforms**

To date, the power of the digital universe has allowed Tradwives to expand and cement their reach internationally, increasing membership and engagement. In order to

authentically research this online community, it needed to be observed and analysed within the realms of which it exists. Complex social communities rarely ever function within a clearly identified group, nor do they operate in a single place (Nadai & Maeder, 2005). Therefore this research could not be restricted to one single observational social media platform. To explore the research aim and identify the social media platforms that contained a presence of Tradwife culture, an initial observational scouting period of one month was completed. This time was also used to form a definition-of-a-Tradwife which was constructed by drawing on previous literature and research and identifying the common grounds across all of the Tradwife sites. This definition encompassed five key factors; (1) Anti-feminism, (2) homemaking, (3) traditional gender roles, (4) evidence of affiliation with at least one expression of extreme right-wing ideologies (political, religious, etc.), and (5) evidence of social media influencing. A list of social media platforms active in 2022 was obtained from Statista (2022b) for investigation (Appendix A). Employing the Tradwife definition, each platform on the Statista (2022b) list was systematically scouted for Tradwives using a combination of three methods; 1) keyword searches, 2) direct profile search of identified Tradwife figures, and 3) through the searching of followers of already identified Tradwife accounts. The below offers an illustration of the initial scouting process.

**Figure 11**

*Key methods used during social media profile scouting*



Initial observational scouting found the presence of Tradwife communities across an array of social media platforms. A selection criteria was then applied to each platform in order to determine the most useful platforms for the present research. This selection criteria involved rating the Tradwife content on each platform against five key elements: Relevance (the extent to which the content relates to the research question), Activity (the regularity of content shared), Diversity (evidence of differing expressions of right-wing ideologies), Richness (the level of insight gained), and Extremity (whether the content is Conservative Right, Alt-Lite, or Alt-Right). See Appendix B for further explanation of the five key element scoring index. These elements were selected based on their ability to show breadth and depth of Tradwife content available on each identified platform. Each social media platform was rated from 0 (very weak presence of key element), to 10 (very strong presence of key element). Notes were also taken which helped to thematically categorise and map the right-wing extremity of each Tradwife.

The four highest rated social media platforms were: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These platforms were subsequently used to search and collect the Tradwife

dataset. The final dataset also included personal websites or blogs of the selected Tradwives, TikTok, and relevant material/content from popular right-wing communication platforms such as Telegram and Reddit, alongside fringe social media platforms like Gab.com and Minds, and fringe video platforms like Bitchute and Rumble. It was important to include fringe platforms given the extreme nature of some of the content posted by Tradwives, and the fact their social media presence was reasonably fluid with many mainstream platforms also choosing to ban or censor certain creators for extremist content (Ganesh & Bright, 2020). These fringe platforms were also used to observe potential recruitment and radicalisation pathways.

### **Selection of Tradwife profiles**


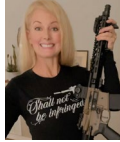
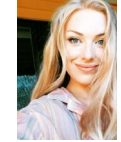

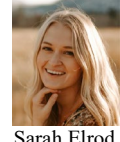
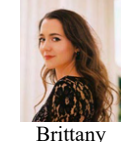
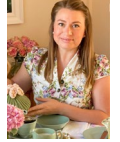
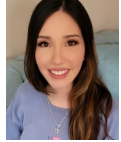




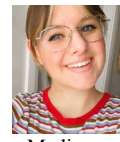
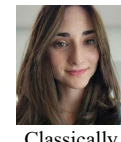


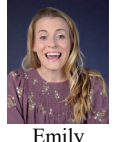
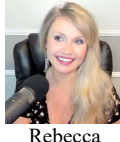
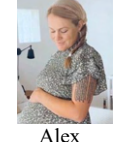
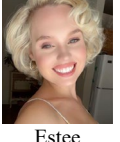
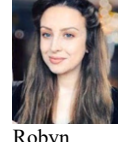
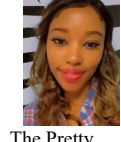

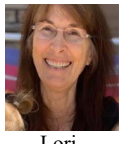
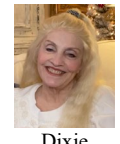

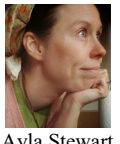

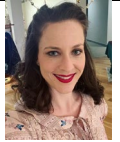
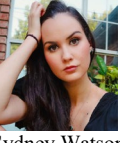

All Tradwife profiles discovered were collated in a designated spreadsheet. This spreadsheet recorded name, geographic location, the social media handles of each platform a single Tradwife was active on, follower count on each active platform, and the public biography or 'about me' section of their account/s. During a scouting session, exploration would begin with a click through to a profile of interest (a possible Tradwife). In reviewing a profile (defined as the 'base profile'), the researcher would first conduct a content analysis of the about me/biography section, and/or a brief run through of the last three months of content shared by the profile to determine if this woman could be classified as a Tradwife. If yes, this profile was added to the data set and further exploration occurred. If not, the profile was excluded from the dataset. Further exploration during an active scouting session involved a review of the followers of the base profile, and a deep dive into the base profile's shared content. This further exploration resulted in a click through. Click throughs directed the researcher to either: a) another profile which triggered the 'base profile' flow; b) a shared media link which resulted in the discovery of i) a new profile (triggering 'base profile' flow), or ii) a new keyword which was used for future scouting on a predetermined list of social

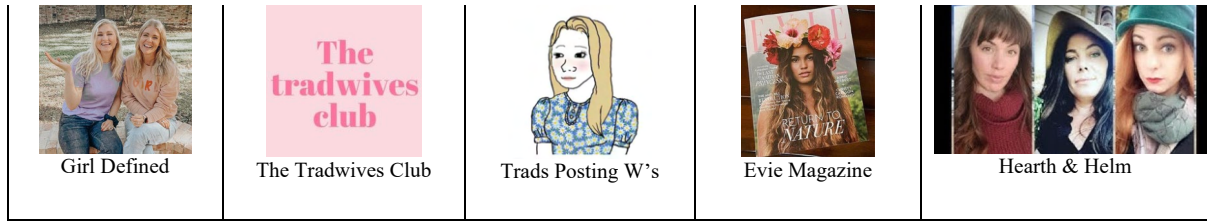
media platforms; or c) a piece of video content which was subsequently analysed to discover new keywords, profiles, or a deeper understanding of the role of Tradwives in RWE (Appendix C offers an illustrated mind map of this process).

Once social media platforms for research were selected, the Tradwife profiles already identified for the purpose of platform scouting were cleaned and recorded in a final format. This format identified; name, geographic location, biography/about me section, and follower count/subscribers (See Appendix D). Accounts who did not have more than 10,000 followers/subscribers on at least one of their profiles were excluded from the dataset at this stage as the greater the following of a social media account, the greater its influence (Nizri, 2022). The only exception to this was Hearth & Helm, a group account included in the dataset for their contribution to understanding a Pagan Tradwife perspective. Tradwife profiles continued to be collected throughout the remaining data collection period. Reconnoitering was used to define and map the exploration of Tradwife territory during this period (Kozinets, 2020). Mainstream social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) were monitored daily, offering an immersive researching experience. Fringe and thread based social media platforms (Telegram, Gab, Minds) were monitored on a weekly basis through the duration of the data collection period. Reddit was also monitored during this time for completeness as threads about Tradwives had been found during social media scouting (i.e., the Red Pill Women Reddit thread). Video based channels (Bitchute, YouTube, RedIceTV) were scouted monthly, however most data from video channels was obtained via resharing of content to one of the other platforms by a Tradwife so it was able to be captured. TikTok was also analysed bimonthly due to the dramatic growth this platform experienced during the research period (Paul, 2022), and the platform's algorithmic ability to reach new and broad audiences rapidly.

A key aspect of data collection was time. Most of the findings of this research could not be overtly seen from a brief scan of the Tradwife landscape. This meant spending time within the researched phenomena long enough for content, messages, and engagement to be experienced and analysed in real-time and in the context of local and world events. Collecting data over 10 months, ensured a depth of understanding was achieved.

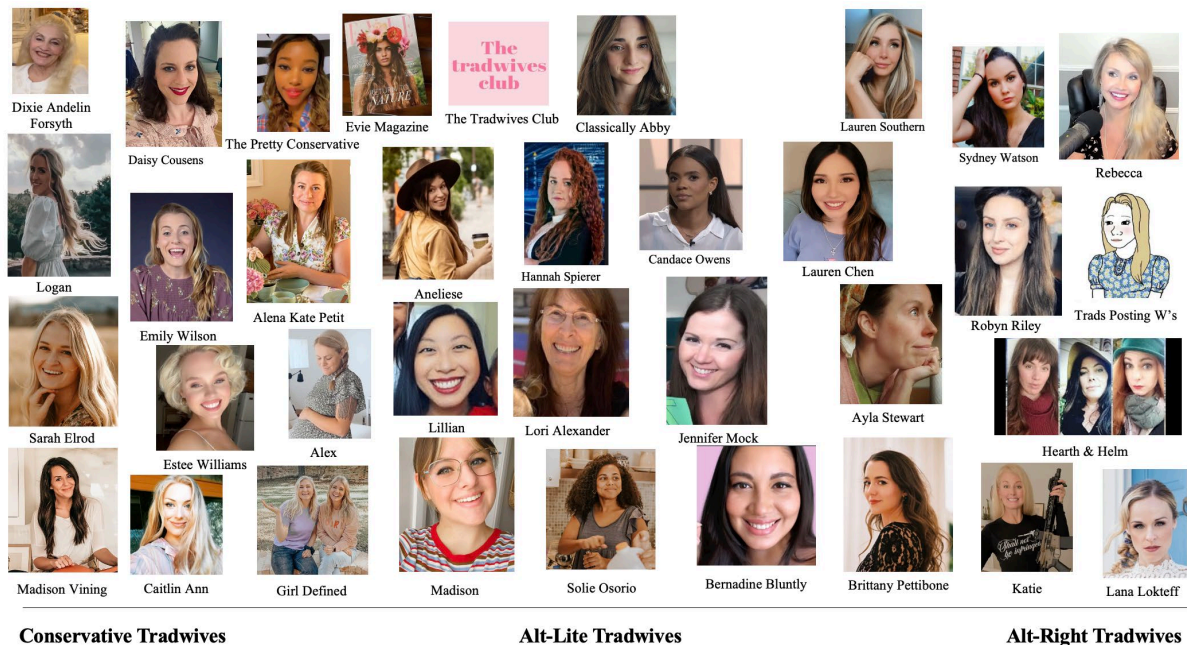
A total of 36 profiles were identified during data collection. Within this dataset, a range of extreme right-wing expressions, views, and value systems were found. Of the 36 profiles selected, 31 were individual Tradwife identities, and 5 were classified as Tradwife group identities (i.e., profiles with no clear owner). A visual representation of the Tradwives included in this research is shown below, with the full dataset found in Appendix D.

Individual Tradwife Identities										
USA						UK		Canada		
										
Lana Lokteff	Katie	Caitlin Ann	Cynthia Loewen	Sarah Elrod	Brittany Pettibone	Alena Kate Pettitt	Lauren Chen			
										
Solie Osorio	Bernadine Bluntly	Madison Vining	Aneliëse	Madison	Classically Abby	Lillian	Logan			
						Australia				
Emily Wilson	Rebecca	Alex	Estee Williams	Robyn Riley	The Pretty Conservative	Australia		Lauren Southern		
								Aotearoa NZ		
Lori Alexander	Dixie Andelin Forsyth	Jennifer Mock	Ayla Stewart	Candace Owens (USA)			Daisy Cousens	Aotearoa NZ		
										
						Sydney Watson	Hannah Spierer AKA Sarah Smith			
Group Tradwife Identities										



While most of the Tradwives appeared to be based in the U.S., women originating from Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Aotearoa NZ are also included. From the known and perceived age of these women, three age ranges can be determined; under 25, 25-45, and over 50. Twitter, Instagram and personal blogs/websites were the most popular platforms the dataset was active on, followed by Facebook and YouTube. Tradwives were found across the right-wing landscape with women inhabiting Conservative Right, Alt-Lite, and Alt-Right positionings. The following outlines how the above dataset could be mapped by extremity.

**Figure 12**  
*Organising Tradwife Dataset by Extremity*



‘Mummy bloggers’ are a similar community to Tradwives that have been recently discussed by Aotearoa NZ media outlets (Manhire, 2022). Known for sharing similar content

themes (i.e., homemaking, stay at home motherhood, and promoting typically traditional gender roles on social media with large followings), mummy bloggers were considered, but not included in this research. The intention of this research is to specifically understand Tradwives and processes of recruitment and potential radicalisation. While some mummy bloggers in Aotearoa NZ may subscribe to some similar ideologies, they did not demonstrate all five factors<sup>6</sup> used for defining Tradwives in this research. As a result, they were not able to be conclusively defined within the Tradwife landscape and therefore these women were excluded.

As a whole, scouting the presence of Tradwives within Aotearoa NZ was difficult. It seemed the Tradwife label has not been as openly taken up in Aotearoa NZ as it has overseas, especially on a public forum like social media. It is hypothesised Tradwife figures could be present in conservative Christian churches and/or in conservative political circles of Aotearoa NZ, however the publicised Tradwife influencer appears to be missing at the time of this research. Further, it is important to note social media is global and thus it is possible the Tradwife profiles included in this research while not located in Aotearoa NZ, are still influential within our society. During the course of this research, Tradwives began to be discussed in Aotearoa NZ media (Lang, 2022; Duff, 2022).

### ***Immersion***

#### **Media Overlook**

Within the 10-month data collection period, a media overlook was undertaken as well. This kept the researcher up to date with both the growing media awareness and attention the

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<sup>6</sup> (1) Anti-feminism, (2) homemaking, (3) traditional gender roles, (4) evidence of affiliation with at least one expression of extreme right-wing ideologies (political, religious, etc.), and (5) evidence of social media influencing.

Tradwife movement was generating, and offered further context to the content being shared across social media platforms. It also allowed observation of the ideological worldviews of Tradwives who engaged with local and global events. To conduct this media overlook, the search terms “Tradwife” and “Trad wife” were used to search the Google database for news media sites, magazines, and blogs reporting on Tradwives. This search was conducted monthly to ensure the researcher remained updated with the most recent information. Video content posted by media sites was also included in the media overlook as a number had conducted video interviews of and with Tradwives. Notes on any new information or leads for further scouting were included in the immersion journal.

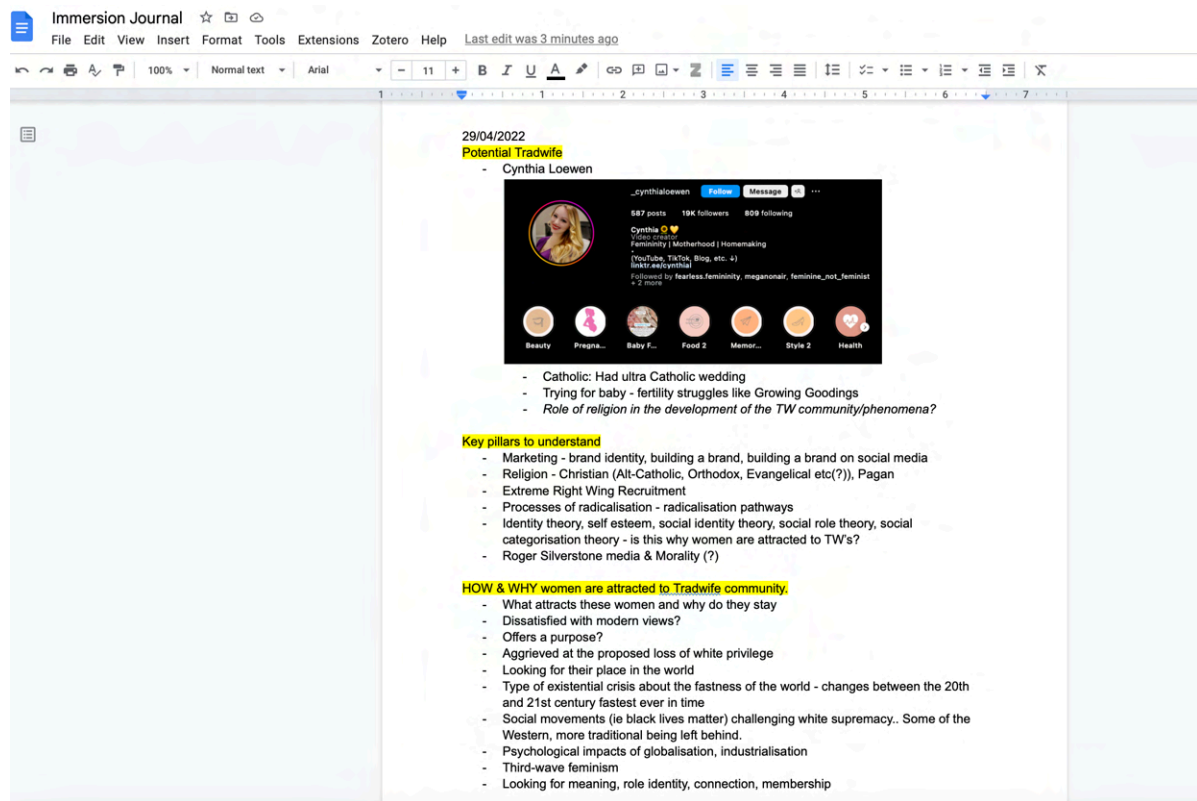
As an online community actively involved in the overarching right-wing landscape, much of the real time content shared by Tradwives is in reaction to mainstream media activity (whether criticising or in support of), and global events of the time. How an individual Tradwife expressed their right-wing affiliation (i.e., politically, religion, counterculture groups, intentional communities) influenced how much mainstream or alternative media sources they shared. While this ongoing media overlook was not directly included as data, it helped inform wider interpretations of Tradwives, and located the research in the contemporary world.

### **Immersion Journal**

Alongside the ongoing media overlook, an immersion journal was also used throughout the 10-month data collection period. The purpose of this immersion journal was first as a place to record search procedure, challenges, insights, notes and influential findings. Journaling influenced the collection of data particularly through offering a checkpoint to reference back to between search sessions and this assisted in the development of the base profile flow/search map (Appendix C). Relevant screenshots taken throughout data collection are also recorded in this immersion journal, offering a timestamp of key pieces of content

shared. Overall, recording offered a clear space to track progress and findings, ensuring data collection remained structured and accountable. An example of a recording entry in the immersion journal is below.

**Figure 13**  
*Immersion Journal Entry 29/04/2022*



The immersion journal was also used to reflect on the time spent within the Tradwife ecosystem as a researcher. The reflective immersion notes recorded a variety of observations that allowed the development of a deeper understanding of the Tradwife community as a culture: the unique language used; social norms adhered to; topics discussed (and how they changed across platform and profile). How Tradwives interacted and engaged with each other was also noted, alongside what outside content (i.e., mainstream media releases, COVID-19 information, political discussions) was shared/important to the group or individual. The researcher's own frames of reference (i.e., perspectives and opinions) were also noted within

a subsection of personal reflective notes alongside discussions which occurred between the researcher and supervisor.

This personal reflection was important throughout data collection as it helped the researcher to understand and negotiate the at times engaging nature of Tradwife culture. There were many appealing things offered on these platforms from their aesthetic and curated lives, to the sharing of recipes and gardening tips which were personally compelling for the researcher. The very nature of the Tradwife lifestyle and the balanced life they projected was also equally compelling. Reflective journaling was subsequently used to challenge some of the researcher's assumptions about gendered relationships, especially marriage and motherhood. The researcher is a recently married, cisgender, heterosexual woman who at the time of research, was beginning to consider having a baby. She could understand aspects of Tradwife value systems around marriage and motherhood and these understandings were consciously unpacked in the immersion journal. Journaling also allowed a reflective space to see the potential processes of recruitment, radicalisation and influence (often overtly) offered to women who do not currently exist within an extreme right-wing landscape. In order to try to approach the data analysis as a balanced inquiry that was ethically sound and offered a duty of respect and care to the observed participants, the four overarching phases of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory; 1) having experiences, 2) making assumptions, 3) challenging perspectives, and 4) experiencing transformative learning (Kitchenham, 2008) were actively used. Transformative learning theory guided the researcher to view data with an empathetic lens that subsequently allowed for a balanced analysis of how and why women are drawn to Tradwife culture and communities.

### **Data Analysis**

Koestler's Theory of Holarchies (1967) was used as an overarching framework for organising and analysing the Netnographical data collected. This theoretical framework

allows researchers to identify the different individual parts of a phenomena of interest and then understand how these parts are brought together to express the phenomena as a whole. According to Koestler, these different individual “parts” are defined as “holons” which together make up the phenomena of interest known as a “holarchy”. Koestler’s Theory was chosen for this research as it enables greater and more nuanced observational ethnographic understandings of online communities and culture. These observational understandings include; (1) the dynamic nature of community interactions, ideology, geographic location, and practices, (2) the human and non-human elements that influence the presentation of online communities, and (3) the external socio-political forces at play within a community. The “holarchy” is an interpreted snapshot of these observational understandings as they are captured at a particular point in time. It is an analytical representation of the broader community and culture being researched. This theory has been used across a variety of disciplines including philosophy, anthropology, and science. It was chosen as an appropriate theory to apply to an online ethnographic study (Mella, 2009).

The holarchy presented in this research comprises unique and identifiable features (holons) which cohere with other holons to produce ‘Tradwives’. In order to identify and understand the Tradwife holarchy and its potential holons, a three phase Netnographical approach was applied to analyse the data collected from each identified Tradwife; 1) Collating, 2) Coding, and 3) Combining. *Collating* is the preparation of data for further analysis and involved a period of ethnographic sitting followed by formatting and filing. *Coding* involved the breaking down of data found on each platform into chunks which identified key signifiers of Tradwives. *Combining* was the last phase of data analysis and involved merging coded data with notes from the immersion journal and media overlook to form four holons of the Tradwife holarchy.

### ***Collating***

The first phase of collating the data was to gain a baseline cultural sense of who Tradwives are and how they appear on their social media platforms. Termed ‘ethnographic sitting,’ this initial analysis is recommended in order to ensure formatting and filing of data is conducted in a way that is authentic to the interactions of the culture being assessed (Kozinets, 2014). Ethnographic sitting usually involves analysing a smaller piece of the wider data set to determine the method of formatting and filing most suitable for the rest of the data (Kozinets, 2014). In the adoption of this recommendation, the sitting period involved analysing only the Instagram profiles of the Tradwives in the dataset. Instagram was selected as the platform for ethnographic sitting for two reasons; 1) the combination of still image, video, and text data offered good breadth of understanding the way each Tradwife communicates, and 2) it was determined as the most accessible platform as all except two Tradwives in the dataset were active on Instagram.

During the ethnographic sitting analysis, it was determined all data that could be formatted as screenshots would be as this allowed for the most authentic representation of Tradwife culture. For some long format videos, transcribing occurred and was saved as text as this allowed for better analysis of the video content. For short format video, links were filed in a spreadsheet under each relevant Tradwife profile. For the story data from Instagram that was time sensitive, a screen recording or screenshot was taken and/or relevant notes were included in the immersion journal. Once formatted, all data was then filed under the Tradwife’s name and the platform it was collected from. This process of collating prepared the data for coding.

### ***Coding***

The purpose of coding was to descriptively break down the collated data into portions in order to determine the key codes or categories which were signifiers of the Tradwife

holarchy. This phase of analysis was focused on developing a face value perception of how Tradwives presented themselves. The coding process identified categories in which to organise the data, and from which the holons were subsequently developed. For example, four codes or categories (termed ‘Tradwife Signifiers’) are shown below.

**Table 5**  
*Tradwife Signifiers*

<b>Grooming</b>	<b>Change of Lifestyle</b>	<b>Clothing</b>	<b>Home Advocate</b>
Displaying a level of maintenance of physical self that can be attributed to mainstream beauty standards i.e.,: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slim</li> <li>- Facial treatments</li> <li>- Frequent application of makeup</li> <li>- Hair grooming</li> </ul>	A significant change in lifestyle, caused by one or a number of the following events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pregnancy</li> <li>- Trauma</li> <li>- Career</li> <li>- Pandemic</li> <li>- God – i.e., a testimony</li> </ul>	Using clothing to express femininity in one or more of the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modest clothing</li> <li>- Predisposition to dresses</li> <li>- Head coverings</li> <li>- Children (if applicable) dressed also modestly.</li> </ul>	Some form of advocacy for the home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-making</li> <li>- Home-birthing</li> <li>- Home-schooling</li> </ul>

The identification of these codes and signifiers offered the basis to assemble the holons which formed the Tradwife holarchy (Kozinets, 2020; Saldana, 2013).

### ***Combining***

The final phase of data analysis involved combining the coded dataset with immersion journal notes and insights from the ongoing media overlook to inform the research findings (i.e. the elements of the Tradwife holarchy and holons). Often termed a ‘higher-order-code’ in Netnography, this analytic operation involved a process of discovery that aimed to offer findings that best answered the research question (Kozinets, 2014). Practically, this involved going through the coded data and identifying connections (or lack thereof) between Tradwife codes and signifiers. This process of combining coded data is known as ‘pattern-coding’ (Kozinets, 2020) and led to the identification of a number conceptual threads between Tradwives and their content shared across social media platforms. These conceptual threads were woven into holons through drawing upon the codes, the immersion journal notes and records of the media overlook.

### **Findings & Discussion**

While other holons may exist, the following were the four most compelling and prominent; 1) *The Tradwife Landscape*, exploring the continuum of extremity existing within Tradwives, and outlining how expressions of RWE are played out by different Tradwives; 2) *Cross-platform Influencers*, outlining how Tradwives use self-constructions to influence their audiences across a variety of social media platforms; 3) *Feminine not Feminist*, discussing Tradwives’ conscious shift from self-identification as ‘feminist’ to self-identification as ‘feminine’; and 4) *The Tradwife side-hustle*, examining the monetisation of Tradwife culture.

Underpinning the Tradwife holarchy and woven throughout the identified holons are the descriptive and visual elements that differentiate a Tradwife from any other social media influencer. Labelled the ‘Tradwife Aesthetic’, and encompassing Tradwife signifiers, this aesthetic presence comprises important defining features of Tradwives. While each individual Tradwife is nuanced in her approach, there were certain norms of presentation on social

media which became evident over the 10 months researching the phenomena. Just as fitness and beauty influencers have their own aesthetic presence that identifies them as such, so too do Tradwife influencers. Parameters of the Tradwife Aesthetic are identified as below.

### **The Tradwife Aesthetic**

*“A Tradwife is a social media influencer who is well known for her advocacy of the home. Supporting her husband as head of the household, the Tradwife promotes homemaking, home-schooling, and stay at home motherhood as a viable career for all women. With her nuclear family unit a priority, the Tradwife uses social media to broadcast the notable events and achievements of her and her family. Generally immaculately presented and modestly dressed, the Tradwife shares curated elements of her life across multiple social media platforms, advertising the Tradwife lifestyle. Providing tips on how to create and attain a ‘Tradlife’, she uses aesthetically presented content and feminine branding to attract a large audience and build a relationship with them.*

*The physical appearance of the Tradwife is of high value to her social media brand and at a glance offers insight into the both type of content she creates and the type of audience she is wanting to attract. Typically, her physical appearance fits into one of the*

*following three categories;*

#### **1) The 1950's Housewife**



- Aprons
- Head-coverings
- A-Line dresses

#### **2) The Girl-next-door**



- Modest clothing with an awareness of fashion trends.

#### **3) The Modern Wife**



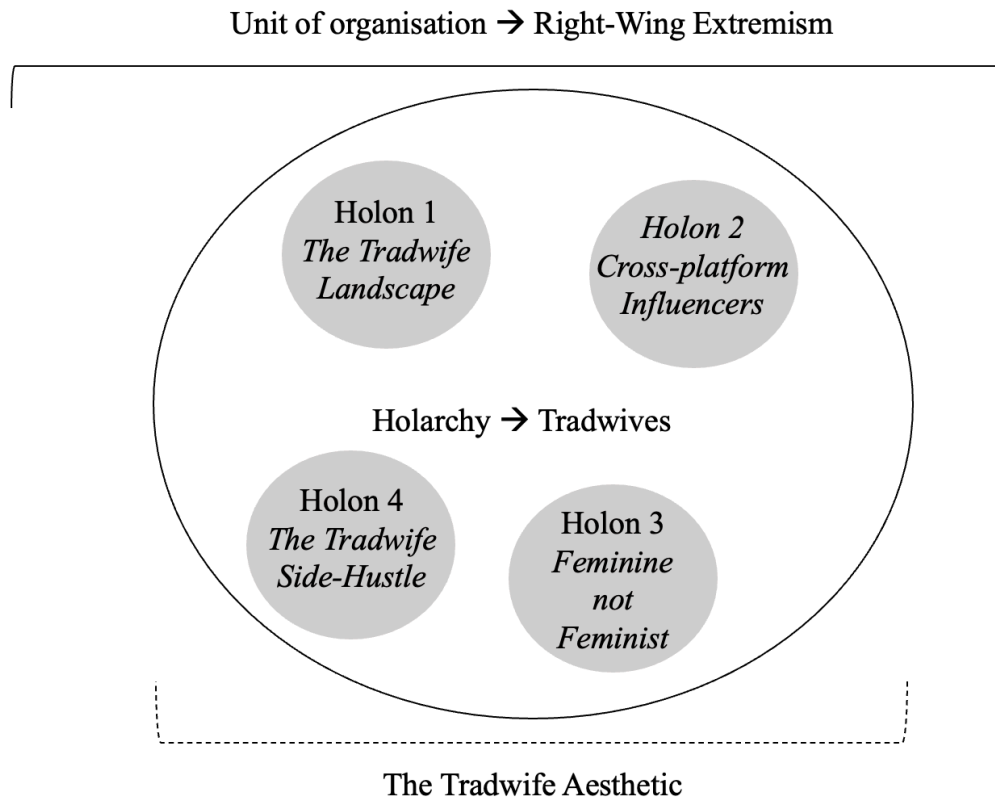
- Physical presentation feminine, but generally more sexualised.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| - <i>Light, feminine colours.</i>                    | - <i>Commonly dresses/skirts, but will sometimes wear pants.</i> | - <i>Ripped jeans, lower cut tops.</i>         |
| - <i>Hair done, smooth, and sometimes in a perm.</i> | - <i>Light, feminine colours.</i>                                | - <i>More moody colours with high contrast</i> |
| - <i>Feminine make-up.</i>                           | - <i>Hair done, but in a natural and effortless way.</i>         | - <i>Long hair</i>                             |
|  | - <i>Natural/effortless make-up.</i>                             | - <i>Obvious make-up</i>                       |
|  |  | - <i>Dark eyeliner common.</i>                 |

*Followers trust the advice of the Tradwife and this allows her to develop a profitable and influential brand from her Tradwife identity. Alongside tips and tricks for the home, the Tradwife discusses her conservative right-wing perspectives and opinions. The dominant topic of conservative conversation (i.e., politics, religion, militia, counterculture) is nuanced for each individual Tradwife.”*

The Tradwife holarchy or snapshot of Tradwife culture produced by this research is a combination of the Tradwife holons, underpinned by the Tradwife Aesthetic - as conceptualised below. Following is an explanation of these holons, how the Tradwife Aesthetic perpetuates them, and how they cohere to form the Tradwife holarchy. Further is discussion of how Tradwife culture may contribute to potential processes of radicalisation of women to the Tradwife cause and extreme right-wing communities. As this research explores issues of femininity, right-wing extremism, radicalisation, and social media, a range of relevant theories have been drawn upon to make sense of both the holons and the Tradwife holarchy, and by extension Tradwife communities and culture. Although these theories can be seen somewhat as an eclectic mix, they can be broadly understood as interpretations of social psychological processes and practices.

**Figure 14**  
*The Tradwife Hierarchy*

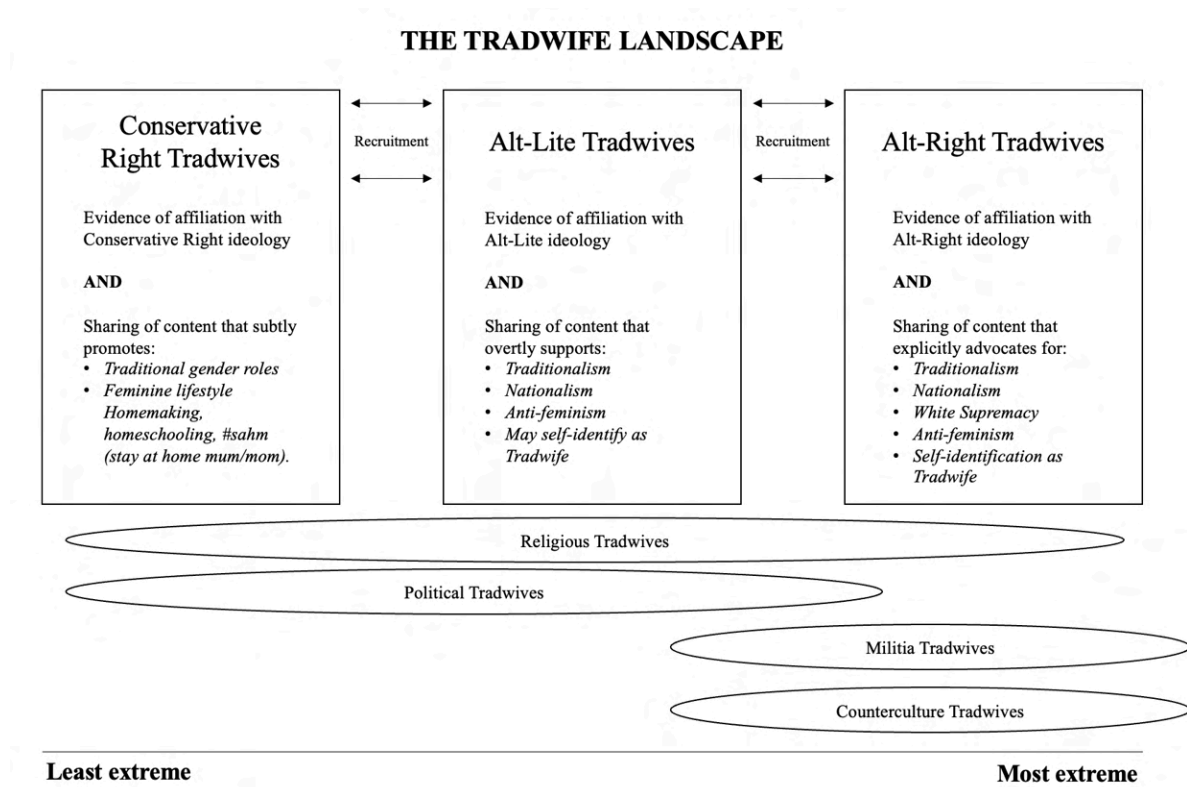


### **Holon 1: The Tradwife Landscape**

Tradwives exist within the realm of RWE and (re)produce the communities they inhabit. They perpetuate conservative values and support right-wing ideologies to varying degrees. The more extreme her affiliation with right-wing ideology, the more extreme the Tradwife presents herself within the online world. Tradwives in this research primarily fitted into one of the three right-wing positions previously discussed; *Conservative Right*, *Alt-Lite*, and *Alt-Right* which are expressed across many facets of society including; religion, politics, the modern militia movement, intentional communities and cults, sovereign citizens movement, counterculture groups, and at the individual level. The Tradwives included in this research presented themselves most prominently as either *religious*, *political*, *militia*, or *counterculture*. While the wider Tradwife phenomena may include other expressions of RWE (i.e., within intentional communities), the researcher did not find evidence of this in the data

collected. Although in many instances these women inhabited several right-wing expressions (i.e., religion and politics), Tradwives appeared to choose one focus of themselves to predominantly broadcast (i.e., religion), and this shaped the researcher’s interpretation of how they engaged with their online community. The Tradwife Landscape therefore conceptualises the various ways Tradwives exist within the right-wing ecosystem and is presented below.

**Figure 15**  
*The Tradwife Landscape*



*Conservative Tradwives* appeared to define ‘Tradwife’ as a woman who advocates for a #Tradlife within the home, supporting her husband and children. While she had clear conservative values on politics and religion – generally, she did not overtly subscribe to issues of race (Miller, 2018). Overall, these political or religious views were not necessarily promoted on social media as frequently or as strongly as her advocacy for her Tradwife lifestyle. Conservative Tradwives presented a *lifestyle aesthetic*. Their content was subtle in its right-wing affiliation and predominantly promoted traditional gender roles and a feminine

lifestyle (including homemaking and stay-at-home motherhood). These women appeared to be the most focused on branding and presentation, and were more likely to convey soft femininity in their online content. This was achieved largely through hallmarks of femininity such as warm and/or pastel pink colourways, which are known to evoke feelings of happiness and security, (Clarke & Costall, 2008; Kumar, 2017). Examples presented below.

**Figure 16**  
*Conservative Right Tradwife Examples - The Lifestyle Aesthetic*



Conversely, *Alt-Right Tradwives* offered the least feminine aesthetic with their Tradwife identity rooted in their Alt-Right identity. She used her platform to advocate for the Alt-Right cause and overtly discussed Alt-Right value systems such as white supremacy, heteropatriarchy and anti-feminism (Berlet, 2004). While the Alt-Right Tradwife could still be classified as an influencer who monetised her online presence, she appeared more selective of the brands she aligned with, openly rejecting anything liberal. Alt-Right Tradwives presented a much more *ideological aesthetic*, examples as below.



**Figure 18**  
*Alt-Lite Tradwife Examples - The Blended Aesthetic*



*Religious Tradwives* spanned the right-wing landscape from Conservative Right to Alt-Right and used their platforms to promote a life structured around following their God or deity(s). They emphasised a patriarchal system of family and society and promoted the idea that God(s)/deity(s) designed humanity with hierarchical distinctions between people based upon sex, gender, and sometimes race. Men were hailed as the head of the house, dominant figure, and decision maker, while women were promoted as submissive and passive (Whitaker, 2022). Functionally, this patriarchal belief system promoted a woman's role as mother and wife and a belief in the creation of large families. Religious Tradwives shared tips and tricks on mothering as a #sahm (stay-at-home mom/mum), alongside homemaking and homesteading. Religious Tradwives were Pagan, Evangelical, Catholic, Alt-Catholic, Orthodox Christian, Mormon or non-denominational Christian women. Some core differences within religious Tradwives could be seen with Pagan Tradwives presenting more extreme right-wing content when compared to Christian Tradwives.

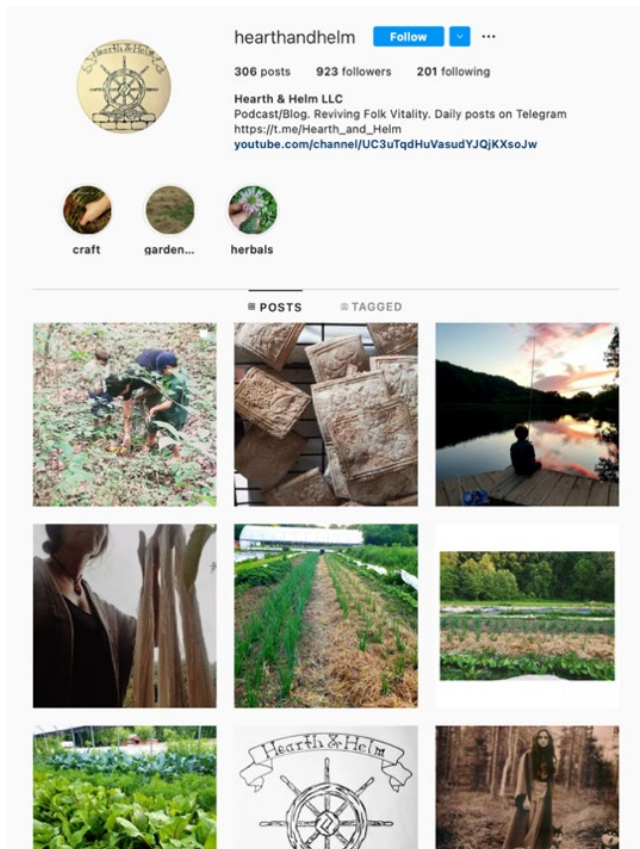
*Pagan Tradwives* presented a back-to-basics approach to everyday life with beliefs of animism and pantheism underpinning their natural and environmental aesthetic (Adler, 2006). These Tradwives promoted traditional gender roles in the context of providing for their family through an ethnic Paganism<sup>7</sup> spiritual lens and a pre-Christian traditional value system. Rather than subscribing to the traditional physical embodiment of patriarchal gender roles as man and woman, Pagan Tradwives discussed an embodiment of archetypes such as the divine femininity and God of Goddesses (Auryn, 2017; Sonnex et al., 2022) who they used as guides to emulate traditional and feminine roles in the home. Within their online content, they frequently shared recipes, back-to-basics do-it-yourself solutions to housework, and homesteading tips alongside extolling the benefits of organic eating from home gardens. These women also advocated for the benefits of natural medicine and apothecary. Overall, the aesthetic of Pagan Tradwives was very natural, earthy, and spiritual to reflect their alignment to Pagan archetypes of femininity and the role of the feminine woman in the home. Pagan Tradwives in this research typically promoted reproduction of a white European race and culture and as such openly subscribed to an Alt-Right position. Hearth and Helm @hearthandhelm is an Alt-Right group account with 923 followers. It is managed by Pagan Tradwives aiming to ‘revive folk vitality in the modern world’, as captured in an Instagram post; *“This is the Hearth, and this is the Helm. It’s the Hearth, where the stones are warm, your boots are drying, and the bread is buttered.. because that’s a metaphor for our comfy, nurturing, sane selves.. The Hearth is in sync with our Helm – our ships, our sails, swords.. our raiding, berserker, conquering selves.. This is an analogy that many dissidents can relate to today as we find ourselves in the modern struggle of reclaiming our racial identity –*

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<sup>7</sup> Ethnic Paganism can be traced back to Vikings and the Germanic people of the Iron Age who believed Paganism - then named Norse Paganism - to be Europe’s ‘true heritage’ (Strmiska, 2018).

*between living wholesome, peaceful, lives and undoing the indoctrination we've been subjected to AND knowing that as women and men we much recognize that we are war and must bear breast and sword... ”* (Hearth and Helm, 2022). Through direct relation to the Eurocentric value system of right-wing or Ethnic Paganism (Gardell, 2003), Hearth and Helm frequently discussed a return to their ‘true heritage’ through the Tradwife lifestyle of homesteading, alongside ideas of racial purity and the role of women as homemakers and men as Vikings, protectors and warriors (Strmiska, 2018). On their YouTube channel with 1,500 subscribers, Hearth and Helm argued the importance of holding central an appreciation for masculinity and how to raise strong men who are warriors and protectors guided by the force of Odin.

**Figure 19**  
*Pagan Religious Tradwife @hearthandhelm*

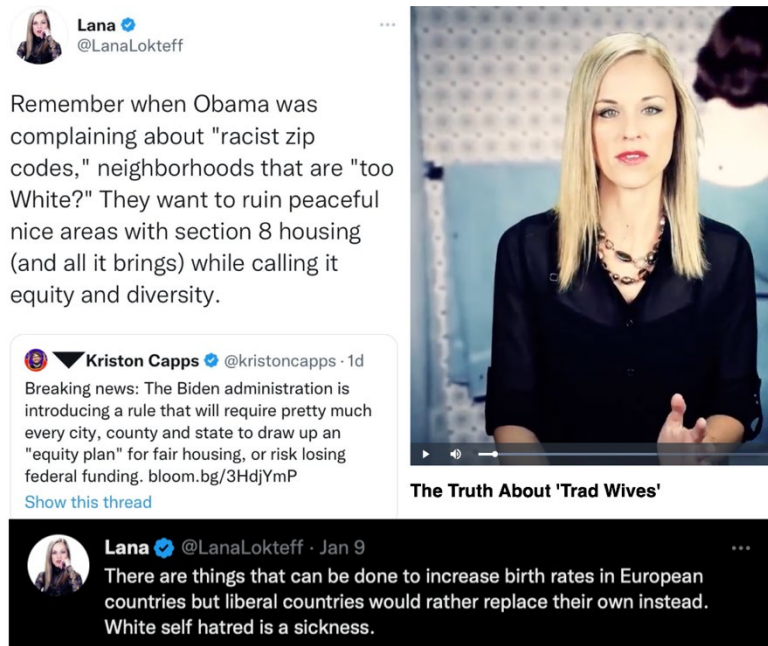


Pagan Tradwives further promoted white supremacy and gender stereotypes through the guise of conspiratoriality. Defined as an online movement of masculine political cynicism coupled with feminine spiritual altruism (Ward & Voas, 2011), elements of conspiratoriality were actively channelled by Pagan Tradwives providing a level of spiritual optimism to their often cynical worldviews. Believing men and women have fundamentally different roles in society (Kraemer, 2012), some Pagan Tradwives used an adoption of mythological figures, gods, goddesses and archetypes to justify their positioning within the family unit without undermining the role of men as protectors and warriors. Through the merging of their traditional Pagan identity with other right-wing ideological views such as a positioning within the Alt-Right, Pagan Tradwives justified their dual role as online influencers as well as wives and mothers - promoting the important role women play in a movement that has traditionally had no room for feminine perspective.

Lana Lokteff was a prime example of an Alt-Right Pagan Tradwife with 53,000 Twitter followers. While Lana has increasingly become more counterculture in her Tradwife expression, she is still a devout Pagan. Accordingly, she attributes her traditional views on the role of women, and advocacy for the continuation of the white race to Paganism. In a video shared to Lana's platform, RedIceTV, she interviews author Askr Svarte regarding his book 'Polemos: The Dawn of Pagan Traditionalism.' In this video Lana and Askr discuss how the contemporary revitalisation of Pagan traditionalism will allow people to live their most authentic life. For Lana, this means never complying nor giving in to internationalism and race mixing - "*Paganism represents a rebellion against this new world order that has just completely gone nuts*" (Lokteff, 2022). Lana was interesting as she presented differently from the typically earthy aesthetic of other Pagan Tradwives. She presented both as an ideological and somewhat glamorous *modern wife* aesthetic as shown below. Rather than promoting the divine femininity archetype, she discussed the role of women in the Alt-Right

cause as ‘lionesses, shield maidens, and Valkyries’ (Darby, 2017). As quoted in an interview, Lana believes the role of women is to “*inspire men to fight political battles for the future of white civilisation*” (Darby, 2017).

**Figure 20**  
*Alt-Right Pagan Tradwife Example - Lana Lokteff*



Pagan Tradwives balanced feminine empowerment and submission to offer a seemingly palatable and attractive portrayal of women in the Alt-Right while remaining clear about their spiritual role and position within their family and wider RWE community. Often driven by conspiracies such as a ‘New World Order’ believing that an elite force is plotting to create a totalitarian world government to minimise the white race (Flores, 2022), Alt-Right Pagan Tradwives were ultimately motivated by the continuation of the white race and the revitalisation of ethnic Paganism.

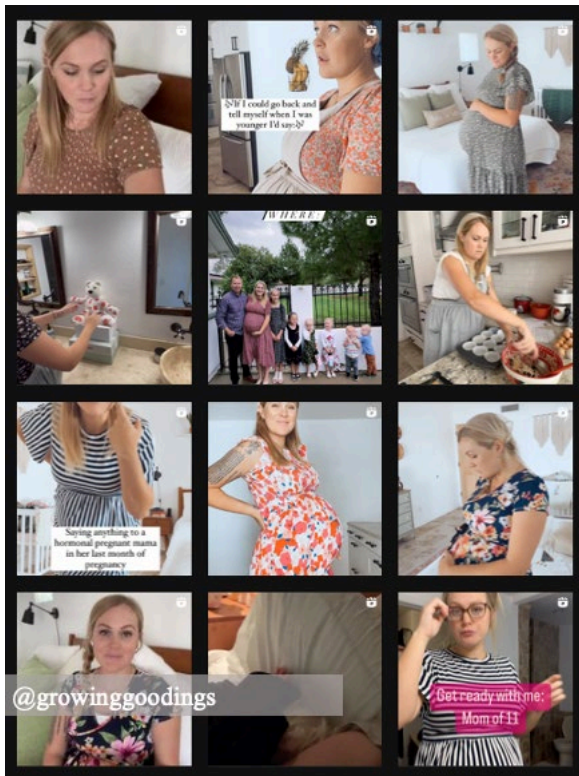
Conversely, the online content presented by *Christian Tradwives* was rooted in biblical gender roles and the patriarchal protection of femininity. These women used their social media presence to promote a woman’s duty to serve her husband and family. They

supported a variety of Christian Right ideologies including socially conservative, traditionalist ways of life and family, and an opposition to progressivism, feminism, reproductive rights, LGBTTQIA+ rights, and gender equality (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017; Stoeckl, 2020). The lifestyle of Christian Tradwives was firmly centred within the home - more closely fitting the stereotypical persona of a housewife. Many Christian Tradwives reiterated a Tradwife lifestyle because of its direct association with biblical teachings about men and women (Coleman & Hackett, 2015). They presented as deeply devoted to God, which informed their devotion to the nuclear family unit. By extension, fundamentalist Christian Tradwives were colloquially referred to as “fundie women and/or tradfundies” and overall their aesthetic was very soft, nurturing, and ‘put-together’. When compared to Pagan Tradwives, Christian Tradwives appeared to be significantly more conscious of the presentation of themselves and their children, ensuring all were immaculately and modestly dressed. Christian Tradwives were often shown wearing a head covering and/or apron as an overt symbolic nod to their commitment to God and husband. These women were generally not as extreme in right-wing presentations as Pagan Tradwives, with many sitting within the Conservative Right and Alt-Lite, however, evidence of Alt-Right perspectives could still be found in some Orthodox Christian, Mormon, and Alt-Catholic Tradwives. Alex (@growinggoodings) is a typical example of a Conservative Christian Tradwife. She advocated for the creation of large families, traditional gender roles, and a Christian lifestyle to her 121,000 Instagram followers. Alex has conceived a total of 11 children, four of which resulted in miscarriage. Wearing a head covering to signify her piety, she regularly discussed miscarriage in religious terms on her social media platforms, as well as pregnancy after loss, the benefits of home-schooling children, homesteading, rejection of modernity, and her Christian faith journey. Alex is a self-identified non-denominational Christian, however, appears to support fundamentalist Evangelical Christian perspectives including the Bible’s

authority; crucicentrism<sup>8</sup>; Jesus' supremacy as saviour; and the importance of active Christian service and preaching. Alex's social media presence was very soft and feminine, using light colours and modest dress to convey her highly conservative religious affiliation.

**Figure 21**

*Christian Religious Tradwife Example – @growinggoodings*



Cynthia (@cynthialoewen) is a slightly different example of a Christian Religious Tradwife, presenting a more glamorous blend of the 'girl-next-door' and '1950's housewife' aesthetics. She actively practices dominionism and used her platforms to project values of a traditional Christian society based on a literal interpretation of the Bible, biblical law, and the specific teachings of Catholicism to her 19,000 Instagram followers and 31,000 YouTube subscribers. A former Miss Earth Canada, Cynthia is now a self-identified traditional

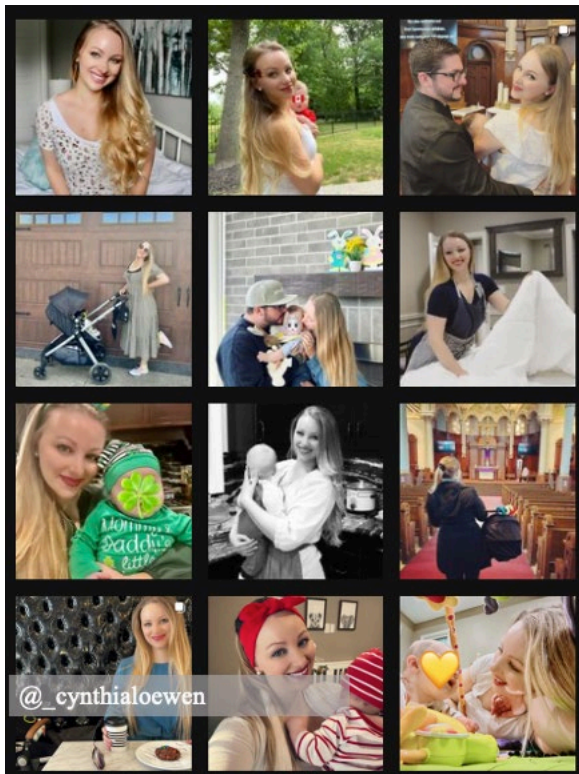
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<sup>8</sup> Crucicentrism is the belief that lives can be changed by Christian conversion and a 'born again' experience (Noll, 2003).

submissive wife and homemaker. Through her social media presence, she endeavoured to help women develop in their ‘homemaking, femininity, etiquette skills, and classy lifestyle’. Submission to her husband is framed as neither demeaning nor oppressive, and instead as allowing her to be more emotionally balanced, healthy, and closer to God and her faith.

**Figure 22**

*Christian Religious Tradwife Example - @\_cynthialoewen*



Broadly, Christian Tradwives actively connected ideas of Christian nationalism with defences of patriarchal norms and traditionalist gender ideologies (Whitehead & Perry, 2019). They presented a level of religious extremism that largely excludes diversity of thought, gender equality and non-heterosexual sexualities (Pratt, 2017). For Christian Tradwives, religious commitment and conservatism appeared to be powerfully linked with fertility expectations, and the sanctity of life (as such all were staunchly anti-abortion). The continuation of their fundamental and biblical views of society was promoted not only through reproduction, but also through an obligation to teach children the same conservative

ideology and religion. Home-schooling was a prominent discussion point for Christian Tradwives, with many women appearing to tailor their children's education towards their traditional religious ideology. As such, intergenerational transmission of extreme right-wing beliefs within very closed and highly monitored environments could be considered to take place.

Christian Tradwives' social norms were rooted in their interpretation of the Bible which influenced the way they dressed and communicated, their relationship with modern medicine, and their interpretations of notable societal and political events. At its extreme, Christian Tradwives' sacralising of social boundaries revealed an antipathy toward immigrants, prejudicial attitudes toward minority communities, and a rejection of same-sex marriage and trans rights. Their focus on large families further perpetuated Christian nationalist ideas of fertility, ethno-nationalism, and the concept of Christianity as a dominant feature of white ethno-culture which needs to be protected from extinction (Perry et al., 2022). Feeding into elements of the Great Replacement conspiracy theory<sup>9</sup>, Alt-Lite and Alt-Right Christian Tradwives appeared to use Christianity to advocate for the continuation of the white race and/or white Culture. In turn, these ideas were upheld by political Tradwives.

*Political Tradwives* used their platforms to advocate for right-wing political and conservative views. These women communicated an ultimate rejection of feminism, a leftist perspective, and the perceived liberal 'agenda'. Espousing Islamophobia, xenophobia, extreme nationalism, and sometimes nativism, as well as Paleo-conservatism, political Tradwives used their social media presence to try to engage a community of likeminded

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<sup>9</sup> The Great Replacement conspiracy theory is one of the most prominent within the Alt-Right and holds that the white race are being replaced by minority groups, people of colour, and immigrants (Crawford, 2022; Wilson & Flanagan, 2022).

woman. As strong, capable advocates for conservative politics, while also respecting their husbands and embracing their role in society as a feminine woman, the look of Political Tradwives was much sharper than Religious Tradwives. These women tended to use cooler green and blue tones in their online branding - colours which are known to evoke feelings of peacefulness, relaxation, cleanliness, and calm (Clarke & Costall, 2008). Like Religious Tradwives, Political Tradwives presented themselves impeccably, clearly taking pride in their physical appearance. However, when compared to Religious Tradwives, they appeared to be less focused on modest dress. These women could largely be categorised into the *Modern Tradwife* aesthetic with a feminine yet slightly more sexualised presentation. These women did not actively promote the homemaking element of Tradwives, compared to other women in the dataset and instead were career women, using their online influencer status to leverage their political impact.

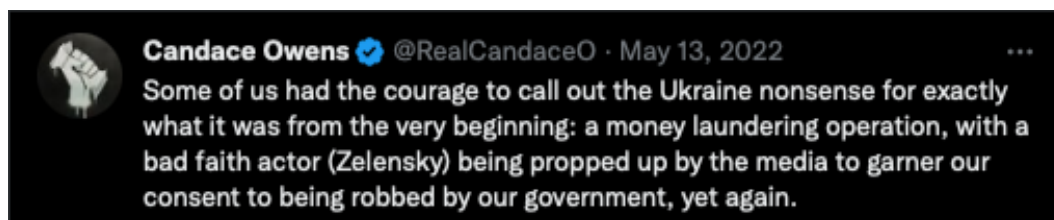
Political Tradwives used their platform to offer their perspective on notable political and social issues (i.e., COVID-19 vaccine response, overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, trans rights, and the War on Ukraine). America's political landscape of the time appeared to provide an environment for these women to overtly promote their conservative and/or Republican views on social media (Giroux, 2022). For example, Alt-Lite Candace Owens (@RealCandaceO) leveraged American political and social issues to bolster her support and grow her 3.1 million Twitter followers in 2022. The following shows posts from Candace's Twitter feed regarding abortion legislation, the Ukrainian War and identity politics.

**Figure 23**

*Candace Owens sharing her views on Twitter about the overturning of Roe vs. Wade*

**Figure 24**

*Candace Owens sharing her views on Twitter about the War on Ukraine*



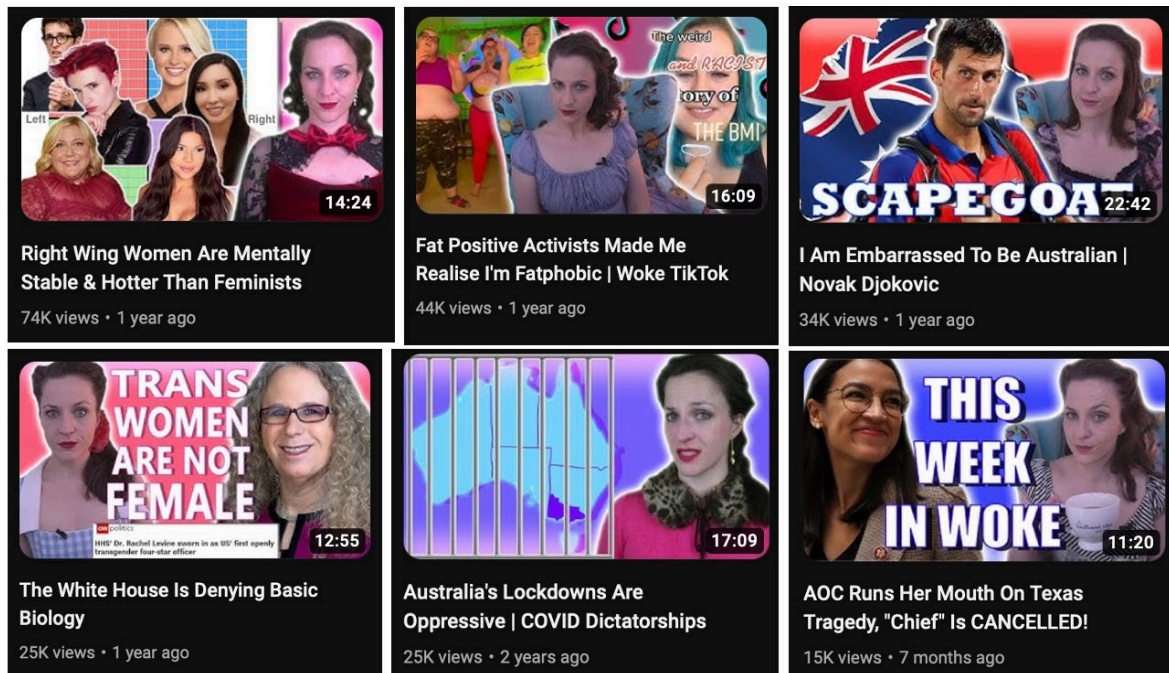
**Figure 25**

*Candace Owens sharing her views on Twitter about Transgender rights*



Wrapped up in the commentary of Political Tradwives was also evidence of dis&misinformation surrounding the key social and political debates mentioned above (Holroyd, 2022; Lee & Hosam, 2020). The following shows examples from the YouTube channel of Daisy Cousens, a Conservative Right Political Tradwife from Australia who presented a ‘1950’s housewife’ aesthetic. Like Candace, Daisy used her platform to negate ‘the leftist agenda’, often providing commentary on news headlines and key issues reported in mainstream media. Daisy ran a segment on her YouTube channel titled ‘This Week in Woke’ where she “*discusses the sillier side of a new cycle full of death, despair and decay over tea in these troubled times*” (Cousens, 2022a) with her 213,000 subscribers. Daisy - like other Political Tradwives - was found to promote transphobic rhetoric, Coronavirus scepticism and an antivaxx stance, as well as support for global right-wing leaders such as Marine Le Pen and Donald Trump.

**Figure 26**  
Daisy Cousens' YouTube Channel



Daisy has also used her professional platform as a conservative reporter to criticise international politics such as mandates and restrictions pertaining to the COVID-19 happenings in Aotearoa NZ. She specifically targeted Jacinda Ardern by stating in a Sky News column;

*“While she [Jacinda Ardern] poses as the smiling, doe-eyed, “compassionate” face of modern progressivism, beneath the soft veneer is a sneering intolerance for anyone who may challenge her. Never mind the fact she claims New Zealand supports the development of “a new global health legal instrument” for pandemic preparedness. Apparently, she doesn’t think it was easy enough for governments to wrench away our inherent freedoms for a virus that for most of us presents itself as a mild case of the flu” (Cousens, 2022b).*

The sanctity of life was also an important issue and the overturning of Roe v. Wade was a particularly prominent point of discussion for Political Tradwives. Offering space to share their pro-life affiliation, many Political Tradwives celebrated the Supreme Court’s decision, using it to discuss their belief in traditional gender roles within active careers.

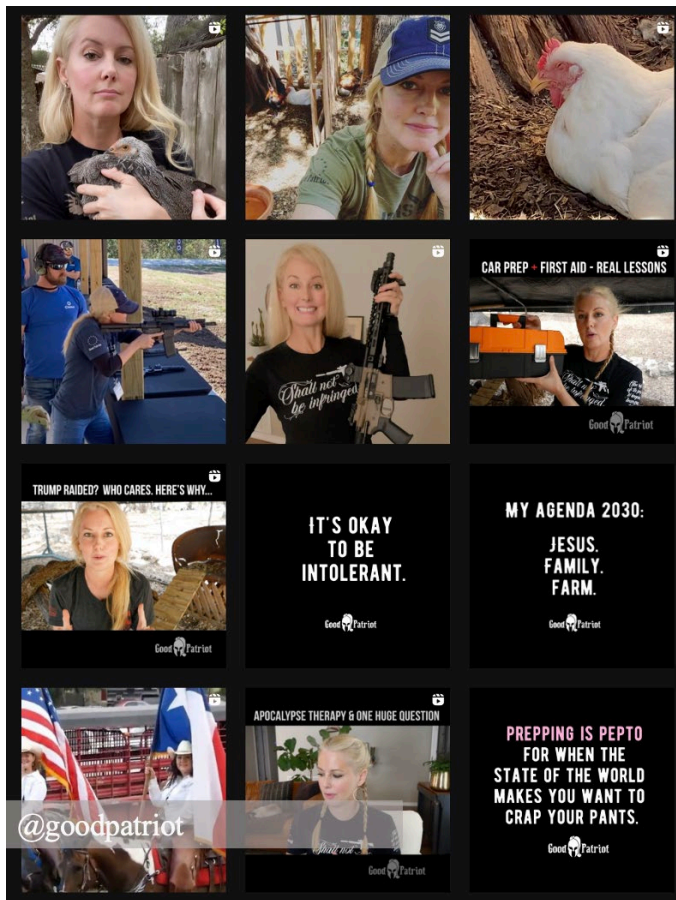
Political Tradwives regularly adopted career positions traditionally seen as outside the scope of wife and mother. In negotiating this position, these women could be understood to take up notions of complementarianism (Zahay, 2022), whereby women are complementary to men rather than submissive to them. Complementarianism rhetoric appeared to reconcile the disconnection between Political Tradwives and their careers outside the home. Through this lens, a traditional woman's role in society is to complement men and reproduce not only children, but also cultural and national identities (Zahay, 2022). Political Tradwives were seen to actively compliment their husbands, reproducing a traditional nationalist ideology through the birth of children and/or their positions of political, social, and cultural advocacy.

Equally invested in political discourse, a rejection of the 'leftist agenda', and with a predisposition to conspiratorial thinking were Militia Tradwives.

*Militia Tradwives* represented a publicising of women's roles in the modern militia movement. Historically, militia women have largely existed in the shadows with men in the movement traditionally taking up positions of advocacy (Kovaleski, 1995). However, this may well be changing with research indicating that Militia Tradwives (labelled 'militia wives' in the research) actively promote appealing constructions of the militia beyond notions of plaid shirted white men existing on the political fringe, advocating for gun and individual freedoms (Terinoni, 1997). From advocacy to apocalyptic prophesising, Militia Tradwives in this research promoted the militia's historical opposition to government authority (ADL, 2020) and shared advice on how to prepare for the worst through a lens of traditional femininity. Just as the militia believe themselves to be defenders of the social order and a last line of defence against perceived threats of immigrants and liberals (Doxsee, 2021), Militia Tradwives presented a duty to both support their husbands and offer education for other women on how to do the same. The only Militia Tradwife - Good Patriot (@goodpatriot) - identified in this research offered a unique insight into how militia may be amalgamating

with the Tradwife online culture to place women in positions of influence, encouraging new members and a greater feminine influence. Good Patriot strongly identified with militia positioning on conservative family values (Kovaleski, 1995), including an opposition to abortion, the feminist movement, LGBTTTQIA+ rights, support for freedoms around firearm ownership, limited or no government oversight and home-schooling advocacy. In a video titled ‘Why We Should Never Apologise For Our RACE’, Good Patriot discusses how the Black Lives Matter movement was a ruse orchestrated by the media to attack white people - *“black lives don’t really matter unless they’re injured or killed by whites and then the media tells you to be mad about it”*. In this video she also discusses how *“black on white crime is 9x higher than white on black crime”*. Good Patriot’s belief is that *“positioning black people as the perpetual victim and white people as a perpetual perpetrator”*, buys into a larger mainstream media and Government agenda (Good Patriot, 2020). Subsequently, her Alt-Right positioning was largely wrapped up in her anti-government, prepper ideology and conspiratorial beliefs. Good Patriot’s aesthetic was practical yet glamorous, combining the *modern wife* aesthetic with distinct militia-style branding.

**Figure 27**  
Militia Tradwife example - @goodpatriot



Good Patriot shared content centred around patriotism, doomsday prepping, conspiracism, and the right to bear arms with her 41,000 Instagram followers and 110,000 YouTube subscribers. She advocated for the removal of government intervention from everyday life and promoted the role of women in the development of strong, autonomous men who are prepared to fight for freedom. As stated in a YouTube video titled *Making MEN into WARRIORS – by being better WOMEN*; “Women shouldn’t be president. Some women shouldn’t be allowed to vote.. It’s not the soy milk making men weak, it’s the women not knowing their place.. The pedestal of leadership only has room for one, and that position was given to men. If you as the woman are up on that platform, you need to get off.. Don’t be a weight around a man’s neck, be an encouraging asset in his life. We need our men to be strong to slay demons” (Good Patriot, 2021). Although Good Patriot participated in more

masculine roles and hobby's when compared to other Tradwives, her actions were still firmly under the guise of helping and supporting her husband. She appears to be a contemporary example of the 'help-mate', a term described by militia women interviewed in Terinoni's research (1997). Defined in a similar vein to complementarianism, the positioning of militia Tradwives as help-mate alludes to a level of practical action. Good Patriot was seen shooting guns and participating in activities outside the home and beyond the kitchen. She did not appear to actively participate in homemaking and homesteading as other Tradwives did, instead presenting as her husband's right hand woman. Through the positioning of help-mate, militia Tradwives could be understood as taking up slightly different roles from Religious Tradwives who serve men in a patriarchal sense, and Political Tradwives who complement men.

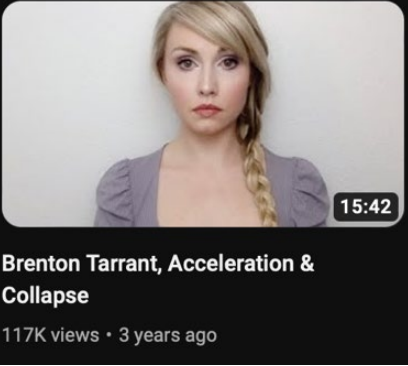
The last group identified were *Counterculture Tradwives* who were firmly positioned and activists for the Alt-Right cause as a whole, rather than directly motivated by religion, politics, or militia values. While right-wing views on religion and politics could be seen in some of these women, the dominant commentary of Counterculture Tradwives was a rejection of the liberal agenda and a direct intention to mainstream the Alt-Right alongside ideas of white supremacy and white racism counterculture (Gardell, 2003). Counterculture Tradwives frequently shared their disdain of the mainstream, especially media outlets (often referred to on social media as 'MSM' – mainstream media) and heavily critiqued the contemporary social emphasis on identity politics, disparaging 'social and political correctness,' and so-called 'woke normies.' Their aesthetic was largely that of the *modern wife*, with many showing a more sexualised interpretation of the traditional Tradwife look - especially when compared to Religious Tradwives. Counterculture Tradwives were the least likely to engage with highly regulated platforms like Instagram and Facebook, instead being most active on less regulated YouTube, Twitter, and fringe platforms like Minds.com,

Rumble, and Gab. Counterculture Tradwives identified in this research were relatively popular and averaged over 100,000 subscribers on sharing platforms such as YouTube. It was not uncommon for there to be hundreds of thousands of views on individual videos.

For example, Rebecca (@blondeinthebellyofthebeast) has 124,000 subscribers on her YouTube with anywhere from 20,000 to 200,000 views on each of her videos. She frequently collaborated with other prominent Alt-Right women on how women can accelerate the Alt-Right agenda. Well known in the online Alt-Right community for her hard-hitting and unapologetic commentary on current events and global issues, her review on the March 15 mosque attacks in Aotearoa, NZ generated 117,000 views and received feedback – particularly from men - such as *“I was so afraid to watch this video. I don't know why, but I was afraid you were going to just come out disavowing and countersignalling. I feel bad now for doubting you. Of course you'd find a way to slice through the bullshit. You are a thought leader, you are the real deal, and you are appreciated;”* *“Thank God I found this women's video, blonde. my jaw dropped just sat there listening to her take. She really gets it and is able to teach. although I am not at her level of understanding. I am a white man living in So Cal so I know what it's like to be in the belly of the beast, I would say. I definitely am alone, but not so much when I hear and read things like this. Carry on”* and; *“You're a voice of reason amongst the howling masses. We need many more like you.”* Below is commentary on the content of this YouTube video.

**Table 6**

*@blondeinthebellyofthebeast response to Aotearoa NZ's March 15 attacks - commentary*

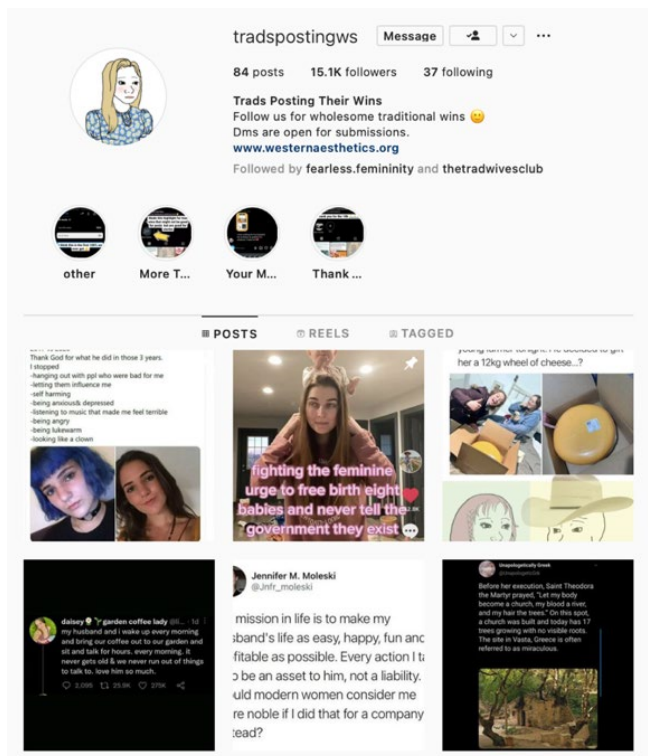
	<p>In this video Rebecca (@blondeinthebellyofthebeast) discusses how the shooting in Ōtautahi Christchurch was “<i>unsurprising</i>” and warns viewers that the world will see more like it as “<i>angry young men like Brenton Tarrant who feel cheated out of the birth right and have no hope for the future take drastic measures... for inevitable reaction.</i>”</p> <p>Rebecca analyses Tarrant’s manifesto in detail, highlighting ‘<i>The West’s continued cultural demise</i>’ as the reason for the attack. Rebecca believes fighting nihilism is the answer and the strongest prevention tactic against future violent events like March 15; “<i>We have to create a culture that’s worth fighting for, because the West right now is not.</i>”</p>
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Counterculture Tradwives like Rebecca offer insight into the extent women are perpetuating the Alt-Right cause and broadcasting their perspectives to a wider audience of both men and women. Through providing political commentary as well as interviews with thought leaders in the Alt-Right, Counterculture Tradwives offer a softer face for extremity. Counterculture Tradwives were also found to be depersonalised accounts with no clear identity or ownership. These accounts used social media platforms to reshare or remix content from other accounts in an attempt to generate further reach and engagement. This version of Counterculture Tradwives did not typically share the same aesthetic approach to content as any other Tradwives in the dataset (i.e., a strong feminine brand and identity). Instead, they appeared to be created for a two-fold purpose; (1) to question and counter liberal views and value systems, and (2) to promote the benefits of being a Tradwife – sometimes through the sharing of dis&misinformation. The inclusion of Alt-Right meme culture characters such as ‘wojak’ and ‘kek’ alongside ‘Tradgirl’ (a cartoon depiction of

Tradwives) illustrated an intention of these Counterculture Tradwives to amalgamate the Tradwife cause with that of the broader Alt-Right.

A good example of this depersonalised form of Counterculture Tradwife is @tradspostingws. Known for sharing various types of content believed to be a “win” for the Tradwife or traditional ideology to their 15,000 followers, @tradspostingws shared every post with the question “Trad win?” in order to generate engagement and conversation. Followers were encouraged to submit posts through the page’s direct messages as a way to further engage their audience. Largely embedded in meme culture, as illustrated by the ‘Tradgirl’ meme (Know Your Meme, 2020) used for the account’s profile image, this type of Counterculture Tradwife promoted their RWE ideology through a critical and conservative analysis of the mainstream.

**Figure 28**  
Counterculture Tradwife example @tradspostingws



Counterculture Tradwives were the strongest perpetrators of RWE ideology identified in this research and were the most overt in their attempts to recruit and radicalise other women to the Alt-Right. These women took on strong advocacy roles and appeared to use their feminine aesthetic as a legitimising factor for their cause. All counterculture Tradwives (except @tradspostingws) presented with the same immaculate presentation for their online brand, sharing strong Alt-Right rhetoric and extreme commentary regarding liberals and minority communities. These women actively engaged in the contemporary radicalisation technique redpilling, and appeared to use techniques such as subversive exposure to subtly influence the opinion of their audience. Counterculture Tradwives actively normalised Alt-Right belief systems, including the use of dis&misinformation to attract new audiences (Liang & Cross, 2020). These pathways are discussed in more depth later in this section.

### ***The Deepening of Commitment within Tradwives***

An interesting observation noted across the Tradwife landscape was how some Tradwives changed the way they presented themselves, and prioritised their content. In some cases, Tradwife lifestyles appeared to grow more conservative and/or extreme over time. It appeared that there may have been a process akin to radicalisation that was happening within particular Tradwives that could be observed through tracking their historical online content. An example of this is Alex (@growinggoodings); Throughout the time Alex has been active on Instagram, she appears – at surface level - to have become more overtly religious and conservative in her appearance. The below visually illustrates this change through a comparison of her Instagram profile feed in 2017 vs. 2022.

**Figure 29**  
*Continuum of extremity within Tradwives*



Over a period of five years, Alex changed the overall aesthetic of her Instagram profile. Once focused on fitness and body image, Alex now dresses very modestly, wearing a head covering to reflect her commitment to God, her husband, and her family. In 2017, the colourway of Alex's profile was very blue and focused on harsh contrasts whilst in 2022, Alex presents a soft, feminine aesthetic. Although Alex (@growinggoodings) is not necessarily an example of a Tradwife moving from Conservative Right to Alt-Right, her changing aesthetic and social media presentation offers an illustration of how a spectrum of extremity can be found both between and within Tradwives.

It is unclear what motivated Alex to shift from a liberal to a more conservative online presence, however she was not the only Tradwife communicating this shift. The same pattern could be found on other Tradwife accounts such as @Classicallyabby, @postmodernmom, @darlingacademy, and @daisycousens. Research has cited major 'coming of age' life events such as having children, alongside societal threats to safety and one's sense of self as factors which can lead individuals to adopt more conservative social and/or political approaches to the world (Kerry & Murray, 2020; Stening, 2023). An affiliation to social conservatism has been found to increase with age, with one's religious identity specifically appearing to

fluctuate throughout developmental stages - strengthening in adulthood (Gouveia et al., 2015). A variety of factors were observed which appeared to influence women to initially become Tradwives including trauma, motherhood, marriage, the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health, and stress. For some of these women, their Tradwife persona became much more conservative and extreme over time. Regardless of motivating factors, the Tradwife persona appeared to offer women security and freedom to feel content within a lifestyle of stay-at-home motherhood, homemaking, and prioritisation of traditional heteronormative gender roles. With unprecedented levels of uncertainty facing the world through political, economic, environmental, and social challenges (McNerney et al., 2022; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the inward and individualistic nature of conservatism appears to be a protective factor for Tradwives. This growing sympathy for conservatism appeared to influence why women in this research chose to adopt a Tradwife lifestyle, and is suggested as a primary motivation for why the Tradwife lifestyle has gained significant attention in recent years (Couric, 2022; Iovine, 2022; Kato, 2023; Kelsey-Sugg & Marin, 2021; Kilgallon, 2023; Lang, 2022; Mandel, 2023; Pigg, 2023). While the identified changes within Tradwife profiles does not necessarily indicate a pathway to violence, it outlines a deepening of commitment to right-wing ideology that may infer a process of radicalisation towards a more extreme right-wing perspective.

Holon 1: The Tradwife Landscape offered a conceptualisation of the Tradwives observed and positioned these women within their broader right-wing communities. Through the introduction of markers of extremity, the dynamic nature of the term 'Tradwife' could begin to be understood. Taking these markers of extremity one step further, and placing them within the identified right-wing expressions of Tradwives (religion, politics, militia, and counterculture) allowed categorisation of the similarities and differences both between and within Tradwives. Through these findings, the extent of Tradwife diversity of thought and

action was apparent. It is important to note the classifications of Tradwives to particular right-wing expressions (i.e., religious, political, militia, counterculture) are not linear, nor are they definitive. Just like those within the broader right-wing landscape, Tradwives may exist across multiple right-wing expressions and at varying degrees. For example, Lana Lokteff frequently engages at a counterculture and political level through her commitment to white nationalism and supremacy, however Lana is also committed to Paganism and this also plays out in her online identity.

One way the Tradwife Landscape is actioned appeared to be the cross-platform membership of Tradwives. Regardless of their ideology(ies) of choice, all Tradwives in this research used the norms of various social media platforms to engage the widest audience and build strength and trust within their communities. Holon 2: Cross-platform Influencers unpacks this in more depth.

## **Holon 2: Cross-platform Influencers**

Social media users exist across a variety of online arenas, with the typical user active on an average of 6.6 platforms (Data Reportal, 2022). For Tradwives, the utilisation of different social media platforms offered maximum opportunity for their message and online identity to be spread to the widest audience. Tradwives appeared to engage with platforms in different ways, responding to the norms and guidelines/regulations on individual social media sites. Like all social media users (Lane, 2022), profile creation allowed Tradwives to create constructions of themselves that were flexible, changeable, and strategic. For Tradwives, these self-constructions included differing levels of content extremity, differing content formatting, and differing messaging. In the creation of these self-constructions, Tradwives appeared to negotiate discourses of beauty, heteronormativity, right-wing ideology, and a professional branded experience in order to cement themselves within mainstream influencer culture and most effectively communicate their right-wing ideological position. Through the

creation of online identities that highlighted heterosexuality and an idealised form of femininity, Tradwives appeared to actively play into traditional gender norms, using these to communicate the benefits of the *#Tradlife*. Through the subtle and strategic right-wing positioning of their messaging, Tradwives encouraged women to lean into heteronormative femininity and become members of the Tradwife movement.

With everyday lives increasingly digitalised, social media is a dominant space for connection and interaction (Lane, 2022). Regardless of ideological perspective, social media platforms provide unprecedented access to online arenas of public debate and communities of like-minded people. These online arenas can offer an ample breeding ground for radical ideologies and extremist thought to be spread, and people to be influenced. Extreme right-wing groups and movements are known to exploit social media's virality and ease of connection and interaction to rally their existing audiences, engage new audiences, and radicalise individuals (Paton et al., 2022). Radicalisation can be facilitated through immersion in 'filter bubbles' which is a relevant phenomenon across social media and is frequently exploited by those operating RWE accounts (Aydin et al., 2022). Filter bubbles refer to the human tendency to consume media that is similar to our own personal beliefs and views of the world - as opposed to media which challenges those beliefs (Wollebæk et al., 2019).

Creating positive feedback loops which strengthen our core perspective, social media algorithms broadly capitalise on this tendency to keep users engaged for the maximum amount of time. Essentially, the more a user watches content of a particular type or from a particular individual, the more the algorithm will prioritise this content in future. For those looped into to the consumption of extremist content, and/or those with a vulnerability to extremist beliefs, filter bubbles are a viable method for online radicalisation and contribute to a deepening of commitment to an ideological view over time (Aydin et al., 2022). The development of online communities around particular filter bubbles (known as the 'echo

chamber effect’) can further create tighter feedback loops which are more legitimising and powerful in their influence. Social media engagement (i.e., likes, comments, shares) and online community membership within a RWE context can contribute to conspiratorial thinking, fuel violent rhetoric, and at its extreme, incite violent action (Awan, 2016).

While this research found no evidence of any call to violence from Tradwives, the following section shows how Tradwives created unique online arenas within each of the dominant platforms they were found to be active on, and how their action across platforms attempted to recruit and radicalise (at times overtly) other individuals to the Tradwife cause, cementing their influential positioning both within their communities and on social media as a whole.

### *Twitter*

With over 3.6 million users, Twitter is a social networking platform with global reach (Forsey, 2021; Statista, 2022b). Known for its simplicity and ease of communication, Twitter is predominantly used to follow news and noteworthy events (Jay, 2022). Within RWE circles, Twitter has been used to spread hate speech, propaganda, and coordinate acts of violent extremism (Kouba, 2022). Events such as the 2021 Capitol Riots were reported to have been orchestrated on Twitter, with the platform’s retweeting feature providing the ability for messaging to be virally spread (Kouba, 2022). Also a notable space for the coordination of Islamist Extremism, ISIS has used Twitter to communicate its violent objectives and encourage lone actor attacks through the platform (Alava et al., 2017). In 2016, 235,000 accounts deemed to be connected to violent extremist action from a variety of ideological backgrounds were banned from the platform, in an orchestrated attempt to minimise the spread of extremist rhetoric (Benner, 2016). However, the recent acquisition of Twitter by Elon Musk has privatised the platform, sparking concern that pathways of online radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremism will arise from a lack of community

guidelines and regulations (Kouba, 2022). Since Musk's acquisition in April 2022, previously banned accounts such as that of notable Aotearoa NZ Alt-Right extremist Philip Arps (@ArpsPhil) have been reinstated with Musk's vision to bring 'freedom of speech without limitations' to the fore of the platform's objectives (Pao, 2022).

Twitter profiles were created by Tradwives to 'test the water' and gauge the popularity of a post before sharing content, ideological expressions, and/or themes across other platforms. Political and Counterculture Tradwives were the most active on Twitter as the platform appeared to offer a place for critical analysis of current events, topics of interest, and also the sharing of personal opinion in the form of skimmable content. While some of the content shared by Tradwives was clearly curated, other content read almost like running train-of-thought commentary. See below how The Transformed Wife used her Twitter page in this way, posting thought provoking bite sized pieces of information for her 18,600 followers.

**Figure 30**  
*The Transformed Wife Tweets in one day*

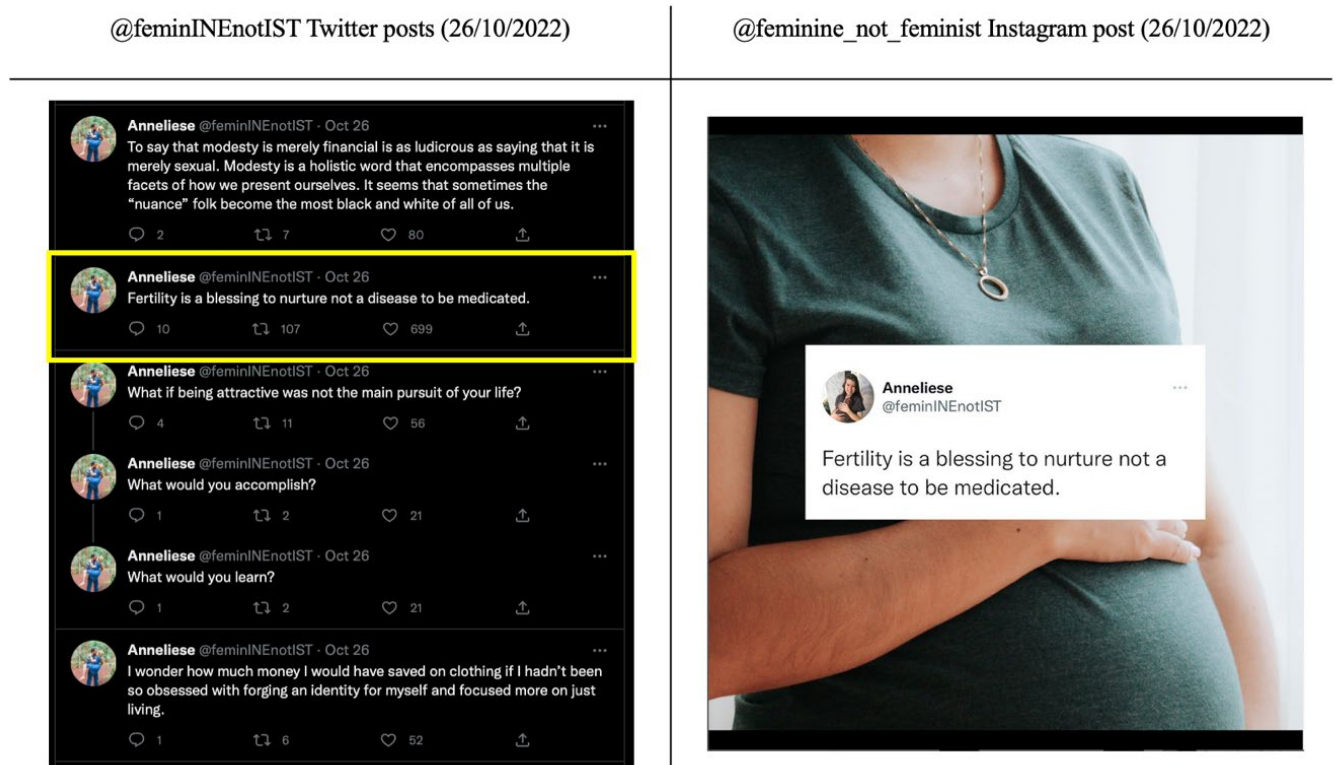


Twitter was one of the only platforms where it was normal to post these multiple updates in one day. Tradwives were often found to be more overt in their right-wing expression on Twitter, with this running train-of-thought commentary offering followers a less aesthetic understanding of who these women were and how they may be positioned within the Tradwife Landscape. Below are six pieces of content shared by Aneliese (@feminINEnotIST) to her 8,773 followers on Twitter, and then reformatted into a more curated format for her 150,000 Instagram followers. The sharing of multiple pieces of content

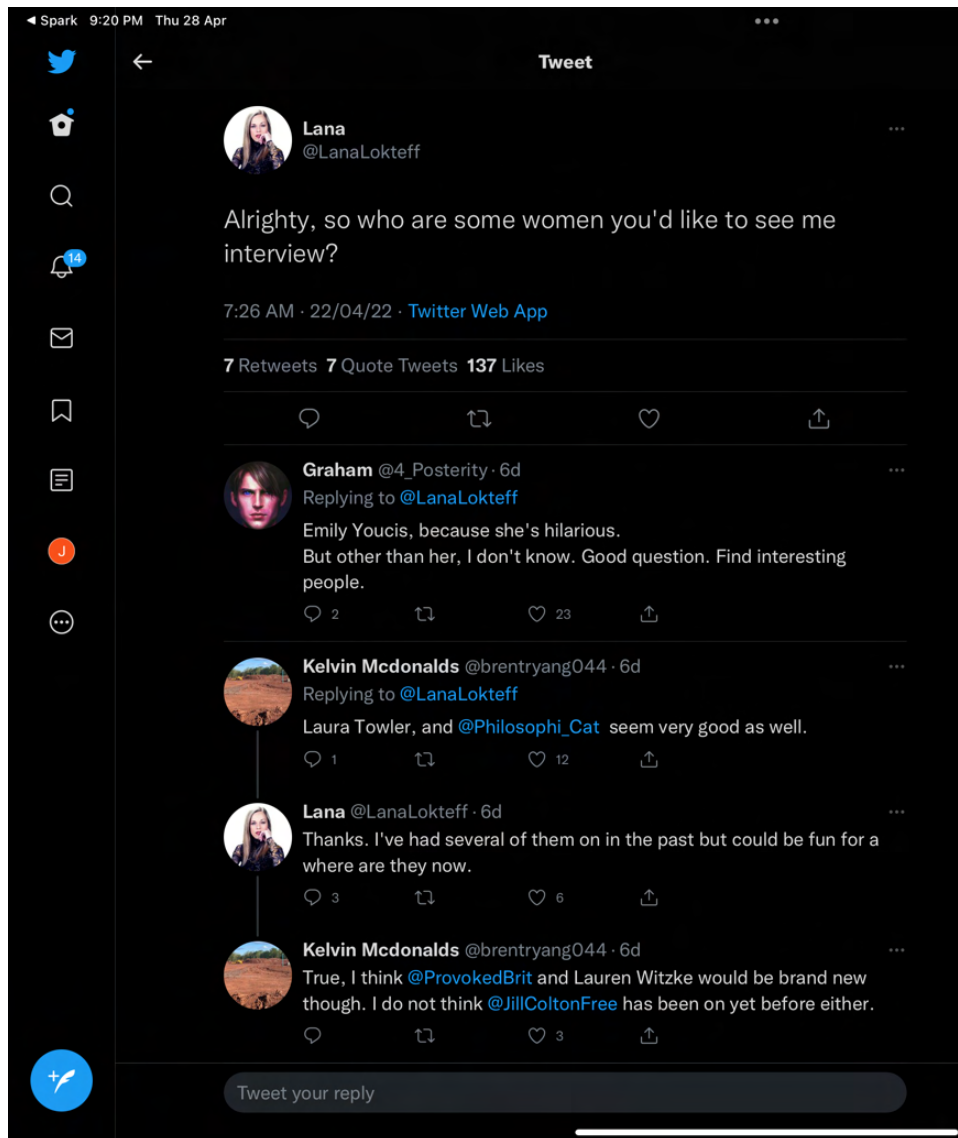
in one day is not as widely accepted on Instagram and thus Instagram housed more curated expressions of Tradwives when compared to networking platforms like Twitter.

**Figure 31**

*@feminINEnotIST Twitter vs. Instagram posting in one day*



Twitter also offered Tradwives a space to engage a wider audience and get follower buy-in on key topics of interest for future content. In the post below, Alt-Right Tradwife Lana Lokteff asked her 53,000 followers for names of women they would like to see her interview. This mechanism was used to incite conversation from Lana's followers with an underlying objective to reiterate Alt-Right views from a female perspective.



Although positioned within a female perspective, Tradwife content was not just targeted towards women. As shown in the above, men were frequently found engaging with Tradwife content, offering support for their ideology and cause. While analysing Tradwife followers was out of scope for this research, positive affirmations from men were frequently found in the comment sections of Tradwife content and this suggested men were active members of Tradwife audiences and communities. In a recent article, Lane (2022) found the action of women on social media is often influenced by masculine reaction as this is what generates the greatest reach. Women often present sexualised or hyper-feminised versions of themselves on social media in order to gain widespread attention and approval (Lane, 2022).

For Tradwives, the male gaze appeared to be actively considered in their online identities. Through their adoption of the Tradwife Aesthetic, Tradwives appeared to seek the affirmation of men within their communities, potentially in part because this affirmation was synonymous with better content performance on social media. Tradwife negotiation of their influential positioning within ideologies that are historically male-dominated was an interesting intersection that was observed throughout the data and will be discussed further in Holon 3: Feminine not Feminist.

### *Instagram*

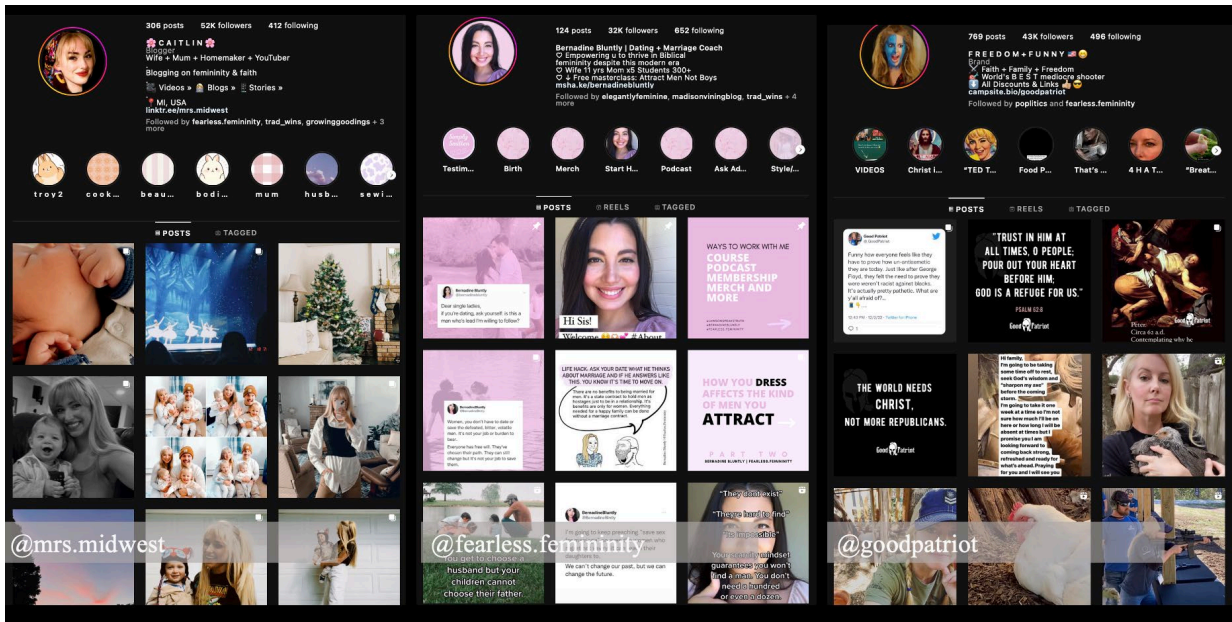
With a billion active monthly users, Instagram is a dominant space for Influencers to expand their reach and cement their online brand (Statista, 2023a; Thömmes & Hübner, 2020). Since its inception, Instagram has been largely perceived as a relatively low-risk platform with a lower tendency for extremist content – especially when compared to Facebook and Twitter (Vaidhyanathan, 2018). However, over the course of 2020, new levels of conspiratorial theorising and radical perspectives especially in relation to COVID-19 misinformation, QAnon, and the Deep State conspiracy were found circulating on the platform (Tuters & Wilaert, 2022). Given the nature of the platform, RWE content on Instagram is typically more visual, with content creators leaning into meme culture, screenshots, and User Generated Content (UGC) to broadcast ideology (Coleman, 2019). With the platform largely geared towards young millennials, the reach of RWE content on Instagram can be inferred as also ‘young’ (Statista, 2023a). Young millennials use Instagram to not only create their own online identity, but learn about the world and news events through influencers rather than traditional media outlets (Coleman, 2019). The very premise of Instagram requires users to follow and engage with people who align with their own personal interests, and thus the consumption of content is often inherently biased.

Instagram profiles were created by Tradwives to engage new and existing Tradwife audiences, and deepen the commitment and connection of their online communities. With its multi-format approach to content sharing and social networking, Instagram appeared to be the most dynamic platform Tradwives engaged with. Offering a space for Tradwives to present a curated, visual and branded presence, Instagram functioned as a promotional advertisement for each individual Tradwife. Each format available on Instagram was purposefully used by Tradwives to enrich this overall branded presence. The following outlines how three of the main Instagram formats were utilised; (1) on-feed posting, (2) story posting, (3) reels.

*On-feed posting* appeared to be used by Tradwives to document the key events and happenings of their life. From professionally captured family photos and personal updates for the community, to the sharing of notable tweets or passages of text in visual form, Tradwives used their feeds to create a visual homepage for their brand and convey their online identity. These homepages provided the strongest insight into the unique aesthetic of the Tradwife and therefore offered a visual window into how each Tradwife may be adopting the Tradwife Aesthetic. Examples of these are shown below.

**Figure 32**

*Tradwife on-feed posting offered a window into their aesthetic and positioning within the Tradwife Landscape*



**Figure 33**

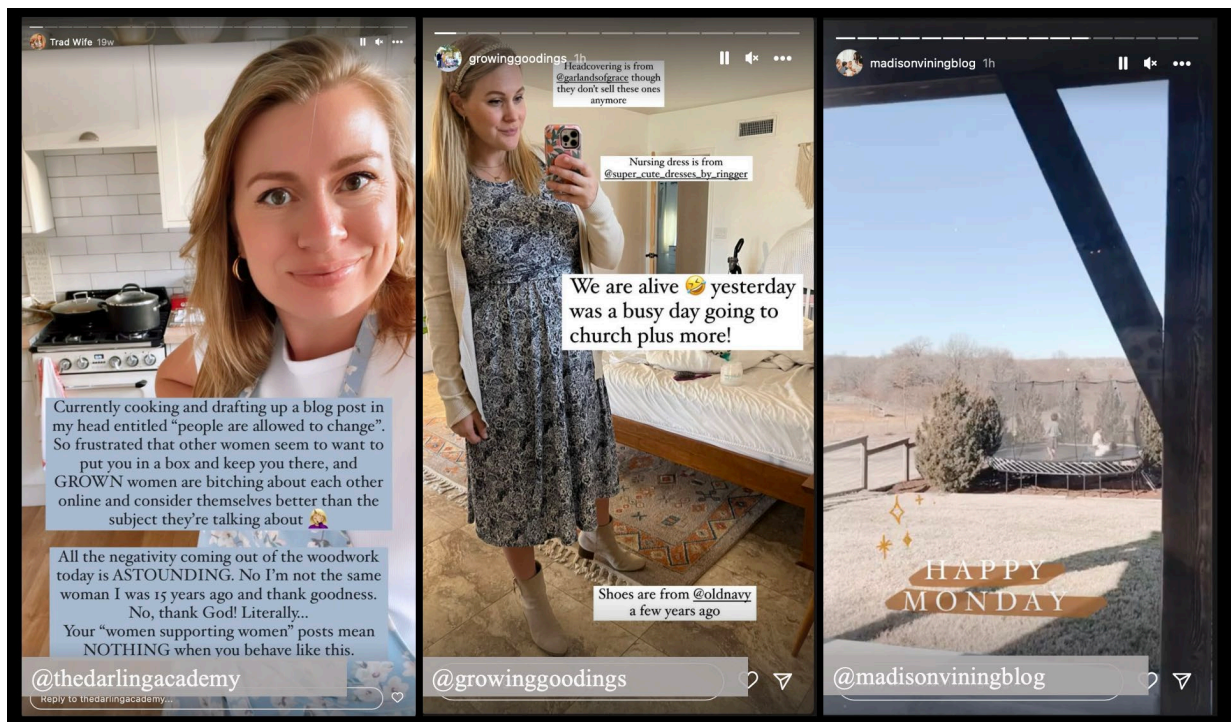
*Example of a text on-feed post by @thetradwivesclub*



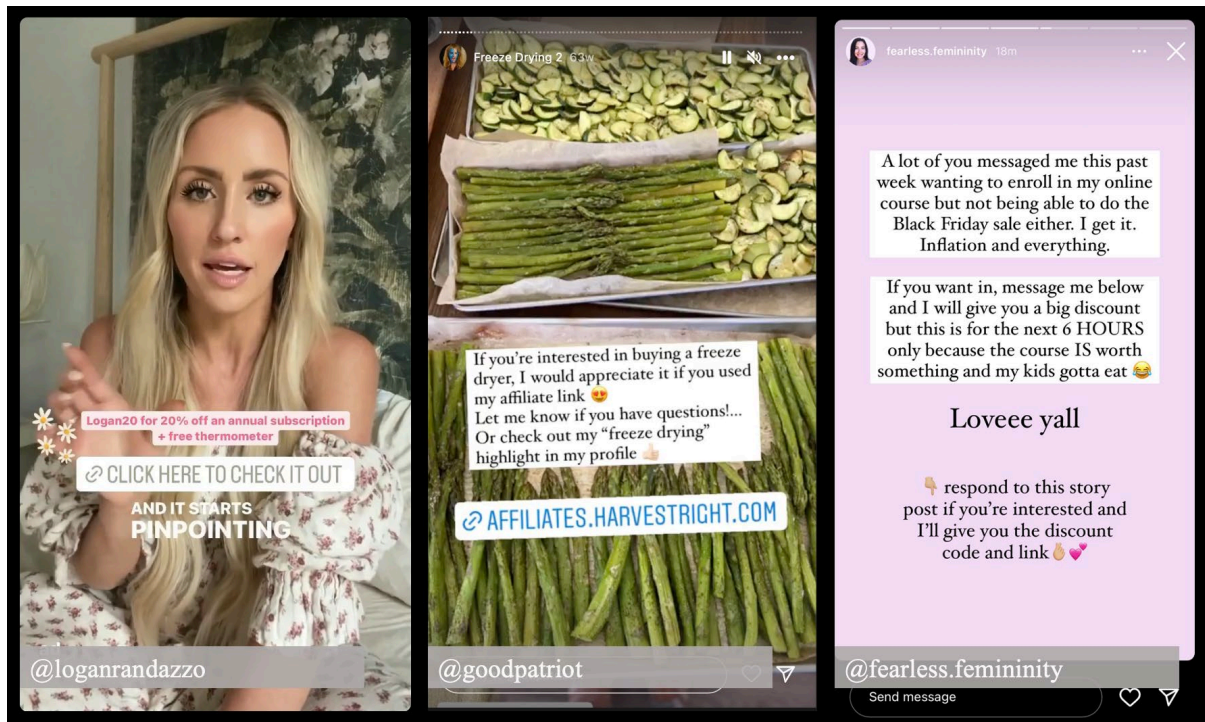
*Story posting* is a unique time-sensitive feature of Instagram where content is only available for 24 hours unless saved as a ‘story highlight.’ Like other types of influencers, Tradwives used the story function to build depth of connection with their followers (Read, 2019). Portraying a seemingly more candid and authentic version of themselves, the story

function was where Tradwives shared day-to-day mini updates. Stories were also used to discuss brands sponsoring or affiliated to Tradwife accounts and discount codes for these brands most commonly offered. The story feature facilitated mass communication within Tradwife communities with question and answer boxes frequently shared as well as recipes, clothing, skincare, and baby product recommendations. This created an open line of communication and allowed followers to gain a greater understanding on topics important to the individual Tradwife, as shown below.

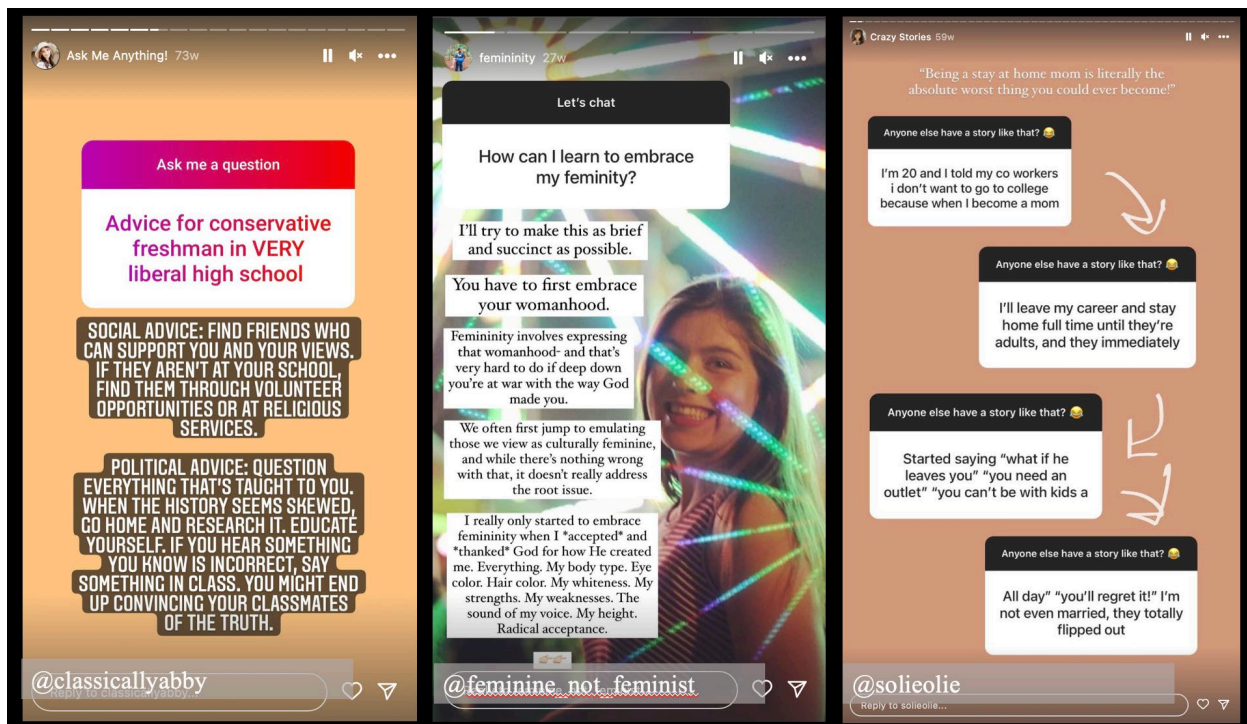
**Figure 34**  
*Instagram story posting - Life Updates*



**Figure 35**  
Instagram story posting - Brand affiliation/promotion



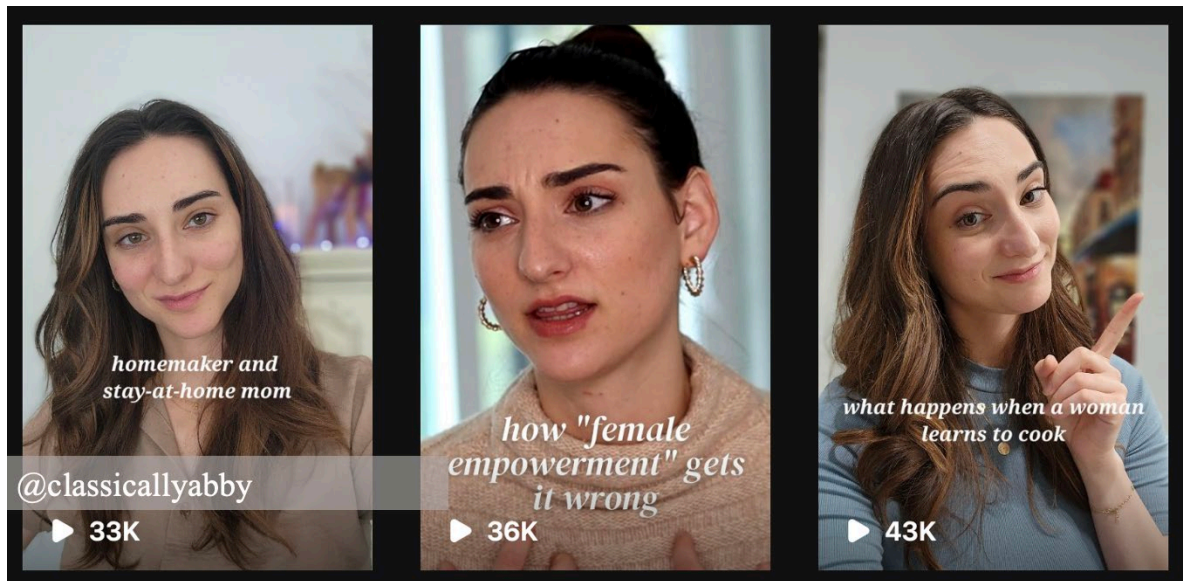
**Figure 36**  
Instagram story posting - Q&A/Ask Me Anything



Story posting was particularly influential in the cementing of trusting relationships between Tradwives and their followers. Coined by Lou (2021) as ‘trans-parasocial relationships,’ the relationship between influencers and their followers is a reciprocal, co-created entity that is cemented overtime through positive affirmation, validation, and the sharing of curated content which is as inspirational as it is aesthetically pleasing. Lou argues that influencer relationships are deeper and more intimate than ‘parasocial relationships’ and uses the term ‘trans-parasocial relationship’ to capture the bi-directional way influencers and their followers interact (Lou, 2021). For Tradwives and their communities, the term ‘trans-parasocial’ is particularly fitting. United within an expression of right-wing ideology, Tradwives were regularly found to invite opinions and advice from their audience – promoting a bi-directional interaction. Tradwives appeared to feed off their followers as much as followers fed off and were influenced by Tradwives. This circular relationship seen on Instagram appeared to deepen the online echo chamber of Tradwife communities, and could contribute to a strengthening of ideological affiliation with the Tradwife cause over time.

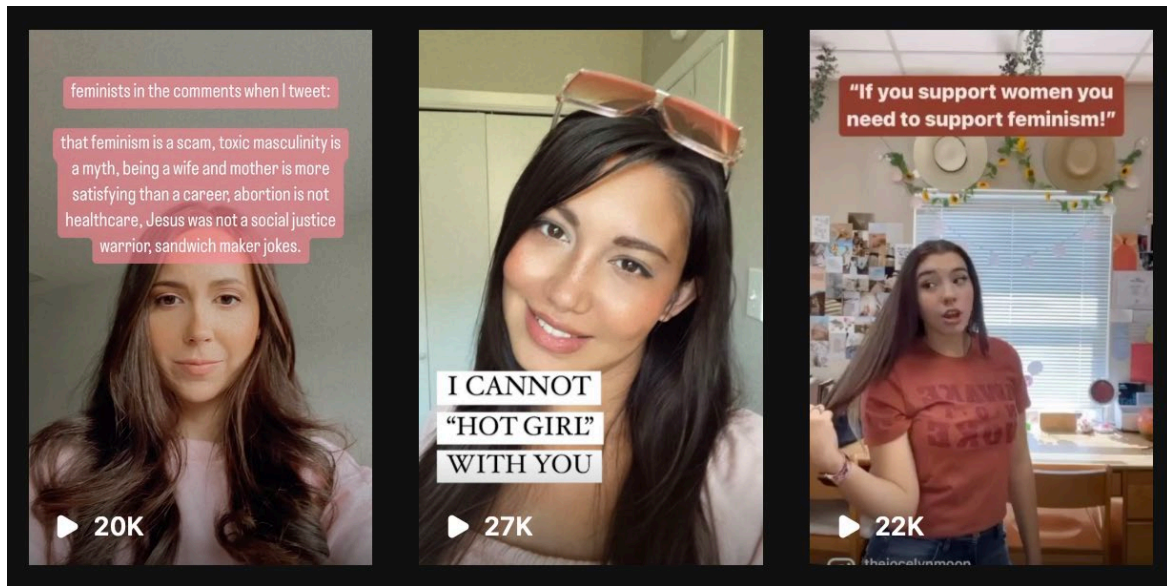
*Reels* are the dominant format used to engage a wider audience on Instagram and involve short, engaging clips of up to 60 seconds. Based off the successful TikTok platform, Reels allow users to publish creative content that showcases their personality, promote brand affiliation, or recreate trends (DIA, 2021). Tradwives used carefully curated Reels to discuss and/or debate notable and sometimes controversial topics and events that were relevant to them and their online identity. Often confronting and counterculture in nature, Reels were where Tradwives concisely articulated their right-wing value systems. Further, Reels - like TikTok - are largely driven by trending topics (Newberry, 2023) and as such Tradwives were seen to take up particular trends and twist them to communicate their particular ideology. Notable Tradwives using Instagram Reels are discussed below.

**Figure 37**  
Instagram Reel example - @classicallyabby



Classically Abby is a Conservative, Political Tradwife who used her Instagram platform to promote ‘traditional values and classic living’. Abby seemingly used Instagram Reels to extend her reach and grow her 79,300 Instagram following. Abby’s reels achieved anywhere from 10,000 – 100,000 views and ranged from persuasive political clips on ‘how female empowerment gets it wrong’, to curated snippets of her life including her fertility journey, and tips and tricks on how to be a homemaker and stay-at-home mom. This amalgamation of content within her Instagram Reel presence appeared to soften Abby’s right-wing ant-feminism stance. Her *girl-next-door* Tradwife aesthetic also appeared to contribute to the success of her content with followers frequently commenting on her looks, clothing, and physical presentation.

**Figure 38**  
Instagram Reel Example - @tradwivesclub



The Tradwives Club used Reels to promote a broader Tradwife agenda to their 21,400 followers. Using an array of content creators, each with their own personal following, the Tradwife Club's use of Reels was distinctly focused on the projection of Tradwife community values. This objective can be seen in the caption of the 'I cannot "hot girl" with you' Reel shown above;

*"We reject: Hook-up culture, Immodest clothing, Degenerate media, Feminist thinking. We value: Covenant love, Modest classy clothing, Wholesome media, Femininity and Biblical womanhood. Tradwives may be in this world, but we're not of it!"*

Using trending audio and formats, viewership on The Tradwives Club Reels is typically between 10,000 and 30,000. One Reel posted in July 2022 received 1.2 million views and highlights the impact trends can have on social media performance.

### **Facebook**

As arguably the most dominant social networking site (Chi, 2021; Statista, 2018), Facebook as a platform has been used exponentially in global RWE movements with groups

across the landscape manipulating its ease of networking and variety of public and private access to recruit and radicalise (Wong, 2017). RWE groups use Facebook to facilitate mobilisation transnationally, form alliances, and target susceptible individuals with extreme right-wing content (Davey & Ebner, 2017; Scrivens & Amarasingam, 2020). Research conducted between 2019 and 2020 analysing the role of Facebook in the promotion of dis&misinformation (particularly to the QAnon conspiracy theory) found the platform actively pushed some users down rabbit holes, increasingly narrowing their ‘filter bubbles’ and funnelling them into tight online echo chambers where conspiratorial thinking and points of view were dominant (Guynn & McCoy, 2021). Extreme right-wing Facebook movements activate, encourage, and reinforce personal grievances and ‘pull’ factors of RWE, creating a protective community within which violent extremist thought and action is perpetuated. Facebook is a community driven platform where users are encouraged to interact in a conversational manner. Facebook groups and pages provide online echo chambers where extremist content can be interacted with, discussed, and legitimised. Within this group setting, individuals on a pathway to radicalisation can feed off each other, developing relational bonds cemented in a shared ideology (Hutchinson et al., 2021).

For Tradwives, Facebook was used to further cement the communication of ideological positions, and allowed engagement with followers through Facebook’s comments section. Facebook functionality was observed to be used by Tradwives in two key ways; (1) long format posts, and (2) private groups. Through long format text posts, Tradwives used their Facebook accounts to discuss topics, opinions, and values in more depth. Curated like a mini-blog, Tradwives delved into bigger, more complicated topics on Facebook, often encouraging interaction and opinion from their following in the comment section and/or directing followers to a YouTube video, podcast, or personal blog to read/learn more. The below shows an example of a long format text post shared by Tradwife sisters, Girl Defined.

In this post, the idea that women competing with men weakens the cause for femininity is discussed. At the end of the post, Girl Defined direct their followers to their podcast episode dedicated to this topic on an alternative platform.

**Figure 39**

*Facebook long format post example - Girl Defined*

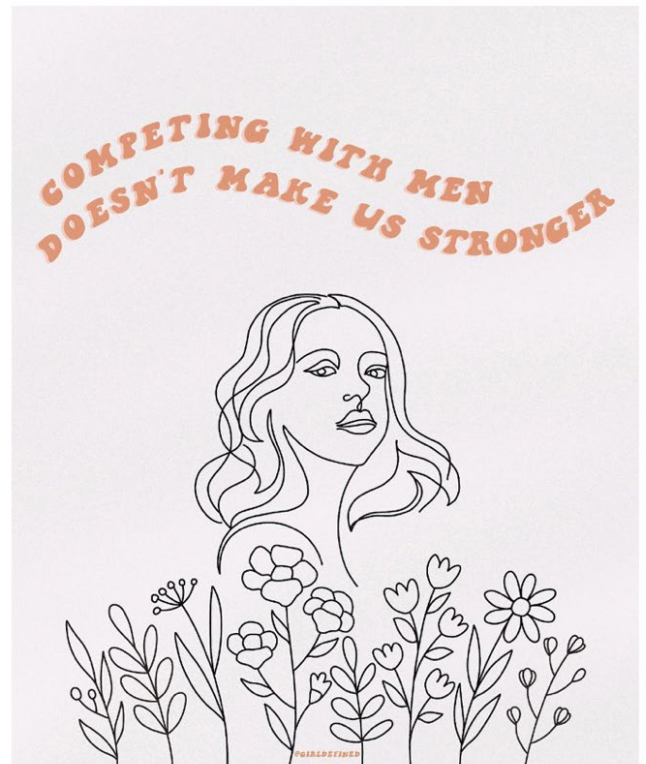
Mainstream voices have blatantly lied about what a strong woman looks like. We're being convinced that the pinnacle of women's success is climbing the corporate ladder, competing with men on every platform, overcoming gender stereotypes, and forsaking everything—including family—in the interests of self. We're being told that our greatest possible achievement is self-glorification and personal gain.

As Christian women, we refuse to believe the lies feminism is preaching to us. We need to hold onto God's truth, live according to His Word and adhere to his role for us as women. That's what makes us stronger.

True, the world may not see it that way. It may tell us that forgoing a prestigious scholarship in order to go on a mission trip is a waste of our potential. It may tell us that refusing a promotion (which would have made us the first woman to hold that position) in order to have more time with our family is a regrettable sacrifice. It may see our contentment as weakness. But we know that's not true.

We aren't living for ourselves. We're living for God. We aren't in the business of levelling the playing field. We're gladly embracing our femininity, and all the differences from masculinity which that entails. Yes, we can still pursue our passions and have ambitions and do great things as women! God has given us amazing talents and gifts to use for His glory! But we don't need to take the place of men in order to be successful or respected. We are cherished by our Creator.

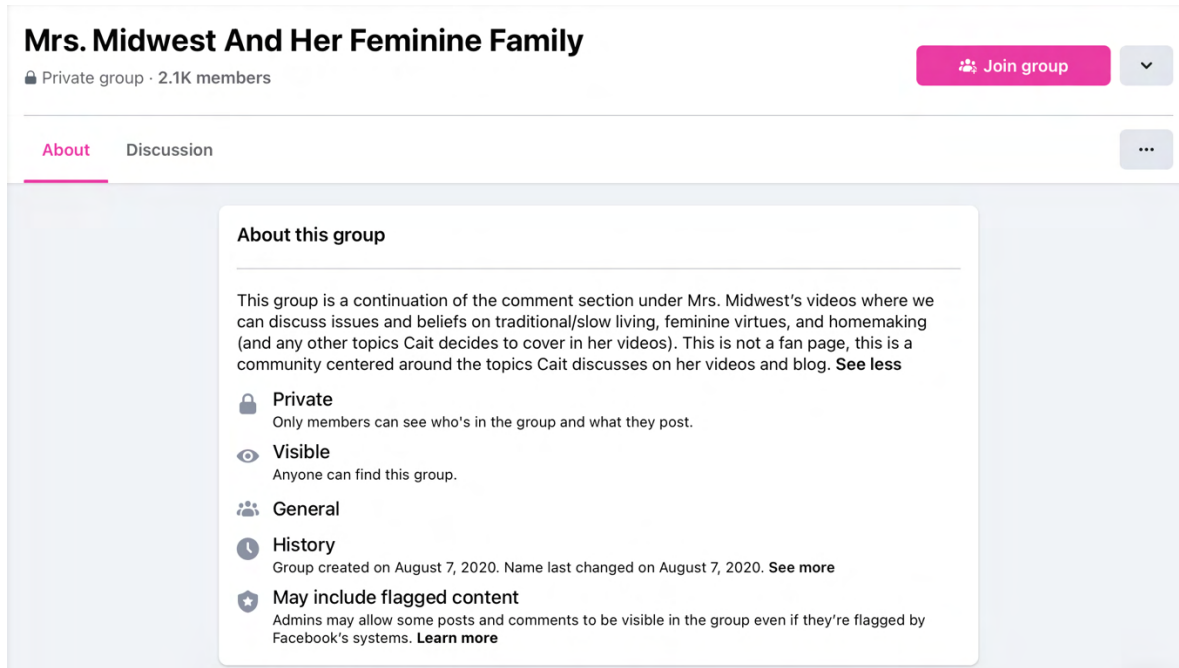
It's time we develop biblical strength. Proverbs 31 woman strength. Feminine strength. If you want to hear more about this strength, and about other lies that Christian women are firmly standing up to, go listen to episode 102 of the Girl Defined Show!



Alongside long format text posting, private groups were another key way Tradwives engaged with their followers on Facebook. While the scope of this research meant private Facebook groups could not be accessed, it is noted that the nature of these private groups means they are protected and internally monitored by those within the community. As such it could be argued private Facebook groups are less regulated than more public Facebook profiles and thus could contain more overt right-wing perspectives. Tradwives who had a private Facebook group appeared from the group's description (which is publicly accessible) to use it as a way to further engage and build relationships with their followers, perhaps as a space to discuss views and opinions in more depth. An example of a private Facebook group

found but not accessed is ‘Mrs. Midwest and Her Feminine Family.’ The below is a screenshot of the description of Mrs. Midwest’s private Facebook group.

**Figure 40**  
*Example of Tradwife Private Facebook Group*



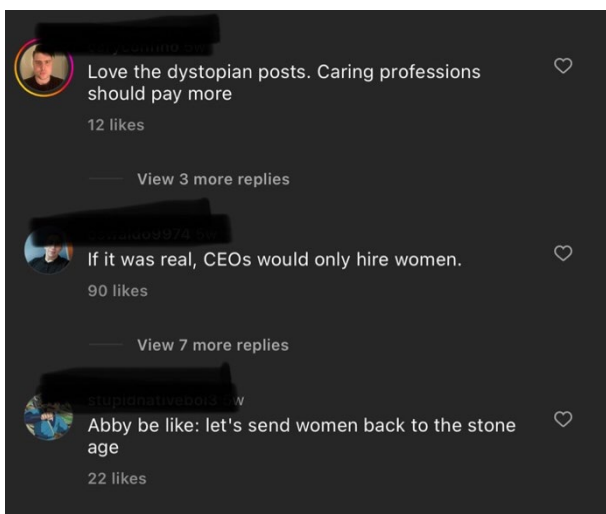
Tradwife Facebook profiles were also susceptible to trolling from users outside the Tradwife community. Trolling is internet slang for the act of intentionally instigating conflict, hostility or arguments in a social media community (GCF Global, n.d.). By opening their comments section, Tradwives also opened their platform to this type of negative feedback. While it appears many Tradwives regularly monitored their Facebook platforms and therefore unwanted comments were deleted, evidence of trolling was still found in some instances. Below is a figure posted in the comments section of many of the Girl Defined’s Facebook posts:

**Figure 41**  
Example of 'Trolling' on Tradwife Facebook posts



Trolling was also found in the comment section of other Tradwife platforms. The following is an excerpt from the comments section of Classically Abby's popular Reel captioned "*on my way to tell women there's no such thing as a wage gap, women just choose different jobs and many choose to spend more time with their children.*" Although this Reel received 74,500 views, the comments section featured significant negative sentiment such as that shown below. This is an example of how the performance of some Tradwife content may not necessarily be due to positive sentiment and/or accurately illustrate the size of their audience – especially on highly controversial topics such as the gender wage gap.

**Figure 42**  
Negative Sentiment on @classicallyabby wage gap Reel






## *YouTube*



With an average of two billion active monthly users and the uploading of over 500 hours of video every minute, YouTube is a powerful social network and much more than a space to watch music videos, movie trailers, and snippets from news outlets (Roose, 2019). As arguably one of the most popular mainstream platforms among extreme right-wing users, YouTube is considered a dominant driver of the supply and demand for extremist content (Munger & Phillips, 2022). The YouTube recommender algorithm has frequently been criticised for its tendency to bias inflammatory or controversial content, and send users into online echo chambers, recommending extremist videos to users watching relatively mainstream content (O’Callaghan et al., 2015; Tufekci, 2018). As a result, some researchers have questioned the role YouTube may play in facilitating extremist content pathways (Yesilada & Lewandowsky, 2022). An investigative journalist analysing the ‘liking’ behaviour of a 26-year-old man who killed his brother on the basis of conspiratorial views that he was a shape-shifting reptile, found a pattern of radicalisation on the perpetrators YouTube account. This individual went from ‘liking’ martial arts and fitness videos, to the consumption of highly conspiratorial and Alt-Right violent extremist content (Green, 2019; View, 2019). Although YouTube attempts to reduce hate speech and harmful content through community guidelines and ongoing tweaks to its recommender algorithm (Yesilada & Lewandowsky, 2022), notable Alt-Right personalities and extreme right-wing content can still be found. Ultimately, as long as extreme content continues to hold user engagement, it can be argued it will continue to be prevalent.

YouTube profiles were created by Tradwives to share a holistic view of their online identity, and provide followers with depth of understanding of their right-wing perspectives. YouTube was used to comprehensively communicate Tradwife beliefs and value systems to their followers. Evidence of video blogs, political commentary, informative videos,

collaboration sessions with a number of Tradwives, and/or collaborations with other influential members from wider extreme right-wing communities were found. The following offers examples of each of these different video formats.

**Table 7**  
*How Tradwives Use YouTube*

Video type	YouTube Video URL & title image	Commentary
‘Vlog’ (video blog)		<p>Video blogs, referred to on social media as ‘vlogs’, are a frequent format influencers adopt to showcase the everyday elements of their life. In this video Caitlin (Mrs. Midwest) introduces her 202,000 subscribers to her new baby and shares her makeup routine, makes cupcakes, shows her outfit of the day with a ‘GRWM’ (get ready with me), has a sit down conversation with her viewers on motherhood, and spends time with the mothers group she attends.</p>
Political commentary		<p>YouTube is often used by Tradwives as a platform for political commentary. In this video, Alt- Right Brittany Pettibone discusses how feminism led to the Trans movement with her 174,000 subscribers. Brittany interprets gender neutral language as paving the way for our thoughts to be controlled “<i>allowing people to control our language allows them to control us</i>”. and how “<i>we’re allowing concepts like exclusivity to be interpreted as hateful, but exclusivity isn’t hateful, it’s natural, healthy, and necessary for self-preservation and in defence of societal social order</i>”.</p>
Question & Answer (Q&A)		<p>Q&amp;A’s are a frequent format for many Tradwives and offers space for these women to directly engage with their communities. In this video, Emily answers questions from her 131,000 subscribers on her birth plan for the upcoming birth of her baby, and body image issues associated with pregnancy.</p>

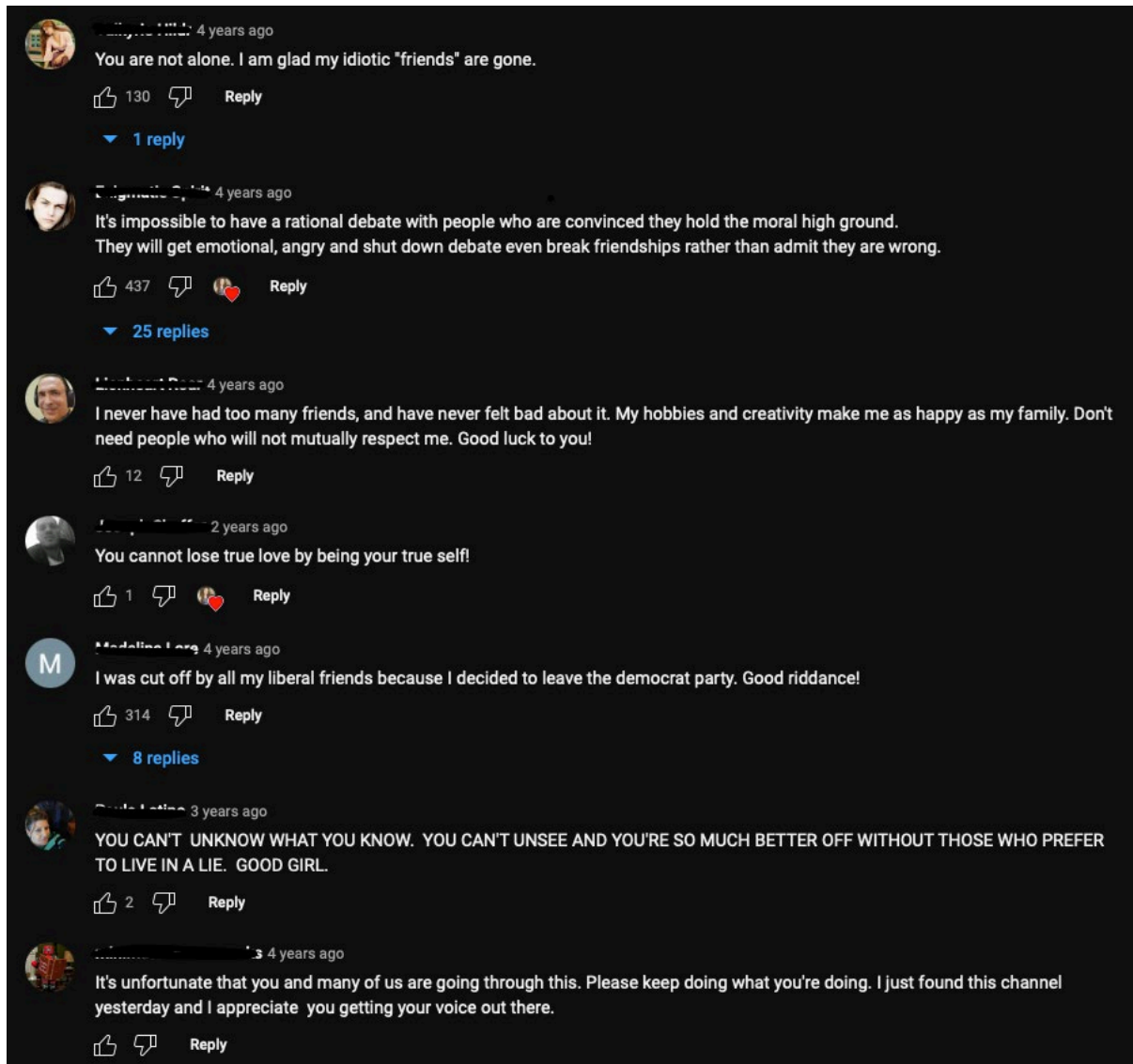
<p>Tradwife collaboration with Tradwives</p>		<p>Collaboration with other Tradwives on aligned topics is a popular way these women connect and grow each other's followings. In this video, three Tradwives from Hearth &amp; Helm connect with Tradwife Robyn Riley to discuss the challenges and triumphs of motherhood. Robyn discusses her recent homebirth and scepticism of modern medicine especially with regards to birth, and the women discuss their views on breastfeeding, and the environmental benefits of cloth diapers. Hearth &amp; Helm also promote Robyn's account 'The Motherland', which is a collaboration between Robyn Riley and fellow Alt-Right Tradwife Rebecca (@blondeinthebellyofthebeast).</p>
<p>Tradwife collaboration with RWE influential figures (not Tradwife)</p>	 <p>(Blonde in the Belly of the Beast &amp; Cullen, 2021).</p>	<p>Collaboration with RWE influential figures outside the Tradwife community were another way YouTube was used. In this video, Rebecca (@blondeinthebellyofthebeast) interviews Dave Cullen, an Irish YouTuber and conspiracy theorist who holds ultra-nationalist views on abortion, gay marriage, feminism, mainstream media, and the Left. Cullen and Rebecca discuss dis&amp;misinformation surrounding the COVID-19 vaccination and associated government responses, how we are living in a world of 'female hysteria', the 'slow boiling frog effect' as it applies to a post-pandemic society. <i>"The boiling frog effect was so gradual that the fear and the terror was so massive in the beginning – all the scary videos out of Italy and China etc. You scare the shit out of [people], and then you just gradually increase the temperature and they don't even realise after a while who they are or how they used to live"</i>, and how to 'wake people up from this level of compliance'.</p>

For the Tradwives regularly active on YouTube, many of them were seen to have hundreds of thousands of subscribers. Active Tradwife YouTubers typically posted multiple

times a month and had tens of thousands of views on each of their videos. With YouTube videos averaging 20 minutes in length, the ability for Tradwives to capture the attention of their audience for a significant amount of time highlighted the commitment of viewers to these topics of conversation. The way Tradwife YouTubers captivated their audience can be particularly seen in the comments section of their videos. The following is an example of the comments section of Robyn Riley's video discussing how she had lost friends as a result of her RWE political and social position (@RobynRiley, 2019). The comments section shows an active deepening of commitment and agreement to Robyn's position through positive affirmation and validation from her subscribers. Persuasive Arguments Theory states that the opinions of groups members discussing an issue or perspective will tend to increase in extremity when a majority of members communicate the favouring of a particular position (American Psychological Association [APA], 2023). This 'position favouring' acts as a domino effect, leading other members to feel more comfortable or compelled to express their alignment with the majority. As a phenomena particularly prominent within online social media echo chambers (Aydin et al., 2022), evidence of the Persuasive Arguments Theory was also found within the comments sections of Tradwife profiles.

**Figure 43**

*Comment section of Robyn Riley video illustrating Persuasive Arguments Theory*

**TikTok**

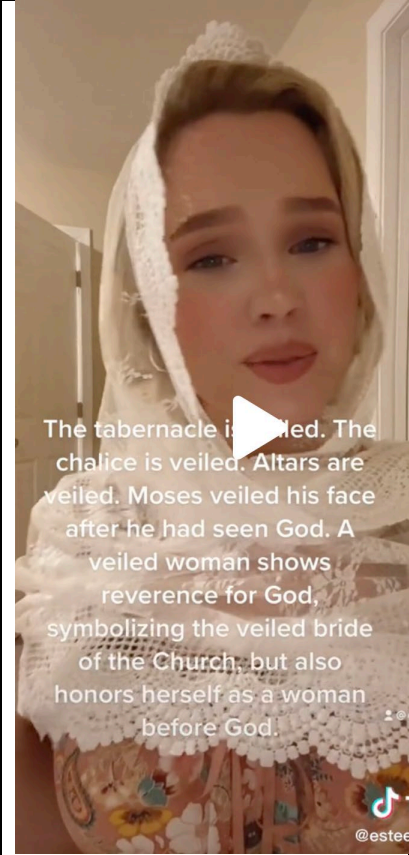
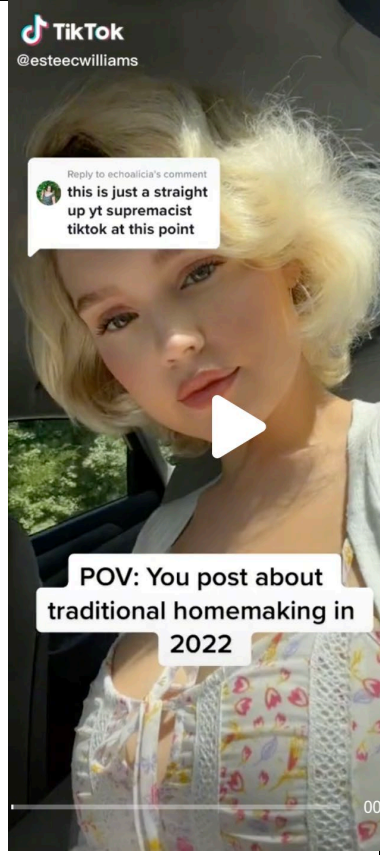

Throughout the duration of the data collection period, Tradwives increasingly migrated to TikTok (Froio, 2022). TikTok's limited enforcement of community guidelines and the instantaneous nature of its algorithm make it an easy place to project extreme right-wing content and facilitate processes of radicalisation. In a recent study analysing the radicalisation potential of TikTok, Boucher (2022) found that over a research period of five days, the TikTok algorithm increasingly served more radical extreme right-wing content. Like other algorithmic platforms, the TikTok algorithm is susceptible to filter bubbles and the

development of online echo chambers through a combination of individual online searching and on-platform recommendation pathways. The more a user engages with a particular type of content (through liking, commenting, or simply watching the video the whole way through), the more the user will be served that type of content. Although TikTok has implemented restrictions within its algorithm in an attempt to limit the publishing and virality of extreme, inappropriate, and harmful content, content creators appear to increasingly navigate these restrictions through omitting certain words, phrases, or imagery known to ‘trigger’ the algorithm (Boucher, 2022). Thus, TikTok is increasingly cautioned as a platform with a potential predisposition to radicalise individuals to extreme right-wing ideology.

While many of the women included in the dataset did not appear to be dominant TikTok content creators, there appears to be a new and growing Tradwife community on TikTok using hashtags like *#Tradwife* and *#Trادلife* to promote the Tradwife Aesthetic and associated expressions of RWE (Froio, 2022). TikTok appears to be used by Tradwives in a similar vein to Instagram Reels – to provide an impact. Often adding their own right-wing spin on trending audio, the highly targeted nature of the TikTok algorithm coupled with the fast consumption of content meant TikTok facilitated breadth of reach of the Tradwife cause. Aligning with trending topics of homemaking, cleaning, home décor design, and stay-at-home motherhood, Tradwives piggy-backed off more mainstream video topics in order to catapult their reach.

With 35,600 TikTok followers and 417,000 likes on the platforms, Estee cleverly uses trending audio to push her conservative cause, advocating for a Christian *#Trادلife*.

**Table 8**  
TikTok example - @esteecewilliams

 <p>The tabernacle is veiled. The chalice is veiled. Altars are veiled. Moses veiled his face after he had seen God. A veiled woman shows reverence for God, symbolizing the veiled bride of the Church, but also honors herself as a woman before God.</p>	 <p>Reply to echoalicia's comment this is just a straight up yt supremacist tiktok at this point</p> <p>POV: You post about traditional homemaking in 2022</p>	 <p>Promoting a traditional lifestyle doesn't further women into domestic abuse relationships.</p>
<p>Transcript:</p> <p><i>“Why I veil at Church as a Christian woman? The tabernacle is veiled. The chalice is veiled. Altars are veiled. Moses veiled his face after he had seen God. A veiled woman shows reverence for God, symbolizing the veiled bride of the Church, but also honours herself as a woman before God. I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. 1 Corinthians 11:3”</i></p>	<p>This is a short, 6 second video where Estee uses trending audio to roll her eyes at a comment she received on a recent TikTok she posted calling Estee a white supremacist. The caption on this video was:</p> <p><i>“Replying to @echoalicia You missed the mark #fyp #homemaking #tradwife #housewife #christianwoman #traditional”</i></p>	<p>Transcript:</p> <p><i>“Promoting a traditional lifestyle doesn't further women into domestic abuse relationships.. A traditional life is simple, secure and beautiful. Being financially dependent on a man doesn't showcase that you're incapable.. It displays complete trust in your partner to provide for you. Stop shaming Tradwives.”</i></p>

Madison (@thereservedwife) is another active creator with 69,000 followers and 1.6 million likes on TikTok. Wearing ripped jeans instead of dresses, and highlighted hair instead

of natural colours, Madison is unique in presenting a very contemporary aesthetic, however, her messaging is still firmly aligned with extreme right-wing ideology.

**Table 9**  
TikTok example - @thereservedwife

		
<p>Transcript:</p> <p><i>Madison</i> "She's got her Master's degree, I got my MRS degree."</p> <p><i>Audio</i> "I've never heard of that.. MRS?"</p> <p><i>Madison</i> "Yeah, like a Mrs. degree, you know like when you wanna be a housewife."</p>	<p>Transcript:</p> <p><i>"Instead of enabling a society that thinks abortion is their only option.. Let's rebuild a society that values motherhood, children, and a community that's willing to help others."</i></p>	<p>Transcript:</p> <p><i>Audio</i> "Why are you so focused on learning how to grow/make your own food?"</p> <p><i>Madison</i> "Our economy is changing and I'm just warning you."</p> <p><i>Audio</i> "Lol you're just a conspiracy theorist."</p> <p><i>Madison</i> "You just don't get it."</p>

**Other**

Alongside the mainstream platforms mentioned above where the scope of this research was predominately focused, evidence of Tradwife affiliation was also found on less

regulated and more fringe platforms. Increasingly, Tradwives (especially Alt-Right Tradwives) directed their followers in their YouTube videos to more fringe platforms like Bitchute, Rumble, and Odysee for fear of being censored or having their account shut down. Backup accounts on regulated platforms like Instagram were also found, in the case their main account was shut down. The increase in censorship for many right-wing content creators was contested through typical statements such as: “*Mainstream platforms (YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and even Google searches) target mainly right wing or conservative opinions for de-platforming...How can the right or conservatives in general expect to spread our views and influence change in society when we can't even talk about our viewpoints on the platforms where most of the people in our society are*” (Chen & Riley, 2019). Telegram was another platform that Tradwives were beginning to access during the course of this research. Of the few Telegram channels accessed, Tradwives reshared posts and videos already distributed on their various other platforms. While not directly included as a platform in the dataset, Tradwife use of Podcast applications and services was noted throughout the data collection period. Similar to the divergence away from mainstream sharing platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, Tradwives appeared to also use podcast apps like Spotify to converse on more controversial topics and opinions such as free-birthing, gender diversity, trans activism, and abortion. The long format and portable nature of podcasts (i.e., followers can listen on-the-go) appeared to offer greater accessibility for Tradwives to share their views and values with their audience (Fernandes, 2022; Statista, 2023b). Evidence was also found of Tradwives featuring on other podcast channels indirectly affiliated with the Tradwife community (similar to YouTube collaboration videos). It is predicted that alongside the format itself growing in popularity (Statista, 2023b), podcasts could increasingly become a more popular format for Tradwives.



Tradwives are cross-platform influencers, they create self-constructions that balance the authentic portrayal of themselves with a persona that is designed to be attractive and engaging to ensure their online identity is broadcast to the widest audience. Tradwives appeared to use each social media platform they engaged with to its strength, creating content specifically to meet its norms (Froio, 2022). Tradwife presence on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Podcast apps, Reddit threads, Telegram, Gab.com, Rumble, and Bitchute appeared to be for a direct purpose and cross-platform influencing was relevant to all Tradwives in the present research regardless of their positioning within the Tradwife Landscape. Through the promotion of content across platforms (typically promoting other platforms in descriptions and about me/biography sections), Tradwives actively worked to secure a notable audience across all social media.

### ***Cross-Platform Influencing as a Radicalisation Pathway***

Tradwife presence across a variety of platforms can also be analysed within radicalisation pathways previously discussed. Recent research into online radicalisation techniques of RWE found right-wing groups strategically engaged an audience on mainstream platforms by exposing their ideology to the broadest audience, before migrating engaged individuals to less regulated online platforms for further radicalisation (Nouh et al., 2019). Although the intent of content shared by Tradwives cannot be conclusively determined from the data collected, the distinct use of multiple platforms by Tradwives and the type of content shared on each can be layered over processes of radicalisation to ascertain a deeper understanding of the potential consequences from consuming Tradwife content.

With more than 132,000 followers on Twitter, 32,000 followers on Instagram, 11,000 on Facebook, 171,000 YouTube subscribers, and also present on Bitchute, Odysee, and Telegram, Brittany Sellner née Pettibone is a Political Tradwife and cross-platform influencer who has created an influential social media empire (Maly, 2020). Brittany is a strong example

of how Tradwives strategically use social media platforms to broadcast their extreme right-wing positioning. Brittany's social media profiles are distinct entities and show a variety of self-conceptions that could be interpreted as belonging in either Conservative Right, Alt-Lite, or Alt-Right positioning. When taken together, Brittany's online presence shows a deepening of ideology and commitment to the Alt-Right cause, a pathway which could be interpreted as paved for her followers. In an analysis of Brittany's online trajectory to political advocate for the Alt-Right, Maly (2020) uses the example of how Brittany posted about her wedding to illustrate her strategic use of Instagram and YouTube. An illustration adapted from Maly's (2020) research is presented below;

Instagram on-feed post	YouTube video
	
<p>On Instagram, Brittany uses her profile to boost the authenticity of her online identity. Sharing pictures from every-day-life and notable events like the above, Brittany's Instagram persona is one of a conservative wife living her authentic wife. No ideology position is mentioned, simply just the sharing of a moment.</p>	<p>The above YouTube video was posted on the same day as the Instagram image shown on the left. In this YouTube video, Brittany overtly discusses right-wing perspectives surrounding traditional gender roles, a biblical understanding of marriage, and how her and her husband plan to navigate life as Alt-Right activists in a world dominated by 'the left.' In the video, Brittany claims 'the left' are trying to de-platform, prosecute, and cancel her bank accounts.</p>

It is important to note the relationships identified above between Tradwife cross-platform influencing and theories of online radicalisation are not necessarily causal. The intention behind what content Tradwives share on particular social media platforms and why cannot be inferred. However, regardless of intent, some Tradwife online identities undoubtedly shift across their social media profiles, with right-wing ideological expression becoming more overt or aggressive on less regulated platforms like YouTube. Considering the time investment required by followers to watch a 20-minute long YouTube video versus a 20-word long post on Twitter, or a 20-second video on Instagram and TikTok, it is reasonable to infer that followers engaging with lengthy Tradwife videos may be more influenced by them, in agreement with their ideological perspectives, and may become more committed to extreme right-wing positions.

By broadcasting right-wing identities across social media platforms, Tradwives also actively use influencer culture and theories of online marketing to communicate their right-wing agenda and bolster their success. Although their online identities are founded in a forms of right-wing affiliation, this right-wing content and rhetoric may not be the driving force behind the highly engaged audiences of Tradwives. Through a highly feminised physical appearance and carefully curated content, Tradwife online identities are likely to be influential because they are desirable. Oozing happiness, love, security, and emotional contentment, Tradwives present an online reality that relinquishes everyday stressors and embraces traditional interpretations of womanly biology. This curated lifestyle coupled with a sophisticated understanding of the functionality of social media algorithms (Hugh et al, 2022) may also facilitate Tradwife success. Tradwives blend the art of social media aesthetics with the science of social media platform management to legitimise, promote, and mainstream their online identities.

Although driven by their curated lives and successful social media management, Tradwives also appeal to conservative audiences through their right-wing affiliations. They appear to consciously play into the competing priorities women may feel between heteronormative traditional roles and the mainstreaming of more liberal perspectives regarding the demands of women to essentially be and do more in society. This use of controversial and polarising rhetoric contributes to the virality of the Tradwife name and brand. Looking at the performance of Tradwife content broadly, it was controversial content that elicited the greatest audience reaction and reach. Content projecting right-wing positions on abortion, transgender activism, traditional gender roles, conservative religious practices, and anti-feminism were some of the topics that generated boosts in reach for Tradwives. Anti-feminism content specifically has been shown to capture an audience through its controversy, evoking an emotional reaction that drives people to react (Lin, 2022).

Through their ability to spark conversation and drive a reaction, Tradwives appear to have popularised a traditionally feminine niche not previously found on mainstream social media. They provide an online arena for women to embrace their femininity and offer compelling reasons to reject contemporary feminism. Holon 3: Feminine not feminist depicts this Tradwife appeal through unpacking how Tradwives communicate and rationalise their identification as feminine, not feminist.

### **Holon 3: Feminine not feminist**

*“Thanks for the trousers, but we see life a different way”*

– Helen Andelin (as cited in Christou, 2020).

One of the highly influential perspectives that connects Tradwives, regardless of their position in the Tradwife Landscape and/or their right-wing ideological affiliation is a rejection of feminism. The promotion of Tradwife culture and adoption of the Tradwife

Aesthetic is a conscious counter to the mainstream liberal ‘fourth wave’ of feminism<sup>10</sup>.

Through their unique positioning online, Tradwives appeared to use the accessibility of online feminism to perpetuate toxic femininity<sup>11</sup>. While online feminism and the fourth wave was created to fast-track equality (Martin & Valenti, 2012), Tradwives used their online identities to globalise anti-globalism and modernise the anti-modern. Feminist ideologies are frequently criticised by Tradwives as the reason why many women feel unable to be stay-at-home wives and mothers, and Tradwives use their influential position to advocate for women to ‘return to the home’. Interestingly many Tradwives once identified as the feminist they now criticise, and often use their own journey from feminist to feminine as validating their right-wing beliefs and encouraging other women to do the same.

This idea of ‘feminine not feminist’ appeared to inspire all Tradwives included in this research regardless of their position within the Tradwife Landscape. For example, Religious Tradwives discussed the biological and biblical role of women and how feminism by definition moves society away from these values, and Political Tradwives discussed how the actions of feminism and capitalism have “*forced families to function on two salaries, despite wanting just one breadwinner (men)*” (Southern, 2022). The return to 1950’s discussed by some Tradwives (i.e., Alena from The Darling Academy) is a nod to a time when feminine women were the mainstream, and feminism was a fringe liberal movement. Tradwives often take on the physical appearance of a 1950’s woman, embracing vintage and conservative fashion choices such as swing dresses, blouses, cardigans, hats, head scarves, and pearls

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<sup>10</sup> The premise of fourth wave feminism is capitalising on the virality of social media and the internet to instigate advocacy pathways. Fourth wave feminism introduced call-out and cancel culture (Zimmerman, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> Toxic femininity in the context of Tradwives refers to ‘toxic’ traits, beliefs, and behaviours of women that promote strict gender roles and excludes diverse expressions of masculinity and femininity. Toxic femininity often includes shaming other women for ‘not being woman enough’ (Alao, 2021).

(Brewer, 2022). For Tradwives who strongly embraced an overtly feminine ideology, the 1950's *Housewife Aesthetic* was particularly prominent, as shown below.

**Figure 44**  
*1950's approach to the Tradwife Aesthetic*



Tradwives see their embodiment of the 1950's aesthetic as a conscious decision against or counterculture to progressivism. The intentional presentation of the 1950's housewife aesthetic appeared to signify commitment to traditional gender roles, and submission to their husband - the use of head scarves and aprons further cemented this nonverbal communication. Many religious Tradwives saw wifely submission as paramount to the harmonious living of men and women, an idea supported by their interpretation of the Bible. As religious Tradwife The Pretty Conservative states;

*“It’s not weakness. It’s biology. It’s not about “your feelings.” It’s about historical fact. As women we are wise enough to know that without male leadership and protection, if all the men in our country suddenly vanished, we would be left vulnerable and exposed. Strong women realize this and follow suit. Male masculinity & leadership should not be seen as “toxic” and if it is, then choose a better partner” (@theprettyconservative, 2021).*

Political Tradwife Lauren Chen (2022) echoed this position to her 583,000 subscribers on a YouTube video titled, Women LEAVING Feminism for Femininity;

*“[Tradwives] highlight the beautiful aspects of being a mom, being a Christian, being a wife, and it’s just such a nice refreshing change from the image of womanhood and femininity that third wave feminism has been shoving down our throats”*

Rooted in a perceived decline of patriarchy and the undermining of the imperative role of women within the family unit (Whitehead & Perry, 2019), Tradwives use their ‘feminine not feminist’ rhetoric to advocate for a societal reinvigoration of conservative religious and fundamental heteronormative values of sex and gender. Through this promotion of inflexible gender roles, Tradwives buy-in to the notions of toxic masculinity and toxic femininity. They uphold a restrictive form of femininity that by definition excludes gender and sexual diversity (Price, 2019). Communicated as either complementary or hierarchical, the role of women in society as interpreted by Tradwives is to be and act as a feminine woman should (to cook, clean, bear children, and support her husband). Through this biological perspective and ‘radicalisation of domesticity’ (Proctor, 2022), resistance towards abortion and LGBTTQIA+ rights are justified and framed as part of a broader globalised, liberal multicultural agenda (Skjelsboek et al., 2020).

In Aotearoa NZ, Political Tradwife Hannah Spierer (also known by her pseudonym, Sarah Smith) appears to have consciously taken up this anti-feminist role through a rejection

of this perceived liberal agenda. Hannah is co-host of Counterspin Media, an alternative media source in Aotearoa NZ. In a five part monologue shared on YouTube, Hannah discussed the perils of mainstream feminism citing;

*“People seem to love the idea of women taking down the patriarchy.. I would argue that feminism, like environmentalism, is an ideology that is being pushed on the public by forces .. who would like to control humanity. ..What a genius thing to come up with? ..Push women out into the workforce and you get another 50(percent) of the population paying tax ... and they no longer want to take care of the household, or their children, or even their husbands heaven forbid. So you've got the breaking up of the family unit, and you've got an added income for the government .. you have more control basically because with weak families you get weak communities, and with weak communities you get weak societies, and with a weak society all the individuals are more easily controlled”* (Spierer, 2020 as cited in Counterspin Media, 2020).

Once a Green Party advocate, Hannah identifies that *“when I was a lefty I would have leaned towards feminist ideology”* (Spierer, 2020 as cited in Counterspin Media, 2020). Other women in the Counterspin Media community have been seen to echo Hannah’s conspiratorial perception that feminism is a tool used by the government to gain control over society. In a Telegram thread one supporter writes (The Daily Telegraph, 2022);

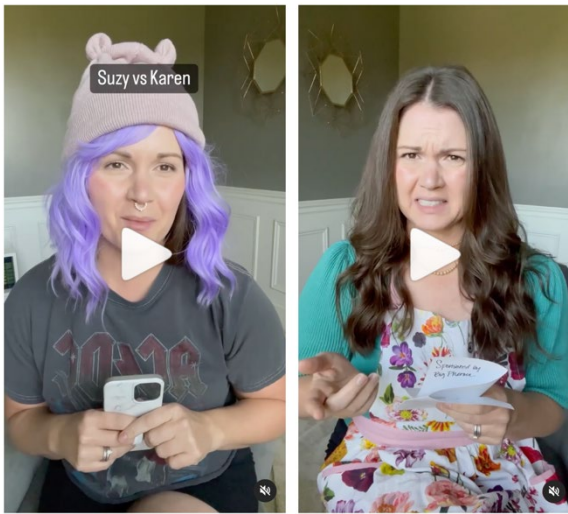
*“However they (mainstream media) are clearly not interested in such honesty and transparency for their audience, instead they’ll continue to smear and moralise about how bad we are, whilst their “side” continues to destroy the economy, turn women into men and men into undesirable low testosterone creatures resembling Marc Daalder [NZ political reporter]in addition to brainwashing children with Marxist gender theory”*

Tradwives in this research firmly aligned with Hannah's political interpretation of anti-feminism. Rather than rejecting feminism through the aesthetic publication and promotion of a feminine life at home as wife and mother, some women embodying a modern Tradwife Aesthetic used political commentary to discuss their rejection of feminist ideology. In a debate bringing together anti & pro feminist thought, modern Tradwife Sydney Watson states "*I find that a lot of feminist ideology and thought today feels more like a supremacist movement rather than something that is supposed to be advancing the goals of equality*" (Watson, 2022 as cited in Vice, 2022). Many modern Tradwives reject feminism purely because they believe it to now be irrelevant. In their eyes, women have achieved the equality sought out by the early waves of feminism and contemporary feminism is perceived as a tirade against men and heteronormativity. Issues of abortion, transgender rights, and the gender pay gap are frequently discussed in this anti-feminist/anti-woke counterculture space as well as regenerating masculinity and men's rights. In 2018, activist Sydney Watson launched a 'March for Men' in Melbourne Australia stating that "*a lot of people feel like they cannot support men's rights, masculinity, and men in general without being judged*" (Chetwin-Kelly, 2018).

Counterculture Tradwife Jennifer Mock echoes this irrelevance of feminism in a contemporary context through her reel series where she uses two fictional characters (Suzy-homemaker and future-Karen) in satire skits to discuss the perceived contradictory nature of feminism to her 58,400 followers.

**Figure 45**

*Suzy-homemaker (right) vs. future-Karen (left) - Characters by Jennifer Mock to show the irrelevance of feminism*



For example in one reel, future-Karen believes women are still oppressed for various reasons such as *‘the USA not yet seeing a woman president.’* Suzy-homemaker questions this opinion, arguing that the fact women are eligible to become president shows we have achieved equality - *“Women can become president, open their own bank account, buy their own property, earn of millions of dollars, and win awards.. and we still think women are oppressed?!”* In this same reel, future-Karen outlines a list of ‘rules’ women must abide by in order to be a modern feminist in 2022;

*“ 1. You have to get a job outside the home. Women must occupy all the spaces men do. Being ‘just’ a housewife is boring, archaic, and a waste of your life.*

*2. No kids, “children are a burden to society and contribute to climate change.*

*3. You must radically support abortion on demand.*

*4. You can be any religion, except Christianity – preferably atheist.*

The reel ends with future-Karen sarcastically saying;

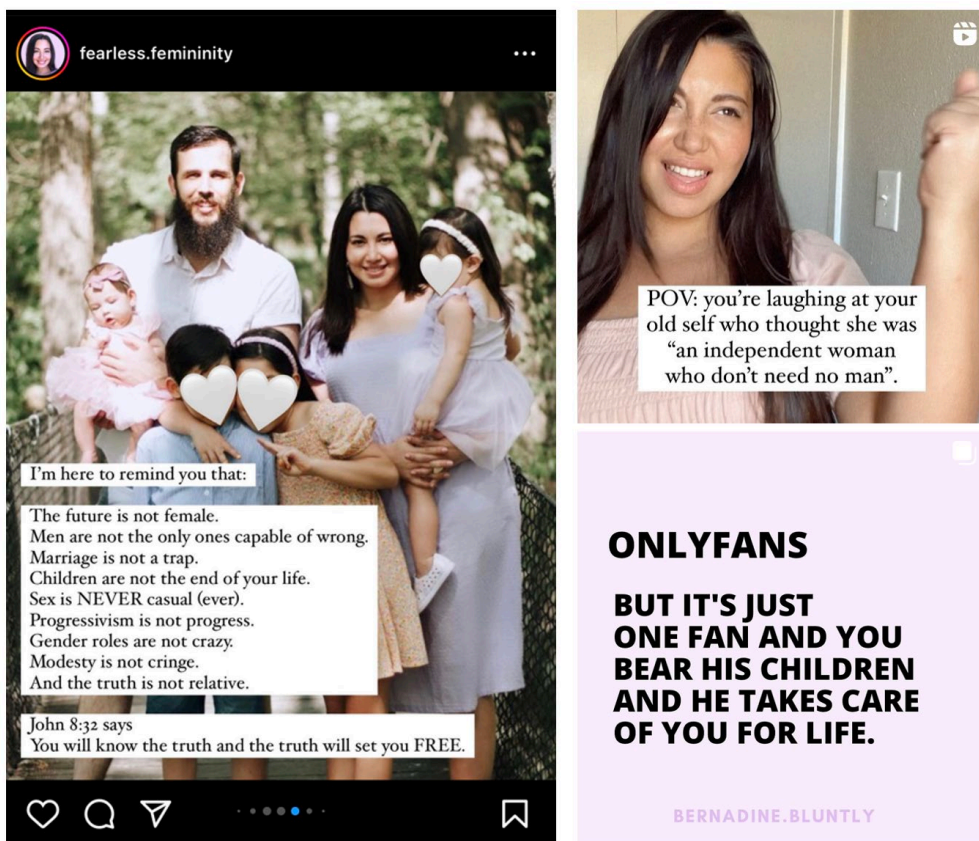
*“If you sign up today you get a free vagina hat, tubes tied... obviously.”*

Most Tradwives described their personal journey from feminism to femininity as a form of awakening. These Tradwives frequently discussed the processes which allowed them to lean into a more feminine life, offering tips and tricks for others. Books, videos, and tools that helped them ‘wake up from feminism’ were shared in the hope other women will feel compelled to do the same. By extension, it appeared the rejection of feminism could be understood as a driving or recruiting factor that attracted women to the Tradwife cause. Maternal identities taken up during pregnancy could be understood as a push factor towards online sites which focus on motherhood (Kerry & Murray, 2020), equally, a level of trauma or instability in childhood and/or a drastic change of life circumstance (i.e., death, health crisis, pandemic) was seen to also provide impetus for attraction to Tradwives. In an interview with BBC, Alena Pettitt cited her reasons for leaning in to a feminine lifestyle; “*I just [feel] like I was born to be a mother and a wife...I grew up in a single-parent household...and at that point in time, I realized that I didn’t want that for my own life*” (BBC Stories, 2020). Within their online identities, Tradwives created communities of like-minded conservative women who refused to conform to the perceived pressures feminism had placed on them to ‘do it all’. Stories of turning away from feminism were unanimously celebrated within the Tradwife community.

Bernadine Bluntly (@fearless.femininity) is a prominent Tradwife femininity advocate and proclaimed former feminist. She is an Alt-Lite Religious Tradwife who presents a combination of *girl-next-door* and *modern wife* aesthetics. Now a proud feminine woman, Bernadine runs a paid course that coaches women towards the benefits of a more traditional life. Named ‘Simply Smitten’, Bernadine launched her course in 2021 and claims to currently have over 320 women inside. A free masterclass named ‘the Art of Pursuit’ is also available through Bernadine’s Instagram where she teaches women what their role is as a “woman of pursuit” (i.e., a single woman) and what qualities attract a “good man”. Testimonials from

women who have completed Bernadine’s courses and ‘rediscovered femininity’ are frequently shared to her 35,600 followers on Instagram. They are typically displayed as a before and after transformation in a format similar to that commonly used by fitness influencers. Benefits of stronger relationships, healthier children, and better life balance are actively discussed on transformation posts and these serve as both an advertisement for Bernadine’s courses, and the promotion of the Tradwife lifestyle.

**Figure 46**  
Bernadine Bluntly (@fearless.femininity)



Jessica’s story below shows her transformation from ‘feminist to feminine’ after completing Bernadine’s course. In the caption of this image Bernadine writes;

*“Another woman thriving in fearless femininity! Thank You God ❤️ Turn on post notifications for @fearless.femininity so you don’t miss the next one on the RIP Feminism*

series! The wise woman builds her house but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down. — Proverbs 14:1. Thank you Jessica at @oneacrehomemaker for sharing your story!”

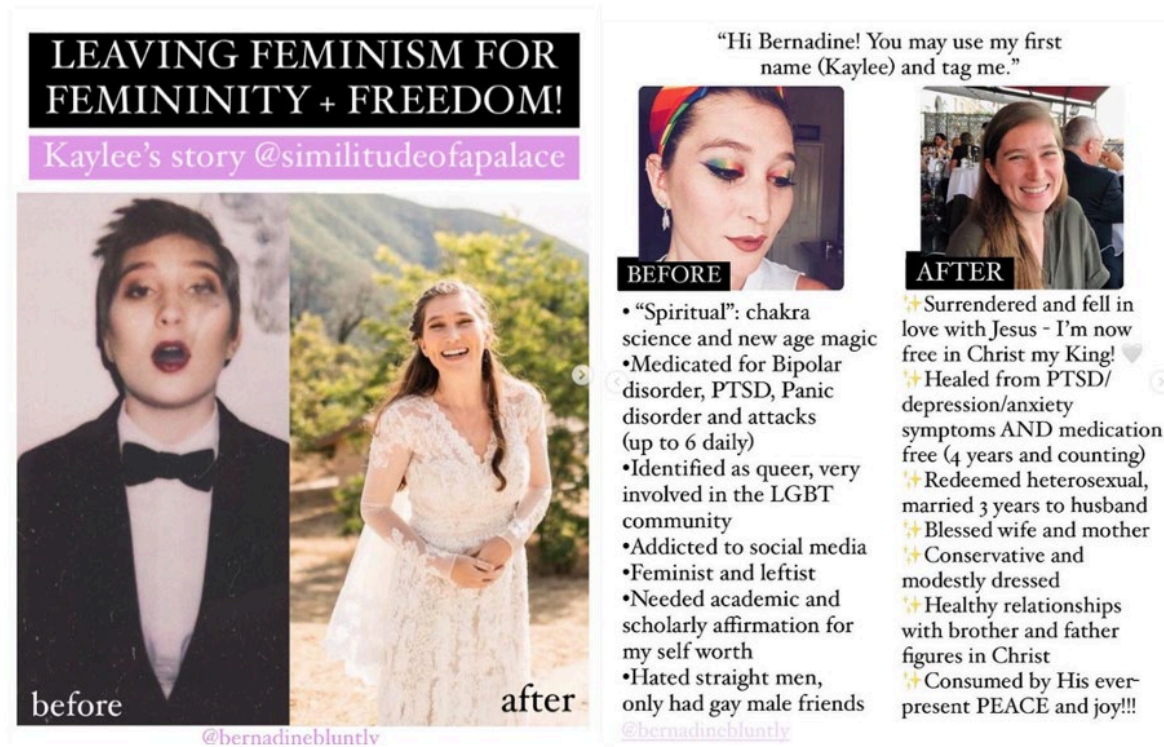
**Figure 47**  
Leaving feminism for femininity - example 1



Similarly, Kaylee’s story shows her similar transformation from feminist to feminine after completing Bernadine’s course. In the caption of this post Bernadine writes;

*“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” — 2 Corinthians 5:17. Follow @Fearless.Femininity for more jaw-dropping transformation. Praise God!! ❤️🙏 Turn on post notifications so you don’t miss the next one on the #RIPfeminism series! #explore #womanhood #fyp #femininity #God #love #transformation #Christian”*

**Figure 48**  
*Leaving feminism for femininity - example 2*



Smith (1990) argues that before and after images contain 'the gap for desire created by the deficiency of the present and actual in comparison with the ideality of the image now represented as an objective' (p. 190). Bernadine posts feminist women as being unattractive and deficient, and women who lean into femininity as the desirable objective. Presenting women in these ways can be understood to draw on ideas of Sexual Market Value, which quantifies the value of women based on how they physically project a male-ordered and narrowly defined feminine ideal (Ebner, 2020). The ideal feminine woman is not only constructed in terms of bodily presentations but also through her behaviour. The onus of infidelity, disrespect, and miscommunication in romantic relationships were offered as issues caused by women who are too feminist, and Bernadine further claimed her courses would help those struggling to hold down a 'good man'.

The idea that women are solely responsible for successful marriages was further promoted by Dixie Andelin Forsyth (@fascinating.womanhood), a popular femininity blogger and author of the book, 'Fascinating Womanhood for the Timeless Woman'. The Fascinating Womanhood cause was created to support and nurture all women, rejuvenating the idea that to be a traditional wife is to fulfil one's potential as a woman. Dixie comes from a line of women following a Tradwife lifestyle. Her mother, Helen Andelin shared teachings of how to live more feminine with a collection of books published in the 1960's titled 'Fascinating Womanhood'. Today, Dixie continues her mother's legacy along with her own daughters and manages the Fascinating Womanhood community where a variety of topics are discussed that focus on (re)discovering a feminine life and building stronger marriages.

Broadly speaking, Tradwives like Dixie and the Fascinating Womanhood community advocate for women to change themselves in order to be viewed as more desirable in the eyes of men echoes the tendency of extreme right-wing groups to view women as property that they deserve monopoly access to. Taking up these places of advocacy, Tradwives are very much guided, perhaps even disciplined by the male gaze. Brought into academic discourse by feminist Laura Mulvey (1975), the 'male gaze' highlights how patriarchy occupies and controls the perspective to offer women as sexual objects for the pleasure of the heterosexual male viewer (Suerth, 2022). Practical applications of the male gaze can be seen in the way women's beauty standards are typically produced from a heteronormative determination of what men find sexually attractive (i.e., blonde hair, hairless bodies, and lean figures) (Wilde, 2021). Psychological implications of the male gaze can be seen in rape myths, domestic violence myths, body dysmorphia, self-objectification, anxiety, depression, and the disordered eating of women (Stibbard, 2022).

The female gaze counters this and presents women as autonomous identities who have agency and can be sexual without being sexualised (Loreck, 2016). Through their advocacy

of choice feminism, Tradwives could be seen to be positioning themselves within the perspective of the female gaze. They frequently cite their hyper-femininity as a choice, stating that as long as they have consciously chosen their lifestyle, society has no right to judge. Many Tradwives report Tradwifery as offering true feminine fulfilment, granting true happiness, and is hailed as an autonomous lifestyle. These women fiercely define and defend traditional womanhood as within the female gaze and not dictated by the opinion or perspective of their husband.

Despite this self-promotion as autonomous and agentic beings, it can also be argued that Tradwives are far more motivated by the male gaze than the female gaze. The conscious attempt to see women as subjects of agency negates the very premise of Tradwives who style themselves within male-ordered heterosexual matrices within a limited and patriarchal range of physical, psychological and spiritual expression. Tradwives seek validation of heterosexual men and define womanly success through patriarchal and heteronormative beauty standards. The Tradwife Aesthetic and layering of right-wing ideology positions these women as disciplinarians of the male gaze: Religious Tradwives seek a biblical male gaze through their interpretation of traditional gender roles in Bible; Political Tradwives seek a metapolitical male gaze through a desire to be seen as a digital advocate for right-wing politics; Militia Tradwives seek a militarised male gaze through their presentation as a capable and sexually appealing help-mate for men; and Counterculture Tradwives seek an Alt-Right male gaze through their advocacy of white supremacy.

This idea of Tradwives as an expression of the male gaze cuts across generations, as seen in the collage below. From young Conservative Tradwives adopting femininity because that is what they believe they are born to achieve. Middle age Political Tradwives promoting the shift from feminism to femininity as a counter to the perceived mainstream liberalist

agenda, and mature Tradwives hoping to pass on the benefit of 1950's feminism to the younger generation. All Tradwives saw their value as through the eyes of men.

**Figure 49**  
*Illustration of the Tradwife age range*



Under the guise of choice feminism, Tradwives renegotiate the contemporary understanding of feminist inclusivity and offer step-by-step guidelines on how to present, act, and communicate as a traditional heteronormative woman in a Western Euro-centric society. Through their online communities, Tradwives distinguish in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), qualifying women who uphold traditional values and openly rejecting those who do not. Liberal interpretations of feminism are subsequently projected as socially and politically less than, with Tradwives and their followers appearing to place both pity and criticism on those who subscribe to the left's interpretation of womanhood. In this way, Tradwives employ cancel culture against feminism in an attempt to diminish feminist thought and reinvigorate conservative femininity.

While the value system of Tradwives is rooted in their prioritisation of their role as wife and mother, this role does not necessarily prevent these women from promoting the Tradwife cause or in some cases holding careers which also promote this cause outside the home. Through the ownership of their social media profiles and curation of their online identity, Tradwives can be understood as exercising a level of autonomous agency - however not all Tradwives are able to exercise this agency, and those that do exercise agency within

male-bounded frames. Conceptualising Tradwives as disciplinarians of the male gaze, we can see how Tradwives right-wing thought influences their online content and actions to idealise femininity in narrowly constrained parameters according to their particular right-wing expressions.

When interviewed on how she would define an ideal woman within RWE, Alt-Right Counterculture Tradwife Lana Lokteff states;

*“She’s well-rounded, reads, is interested in fighting back against anti-white politics, keeps a nice home, raises the kids well, teaches them about their tribal ethnic consciousness, has a good marriage. But then she might have time to do a blog post, or a video, or produce something here and there, to fight back against anti-white politics”* (ADL, 2018).

Tracking this vein of thought, Alt-Lite Religious Tradwife Bernadine Bluntly sees the ideal woman as

*“A full-time wife and mom...The fact that you’ve decided to dedicate your time, energy, and attention to your home, your marriage and your children means that you are directly empowering your husband to do his best at work. Your contribution to the family life enables your husband to focus on getting tasks done... Because he knows things are taken care of on the home front – thanks to you”* (@fearless.femininity, 2023).

Lana has positioned herself and the role of women as advocates for the Alt-Right. While she is still a wife and mother, she also has a voice outside of this context. However, Bernadine’s identity is much more rigid as she reinforces the value of women - and by consequence, femininity - as only positioned within a biblical male gaze. Within the narrow male gaze, some Tradwives appear to have a level of autonomy within their domesticity, others do not.

Overall, Tradwives across the right-wing landscape used expressions of heteronormative masculinity and femininity to project their ideology as symbols of idealism. The general sentiment espoused was that Tradwives believed modern feminism detracts from the biological role of women as wives and mothers. While this research found evidence of modern women taking on career type ambitions outside the home, these ambitions appeared by in large to be geared towards the promotion and ultimate continuation of their right-wing cause and were structured around their Tradwife position. Holon 4: The Tradwife Side-Hustle delves into how Tradwives monetised their notions of femininity via their platforms through the creation of businesses and partnerships that offered a level of ambition without compromising their priorities.

#### **Holon 4: The Tradwife Side-Hustle**

*“[A Tradwives’] job is to tell people they don’t have a job.”*

– Michelle Janning (as cited in Froio, 2022)

In the development and coordination of their online identities and communities, groups and figures across the right-wing landscape seek revenue streams in order to keep their ideologies alive. From bitcoin investment, to PayPal donations and advertising (Bogle, 2021a), right-wing online advocacy is undoubtably profitable for those able to generate a willing and notable audience. While funding their right-wing initiatives is not a new phenomenon, the way these groups generate this funding is increasingly complex - and exists across a range of platforms and methods. Recent research into online funding methods of the Alt-Right identified social media influencing as a growing revenue stream (Bogle, 2021b). Through carefully curated content, extreme and notable right-wing figures have developed highly engaged audiences from which they can capitalise.

Influencer marketing is one of the most popular and effective forms of online marketing. Since 2019, its global market value has more than doubled, reaching 13.8 billion USD in 2021 (Michaelsen et al., 2022). Theorised under the ‘attention economy’, social media influencers use self-branding rooted in authenticity to develop and maintain a highly engaged audience that in turn can facilitate revenue streams via advertising, brand collaboration, and promotions (Arriagada & Ibáñez, 2020; Ashman et al., 2021; Goldhaber, 1997; Smith & Fischer, 2021). Highlighting how an influencer’s profitability relies on the attention of their followers, and how this attention can be conceptualised as a form of currency (Zulli, 2017), the attention economy is measured via social media platform features such as likes, shares, and follows. The level of attention an influencer generates can by extension act as a predictor for the amount of revenue that could be generated from their online identity (Kubler, 2023). Tradwives have developed an influencer status through ostensibly presenting their values, beliefs and lifestyles on social media. Typically leading communities of between 20,000 and 200,000 followers, Tradwife audiences were not only significant in size, but also notably engaged. The comment section of Tradwife accounts included hundreds of followers engaging in conversation. Comments took on many forms including the following from Religious Tradwife Mrs. Midwest’s YouTube video titled ‘how to Speak Femininely.’ This video was posted in 2020 and has since received 468,000 views, 19,000 likes, and 1200 comments (Mrs. Midwest, 2019).

**Table 10**

*Comments Section of Mrs. Midwest video 'How to Speak Femininely'*

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Messages of Support: “*SHE SPEAKS SOOOOOO!!!!BEAUTIFULLY!!!!* 🌸❤️🌸 *Isn't it something that our mothers grandmothers great grandmothers etc knew all this deeply and inherently within....but sadly... it's very needed that women hear this now, especially younger generations of women.*”

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Messages of hope: “*I 100% agree with all of this. I wish it had more views. I'm tired of being the only woman that embraces her own femininity. When did it become a bad thing to be a woman? I've felt very*

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*alone but it's nice to find videos like this and know that I'm not the only woman that feels as if femininity is important. One of the keys to life. It's what balances the world. So do men. We have our own roles and we should embrace them! Great video!"*

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*Suggestions: "I would love to see a video discussing advice on how the young girly girls can work towards transitioning to women. Something I feel like I struggle with as I do tend to think of myself as mature in many ways, however in many others I still feel as though I still project myself as a young girl instead of a woman. In many ways I still feel like a young girl and I'm not sure where to start in growing towards that 'feminine woman' goal..... Love your channel and all your helpful advice!!"*

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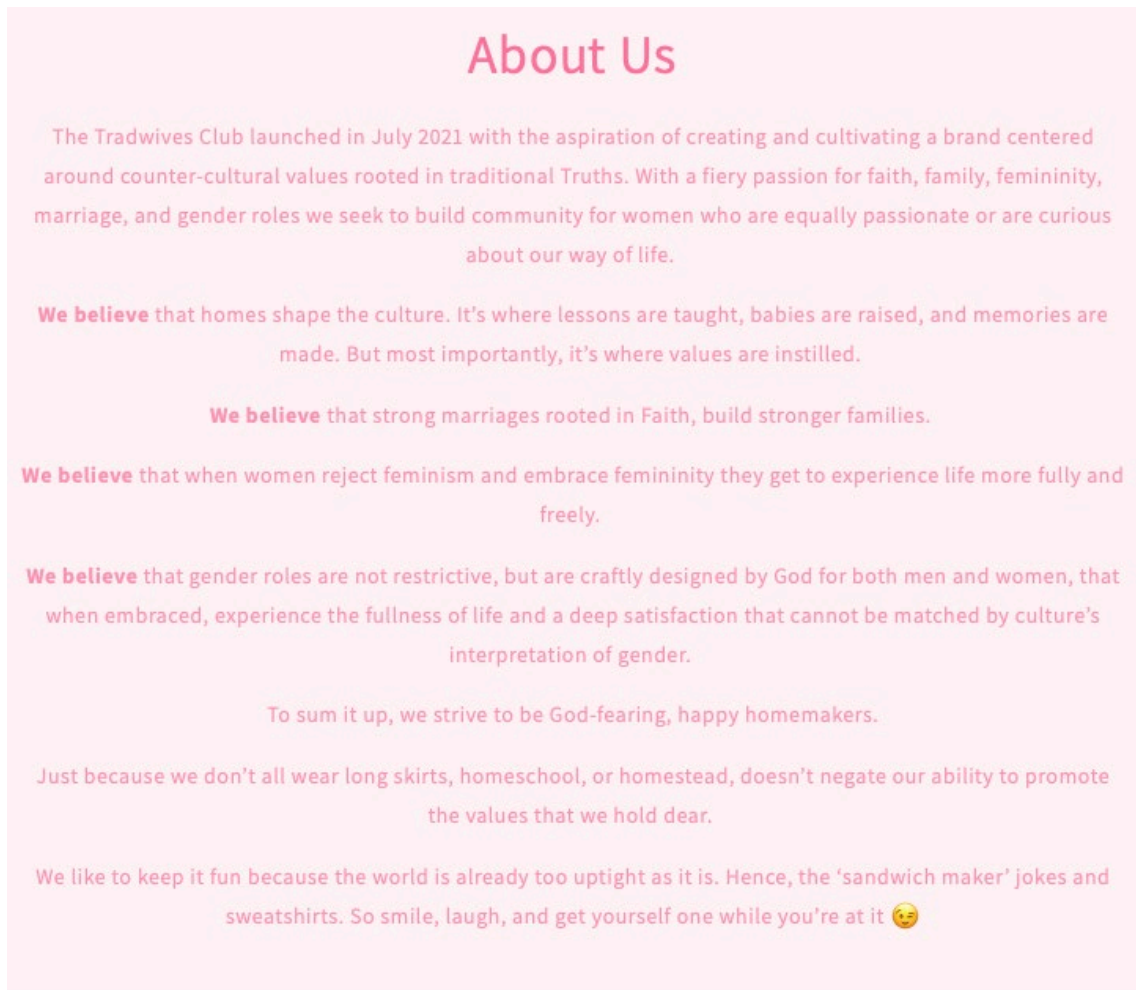
Even accounts with the smallest following received notable and regular community engagement. These highly engaged and attentive audiences enabled Tradwives to successfully monetise their online identity. Using the attention economy, Tradwives appeared to earn money across all platforms they were active on whilst maintaining their ideological priorities as wife and mother. All except one (@tradspostingws) of the Tradwives included in this research monetised their social media presence. From businesses promoting femininity, homemaking tools, social media coaching, marketing, and home décor, to Amazon storefronts and brand partnerships, the Tradwife phenomena is undoubtably profitable for women. Using examples from the dataset, the following outlines the common ways Tradwives monetised their online presence; Goods, Services, Partnerships, and Advertising.

### **Goods**

Using their audience as the baseline for their marketing strategy, Tradwives promoted goods across their accounts. Often - but not always - aligned in some way to the overall messaging and adopted aesthetic of the Tradwife, the created goods appeared to offer some sort of related purpose to the Tradwife and her following. For example, @tradwivesclub have created an array of Tradwife merchandise that promotes their Conservative Religious Tradwife identity and *girl-next-door* aesthetic. Featuring hoodies, t-shirts, mugs, and caps

with quirky Tradwife slogans such as ‘Sandwich maker,’ the @thetradwivesclub clothing brand ideally represented the overall aesthetic of @thetradwivesclub online identity. As expressed in the About Us page of their website;

**Figure 50**  
*The Tradwives Club 'About Us' page on their website*



Designed modestly using pastel colourways, the merchandise appeared to be targeted towards a younger Tradwife audience as shown below. There were no links to the manufacturing standards adhered to in the production of this Tradwife merchandise. It appeared @thetradwivesclub sourced their clothing from Gildan brands and screen printed this clothing with their logo and slogans. Using Gildan products is common for small start-ups as their wholesale products are accessible and affordable (The Adair Group, 2018).

Although Gildan mentions their significant commitments to Corporate Social Responsibility, ethical, and sustainable standards of practice, some sustainable fashion commentators have questioned the authenticity of Gildan’s claims, criticising the company for not doing enough to address working conditions, and health problems incurred by factory workers (Ibrahim, 2017; Good On You, 2022). @thetradwivesclub clothing ranged \$30-40USD per item and \$15-25USD for their mugs and hats.

**Figure 51**  
*@thetradwivesclub merchandise*



Alt-Lite Political Tradwife Lillian (@thepostmodernmom) together with her family have also created merchandise promoting their traditional British living and British nationalist ideology. A similar start-up screen printing model as @thetradwivesclub, on the family website (thepostmodernfamily.com) Lillian and her husband sell their t-shirts to “raise funds to support our staff and continue to buy equipment for the [Postmodern Family] channel.”

**Figure 52**  
*The Postmodern Family t-shirt line*



Through the creation of clothing merchandise, Tradwives perpetuated the culture of consumerism that is prevalent on social media. Through offering a free place to trade, and facilitating the connectedness of online communities, commodities like clothing are increasingly accessible and desirable via social media. By extension, Xu and Chu (2023) suggest social media entrepreneurs contribute to the productivity of capitalism both online and offline. Tradwife businesses could be understood as also contributing to capitalism, commodifying a way for followers to express their support. Common in defining and communicating one's social identities (Feinberg et al., 1992), the production of clothing merchandise also offered a deepening of follower in-group association to the Tradwife movement. Clothing holds significant congruence with social identity (Bull, 1975; Feinberg et al., 1992), and can project a clear statement on who an individual is, and what they stand for. Prominent themes stemming from previous research around psychology and clothing have found; (1) individuals form impressions of others based on clothing cues, (2) observers behave differently toward people depending on their clothing choice, and (3) individuals prefer clothing which invokes a similar expression to their clothing choices (Buckley & Roach, 1974). For Tradwives, the creation of wearable merchandise could be classified as a 'bringing to life' of their ideology. Wearing Tradwife clothing in offline worlds could serve

as both an advertisement for the Tradwife cause, and an instrument for identifying others in the Tradwife ‘in-group.’ For example, if two women wearing @thetradwivesclub ‘Sandwich Maker’ t-shirts crossed each other on the street, they would immediately have something in common and/or an ideological alliance. Kleine et al. (1993) identified how within in the context of social identity theory, a physical item (in this instance, clothing) is significant because it reflects a contribution to some totality which enables a functional response. Drawing on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), Tradwife clothing can be understood as ‘identity-related possessions’ (i.e., the way consumers rely on possessions to construct their identity – Hawkins & Rome, 2021). In this instance, followers may wear Tradwife clothing as a form of self-communication and way to physically enact an alliance with Tradwife ideology.

### ***Services***

Alongside selling clothing merchandise, Tradwives engaged in selling particular services. These covered a range of topics including; marketing strategy and how to grow a social media following, courses teaching women how to be more feminine and attract the right man, the sale of presets<sup>12</sup> for images posted to social media, recipes, and homemaking handbooks. The creation and promotion of these services appeared to provide Tradwife followers with a guided path to Tradwifery. Solie is an Alt-Lite Religious Tradwife and owner of Nap-Time Side-Hustle, a program created for women who want to “*grow their social media and make money online, without it overtaking their lives as homemakers, wives, or mothers*” (Nap-Time Side-Hustle, n.d.). On the business’ website, the 6-week course is said to cover business planning, marketing, and social media support. Members have access

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<sup>12</sup> A collection of edits which align all content posted on an individual’s social media account to have a cohesive look and feel (The Lost Girls, 2022).

to group coaching and webinars led by fellow women who have managed to make social media profitable. Solie's business works alongside her husband who is also an online content creator that is claimed to make \$1000/month on his YouTube channel (Nap-Time Side-Hustle, n.d.).

**Figure 53**  
*Instagram promotion for Solie's Naptime Side Hustle*



Alongside her books on English Etiquette, Conservative Religious Tradwife Alena from the Darling Academy has also created an online handbook to assist women in managing their kitchen. Marketed to help the smooth running of a domestic kitchen, the 'Kitchen Management Manual' features useful charts to track food inventory, weight and temperature conversions, as well as planning sheets, recipe cards, and shopping list templates.

**Figure 54**  
*The Darling Academy's Kitchen Management Manual*



Tradwife promotion and monetisation of services could be considered as contributing to processes of radicalisation. All services offered by Tradwives were largely geared towards bringing followers deeper into the Tradwife ecosystem. Whether through upskilling in social media management, the creation of successful content, or guides on how to effectively run a household, the services directed followers further towards the *#Tradlife*. Research has identified paying for services of an influential figure can be associated with a deepening of commitment to a particular ideological position (Bogle, 2021b). Theorised as the ‘commitment curve,’ the deepening of commitment that occurs when a follower exchanges money indicates a distinct and conscious shift from viewing and liking content (Bogle, 2021b). Within RWE, this shift can echo a level of commitment to an extreme right-wing ideological position. For example, although allegedly self-funded in his own terrorist act, the perpetrator of the March 15 attacks committed in Aotearoa NZ made 14 donations to Alt-Right, anti-immigration groups and individuals in the lead up to the attack (Bogle, 2021b). While this is not necessarily the intention of Tradwives, the act of purchasing something of value which teaches a follower how to be and act as a Tradwife could be considered as a stage of radicalisation towards Tradwife ideology. When compared against Hogan's Socialisation Theory for online radicalisation (Liang & Cross, 2020), engaging Tradwife services could echo a shift from ‘schooling’ to ‘selection’. The act of exchanging money for Tradwife expertise on a particular topic (especially those related to Tradwife right-wing ideologies) highlights the individual has already reached a level of education on Tradwife ideology (schooling), and they are now wanting to actively engage with the belief system of the Tradwife (selection). Taken a step further, Tradwife services could lead the individual to a ‘specialisation’ phase of radicalisation whereby they may adopt the Tradwife aesthetic and generate their own social media presence (i.e., recreating the Tradwife ideology within the context of their own life and right-wing value systems). From another perspective, the sale of

gender services teaching women how to be and act more feminine could echo ‘redpilling’ within the context of the manosphere<sup>13</sup>. As mentioned in Holon 3: Feminine not feminist, Tradwives uphold the male gaze and place much of the onus of healthy relationships on women. By promoting this idea through gender services that teach women how to be more feminine, Tradwives could be considered to ‘redpill’ women towards a perceived truth that to be heterosexually desirable is to present oneself within the Tradwife Aesthetic. Women are encouraged to buy-in to these Tradwife gender services and subsequently alter the way they present, act, and speak. Through this redpilling technique, Tradwives appear to not only be upholding the beliefs of the manosphere, but commodifying them.

### ***Partnerships and Advertising***

Social media influencer brand collaborations are one of the most profitable areas of influencer marketing (Miguel et al., 2022). Ranging from influencer product reviews, tutorials on how to use a product, or simply featuring the product in their content and providing links to purchase, brands frequently piggy-back on social media influencers as a means to generate sale of their products (Miguel et al., 2022). Authentic audience engagement is one of the key factors in the success of brand collaborations and partnerships. Brands rely on the ability of influencers to convey their support of a brand in a way that is perceived to be true and genuine by followers. Lee and Eastin (2021) theorised that perceived authenticity is made up of five constructs (sincerity, truthful endorsements, visibility, expertise, and uniqueness), each of which having an effect on the believability of an influencer’s online identity (Lee & Eastin, 2021). Tradwives negotiated the constructs of

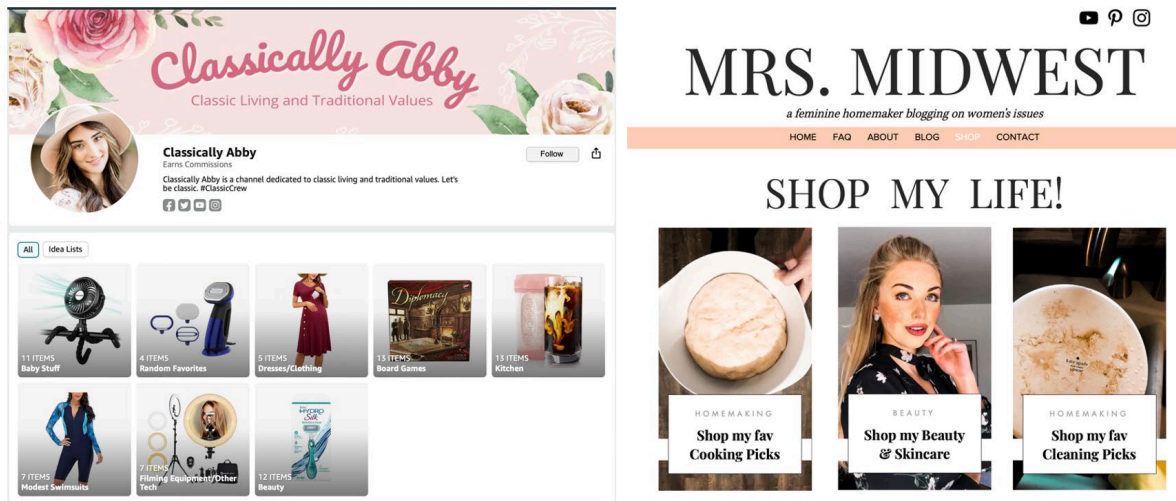
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<sup>13</sup> The manosphere is a collection of subcultures that sit both within and outside of the Alt-Right who are united by the belief that feminism controls modern culture, and a perception that masculinity is under attack (Shullenberger, 2021).

perceived authenticity through aligning with brands and partnerships that elevate the publication of their private lives. Maintaining authenticity was actioned through Tradwife use of Amazon Affiliate pages and brand partnerships aligned with Tradwife conservative values.

Amazon Affiliate pages allowed Tradwives to essentially gain return from product recommendations they made on their social media profiles. Functioning as a third party between Amazon and the brand, Tradwives shared recommended products on their social media platforms with an affiliate link. When followers made qualifying purchases from the link, the Tradwife earned a commission. The below shows two examples of how Tradwives used Amazon Affiliate pages to monetise their platform. The first (@classicallyabby) used the functionality of Amazon itself to create a homepage for her recommended products, the second embedded Amazon affiliate links into her personal website (@mrsmidwest).

**Figure 55**  
*Examples of Amazon Affiliate Pages*



Partnerships and advertising were the final ways Tradwives were observed to monetise their platform. From brand partnerships in the form of ads on social media promoting the product, to collaborations with other brands, brand partnerships are a common way influencers generate an income and Tradwives appeared to be no different.

@madisonviningblog partnered with @wallcase to create a practical yet aesthetic phone case

aligned to her overall social media and brand identity. As a conservative Tradwife with a modern, authentic, and warm style, Madison appeared to create the case for like-minded women with a similar aesthetic. The partnered brand @wallicases is a phone case business owned by a couple who appears to be a similar age and stage to Madison. It is unclear whether the wife of the couple is also a Tradwife, however she did appear to align with similar conservative views on the role of women in the home. The previous accounts @wallicases have collaborated with also seem to be other popular feminine Instagram accounts with a similar aesthetic look and conservative ideology to Madison.

**Figure 56**

*Madison Vining X Walli phone case partnership*



Tradwives also generated income through advertising partnerships. Different brands appeared to pay the Tradwife for sponsorship rights over a particular piece of content (or a content series) in exchange for the Tradwife discussing and promoting the product to their audience. For example, Alt-Lite Political Tradwife Lauren Chen partnered with many businesses in the creation of her YouTube videos. For most Tradwives, including Lauren, it was apparent brand partnerships stemmed from an alliance of values. Figure 56 depicts Lauren's promotion of Noble Gold Investments, a business that promotes the protection of wealth through turning cash into gold. Investment in gold is a method which Alt-Lite and Alt-Right commentators believe is less likely to be controlled by the government (Slobodian, 2019).

**Figure 57**  
*Advertisement example including in Lauren Chen's video*



The promotion of business ventures was largely carried across all platforms Tradwives were active on, however the most prominent platforms used were Instagram and YouTube. While it was generally clear how each Tradwife was monetising their platforms, it also never appeared to be overly obvious. From the researcher's time spent in the Tradwife ecosystem, the marketing Tradwives employed to promote their businesses, services, brand affiliations, and partnerships never felt overly forward or 'salesy'. Tradwives appeared to cleverly embed advertising within elements of their Tradwife identity and culture, deepening their perceived authenticity. Many Tradwives endorsed health and beauty products they already used and clothing they already wore which led the promotion of products and services to appear to be genuine rather than forced.

By embedding themselves in influencer culture, Tradwives created an element of perceived autonomy within their arguably restricted lives. Offering visibility to communities of women who have historically been in the shadow of their male counterparts, Tradwife influencers validate a role for women as somewhat agentic beings within RWE. The flexibility and anonymity provided by influencing offered these women the ability to curate, project and monetise an aesthetic life, compatible with their responsibilities as a wife, mother, and homemaker. Tradwives may be bound by their domestic duties as wife and mother, but

they are not limited by them. Through the adoption of the Tradwife Aesthetic, these women curated an engaging identity that simultaneously served their right-wing affiliation and generated income. Projecting self-validation and validation for other women living or wanting to live by Tradwife values, Tradwives revolutionise what it is to be a traditional wife and mother.

### **Tradwife Culture**

Tradwives are a unique community existing within Right-Wing Extremism (RWE). Popularised online and active across social media platforms, women in the Tradwife community promote a lifestyle of devotion and dedication to the home and traditional nuclear family unit alongside an ideological rejection of feminism. The findings of this research identified four unique parts (termed ‘holons’) existing within the observed Tradwife holarchy. These holons allowed the researcher to conceptualise the complexities of the Tradwife holarchy and its right-wing influence and impact. A holarchy is a snapshot of an online culture in a particular time and place. Viewing the Tradwife Holarchy not as its individual holons, but as a whole, this researcher takes liberty and extends this holarchy to suggest understandings of Tradwife culture. The below offers an explanation of what Tradwife culture *is*, *offers*, and *promotes* as it was observed in the present research.

*Tradwife culture is* diverse in both right-wing affiliation and extremity. This research found evidence of Tradwife culture existing across the right-wing landscape in Conservative, Alt-Lite, and Alt-Right women. The level of right-wing extremity a Tradwife subscribed to influenced the norms of her language, dress, and overall online expression. Alongside extremity, women accessed and presented Tradwife culture through their affiliation with religious, political, militia, and counterculture ideologies. For example, Religious Tradwives looked and presented differently to Political Tradwives, and Counterculture Tradwives were different again. While levels of affiliation within Tradwife culture are not necessarily

mutually exclusive (i.e., the same woman could have religious as well as political extreme right-wing affiliation), women appeared to prioritise one for the curation of their online identity. To put it simply, all Tradwives align on the values of Tradwife culture, but may differ in their expression of it.

*Tradwife culture* is actioned through the development of an online influencer status on social media. Tradwife culture emphasises the publication of private lives with women in the community using an array of social media platforms to engage, communicate, and extend their cause. Through a clever story telling ability and sharing of curated and aesthetically attractive content, Tradwives are able to transform themselves from everyday social media users into influencers. The creation of Tradwife identities on social media platforms allows Tradwife culture to be optimised across the widest reach, cementing its influence. The use of social media marketing including the development of a strong brand identity facilitates the success of Tradwife culture. By applying a distinct and consistent message to their content, Tradwives are able to function across a multitude of social media platforms without losing credibility or consistency of messaging.

*Tradwife culture* is expressed through the Tradwife Aesthetic. Derived from three unique looks (*1950's housewife*, *girl-next-door*, and *the modern wife*), the Tradwife Aesthetic dictates the norms of presentation of Tradwife culture. It provides Tradwives with a shared template from which they can present their values and beliefs. Tradwives adopt a consistent aesthetic and use this to align their messaging and visually (re)present their ideological affiliations. The expression of Tradwife culture is nuanced by individuality. Kitayama (2002) theorises that members of a community do not necessarily adhere to cultural values in the same way. By incorporating their individual flair and personality into their online identity, Tradwives were able to create *personal cultural tendencies* (Moon et al., 2018) within the

universal values of a Tradwife Aesthetic. No two Tradwives looked exactly alike, and each Tradwife expressed an authentic self within the realm of Tradwife culture.

*Tradwife culture is* communicated online through a rejection of modern feminism, and adoption of traditional femininity. By encouraging self-care, homemaking, and traditional gender roles, Tradwife culture facilitates the devotion of members to a feminine lifestyle. Justified as an easier, more balanced and fulfilling life, feminist to feminine communication was used to validate Tradwife culture as the future of womanhood. Tradwives' individual journey from feminist to feminine was highlighted as an empowering awakening that allowed for greater personal happiness and deeper connection in relationships. Tapping into ideas of choice feminism, Tradwife culture promotes a woman's right to choose to be a fulltime wife and mother and the women in this research presented this choice as a desirable career through the vehicle of monetisation.

*Tradwife culture is* perpetuated through the monetisation of Tradwife influencers. Conceptualised as the Tradwife side-hustle, the inclusion of an influencer status within Tradwife culture where women promote brands, goods, and services in exchange for payment highlights how Tradwife culture preserves its relevance. Through commodification, Tradwife culture becomes more than just a personality trait or identity, it is a viable career option and a business that attributes currency to the sharing of personal information (Uwagba, 2022). As leaders of their online communities, Tradwives' influencer status implies the trust of their following. Consequently followers are more likely to accept the perspectives, opinions, and recommendations from Tradwives (Chang, 2008). Validation theories of marketing suggest that if an online user leaves a positive review for a product, service, brand, or business, another user is subsequently more likely to purchase or engage with that product, service, brand, or business (Schenk, 2020). The same could also be true for Tradwife influencers. The more her followers validate her identity (through following, sharing, and engaging with

content), the more likely she is to continue presenting and/or strengthening the parameters of her online identity. Likewise, the more a follower engages with Tradwife content, the more likely they are to deepen their commitment to her ideology through greater engagement with Tradwife content.

*Tradwife culture offers security in an increasingly insecure world. It outlines a set of guidelines, rules and norms on how to act, dress, and behave which provides women in right-wing communities with a sense of direction and purpose. It is a social comfort offering a compelling lifestyle and balance not common in modern society. Through inherent beliefs about the biological role of women, Tradwife culture offers women validation for choosing a lifestyle as the architectural wife and mother. By extension, Tradwife culture also offers a viable career option as social media influencers, and validation from being notable activists in their communities which have historically been male-dominated. In this vein, Tradwife culture offers a voice to women who may otherwise be voiceless.*

*Tradwife culture offers a powerful female in-group association and supplies solutions to perceived demands placed on women in Eurocentric modern societies. Within Tradwife culture exists a comfortable online community for likeminded conservative women who either do not fit into the hustle culture of modern society, and/or are negotiating highly traditional heterosexual relationships and mothering. The ability to reject career ambitions and prioritise a traditional housewife role is less popular in contemporary societies. The in-group association offered through Tradwife culture increases an individual's acceptance of a #Tradlife as the 'right decision', combats contradicting opinions of the out-group (i.e., those advocating for women to have careers outside the home), and further strengthens their affiliation with Tradwife ideological views. Strong cultural identity is known to be a protective factor and associated with positive outcomes in mental health (Burnett-Zeigler et al., 2013). By extension, this strong tie to one's cultural identity – in this case identifying*

with Tradwife culture – can also strengthen one's social support network through a collective in-group. For right-wing women new to motherhood, for example, a strong and supportive network of women in Tradwives may offer a protective level of comfort and validation.

*Tradwife culture reinforces* women as disciplinarians of the male gaze. Cultural norms for how to dress, speak, and behave put in place relatively strict boundaries for how women can express themselves. Geared firmly towards presenting women as attractive from a heteronormative masculine perspective, Tradwife culture limits the level of autonomy women have over their lives. Using the guise of choice feminism, perceived agency is offered around decisions to adopt Tradwife lifestyles and likewise agency over influencer status. Notwithstanding any agentic positioning, Tradwives are ultimately restricted by replicating the male gaze through their right-wing ideological expression and affiliations.

*Tradwife culture promotes* right-wing perspectives in an attempt to mainstream an extreme right-wing ideology. The influential positioning of Tradwives on social media makes the content they produce and ideas they promote more likely to be seen by a wider audience beyond their own communities. It is highly likely that other women exploring different versions of femininity or who have become new mothers or women interested in cooking, gardening, home-schooling and so on may come across the Tradwife social media presence. The sharing of traditional religious and right-wing political views in particular makes some content shared by Tradwives potentially harmful to certain groups of people beyond RWE. In some cases, Tradwife culture gives a softer, more palatable voice to potentially damaging beliefs and positions which may perpetuate ideas such as anti-abortion, transphobia, homophobia, and racism. Perhaps one of the strongest influences of Tradwife culture is on how women and their roles are viewed in modern society.

*Tradwife culture promotes heteronormativity and the heterosexual matrix* (Butler, 1990). It glorifies binary gender and promotes the traditional roles of men and women in the home and workplace. The act of wifely surrender and submission in a relationship is observed and this encourages the diminishment of women's voices. When taken to its extreme, the promotion of these ideals not only discriminates minority views (i.e., that of the LBTTQIA+ community through the undermining of trans women's identity), but when given a platform over time, leads to real and impactful social and political change. Change that includes historical events such as the Supreme Court overturning of *Roe v. Wade* which resulted in highly limited or no access to abortion for women in certain states of America. This research showed evidence of how a small number of Tradwives actively supported or promoted the pro-life movement, celebrated the *Roe v. Wade* decision, and alluded to the restriction of birth control access for women as a next step on the path to true traditional gender roles in society. It could be argued the very definition of Tradwives is what second and third wave feminists were fighting against, and now it appears a selection of women are using their influencer status to turn back the tide.

### **The Impact of Tradwife Culture**

*“Just because you can have it all, doesn't mean you want to” – (Mandel, 2023).*

The aim of this research was to conceptualise Tradwife communities and explore how Tradwives may support efforts to radicalise other women to embrace often extreme right-wing movements through processes of radicalisation and practices of social media influence. These findings uncovered that the role Tradwives appear to be playing has three distinct levels depending on an individual's engagement with Tradwife culture.

The surface level impact of Tradwife culture is a product of choice. People who choose to follow Tradwives, in general, do so with a surface level knowledge of their core

views and value systems. Tradwife accounts are publicly accessible, with social media users on all platforms analysed in this research able to see Tradwife content before choosing to engage or follow along. Tradwives did not actively conceal or obscure their fundamental conservative perspective, in fact the very opposite occurred. Through their adoption of the Tradwife Aesthetic, determining who a Tradwife was and how they affiliated with RWE as an observer was relatively clear. Further, just like any online influencer, followers had freedom of choice as to whether they engage with Tradwife content, or not. If a follower did not agree with the perspective of a Tradwife, they could choose to disengage and remove themselves from the community at any stage of the relationship, and without consequence. Freedom of speech and diversity of thought fosters flexibility and adaptability in our society and teaches that there is never only one way to solve the problems facing our world. Therefore, the existence of Tradwife culture at its most surface level contributes to societal diversity of thought. Whether someone chooses to engage with that thought is their prerogative.

The mid-level impact of Tradwives is fostered through the building of relationships and an emotional connection with followers. The longer a follower is engaged with an influencer's content, the stronger their perceived interconnectedness with the influencer (Abidin, 2015). Through cumulative interactions over a period of time, followers develop an enduring attachment that becomes a protective factor against disengagement (Lou, 2021). Within the context of Tradwife influencers, this emotional connection could be seen as a vehicle through which Tradwives are able to influence other women's opinions on RWE and right-wing movements. Over time, followers become increasingly invested in the life of the Tradwife and this may make it more difficult to turn away from their content, even if it was to become more extreme. Increasingly, social media algorithms reward intimacy and vulnerability from content creators (Uwagba, 2022). For this reason, a Tradwife filming

herself discussing her personal views on abortion within the context of her own fertility story is likely to perform better than an advertisement for her latest makeup routine. As fashion influencer Camille Charrière writes (Uwagba, 2022, para. 15);

*“Sharing your children, your boyfriend, the inside of your home, perhaps about your mental health or other illness struggles, family stuff – all of that performs better on social media. Anything that is very intimate and relatable, and that other people can identify with. The things that used to work – keeping it impersonal and just showing your outfits, like we used to do – don’t really work anymore. That’s something that anyone with a large social media following will be able to see.”*

To this end, Tradwife:follower social media relationships could be considered a form of subversive exposure radicalisation. The longer a follower is engaged with the conservative and in some cases extreme right-wing opinions of Tradwives, the more susceptible they may become to subscribing to them.

At its deepest level, the very existence of Tradwife culture contributes to the continuation and validation of RWE. Tradwives are online advocates for right-wing thought and action. At their extreme they use social media to share Alt-Right perspectives through the lens of their everyday private life and personal relationship with religion, politics, militia, and/or Alt-Right counterculture. Through monetisation, Tradwife culture is legitimised and preserved, offering an appealing buy-in or recruitment for other right-wing women. For Tradwife influencers themselves, the monetisation of their online brand perpetuates their affiliation to their right-wing ideology. The better their content performs, the more money and follower validation they receive, and in turn the more likely they are to continue producing that content.

## **Tradwife Culture in Aotearoa New Zealand**

The presence of Tradwife Culture in Aotearoa NZ is ambiguous. Beyond Political Tradwife Sarah Spierer, few women were found who could conclusively be defined as Tradwives. Although this research did find evidence of various types of Christian Mummy Bloggers adopting elements of Tradwife Culture, these women were not named due to an inability to conclusively position them within a right-wing landscape. One prominent feature of Aotearoa NZ which may contribute to the limited presence of Tradwives to date is secularity. Aotearoa NZ has long been classified as a secular nation with a formal separation between state and religious entities (Griffiths, 2013; Scroope, 2023). Principles of religious tolerance and freedom of religious diversity were instilled in Aotearoa NZ as early as the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 (Shaver et al., 2016). Colonial Aotearoa NZ never adopted an official state religion and by extension egalitarian values like religious diversity and social cohesion have largely limited religious based conflict. Comparatively, America has always been regarded as a Christian nation where the amalgamation of Church and State has led to conflict that at times has been emmeshed with REMVE and PMVE. Previous research on the relationship between religious affiliation and prejudice found the more strongly an individual associates with a religion, the more likely they are to prejudice minority communities (Shaver, 2016). Further, those who have more rigid beliefs (i.e., have a Fundamentalist orientation) tend to exhibit greater prejudice toward minority groups, especially when compared to those who are more flexible in their religious orientation (Allport, 1966; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Atran & Ginges, 2012; Batson et al., 1993; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005 ). This relationship may highlight why Tradwife culture was not as prominent in Aotearoa NZ. Aotearoa NZ mummy bloggers, or those found highlighting elements of Tradwife culture generally appeared to be more accepting of religious, racial, and political diversity. While they may have disagreed with certain beliefs and value systems

(i.e., abortion rights, trans activism, and cultural diversity), they did not reject the existence of them. In contrast, American Tradwives were typically very rigid in their ideologies and thus more conclusive in their rejection of minority communities and/or those who did not subscribe to their ideology.

Despite this apparent protective nature of Aotearoa NZ's secular and culturally diverse society, it is important to note the existence of distinct pockets of Conservative Right, Alt-Lite, and Alt-Right ideology (Gluckman et al., 2021; Spoonley, 2022). Influences of American RWE counterculture and conspiracism have made waves in Aotearoa NZ society, contributing to societal feelings of a rise in right-wing counterculture. Thus, the lack of evidence of public Tradwife ideology found in this research does not mean an absence of Tradwife culture entirely - an example being within Aotearoa NZ's megachurch franchises.

Encompassing Evangelical and at times Christian Nationalist perspectives, megachurches such as Arise, Hillsong, and Life use music, concert-like settings and charismatic leaders to sell their version of Christianity (Sathiyaraj, 2022). David Farrier's investigative journalism within these communities has revealed threads of traditionalism, misogyny, anti-feminism, transphobia, and homophobia within their teachings (Farrier, 2023). Although the women of Aotearoa NZ megachurches were not found to take up the same public social media positions of influence as Tradwives, this does not mean they are not doing so privately, or within the context of their faith communities. Further research is needed in this area in order to make a clear distinction.

Another space Tradwife rhetoric may be threaded through the traditional mum's of Aotearoa NZ is that of the left-wing Crunchy Mom. Embodying homemaking, natural motherhood, anti-modernism and biological gender roles, Crunchy Moms adopt many of the same core values as Tradwives (Belew, 2022). In fact, Crunchy Moms appear to be largely

centred around the same anti-feminist counterculture as Tradwives, with a predisposition towards heteronormativity and fulfilment of patriarchy. Belew (2022) theorises that the Crunchy-Mom-to-Alt-Right-Tradwife pipeline may signify an inherent closeness between the Alt-Left and Alt-Right, alluding to the development of an anti-modern counterculture distinct from politics and religion. If we understand Crunchy Moms and Tradwives as two sides of the same coin, perhaps we can understand how the Tradwife anti-feminist counterculture could cement or may be cementing within Aotearoa NZ.

### **Limitations and Future research**

This research provided a snapshot in time of the publicly available elements of the Tradwife ecosystem. It endeavoured to capture a broad range of dominant perspectives within Tradwife culture in order to explore the role of these women in supporting efforts to radicalise other women to embrace often extreme right-wing movements through practices of social media influence. A limitation of this research was its inability to directly engage with Tradwives. While the methodology did provide a unique opportunity for outsider observation of the impact of Tradwife culture (i.e., through the researcher's immersion with the community), having direct Tradwife perspectives as part of the data collected would have provided an element of completeness and validation of their authenticity. This is because Tradwife social media personalities are curated. Their content is created within a snapshot of their life and for a specific purpose. Tradwives control how, what, when, and why they share on social media and therefore without a direct connection with Tradwives themselves, the researcher cannot be certain that the data collected is a genuine depiction. In order to delve into the complexities and motivating factors of Tradwives on a more micro level, future research that features first-hand accounts of Tradwives and their beliefs on what the Tradwife culture means to them would be complimentary to the present research.

Further, research into the follower demographics of popular Tradwife accounts would also provide insight into how influential Tradwife culture is and to whom. This research was unable to conclusively assess the presence or lack thereof of Tradwife culture in Aotearoa NZ. While almost no conclusively 'Tradwife' influencer accounts were found on the public profiles scouted for research, this does not mean Tradwife culture has no influence in Aotearoa NZ. An analysis of follower demographics of the most popular Tradwives would go some way to uncovering the presence of Tradwife culture in Aotearoa NZ.

This research also uncovered a research gap in the role of militia women and/or militia Tradwives in perpetuating the cause of the wider Militia. This would be an interesting area of research exploring whether other women like Good Patriot are publicising women's militia involvement.

### **Concluding thoughts**

The adoption of Tradwife culture can be an empowered choice. In an age where progressivism is increasingly in the spotlight and the power of feminism is stronger than ever, women who do not fit into the mainstream have created an alternative. Promoting a counterculture fuelled by anti-feminism and heteronormative traditional living, the women this research observed have successfully infiltrated mainstream social media with their anti-globalist, anti-modern approach to life. Encapsulating conservative women passionate about their right-wing ideology, Tradwife culture creates space for non-feminist women and has grown in both breadth and depth even over the course of this research. Increasingly there exists a community of women choosing to forego their careers and focus on domestically nurturing their family. These women are not necessarily submissive to their husbands; they simply want a different life to what is contemporarily promoted as "normal" (Coury et al., 2022). Tradwives have incited this global conversation on the role of women in the home, making waves in mainstream media and contributing to societal shifts towards more

conservative, more traditional living - shifts which can most notably be seen in global politics with the rise of figures such as Georgi Meloni and Marine Le Pen. At its extreme, Tradwife culture actively and globally contributes to the politics of division and intolerance that threatens our society's social cohesion. While individual opinion and diversity of thought is important, freedom of speech is not without consequence. Tradwives use their position of influence to perpetuate contentious perspectives on wifely submission, abortion rights, birth control, racism, and the LGTTQIA+ community. While the perpetuation of RWE was more overt in some women than others, the very subscription to Tradwife culture by definition is promoting these views and influencing other women to take up their cause. Tradwives are much more than housewives, they are influencers of Right-Wing Extremism.

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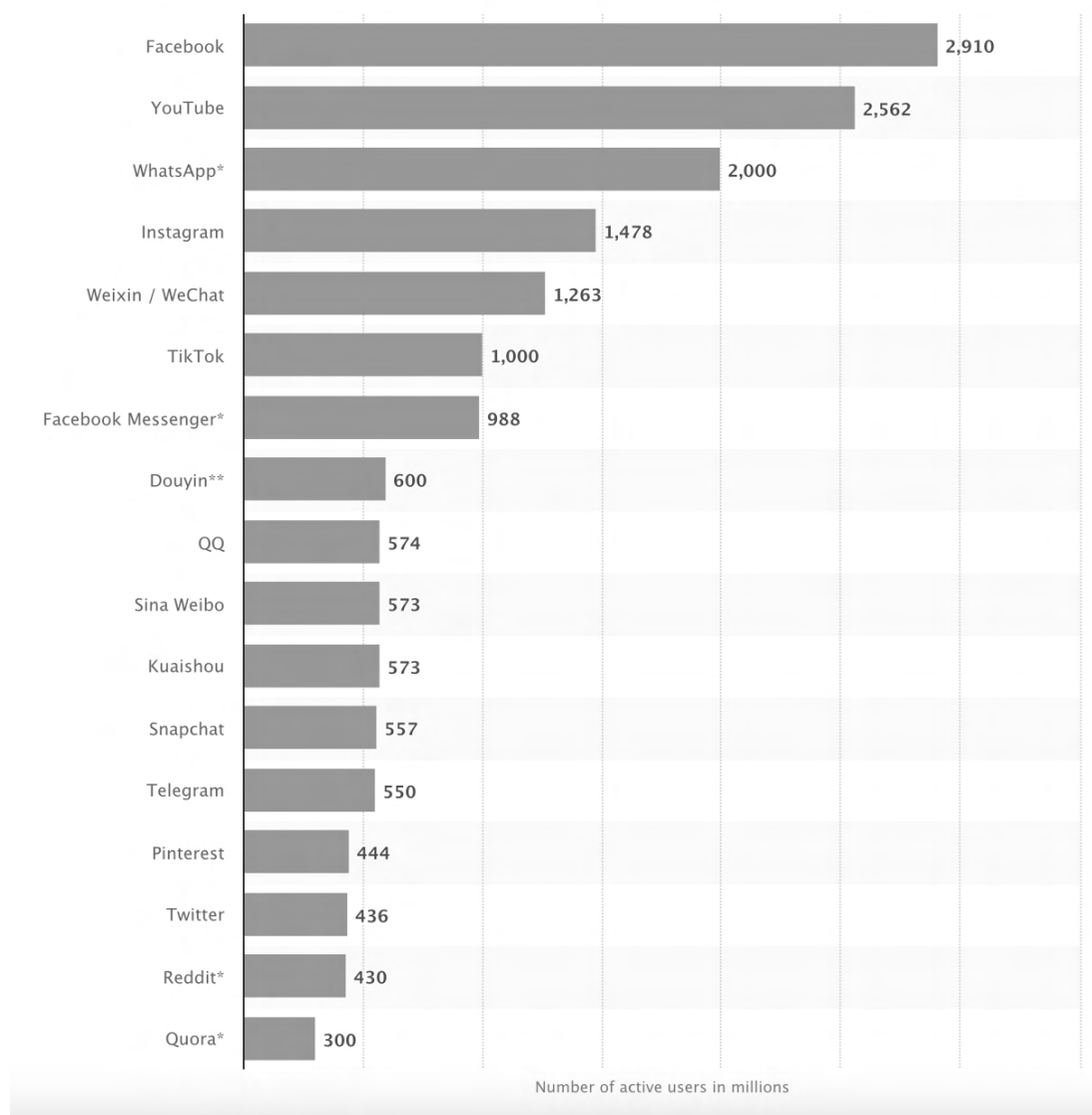
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## Appendix A

### Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2022, ranked by number of monthly active users\*



\*sourced from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

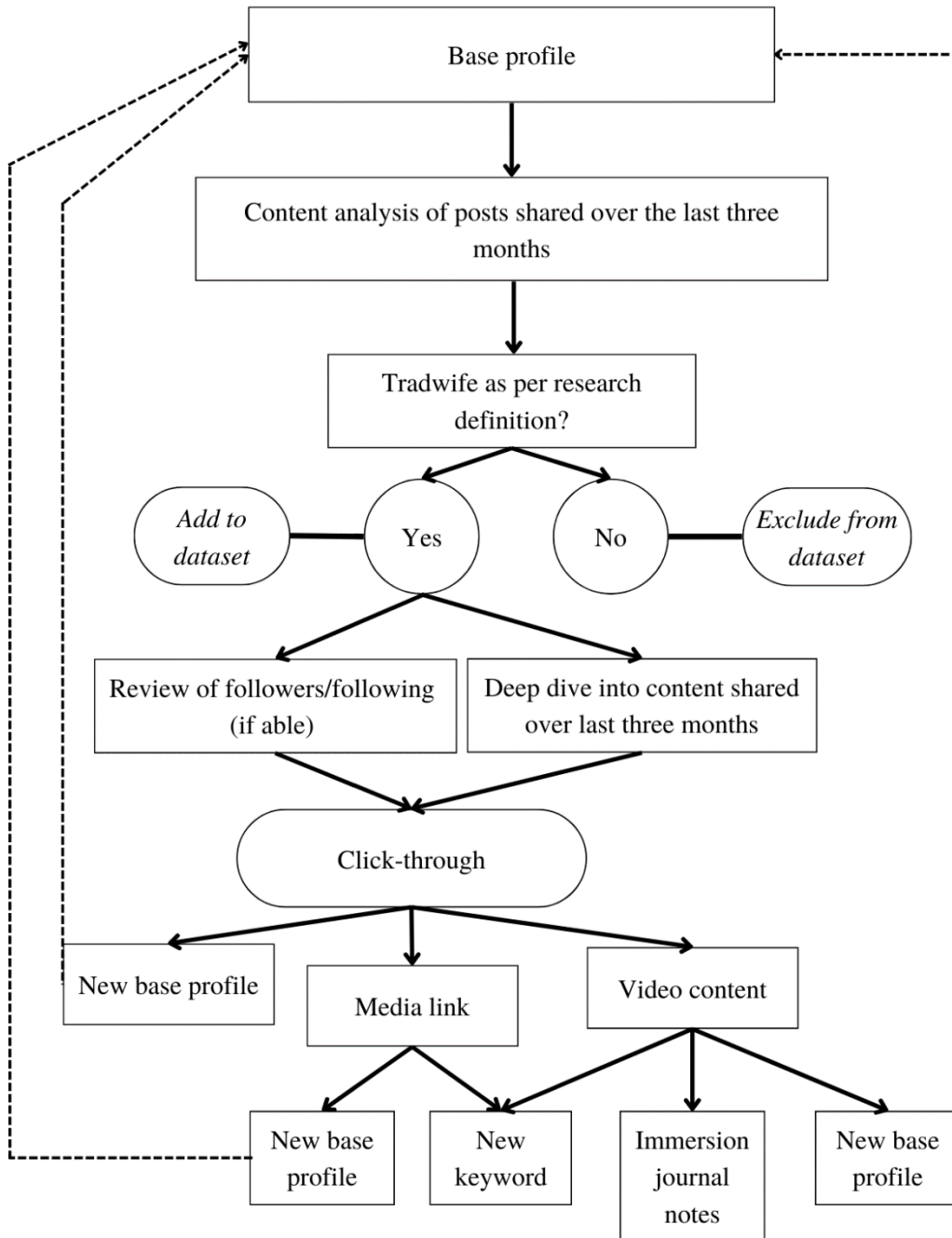
## Appendix B

### Social Media Platform Scoring Index

Key Element	Description
Relevance	Is content on the platform related to the present research focus and question?
	Social media platform (a) rating: ..... Social media platform (b) rating: .....
Activity	How many Tradwives are active on the platform? Is the content shared recent and regular?
	Social media platform (a) rating: ..... Social media platform (b) rating: .....
Diversity	Does content on the platform offer different right-wing perspectives and different expressions of RWE (i.e. Tradwife accounts motivated by religion vs. politically motivated Tradwife accounts)?
	Social media platform (a) rating: ..... Social media platform (b) rating: .....
Richness	Is content on the platform detailed and descriptive, offering relevant insight into Tradwife culture?
	Social media platform (a) rating: ..... Social media platform (b) rating: .....
Extremity	How extreme is the content shared on the platform when mapped along the RWE continuum?
	Social media platform (a) rating: ..... Social media platform (b) rating: .....

## Appendix C

### Selection of Tradwife Dataset











## Appendix D

### Tradwife Dataset

Name	Country of Origin	Twitter	Instagram	Facebook	YouTube	Personal Blog/website	Fringe Video	Telegram, Fringe Social Media & TikTok				
INDIVIDUAL TRADWIFE IDENTITIES												
<b>1. Lana Lokteff</b>	USA	Handle	<a href="#">@LanaLokteff</a>	Handle	Not Found	Handle	Not Found	Handle	Not Found	<a href="#">Lanalokteff.com</a>	RedIceTV <a href="https://redice.tv">https://redice.tv</a>	<a href="#">Gab</a>
		Followers	53,000	Followers		Followers		Subscribers				
		Bio	Slavic. Wife of a Swede. Mother of Vikings. Producer of Indie Media for @redicetv  @radio3fourteen They tell so many lies. Folk First!	Bio		Bio		Bio			Radio 3Fourteen <a href="https://redice.tv/radio-3fourteen">https://redice.tv/radio-3fourteen</a>	
<b>2. Katie</b>	USA	Handle	<a href="#">@_goodpatriot</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@goodpatriot</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Good Patriot</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Good Patriot</a>	<a href="#">Goodpatriot.com</a>	<a href="#">Bitchute</a>	<a href="#">TikTok</a>
		Followers	3,204	Followers	41,100	Followers Likes	105,725 66,762	Subscribers	110,000		<a href="#">Rumble</a>	
		Bio	f r e e d o m + F U N N Y Passion For Freedom - 2nd Amendment/Conservative Humor - Patriotic Gear - Save The REPUBLIC	Bio	F R E E D O M + F U N N Y us ☺ Brand 🚫 Faith + Family + Freedom 🌐 World's B E S T mediocre shooter 📁 All Discounts & Links 👍👏 campsite.bio/goodpatriot	Bio	Faith, Family, Freedom & Laughs - in a world gone crazy.	Bio	Humorous education for all things faith, family and freedom.  We'd be honored to have you click that "subscribe" button and share our passion for all things faith, family and freedom.  There's lots more to come... Welcome to Good Patriot!			
<b>3. Caitlin Ann</b>	USA	Handle	<a href="#">@mrsmidwestblog</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@mrs.midwest</a>	Handle (PRIVATE GROUP - Not accessed)	<a href="#">Mrs. Midwest And Her Feminine Family</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Mrs Midwest</a>	<a href="#">Mrsmidwest.com</a>		
		Followers	8,220	Followers	51,100	Followers	2,100	Subscribers	191,000			
		Bio	Writing on feminine homemaking + women's heart/mind issues. Slow living, faith, & marriage.	Bio	👩 C A I T L I N 👩 Blogger Wife + Mum + Homemaker + YouTuber Blogging on femininity & faith 📺 Videos » 📺 Blogs » 📖 Stories » 📍 MI, USA linktr.ee/mrs.midwest	Bio	This group is a continuation of the comment section under Mrs. Midwest's videos where we can discuss issues and beliefs	Bio	Hello and welcome to my little piece of the Internet!  My name is Caitlin and I run the blog called "Mrs. Midwest." I joined YouTube in 2019 with the goal of creating a haven for traditionally feminine women trying to find their place in this modern world. Being a traditional homemaker and wife myself, it is my aim to help women blossom into their natural femininity through discussions on style, mindset, and relationships.....			Not Found

4. Solie Osorio	USA	Handle	<a href="#">@solieoso</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@solieolie</a>	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">Andre and Solie</a>	<a href="https://www.nap.family/join">https://www.nap.family/join</a>	Not Found	<a href="#">TikTok</a>
		Followers	2,872	Followers	27,200	Followers		Subscribers	2,187	<a href="https://440andre.wixsite.com/mysite-2">https://440andre.wixsite.com/mysite-2</a>		
		Bio	home/maker 21 yr old Wife + Mama Passionate about homemaking and traditional femininity ♡ <a href="http://instagram.com/solieolie">http://instagram.com/solieolie</a>	Bio	Solie Osorio Homemaker, wife and mom to 2 boys ♡ 👉my husband and I teach how to bring in side income online from home nap.family/join	Bio		Bio	Love changes everything. At least it did for us.  We are André and Solie Osorio. We love singing together, going on long walks together, deep conversations (with each other), and just spending time together. You see a common denominator?...			
5. Bernadine Bluntly	USA	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">@fearless.femininity</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Bernadine Bluntly</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Bernadine Bluntly</a>	<a href="https://msha.ke/bernadinebluntly/#inks">https://msha.ke/bernadinebluntly/#inks</a>	Not Found	<a href="#">Telegram</a>
		Followers		Followers	26,500	Followers	1,519	Subscribers	2,090			
		Bio		Bio	Bernadine Bluntly   Dating + Marriage ♡ Anti degeneracy pro family ♡ Wife of 10 years & Mama to 5 ♡ Faith-based relationship guidance for women ↓ Join 250+ ladies in my course for singles <a href="https://msha.ke/bernadinebluntly">msha.ke/bernadinebluntly</a>	About	culture • truth • common sense	Bio	N/D			
6. Alena Kate Pettitt	UK	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">@thedarlingacademy</a>	Handle (PRIVATE GROUP - Not accessed)	<a href="#">Traditional Housewives with The Darling Academy</a>	Handle	<a href="#">The Darling Academy with Alena Kate Pettitt</a>	<a href="https://www.thedarlingacademy.com">https://www.thedarlingacademy.com</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers		Followers	37,800	Members	2,800	Subscribers	7,910			
		Bio		Bio	Alena Kate Pettitt   Vintage Housewife 🇸🇬 All things hearth, home, and a love for vintage living 📖 Ma Larkin wannabe, stay at home mummy to one, author & traditional homemaking blogger 📧 <a href="http://www.thedarlingacademy.com/articles">www.thedarlingacademy.com/articles</a>	About	An online social space for current and aspiring Traditional Housewives. We are a private, women-only group for those who love to stay home and serve their families.	Bio	Simple, wholesome, vintage-inspired homemaking & etiquette from an Author and Housewife in The Cotswolds 🇸🇬 <b>📖 My new book "English Etiquette" is OUT NOW on Amazon</b>  "Homemaking is surely in reality the most important work in the world." - C.S. Lewis			
7. Cynthia Loewen	USA	Handle	<a href="#">@_cynthialoewen</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@_cynthialoewen</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Cynthia Loewen Blog</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@CynthiaL</a>	<a href="https://www.cynthialoewenblog.com">https://www.cynthialoewenblog.com</a>	Not Found	<a href="#">TikTok</a>
		Followers	1,706	Followers	19,000	Followers	961	Subscribers	31,700			
		Bio	Wife. Mom. Homemaker. Subscribe on YouTube.	Bio	Cynthia 📖 ♡ Video creator Femininity   Motherhood   Homemaking • (YouTube, TikTok, Blog, etc. ↓) <a href="http://linktr.ee/cynthial">linktr.ee/cynthial</a>	Bio	I don't use this page anymore. Follow me on Instagram or YouTube.	Bio	HOMEMAKING ♦ FEMININITY ♦ LIFESTYLE Instagram: @_cynthialoewen Tik Tok: _cynthialoewen Blog: <a href="http://www.cynthialoewenblog.com">http://www.cynthialoewenblog.com</a> CONTACT Subscribers: Comment on my latest video and Instagram DM. Brands: email.No post for product.			
8. Classically Abby	USA	Handle	<a href="#">@classicallyabby</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@classicallyabby</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@ClassicallyAbby</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@ClassicallyAbby</a>	<a href="https://www.classicallyabby.com">https://www.classicallyabby.com</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers	80,800	Followers	80,000	Followers	12,000	Subscribers	109,000			



					Spotify and  <a href="https://linktr.bio/feminine_not_feminist">linktr.bio/feminine_not_feminist</a>							
13. Emily Wilson	USA	Handle	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/emwilss">@emwilss</a>	Handle	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/emwilss">@emwilss</a>	Handle	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...">Emily Wilson</a>	Handle	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...">Emily Wilson</a>	<a href="https://emilywilsonministries.com/">https://emilywilsonministries.com/</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers	7,921	Followers	96,200	Followers	22,000	Subscribers	127,000			
		Bio	YouTube   Author instagram: @emwilss	Bio	Emily Wilson I share honestly here on dating, marriage, motherhood, and faith! Pull up a chair at the table.   Pre-order Stella the Brave here! <a href="https://amzn.to/3VoP7Ja">amzn.to/3VoP7Ja</a>	About	N/D	Bio	I tell women what they need to hear in truth and in love.  On my channel I answer your questions, give pep talks, and give you practical advice to help you in your everyday life. Stick around and soon you'll find yourself commenting. "I needed to hear this."  SUBSCRIBE to my channel - I would love to hear from you if you are watching!			
14. Sarah Elrod	USA	Handle	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/mrssarahelrod">@mrssarahelrod</a>	Handle	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/themakingofelrodbranch">@themakingofelrodbranch</a>	Handle	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...">The Making of Elrod Ranch</a>	Handle	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...">@ElrodRanch</a>	<a href="https://sarahelrodblog.com">https://sarahelrodblog.com</a>	Not Found	TikTok
		Followers	10	Followers	17,000 6,376	Followers	154	Subscribers	355			
		Bio	Ranch Wife & Mama // Western Brand Educator & Photographer // Host of the #BrandedCowgirlPodcast	Bio	The Elrod Family   Western + Rural Lifestyle Agriculture  Becoming 1st Gen Cattle Ranchers  Faith, Homemaking, Family, Marriage  @mrssarahelrod / @telrod27  Resources <a href="https://linktr.ce/elrodbranch">linktr.ce/elrodbranch</a>	Bio	A married couple on a mission to becoming first generation cattle ranchers.	Bio	We are a family of 3 currently living in Northern Nevada, hoping to one day move back up to Montana to start our dream of becoming first generation cattle ranchers. Our hope is to share our story and inspire others that they can do the same. We are so glad you're here!			
15. Rebecca	USA	Handle	Not Found	Handle (PRIVATE - not accessed)	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/blonde_beast1">@blonde_beast1</a>	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...">Blonde in the Belly of the Beast</a>	Not Found	Bitchute	Gab
		Followers		Followers	3,384	Followers Likes		Subscribers	123,000			
		Bio		Bio	Wife. Mom. Dissident.	About		Bio	Who knows?			
16. Robyn Riley	USA	Handle	@RRROBYN. - Appears to be no longer active 27/10/2022	Handle (PRIVATE - not accessed)	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/brigids.cross">@brigids.cross</a>	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...">Robyn Riley</a>	Not Found	Not Found	Telegram
		Followers	23,700	Followers	4,678	Followers Likes		Subscribers	30,700			
		Bio	N/D	Bio	Robyn Riley  Orthodox Christian • Homebirth Mama • Writer/Spell breaker • Doula @rewild.birth <a href="http://www.eviemagazine.com/author/robyn-riley">www.eviemagazine.com/author/robyn-riley</a>	About		Bio	Hi there, I'm Robyn :)  THIS CHANNEL IS A CREATIVE EXPERIMENT IN FREE SPEECH. Long format chats are my thing. Sometimes with inspiring people, other times all by myself 😊  Please join in on the convo about pregnancy, motherhood, family, politics, religion, culture, identity, and the world as we know it - to help me and yourself get a hold on this mess. ALL ARE WELCOME HERE.			

17. Estee Williams	USA	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">@esteeccwilliams</a>	Handle	Not Found	Handle	Not Found	Not Found	Not Found	<a href="#">TikTok</a>
		Followers		Followers	5,613	Followers		Subscribers				
		Bio		Bio	Estee Williams 📍 25   Virginia 👰 Married to Conner Williams 📍 👩 Traditional Wife & Homemaker	Bio		Bio				
18. Madison	Unknown	Handle	<a href="#">@thereservedwife</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@thereservedwife</a>	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">@thereservedwife1727</a>	<a href="https://www.thereservedwife.com">https://www.thereservedwife.com</a>	Not Found	<a href="#">TikTok</a>
		Followers	2	Followers	4,975	Followers		Subscribers	726			
		Bio	N/D	Bio	Madison homemaker, mother, and wife 📍 beginning homesteader 📍 www.forceofnatureclean.com/lp-raf-40-c/?raf=ref2739863	Bio		Bio	My name is Madison and I am a homemaker and stay at home mom. Here you can expect videos of all things homemaking, marriage advice and tips, occasional day in the life, and more! Like and subscribe 📍📍			
19. Alex	USA	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">@growinggoodings</a>	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">Growing Goodings</a>	<a href="http://momsguidetogod.com/">http://momsguidetogod.com/</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers		Followers	105,000	Followers		Subscribers	1,160			
		Bio		Bio	Alex Blogger • Finding God's glory in motherhood • Mama to 11 little loves; 📍📍📍📍📍 • Twins x3 -1 set in heaven • Infertility, loss, homesteading, homeschool linktr.ee/Growinggoodings	About		Bio	Homestead journey Family of 8 Two sets of twins Infertility Loss Homeschooling			
20. Lori Alexander	USA	Handle	<a href="#">@godlywomanhood</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@thetransformedwife</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@thetransformedwife</a>	Handle	<a href="#">The Transformed Wife</a>	<a href="https://thetransformedwife.com/">https://thetransformedwife.com/</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers	18,600	Followers	41,300	Followers	136,000	Subscribers	12,100			
		Bio	A wife, a mother, a grandma, and a keeper at home. Loves Jesus and is not afraid to speak Truth because it sets you free!	Bio	Lori Alexander Personal blog Wife, Mother, Grandmother, Blogger, Lover of Jesus, backup account @thetransformedwife2.0 thetransformedwife.com	About	Teaching biblical womanhood to young women as God commands in Titus 2:3-5. Married over 40 years!	Bio	Older woman teaching younger women to be sober, love their husbands, love their children, be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed from Titus 2:3-5. Visit my blog at thetransformedwife.com.			
21. Brittany Sellner née Pettibone	USA	Handle	<a href="#">@BrittPettibone</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@brittpettibone</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Brittany Pettibone</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Brittany Sellner</a>	<a href="https://brittpettibone.com/">https://brittpettibone.com/</a>	<a href="#">Bitchute</a>	<a href="#">Telegram</a>
		Followers	132,300	Followers	32,200	Followers	11,000	Subscribers	171,000		<a href="#">Odysee</a>	
		Bio	Author. Political Activist. Catholic. Instagram: <a href="https://instagram.com/brittpettibone/">https://instagram.com/brittpettibone/</a>	Bio	N/D	Bio	N/D	Bio	N/D			
22. Ayla Stewart	USA	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">@wifewithapurpose</a>	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">Ayla Wife</a>	<a href="http://www.wifewithapurpose.com/">http://www.wifewithapurpose.com/</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers		Followers	3,472	Followers		Subscribers	10,100			
		Bio		Bio	Wife with a Purpose The official account of Wife With A Purpose & family. Based at St. Edna's Cottage, Spencer's Mill.	Bio		Bio	Ayla Stewart is a writer, artist and Youtuber. She is a Christian wife and mother of many children. A survivor of stalking, slander and abuse from radical journalists, media and extremist groups she is now an			

					www.wifewithapurpose.com				advocate paving the way for the average man and woman..			
23. Lillian	UK	Handle (PRIVATE profile - content not accessed)	<a href="#">Postmodern Mom</a>	Handle (PRIVATE profile - content not accessed)	<a href="#">@thepostmodernmom</a>	Handle	<a href="#">The Postmodern Family</a>	Handle	<a href="#">The Postmodern Family Postmodern Mom</a>	<a href="https://the-postmodern-family.creator-spring.com/?">https://the-postmodern-family.creator-spring.com/?</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers	8,561	Followers	1,202	Followers	925	Subscribers	Postmodern Family - 38500 PostmodernMom-1,640			
		Bio	Traditional SAHM of 4! Proud #tradwife. Homeschool & Natural Birth Advocate. Anti-abortion, anti-feminist, and a classical educator.	Bio	Hi I'm Lillian! 🌸 Wife, Mom, Homeschooler, Christian, Musician, Vlogger. Linktree.com/postmodernmum youtube.com/c/PostmodernMom	Bio	We're Felipe and Lillian, Americans living in the UK!	Bio	Hiya! I'm Lillian, the Postmodern Mom and Traditional Housewife of the Postmodern Family YouTube Channel. This channel is for my videos about homeschooling, mothering, pregnancy, birth, and more!			
24. Dixie Andelin Forsyth	USA	Handle	<a href="#">@forsythdixie</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@fascinatingwomanhood</a>	Handle - Private group, not accessed	<a href="#">The Official Fascinating Womanhood</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Fascinating Womanhood - Dixie Andelin Forsyth</a>	<a href="https://fascinatingwomanhood.com/">https://fascinatingwomanhood.com/</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers	52	Followers	5,377	Followers	10,700	Subscribers	10,700			
		Bio	author, Fascinating Womanhood for the Timeless Woman , President Fascinating Womanhood,LLC	Bio	Dixie Andelin Forsyth Author International Best Selling Books 📖 Femininity Expert ❤️ Saving Marriages for 50+ Years ❤️ instabio.cc/10823QC0B0	About	The purpose of this group is to promote femininity and female empowerment, and to raise visibility of Fascinating Womanhood: an international pro-femininity movement and guide to help women make their marriage into a lifelong love affair in the best-selling book written by Helen B. Andelin and edited by her daughter and protégée Dixie Andelin Forsyth.	Bio	🌸 We are the ultimate marriage experts & have been saving relationships for over 50 years through our family legacy of Fascinating Womanhood. 🌸 Our channel is devoted to developing femininity, building strong, long & lasting loving relationships by raising awareness of the Fascinating Womanhood principles....			
25. Lauren Chen	Canada	Handle	<a href="#">@TheLaurenChen</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@thelaurenchen</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Lauren Chen</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Lauren Chen</a>	Not Found	<a href="#">Rumble</a>	<a href="#">TikTok</a>
		Followers	418,800	Followers		Followers	86,000	Subscribers	522,000			
		Bio	It can always get worse 🌸 Taxation is theft. @TPUSA contributor. IG & Telegram @TheLaurenChen 📧📧 Email: hi@laurenchen.com	Bio	Lauren Chen Video creator Riley's mom, Liam's wife ❤️ <a href="#">@turningpointusa</a> contributor 📧 <a href="linktr.ee/TheLaurenChen">linktr.ee/TheLaurenChen</a>	Bio	N/D	Bio	Hi. I have a lot of opinions about stuff.			
26. Jennifer Mock	Unsure	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">@jlmock4.0</a>	Handle - (PRIVATE GROUP - Not accessed)	<a href="#">Live Beautifully - Jennifer Mock</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@JenniferMock</a>	<a href="https://jennifermock.co">https://jennifermock.co</a>	Not Found	<a href="#">TikTok</a>
		Followers		Followers	59,000	Followers	95	Subscribers	1,360			
		Bio		Bio	Jennifer Mock   the Quiet Out Loud podcast Collabs/Inquiries: jlmock4.0@gmail.com Links🔗 • Podcast • Bible Study • Hair Quiz	Bio	A community learning together how to live beautifully with health, purpose, and joy.	Bio	Jennifer is a content creator of parody skits. Think SNL, if they were Christian, had common sense, no budget and a cast of one. Kicked off Tiktok @ 150k followers and 2.1M likes.			

					bio.site/jlmock4.0		“She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future.” — Proverbs 31:25 See less					
27. Candace Owens	US	Handle	<a href="#">@RealCandaceO</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@Realcandaceowens</a>	Handle	Candace Owens	Handle	<a href="#">Candace Owens Podcast</a>	<a href="https://candaceowens.com">https://candaceowens.com</a>	Not Found	<a href="#">TikTok</a>
		Followers	3,100,000	Followers	4,500,000	Followers	5,400,000	Subscribers	1,400,000			
		Bio	New York Times best-selling author. Founder of @BLEXIT organization. Black people don't have to be Democrats— still.	Bio	Candace Owens FREE. m.youtube.com/channel/UCLOu5uz7KZ9q-pe-VC8TY-w	About	"I never dreamed it. I just kept going."	Bio	Candace Owens holds nothing back in her brand new show as she takes on the political and cultural issues of the day. Featuring deep dives, investigations and exposés on today's burning topics.			
28. Hannah Spierer/Sarah Smith	Aotearoa NZ	Handle	Not Found	Handle	Not Found	Handle	Not Found	Handle	<a href="#">Counterspin Media</a>	<a href="https://counterspinmedia.com">https://counterspinmedia.com</a>	<a href="#">Rumble</a>	<a href="#">Telegram</a> – 17,365 subscribers
		Followers		Followers		Followers		Subscribers	2380			
		Bio		Bio		Bio		Bio	N/A			
29. Lauren Southern	Canadian - reported to be currently living in AU	Handle	<a href="#">@Lauren_Southern</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@laurencheriie</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Lauren Southern</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Lauren Southern</a>	<a href="https://laurensouthern.net/">https://laurensouthern.net/</a>	<a href="#">Odysee</a>	Not Found
		Followers	447,500	Followers	152,000	Followers	293,000	Subscribers	706,000			
		Bio	WATCH CROSSFIRE: <a href="http://laurensouthern.net">http://laurensouthern.net</a> Best Selling Author. Filmmaker. Non-Binary. Insta: <a href="http://instagram.com/laurencheriie/">http://instagram.com/laurencheriie/...</a>	Bio	Lauren Southern Documentary filmmaker 🎬 Farmlands - Borderless - Crossfire - American Mirage - 🎬🎥 <a href="youtu.be/bBCF2u-up6w">youtu.be/bBCF2u-up6w</a> Music's profile picture	Bio	N/D	Bio	N/D			
30. Daisy Cousens	AU	Handle	<a href="#">@DaisyCousens</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@missdaisycousens</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Daisy Cousens</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@DaisyCousensOfficial</a>	<a href="https://daisycousens.creator-spring.com">https://daisycousens.creator-spring.com</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers	35,500	Followers	18,000	Followers	21,000	Subscribers	213,000			
		Bio	YouTuber, commentator, contributor at Sky News Australia @SkyNewsAust . Occasional provocateur. This is the Darkest Timeline.	Bio	Sydney   New York   Lord Byron   Rafa   Flair   Sass   Take your hurt feelings, and exit stage left ☹️ LATEST <a href="#">1</a> <a href="youtu.be/Pi3LyyD_8Tw">youtu.be/Pi3LyyD_8Tw</a> YouTube 2's profile picture	Bio	Australian YouTuber, cultural commentator and eventual novelist. Rafael Nadal is the reason I get up	Bio	Daisy is a political and cultural commentator. She contributes to The Spectator (spectator.com.au), Penthouse Magazine (for the articles), and Sky News Australia. She has appeared on ABC's QandA and The Drum, Hack Live on ABC2, Channel 10's The Project, and Sky's The Bolt Report, Paul Murray Live, and Jones and Co. She also holds a Master of Creative Writing from the University of Sydney. Daisy has been told she's a 'flamethrower', and describes herself as an *occasional* provocateur, and feminist apostate.  Taking up the call to fight for Western civilisation with flair, style, and incredible sass.			
31. Sydney Watson	AU	Handle	<a href="#">@SydneyLWatson</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@Sydneywatson</a> (changed during the course of research - used to be @sydneylwatson)	Handle	<a href="#">Sydney Watson</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Sydney Watson</a>	<a href="https://www.sydneywatson.com/">https://www.sydneywatson.com/</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers	340,700	Followers	122,000	Followers Likes	83000 74,000	Subscribers	762,000			
		Bio	Very important doctor. Claiming to be American-Australian. AUUM	Bio	Vampire Lord Sydney Watson xyr/xem/thon/eir Video creator • Politics   Deplorable • Aussie AUUS	About	Just a conservative Australian with opinions on American/Australian politics,	Bio	Writer. Journalist. Australian/American political commentator. And your very favourite deplorable.  To be fair, I actually hate writing these "about me" things. Honestly, if you're reading this, on a scale of one to "not even a little", how much do you care? Ya don't. But anyway.			

					•I make Youtube videos		feminism and men's rights		If you're here, I'm glad. I hope you enjoy my commentary on all things political and my questionable accent.			
<b>GROUP TRADWIFE IDENTITIES</b>												
<b>1. Girl Defined</b>	USA	Handle	<a href="#">@girl_defined</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@girldefined</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Girl Defined</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Girl Defined</a>	<a href="https://girldefined.com">https://girldefined.com</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers	3,865	Followers	70,200	Followers	45,000	Subscribers	159,000			
		Bio	Texas sisters. Co-authors of Girl Defined and Love Defined. Reclaiming God's design for womanhood. Join us! <a href="http://girldefined.com">http://girldefined.com</a>	Bio	Bringing Back Biblical Womanhood Community 📖 Encouraging women to embrace God's design 👯 With sisters Kristen & Bethany 📩 DM us "PRJ" for our latest journal on rest <a href="http://www.girldefined.com/retrat">www.girldefined.com/retrat</a>	Bio	Discovering the beauty and freedom of God-defined womanhood. Join the Sisterhood!	Bio	We're two sisters passionate about helping Christian women discover what it means to become girls defined by God. We believe that the One who designed us is the One who defines us. God's design for beauty, femininity, and identity isn't outdated or old fashioned. It's timeless. Join us in discovering the beauty, power, and freedom of God-defined womanhood!			
<b>2. Tradsposting Wins</b>	Group	Handle	<a href="#">@tradspostingWs</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@tradspostingws</a>	Handle	Not Found	Handle	Not Found	<a href="https://www.westernaesthetics.org/">https://www.westernaesthetics.org/</a>	Not Found	Not Found
		Followers	3,057	Followers	14,900	Followers		Subscribers				
		Bio	Wholesome W's. Showing people the beauty of tradition one post at a time. DMs open for submission.	Bio	Tradsposting Their Wins Follow us for wholesome traditional wins 😊 Dms are open for submissions. <a href="http://www.westernaesthetics.org">www.westernaesthetics.org</a>	About		Bio				
<b>3. Evie Magazine</b>	Group/ Business – Conservative Women's Magazine	Handle	<a href="#">@Evie_Magazine</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@eviemagazine</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Evie Magazine official</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Evie Magazine</a>	<a href="https://www.evie-magazine.com/">https://www.evie-magazine.com/</a>	Not Found	TikTok
		Followers	31,100	Followers	42,900	Followers Likes	37,554 35,465	Subscribers	1,170			
		Bio	Celebrate your femininity 📖 Advice, News, and Commentary that's beautifully honest. Text us 📞 +1 310-356-9083	Bio	Evie Magazine News & media website Celebrate your femininity 📖 Print Edition available now at <a href="http://evieprint.com">evieprint.com</a> Text us 📞 (310) 356-9083 Read the latest 📖 #MustBeAnEvieGirl <a href="http://linkin.bio/eviemagazine">linkin.bio/eviemagazine</a>	About	Empowering women to Seek Truth, Find Beauty.	Bio	Evie is a new online publication for women by women covering Health, Beauty, Fashion, Relationships, Career, and Culture. <a href="http://www.EvieMagazine.com">www.EvieMagazine.com</a>			
<b>4. The Tradwives Club</b>	Group	Handle	<a href="#">@tradwivesclub</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@thetradwivesclub</a>	Handle	<a href="#">The Tradwives Club</a>	Handle	Not Found	<a href="https://thetradwivesclub.com">https://thetradwivesclub.com</a>	Not Found	TikTok
		Followers	1,139	Followers	19,000	Followers Likes	874 721	Subscribers				
		Bio	For the women who embrace their femininity & like fixing their men a sandwich 🥪 #thetradwivesclub	Bio	The Tradwives Club Community Reclaim traditionalism. Reject feminism. Embrace femininity. (we like fixing men sandwiches too) 🥪 #thetradwivesclub <a href="http://linktr.ee/thetradwivesclub">linktr.ee/thetradwivesclub</a>	About	For the women who embrace their femininity & like fixing their men a sandwich 🥪 #thetradwivesclub	Bio				
<b>5. Hearth &amp; Helm</b>	Group	Handle	<a href="#">Hearth and Helm LLC</a>	Handle	<a href="#">@hearthatdhelm</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Hearth and Helm</a>	Handle	<a href="#">Hearth &amp; Helm</a>	Not Found	Not Found	Telegram
		Followers	535	Followers	928	Likes	522	Subscribers	1,460			
		Bio	Reviving Folk Vitality in the Modern World. Podcast & Blog. 📖 <a href="http://subscribestar.com">http://subscribestar.com</a>	Bio	Hearth & Helm LLC Podcast/Blog. Reviving Folk Vitality. Daily posts on Telegram	About	Podcast/blog. Mothers dedicated to reviving folk	Bio	Hearth & Helm exists to inspire and revitalize our folk by sharing our thoughts, ideas and life experiences from a feminine, holistic, conservative, and primal perspective.			

			<p>/hearhandhelm <a href="http://t.me/Hearth_and_Helm">http://t.me/Hearth_and_Helm</a> <a href="http://dlive.tv/Hearth_and_Helm">http://dlive.tv/Hearth_and_Helm</a></p>	<p><a href="https://t.me/Hearth_and_Helm">https://t.me/Hearth_and_Helm</a> <a href="https://youtube.com/channel/UC3uTqdHuVasudYJQjKXs0Jw">youtube.com/channel/UC3uTqdHuVasudYJQjKXs0Jw</a> craft's profile picture</p>	<p>vitality. Feminine, holistic, conservative, primal intentions. We live stream on DLive, produce tutorial videos, and host guests on various topics. Also see our videos on our YouTube channel.</p>	<p>In our weekly podcast and blog, we three mothers will cover a wide range of topics with a balanced approach; everything from family planning, pregnancy, birth, child-rearing &amp; homeschooling to homesteading, animal husbandry, herbalism, diet, culture, spirituality and even controversial topics such as vaccinations, circumcision, feminism and other related current political issues.</p> <p>From the Hearth- a sacred place in our homes providing warmth and sustenance, a symbol of our heart and connection to our ancestors; to the Helm- the aged, oaken, ancient, turning wheel guiding the path of our destiny... We invite you to join us...</p>			
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