



# Mainstreaming, Gender and Communication

Finland/5.2 Country Report

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Laura Horsmanheimo, Emilia Lounela, Roosa-Maria Kylli and Emilia Palonen – University of Helsinki



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: [emilia.palonen@helsinki.fi](mailto:emilia.palonen@helsinki.fi)

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## List of Abbreviations

CSO	Civic society organisation
FCA	Finn Church Aid
HDL	Deaconess foundation ( <i>Helsingin Diakonissalaitois</i> )
I-GAP	Injustice-Grievance-Alienation-Polarisation
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, and others
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
UN	United Nations
US	United States (of America)

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## About the Project

D.Rad is a comparative study of radicalisation and polarisation in Europe and beyond. It aims to identify the actors, networks and wider social contexts driving radicalisation, particularly among young people in urban and peri-urban areas. D.Rad conceptualises this through the I-GAP spectrum (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarisation) with the goal of moving towards measurable evaluations of de-radicalisation programmes. Our intention is to identify the building blocks of radicalisation, which include a sense of being victimised; a sense of being thwarted or lacking agency in established legal and political structures; and coming under the influence of “us vs them” identity formulations.

D.Rad benefits from an exceptional breadth of backgrounds. The project spans national contexts including the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Slovenia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, Georgia, Austria, and several minority nationalisms. It bridges academic disciplines ranging from political science and cultural studies to social psychology and artificial intelligence. Dissemination methods include D.Rad labs, D.Rad hubs, policy papers, academic workshops, visual outputs and digital galleries. As such, D.Rad establishes a rigorous foundation to test practical interventions geared to prevention, inclusion and de-radicalisation.

With the possibility of capturing the trajectories of seventeen nations and several minority nations, the project will provide a unique evidence base for the comparative analysis of law and policy as nation states adapt to new security challenges. The process of mapping these varieties and their link to national contexts will be crucial in uncovering strengths and weaknesses in existing interventions. Furthermore, D.Rad accounts for the problem that processes of radicalisation often occur in circumstances that escape the control and scrutiny of traditional national frameworks of justice. The participation of AI professionals in modelling, analysing and devising solutions to online radicalisation will be central to the project’s aims.

## Executive Summary/Abstract

The DRad 5.2 country report studies the relationship between mediated hegemonic gender representations, violence, and extremism by analysing empirical evidence collected from social media through the lens of I-GAP (Injustice-Grievance-Alienation-Polarisation). The data consists of posts by three actors that are identified in this study as agents of radicalisation, three de-radicalisation actors, and three ordinary citizens who are addressing these topics publicly in social media. With the agents of radicalisation, the report aims to illustrate how extreme narratives revolving around misogyny, homophobia, sexism, and transphobia are expressed online using visual and communicative tools, how they disseminate their messages and how their audiences respond to them. Next, the report analyses how these hegemonic gender representations are countered by the de-radicalisation actors and how they aim to tackle alienation, othering, polarisation, and grievance. Finally, the report engages with “citizen communication” that addresses how influencers are addressing issues regarding hegemonic gender representations and radicalisation. The report draws on actors identified in the country report 3.1 on Finland (Horsmanheimo et al., 2021) and their social media content related to gender and misogyny. The selected agents of radicalisation did not engage with these topics directly or extensively. First, racism being the core theme of these agents, questions related to gender are not explicit, although their belief in traditional gender roles intertwines misogyny and transphobia. Furthermore, de-radicalisation actors in Finland consisting of third sector actors work in multiple fields, their social media include diverse content. Studying social media influencers, while addressing issues related to gender, especially women, rarely addresses gendered aspects of extremism. Our cases consist of a video by two far-right activists with connections to multiple organisations representing far-right ideologies, an article and a thread in the alternative and social media imageboard, on the one hand, social media posts by de-radicalisation actors on the other and further citizen communication in social media addressing the concern about violent radicalisation in diverse ways. The Finnish case bears evidence of the normalisation of hegemonic masculinity and how its employment in conjunction of the far-right argumentation also further normalises violently radical content.

## Introduction: Hegemonic masculinity and violent radicalisation

Misogyny and violent masculinity play a role in extremist violence more often than is recognised, also noticed in cases of extremist violence in Finland (Lounela et al., 2021)<sup>1</sup>, a country with 5.6 million people and a tradition of consensual politics with a small presence of violent extremism. In this country report we have studied a relationship between mediated hegemonic gender representations, violence, and extremism, by analysing empirical evidence collected from social media using a constructivist I-GAP framework (Injustice-Grievance-Alienation-Polarisation). By polarisation, we understand the dichotomisation of the (socio-)political space into two camps that are co-constitutive in their mutual counterhegemonic rejection (Palonen 2009; 2020). I-GAP as a methodological tool aims to locate and analyse the identity-building feelings and demands of radicalised individuals and groups. By radicalisation, we mean a process involving the increasing rejection of established law, order, and politics and the active pursuit of alternatives, which mostly appears in non-violent forms but can lead to violent extremism.

Instead of expecting sexes to be naturally determinative, gender theory is based on an idea that power hierarchies are produced in social construction. Hegemonic masculinity is a product of cultural repetition of dominant of gender ideals which legitimise hierarchical and unequal relationship between women and men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). One way of *doing* masculinity is placed at the top of the hierarchy and other masculinities and femininities under it (Connell, 1995). Based on heteronormative traditional gender values and hierarchies, hegemonic masculinity rests on the premise that women, represented as being weaker than men, need protection from the 'other' men (Keskinen, 2013). The discourse sets woman as an object and creates dependence on men and their gaze (Oliver, 2017). A stereotype that can exist about online activities, despite the agency that women have as producers of self-expression (Paasonen et al., 2020). Feminist communities and influencers contest this vision. Online examples of the critique of hegemonic masculinity in contemporary Finland include contestation of the bipolarity such as hairlessness which nevertheless may be from a privileged and white position (Åberg & Salonen, 2021). Online communication has provided tools for contesting marginality and hegemonic masculinity (Särmä, 2016).

In Western societies, men of colour are discursively positioned as a threat to society: unintelligent, hypermasculine, and aggressive, and their bodies are sexualised and fetishised (hooks, 2003). In Finland, the so-called 'refugee crisis', mainly in 2015 and 2016, accelerated moral panic in far-right circles and within some feminists, about the risk of sexual harassment by immigrant men (Keskinen, 2018). This also happened after the terrorist attack committed by a Moroccan man in Turku in 2017 that received a wave of social-media attention to the Islamic Other (Sumiala & Harju, 2019; Sumiala, Harju & Palonen, 2022). Posing women as

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<sup>1</sup> Three Finnish extremist violence cases, including a stabbing in Turku, an assault by a member of now-banned neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement and a school shooting in Jokela, were studied through an I-GAP lens.



potential victims and foreign men as potential aggressors can strengthen the position of white men on top of both gender and race hierarchies (Chang, 2018). Objectified women are seen as symbols of the honour of 'us' (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Portraying racialised people as rapists marks white domestic people as morally pure actors (Thorleifsson, 2019). The narrative serves far-right agenda, analysed in this report, in which both men and women activists support conservatism and nativism as a base of 'natural' (Skjelsbæk, 2021).

Liberal gender ideologies are not only opposed by the far right, but also other extremist actors, as was seen in an Islamistic terrorism attack in Turku, the perpetrator stating that his motivations were misogynistic (Lounela et al., 2021). Despite this, gendered practices and ideas are often overlooked in the public discourse on extremist violence, and in academic debate. Kimmel (2018) states that the extreme right has been analysed insufficiently in terms of gender. Also, racism has not traditionally been analysed in connection to hegemonic masculinity (Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 2005, p. 147), which has made multilateral power structures seem too simple. The lack of a gender perspective can be seen in commonly reproduced stories in which terrorism by white men is associated with mental health issues, while with immigrants and racialised people, it is connected to religion (Chang, 2018, p. 500). Without addressing extremism holistically, the threat of gender-based violence, and social structures maintaining the need of some people to show their superiority compared to others, will continue.

Extremist violence on the streets has been rare in Finland and the most prominent networked actor<sup>2</sup>, the far right, is more visible online (Kotonen, 2021) in which hegemonic masculinity shapes the conversation. Far-right actors use online content constructing relationships with audiences to articulate and perform political and social identities (Ekman, 2014). Digital media offers platforms to interact and spread racist content without being physically in the same place (Ekman, 2017; Tuomola, 2018). This extends the access to extremist content potentially increasing radicalisation beyond the known extremist groups to 'lone actors', possibly excluded from onsite interaction. They may identify themselves as part of misogynist online communities, as in Finnish school shootings in 2007 and 2008 (see Mølmen & Ravndal, 2021).

The consumption of social media platforms is traditionally gendered: young men use a lot of YouTube for instance, while Instagram is more popular with young women (Ebrand, 2019). This can affect the kind of radical messages people encounter and the ways they might (radically) counter them. Internationally compared, the Finnish speaking audience consuming social media in their own language is relatively limited in numbers, which is visible in the number of comments and reactions, but the phenomenon of online hate speech is well documented to exist (Saresma et al., 2022) affecting political participation (Knuuttila et al., 2019). Researchers and journalists also produced The Hate Speech Toolkit published by Finnish PEN that would offer advice in situations of facing hate speech (Hämäri et al., 2021), which had led to court cases (Vehkoo, 2021).

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<sup>2</sup> According to SUPO (2022), the other relevant extremist threat, radical Islamism, is mostly concentrated in supportive action.

The report aims to illustrate how extreme narratives revolving around misogyny, homophobia, sexism and transphobia are expressed online using visual and communicative tools, how the actors disseminate their messages, and how audiences respond to them. It explores the type of claims of alienation, othering, polarisation, and grievances there are, linked to gender representations in radical-right conversations. It adds to existing reports on hate speech and misogyny (Kosonen et al., 2022) and online extremism (Malkki et al., 2021) by addressing gender awareness on extremism, its prevention and its connection to online forums through (audio)visual case studies through which affective force is particularly tangible (Koistinen & Kosonen, 2022). The report evaluates whether and how hegemonic gender representations are challenged in social media. While organisations affiliated with de-radicalisation work are not the only actors challenging hegemonic gender representations connected to violent radicalisation, the report analyses how feminist online activists and influencers take a part in the social media conversation (Nacher, 2021; Piva, 2020).

The report is structured as follows: Section 2 introduces the methodological approach used in the report. Section 3 discusses the literature on historical development of hegemonic gender representations and norms in Finland, and the way gender connects to radicalisation. Sections 4, 5 and 6 consist of the analysis of the data, starting with material from the radicalisation stakeholders, moving on to de-radicalisation actors, and continuing with feminist activists' posts. Section 7 concludes with the remarks of the report and discusses similarities and differences between the actors' gendered communication. The data, collected between January and March 2022, consist of three posts of each analysed category.

## Methodology and methods

For the report, we used the I-GAP framework, an analytical tool, to trace injustices, grievances, alienation, and polarisation experienced as motives behind radicalisation to identify feelings, such as a sense of being victimised or lacking societal agency, related to radicalisation. It also detects antagonisms built around in- and outgroup identifications, or 'us' and 'them'. As a constructivist method, I-GAP explore continual reproduction of reality through cultural repetition. It investigates how media practices construct shared representations, in social media posts potentially leading to or countering polarisation, alienation, grievance, bolstering perceived injustices. Stereotypes, cultural assumptions, ideological discourses, myths, and folktales are presented in medium specific structures of language, cultural codes and conventions, metaphors and symbols as well as aesthetic elements, cinematography, camera angles, costume, voiceover, anchorage, sound design and editing. Analysing representations unveils how signifiers are negotiated, contested and agreed on (Hall, 1997; Laclau & Mouffe, 1987).

Our qualitative content analysis investigated the representations there are regarding masculinity and femininity (Altheide, 1987). We explored the discursive narratives and counter-narratives relating to various forms of gender-based oppression, such as misogyny, trans- and homophobia, and sexism, in the I-GAP framework, paying attention to articulations and rhetoric engaging with people's identity and cultural meanings (Watson, 2009).

Additionally, multimodal perspective demonstrated the effect of the variety of media-specific communicative elements of social media, compounding (audio)visual and written text (Kress, 2010). Finally, as social media is an interactive sphere, where created publics are engaging in the conversation (Chadwick, 2013), the comments of the posts were systematically collected and analysed to understand the transmission of gender ideas and elaborate how the audience articulates their relation and attitudes towards the analysed data.

The Finland report on the more prominent actors in Finnish radicalisation, highlighting the far right and de-radicalisation, combining public officers and civic society organisations<sup>3</sup> (Horsmanheimo et al., 2021) informed social media data collection from several platforms for this study, which also added posts from feminist activists criticising misogyny. Online material produced by relevant stakeholders of radicalisation was easy to locate because the Finnish far right is active on social media. The three data sources include an image board thread, a counter-media article and a YouTube video. For the YouTube video, anonymisation is a strategy of not directing attention to the controversial material (c.f., Koistinen & Kosonen, 2022). De-radicalisation actors and fitting social media data were harder to find. The very few organisations engaging purely in explicit de-radicalisation work (Sivenbring & Andersson Malmros, 2021), whose data were collected from TikTok, Instagram and Facebook, are highly prominent on social media relative to the Finnish context. Three feminist accounts of medium size following in the Finnish context were selected to picture how public opinions on gender connected to extremism appears through visual and ironic Instagram art and lifestyle feminism. To protect the individual, the influencer, whose Instagram data is no longer available online was pseudonymised (Sold et al., 2020). The art accounts were not pseudonymised so that the works could be referenced.

## Gender roles in Finland: Historical perspective and relationship between mediated hegemonic gender presentations and violent radicalisation

The Nordic gender equality credentials compared with most other regions are traditionally perceived as being exceptional. Finnish feminism has been based on an ideal of equality, rather than ideas of difference or plurality, just as it has in all Nordic states. (Holst, 2018.) In a historically agricultural country, men and women worked together, and universal suffrage was achieved in 1906. After the war years when women took men's work roles, separate collective wage agreements ensured lower wages for women. Although gender specific agreements were subsequently abolished, women's work remains institutionally undervalued (Koskinen Sandberg, Törnroos & Kohvakka, 2017) in the segregated labour market. Family and redistribution policies from the 1960s were to increase women's participation in the

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<sup>3</sup> In the report, we distinguish between implicit de-radicalisation policies, such as those in the field of welfare and education, and explicit de-radicalisation policies directly aimed at tackling the issue of violent radicalisation and extremism (Horsmanheimo et al, 2021).

‘woman friendly’ society (Hernes, 1987; Holst, 2018). Redistribution of the welfare state has decreased women’s dependency on men but increased their dependency on the state (Svanström, 2017).

A narrative of strong women's societal position has created an illusion of exciting universal equality, which has made it difficult to address existing gendered issues (Keskinen et al., 2021; Holli, 2002; Lister, 2009), such high levels of domestic abuse (SVT, 2020). Neo-liberal discourse has changed the Finnish understanding of equality in the direction of emphases of individual success (Holli, 2002). Intersections of generation, class, family and labour market status, and ethnic background affect the opportunities and experiences of women in Finland (Julkunen 2010, pp. 271-273). Finland has received repeated recommendations from the UN to improve the situation on minority rights, economic and social rights, and gender inequality (see e.g., CESR 2021). Employment is especially low for immigrant women due to language requirements (Saukkonen, 2021), and many work in low-paid jobs.

Some women, but also some men face uncertain situations in an increasingly competitive and individualistic society face accumulation of multiple challenges. Currently, young men are at higher risk of social exclusion than women (THL, 2021). The historic ideal of Finnish masculinity is hard-working and silent, at the expense of emotional skills and talking about feelings. The model of ideal manhood is considered to be in transition (Hyvönen, 2021), but Finnish national identity is still based on mythologising war history and thereby shaping gendered bodies (Väyrynen, 2015). Compulsory conscription takes military service as proxy over civic service, and significantly upholds respectable, even heroic, masculinity performed as white, Finnish, able-bodied, heterosexual man (Lahelma, 2002), as ‘boys become men in the military service’ (Lahelma, 2005).

The Nordic gender policy has been developed to serve a heteronormative nuclear family in the first place (Holst, 2018), and regarding LGBTQ+ people and other marginalised groups secondarily (see Lister, 2009). By the end of the 2010s, historical legal changes regarding LGBTQ+ rights were promoted by civic society and legislated through the Act on Equal Marriage (Finlex, 2017) and the Maternity Act (253/2019) which enabled a child to have two mothers. The Trans Act is being renewed and disputed in 2022.

The economic policies of Sipilä’s centre-right government (2015---2019) negatively affected more women and among women, those with lower incomes (Elomäki et al., 2018). Since 2019, a five-women-led left-leaning government under prime minister Sanna Marin has meant more women-sensitive policies. It has executed the Family Leave Reform which enables both parents to stay at home with a child for a longer period (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö, 2022). The government has been pejoratively branded as the ‘girl government’ or ‘lipstick government’, and the five female-leader presence has also been contested (Koljonen & Palonen, 2021). The acceptability of anti-feminist and conservative values in Finland has been increasing since the strong presence of the populist right-wing Finns Party in Finnish politics from 2011 (Luhtakallio & Ylä-Anttila, 2017).

Gender equality, seen in a binary way, is one of the central arguments in the anti-immigration discourse. It can seem emancipatory, but it is connected to highly conservative politics that place women as being subordinate to men, and it is used to justify the othering of immigrants

(Saresma, 2017). The far-right ideology views women as caretakers in charge of ‘womanly duties’, and men are the frontline activists and warriors (Aasland Ravndal, 2020, p. 17). Protective masculinity has been visible when the Finnish far right has securitised the public gender-based violence to enhance the militarised performance of white masculinity (Aharoni & Féron, 2020). The Finnish far right has some active female members who mostly position themselves in traditional gender roles. A female far-right group called Berkano was founded in 2020, but it is not publicly very active (Kotonen, 2021).

Militarism and political violence can all be regarded as masculinist projects. The Finnish far right bases the idea of the ‘Nordic race’ on the imaginary of ruthless, brutal, hierarchical, and self-reliant Vikings (Kølvraa, 2019). Men who defend their freedom, honour, homeland, and women are seen as the real actors (Nagel, 1998, pp. 243-244). Discussions on who is European and who is the ‘other’ is a matter of whose masculinity is superior (Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 2005, p. 147). The ‘angry white males’ are characterised by their feeling of entitlement to have their privileges (Kimmel, 2010, p. 216). According to Kimmel (2007), young people participating in neo-Nazi groups are more likely to demonstrate their masculinity than because of political ideology and at an early age. Kimmel (2018) states that, overall, joining extremist movements is because belonging to a hyper-masculine culture that is not available for men in mainstream culture. The ideology can be secondary for far-right movements compacted to the significance of community and social experiences (Mattsson & Johansson 2021; Blee 2007, 2002).

Misogyny and anti-gender discourses are spread directly on far-right (social) media platforms, such as *Partisaani* and *Ylilauta*<sup>4</sup> (Kosonen et al., 2022; Vainikka, 2020) analysed in this report. The ideas are also visible in the communication of institutionalised parties. In 2020, the Finns Party’s think tank *Suomen Perusta* published a book on women’s sexual power over men (Mäntymaa, Roslund & Konttinen, 2020). The book is highly misogynist, with statements about women destroying the ‘Finnish race and ethnicity’ and using their sexuality as a manipulative tool, and consent to sex being overrated as part of the Finns Party’s counterhegemonic argument (Saresma & Palonen 2022).

## An analysis of media presence, production, and circulation of collective agents of radicalisation

The selection of far-right content from image board, website counter media, and YouTube demonstrates the variety between ostensibly neutral and overtly hostile and neo-conservative far-right data in a hybrid media context in which different styles and genres are blended which can make misogynistic content more difficult for audiences to distinguish and thus mainstream ideas of hegemonic masculinity.

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<sup>4</sup> International anti-feminist ideas and language typical to the manosphere are frequent in *Ylilauta* discussions (Vainikka 2019). Ironic style evades responsibility by simultaneously spreading extreme material and presenting it as “just a joke” (see Greene 2019; Chang 2020).

## Spreading misogyny and racism on the *Ylilauta* image board

*Ylilauta* (Overboard, similar to 4chan) is the most popular Finnish image board and one of the more popular online discussion forums in Finland. In addition to varying everyday topics, it is known for its hostile, misogynistic atmosphere, far-right material, as well as trolling and shitposting, and can be regarded as ‘the most significant platform for hate speech’ in Finland (Kettunen & Paukkeri, 2021) also for the incel (‘involuntarily-celibate’) discussions (Malkki et al., 2021). The chosen thread focuses on violent videos of women being threatened or beaten. The original poster suggests that people ‘post videos of women's empowerment going wrong’. It contains 672 messages including misogynist and racist text, images and/or videos, of which the first 50 were selected for close analysis. The thread has since been removed from the forum.

On a discussion forum, the audience post their own videos and messages besides watching the originally posted video. Most of the discussants laud the videos of women being violently beaten promoting an idea of a cultural war against feminism and women in general (Figure 1). The discussion revolves around the idea of women having different advantages in relation to men; women are seen as benefiting from feminism, but at the same time profiting from the traditional expectations that men will be ‘gentlemanly’ towards women. The most frequent narrative is of women expecting special treatment and being shocked when they are treated ‘equally’ (mostly being hit after first hitting a man), but the thread contains many videos of women being abused with no clear context and messages describing the posters’ hatred of women in general (e.g., ‘I hate women so much it is unreal’). Women are referred to by sexist terms such as whores, bitches and sluts. An implicit assumption is that all or most discussants are men and misogyny is a shared sentiment, enforcing the idea of *Ylilauta* as a masculine space (see Maloney et al., 2019). Some users challenge the misogynist users by pejoratively calling them incels, and the videos ‘fake bullshit’, formulating their opposition to fix the forum discussion culture and enforce normative, hegemonic masculinity. It contains feelings of injustice, mentions of grievances, and a sense of polarisation, but no specific talk of alienation – most discussants share anti-feminist values, and there is a sense of community.

## Articulating a shared threat towards hegemonic masculinity in a *Partisaani* counter-media article

The Finnish counter media *Partisaani*, connected to the now-banned Finnish branch of the far-right organisation Nordic Resistance Movement (Kotonen, 2021), publishes articles imitating a conventional mainstream news article style but with racist, misogynist, and homophobic content and rhetoric (Kosonen et al., 2022). The chosen article ‘British intelligence chiefs: Use ‘gender-sensitive’ language and challenge ‘white privilege’ (‘*Britannian tiedustelupäälliköt: Käyttäkää ”sukupuolisensitiivistä” kieltä ja haastakaa ”valkoinen etuoikeus”*’) critically comments on a manual published by the British intelligence service (Partisaani 2022). The article was published on 4 March 2022, eight days after the Russian invasion of Ukraine began, making use of the affective connotations to the situation at that

time. It is marked with a 'decay culture' (*rappiokulttuuri*) tag, implying a dichotomy between glorious past and a dystopian present (Figure 2).

The article ironically contrasts the British intelligence service's new, more sensitive language policy and the alleged triviality of trans rights to the seriousness of the on-going war. Connecting the separate issues into a comparison of importance and suggesting that addressing one problem detracts from addressing another are tools of argumentation found in other Western anti-feminist discourse (e.g., Farci & Righetti, 2019). The article features a photo of LTBTQ+ demonstrators riding a pink tank (Figure 2), captioned 'British security machinery will be updated for the 2020s'. The photo, chosen to ridicule the attempt to introduce gender-sensitive language, originates from a Lesbian and Gay Pride event in London in 1995. Removed from its original context and associated with a 'cultural war', the image mocks both sexual minorities and the institutions that are considered to have turned on 'their' side.

The confrontation portrays trans and queer people as emotional and unmasculine, and military issues as respectable masculine interests (see Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell, 2005). 'True' masculinity, presented as patriarchal, protective, and potentially violent, is portrayed as a positive force keeping 'us' safe. Gender and sexual minorities are referred to using derogatory terms, and advancing their rights is presented as an impact of spread of cultural Marxism which is compared to cancer (see Mirrlees, 2018). Pejorative language and exaggeration have been used as rhetorical devices. Those opposed are 'gay marchers, anarchists, and immigrant criminals', making space for 'us' constituted on the values allegedly under attack: white supremacism and traditional gender norms. 'Decay culture' and minority rights are presented as hegemonic conveying a feeling of powerless frustration and evoking grievance and polarisation, as well as feelings of injustice and white-masculine victimhood (e.g., Blommaert, 2018; Ging, 2019).

The five comments share the concern of 'Western culture' being under attack with various views of the scapegoat but a common vision of hegemonic masculinity in line with the article. The threatened hegemonic masculinity offers a common heading, an empty signifier for a diversity of views and rhetorical strategies. Common concern on traditional values is a factor that unites commenters who use openly hateful language about their 'opponents'. The comments feed into polarisation and evoke a sense of injustice. People do not refer or criticise the article but come to share their own opinions as an extension of the article. The comment field provides a platform for sharing one's own world view.

The article is an example of remediation of far-right content in hybrid media (Toivanen et al., 2021; Pyrhönen & Bauvois, 2020). The photo has been used by a range of actors, such as the far-right US Breitbart News Network, the Russian Orthodox website Pravoslavie.ru, and the pro-Russian propaganda site rusvesna.su, in opposing sexual and gender minority rights. The text of the *Partisaani* article is a modified, translated version of a publication by Breitbart (Kraychik, 2022), although the original article is not cited, showing the international flows of circulating far-right material.

## Hiding the radical ideology in a life-style YouTube video of far-right activists

The analysed YouTube video (pseudonymised) features two activists prominent in organised far-right groups, such *Sinimusta Liike* (Black-Blue Movement), in Finland. Of the two, he is a self-proclaimed fascist and ethno-nationalist expelled from the Finns Party's youth organisation for his radical views, whereas she received mainstream publicity after performing in a mass media production introducing 'nationally conscious' or 'patriotic' women. On their YouTube channel, the representation of far-right activists living a regular life hides their ideologically radical thoughts blended with the mundane content usually spread in non-extremist context. The style can make it more difficult for the audiences to recognise extreme content in a complex hybrid media environment (see Toivanen et al., 2021).

The name of the YouTube channel, undisclosed here, refers to the Finnish wilderness isolating Finnish people from other nations. The barren landscape is central in the literature and art producing traditional Finnishness. Patriotism, maintaining hegemonic masculinity, is highlighted in the video with casual lifestyle content and calm, positive and approachable atmosphere and style resembles popular influencer videos often aimed at women. The video addresses Finnish nature and domestic tourism in the discovery of national roots (see Figure 3). It glorifies the war history in which the home country gives people a purpose to fight together.

In the video, their recent engagement is approached rationally as a natural, progressive event without great emotion. In general, emotions, such as enthusiasm, are shown in a very reserved manner, especially by the man. Emotional restraint can be considered to be a central part of the image of hegemonic masculinity. The activists are presented as a stereotypical Finnish couple with a brisk woman and a serious, silent man. The woman is talking about 'us', as a unit, not separate individuals. The man's presence and calm gesticulation in the background seems to confirm the woman's speech. The couple sits side by side, the man slightly behind the woman, giving the impression that he is securing her. (See Figure 3.)

In the video, hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality are not explicitly addressed as a primary topic. However, 'traditional' and Christian values are stressed as being preferable compared to modern values appearing in contemporary art and trans issues. Trans topics are called vulgar (*rivo*) with a mocking, pejorative attitude. However, the sneering tone is not aggressively derogative, but rather seems to try to hide contempt which partly blends with awkwardness. Implicit imagined togetherness and community underlies an assumption that the audience shares the values considered to be good (see Anderson, 2006). While there is little openly ideological speech in the video, the activists inconspicuously advise the viewers to live as they do, e.g., to avoid drinking alcohol (see Figure 3, a non-alcoholic drink). Suitably for a lifestyle format, the advice can be seen to be connected to maintaining a healthy body, which in far-right rhetoric could be seen the source of reproduction of the nation.

The technique used to mainstream and normalise far-right messages can be reflected in the analysis of the twelve comments of the video congratulating the couple for their engagement, focusing on the personal content in the video. Only one comment raises straight political



issues. The content is therefore received at first as lifestyle entertainment which by addressing personal issues, makes the content producers feel familiar to the viewers (Abidin, 2013). In this kind of content, the focus is not on stressing the I-GAP's injustices, grievances and alienation. Polarisation is addressed in a softer, more implicit way.

## An analysis of media presence, production, and circulation of the stakeholders of de-radicalisation

In this section, we analyse three social media posts from three actors, Finn Church Aid (FCA), the Deaconess foundation (HDL) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), central explicit stakeholders on de-radicalisation in Finland, where the focus is on primary prevention and implicit policies increasing social cohesion (Horsmanheimo et al., 2021). We demonstrate how online presence of chosen stakeholders, active also on other societal issues as seen in their diverse social media content, is reinforcing or breaking the hegemonic-masculine discourse. Public communication about de-radicalisation work is rare, so chosen the posts also reflect the expressed gender sensitivity related to (extremist) violence from a wider perspective.

### Challenging hegemonic masculinity in the Finns Church Aid Instagram post

FCA, as part of co-operative de-radicalisation field, works on Reach Out project (2013–2023) supporting people affected by violent radicalisation and improving cooperation between stakeholders. In the data collecting process, FCA was the only de-radicalisation stakeholder in Finland we found explicitly communicating about de-radicalisation work as a part of their *Tekoja* (Acts) podcast, promoted on their Instagram account. In the Instagram post we chose, published in January 2022, FCA informs us about the first episode of the podcast series, focusing on (de-)radicalisation (Kirkon ulkomaanapu, 2022). The post contains a picture with three smiling cartoon-style faces of the speakers in the podcast (Figure 4) and an audio clip from the podcast in which Marko Juntunen, a researcher on Islam and the Middle East, and Jari Taponen, a police chief inspector, are interviewed and a former Norwegian neo-Nazi Tom Olsen tells his own story.

In the audio clip, Taponen talks about a 14-year-old boy who left extremist social circles. The boy had voluntarily come to a police car and burst into tears. A narrative about a crying boy asking for help is outside of the stereotypical surviving imaginary of hegemonic masculinity and breaks the hardness of the extremist movements' culture. This turning point towards a new life conveys a message of collapse of hegemonic masculinity as a release. The helping adults are portrayed as safe and warm (Figure 4). The police officer is presented as having a supportive attitude towards the boy, who is presented as an independent, humane actor, not a victim or a threat as a member of an extremist group. The two are not depicted as enemies. The police officer calls the boy "a kid" (*poitsu*, a gentle name for a little boy), which strongly contrasts with the far-right male model. The manner of speaking creates a fatherly, reliable impression of an authority not using his power to punish but to reduce social exclusion by listening and helping people. Finnish de-radicalisation work is presented as being done by

accessible local authorities reaching out to young people at a grassroots level from a familiar public space.

The Instagram post has only one comment, stating the commentator's will to listen to the podcast. This shows that the communication is not dialogical, but one-way from the producers to the viewers. The post is probably not considered to be taking a stand, but to be an advertisement, which as a text type is often interpreted as neutral despite the hidden messages it contains.

### Breaking an image of immigrant women's safety in the Deaconess Foundation Facebook post

HDL is the only CSO running an exit program in Finland (see Kylli et al., 2021). De-radicalisation work is a part of the wider social work expertise scope of HDL. The post on Facebook, shared by HDL on Women's Day 2018, states support for women whose voices are not heard in society (Figure 5). Now removed post it included a link to an also removed article, originally posted on HDL's webpage, about undocumented migrant women in Finland. There were 301 Facebook reactions (mostly crying faces or raised thumbs, but also angry faces, heart emojis and confused faces) and 83 comments on the post, much more than HDL's posts usually receive.

In contrast with a public discourse about Finland as a 'woman friendly' country, HDL raises up the insecurity of undocumented women by interviewing an Iraqi mother represented to feel safe only in her own room in a shelter. The Facebook post, addressing an intersectional perspective, does not explicitly talk about violent extremism, but the linked article recognises violence as a gendered issue mentioning violence and terrorism as threats especially for women, describing the undocumented women as being especially vulnerable. The post, including a photo, a shot from the back, of a woman wearing a hijab looking out of a window (Figure 5), represents undocumented women as (passive) victims. The alienation and marginalised position of undocumented people in Finnish society are underlined, but the women are not described as being at a risk of radicalisation as might be a case with men in the same situation.

The post evoked strong reactions and conversation, including everyday racism (see Orrù, 2014) among the Finnish Facebook audience. The emotionally loaded comments portray opposite perspectives on immigration policies, Finnish parties, and the rights of undocumented immigrants. Compared to far-right discussions, the commentators seem to be mostly so-called ordinary people. They do not use violent language, even though some have xenophobic views and accuse others of their attitudes or unsatisfied argumentation reinforcing the polarised atmosphere. Compared to the FCA post without a heated discussion, the number of comments could be explained by a fear of losing privileges when seeing undocumented people, came from 'outside', presented as victims. The post also arouses sympathy for women and children, which in some cases turns to strengthen the opposition to foreign men. There are many misconceptions about undocumented people among the commentators, leading to a feeling of injustice. Facebook as a platform might also have impact on activity of commentators on immigration topic (see Merrill & Åkerlund, 2018).

## Unsuccessful attempt to engage with the youth by the National Bureau of Investigation TikTok video

NBI, as a part of the multi-professional de-radicalisation field, was the first organisation implementing exit work to engage with violently radicalised people since 2018 (see Horsmanheimo et al., 2021). In November 2020 the NBI published a TikTok video which demonstrates how (nude) images can spread online (Keskusrikospoliisi, 2020; Figure 6). The video was chosen as a piece of data because of it received wide attention on TikTok and was also discussed on other (social) media, raising concern on the trustfulness of the police's gender sensibility as a security institution with monopoly of violence. The video has been watched 510K times and there are 1484 comments (referenced 7 October 2022).

The video claims that one should not send nude photos of oneself to anyone to prevent unwanted use of them, and in the end, it is better not to take naked or sexual photos of oneself at all. In the video, a chart is drawn to demonstrate the spreading of a nude photo online (Figure 6). A male narrator, who talks in the first person singular, begins by saying: 'I sent a kind of picture, -- well, you probably know what kind of picture', implying that sending nude photos to others is shameful and feeding into the idea of nudity and intimacy as something private, even taboo. The story continues and finally the photo ends up on the dark web and is impossible to remove. The narrator sums: 'All this only because I had taken this kind of photo and sent it to a couple of people' which makes it sound as everything that happened was one's own fault. At the end of the video there is a rewind, which clears the paper while the caption in the post says: 'Rewinding does not work in real life. Think before you share.'<sup>5</sup>

In the video, the police do not bring up the fact that spreading private photos without permission is a crime in Finland. The video created public controversy for its implication that the victims whose photos are leaked, and spread are the ones to blame, evoking notions of injustice. Commenters show distrust and contempt towards the police indicating a contrasting image of the police compared to FCA's post. After receiving a vast number of critical comments, the police participated in the conversation, reminding viewers about the crimes connected to spreading nude photographs without permission.

The shame attached to nude photographs becoming public predominantly negatively affects girls, e.g., in terms of 'moral lynching', while boys might receive even positive attention (Deslandes et al., 2022). In the video, the gendered emphasis is not explicitly demonstrated, and it can be seen even to be hidden behind the male voice of the narrator. Gender blindness of officials perpetuate inequities (Bishu et al., 2019). Even if the narrator might be intended to be androgyne, some commentators interpret the male voice literally referencing men and jokingly wonder why someone would send a 'dickpic' to a friend. The video, produced by a key national actor in the field of de-radicalisation, and can be connected to a wider, on-going public discussion concerning misogyny within the Finnish police (see *Tympeät tytöt* section in this report). During the past year, there have been cases in which the police have refused

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<sup>5</sup> Translated by the authors from the Finnish original video.

to investigate rape and harassment cases (Teittinen, 2022), ethnically profile racialised women (Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu, 2022) and advising women to behave in certain ways to prevent being raped (Tani, 2022).

## An analysis of media presence, production, and circulation of feminist activists against hegemonic gender discourse

Citizen activism is analysed in this report to show how Instagram is used in variety ways to distribute feminist messages reaching different (female) audiences sparking conversation, e.g., by sharing political art. We analysed three social media posts from three medium-size (20-60k followers) Finnish social media influencers focusing on equality. Each have gained public attention in the mainstream media and to a wider audience (Kuokkanen, 2021; Tiedonjulkaisemisen neuvottelukunta, 2022). The anonymous meme account *Pikakahvimegirl* is a feminist, anti-capitalist meme account with ironic style. The art project *Tympeät tytöt* highlights misogyny through comic paintings and drawings. A popular lifestyle influencer, Strawberrygirl (pseudonymised), posts less radical feminist material reaching wide audience. The posts and influencers analysed here cannot be considered to be de-radicalising or social cohesion focused, since many of the arguments can be viewed as radical in pushing against a hegemonic gender discourse.

### Criticising the police institution in the feminist comic account *Tympeät tytöt*

*Tympeät tytöt* ('Rude' or 'Bored' Girls) is an Instagram account, with 58.2K followers, of a Finnish comic artist Riina Tanskanen. It comments on different social issues, mostly addressing class, gender and racial power structures and their intersections, with a radical and left-leaning tone. The account, with a goal of empowering girls and minorities, combines social media communication and visual arts using girly and cute aesthetics. We analysed a post with 6111 likes and 72 comments, that criticises the Finnish police and people's high trust in the police (Tympeät tytöt, 2022).

The painted image depicts three blonde cherubs with police badges on their bodies circled with a golden frame. Hegemonic-masculine power of police is visualised with hidden symbols of violence blended in an innocent style of painting. A text 'Who gets protection here?' (*Ketä täällä suojellaan?*) questions the slogan of the Finnish police "Everyone's protector, at all times" (*Kaikkien turvaaja kaikkina aikoina*). (Figure 7.) In contrast with a colourful and smooth painting, the tone of the long caption about the police institution is dark and sharp describing the police as historically created to serve only privileged people. It is claimed that the police are racist and that they favour the far right and white-collar criminals. Several issues on sexism are highlighted. The post states that victims of sexual crimes hesitate to report them to the police in fear of being blamed. The police are criticised for not naming trans- and homophobic movements as a safety threat in its overview on violent extremism, while people opposing the far right online are mentioned. Angel figures can be seen as ironically highlighting the hypocrisy of the police. Depicting the police as an unmasculine angel can be

seen as a rhetorical device in which the police's duty of protection is made subject to laughter (c.f., Laaksonen et al., 2022).

The post presents the situation as polarised, and minorities and women as alienated and experiencing injustice without receiving protection from the Police. The polarised and affective arguments, constructing polarised opposites, are also presented by the audience. About two-thirds of the comments support the statements in the post, while one-third oppose it. Criticisms of hegemonic masculinity of police organisation is pressed by some commentators. Some of the comments accuse the post of inciting hatred or conflating things and show understanding towards the police or reference to good experiences with the police.

### Framing gender ironically on the *Pikakahvimegirl* meme account

*Pikakahvimegirl* (Instantcoffeememegirl) is an anonymous meme account on Instagram, with 22.5k followers. The account addresses issues related to capitalism, class and gender with an anti-elitist pathos and satirical and provocative aesthetics as a part of an increasingly popular scene of feminist and leftist memes (Lawrence & Ringrose, 2018; Burton, 2019). The language in the posts is typical for memes: witty, unpolished, and sometimes rude. The meme published 15 December 2021, with 2964 likes and 14 comments, analysed here makes fun about men's inability to understand feminism (Pikakahvimegirl, 2021). In the picture, smiling reality TV star Kim Kardashian is photographed sitting in a car on the driver's seat with the door open (Figure 8).

The meme presents men, or 'dudes', as a group that claims there is no logic in feminism. Below, there is a sarcastic explanation: the men base their conception on anti-feminist propaganda and misinformation. The meme asks: 'Do you think incels are going to explain these things to you in a clear manner so you can form your opinion on fair basis?? Bitch please, they are manipulating you.' (Figure 8.) Men are addressed as 'you', separating them from an implicit 'us', which constructs antagonistic groups with different interests. The text represents 'incels' as an example of influential distributors of misinformation among men. Misunderstanding of the concept of feminism and mansplaining are presented as grievances women experience online.

The meme, combining a feminine, glamorous idol and a straightforward political message, gives the impression that Kardashian as a speaker is addressing anti-feminist men (Figure 8). Contradictories or irony is drawn by companying photos of celebrity women, such as Kim Kardashian (or Britney Spears and Paris Hilton often seen in the memes of *Pikakahvimegirl*) with radical feminist and anticapitalistic messages. The meme images depict the figures as prototypes of a 'hyper femininity' and symbols of female power which is a rhetorical tool to reclaim the female body objected by the hegemonic-masculine culture (see Just & Muhr, 2019). As Schwichtenberg (1995) has demonstrated in a previous study of the image of the Madonna, emphasising femininity both reveals the male gaze and deconstructs the cultural definition of femininity, showing that femininity is only a socially constructed strategy. The result is a 'meta-femininity' commenting on femininity, which makes gender an exaggerated style (Schwichtenberg, 1995). Kardashian's image and the text turn the dialectic, hegemonic-masculine idea of rational men and silly or emotional women upside down by presenting men

as vulnerable to affective propaganda and misinformation while women are driving the car as in a 'boss lady' manner.

Most of the comments support the message of the post, while a few commentators are worried about creating an atmosphere that silences opponents instead of creating meaningful discussion. The ironic rhetoric of the meme is visible in some of the comments which are mocking men. For some users, the meme account is approached as a certain kind of object of fandom. For example, one commenter asks if she can add the publication to her Tinder profile.

### Highlighting the women's fear and need for male allies in the Instagram stories of a Finnish life-style influencer

Strawberrygirl (pseudonymised) is a Finnish lifestyle influencer with 47k followers on Instagram. In her Instagram biography, she states that she is a feminist and an advocate of a better discussion culture. Her account is pseudonymised because the thread we analysed has been deleted. In her visually harmonious account, featuring mostly fashion, home décor, aesthetics, and other material topics, she frequently discusses topical social issues, especially related to feminism. The chosen highlighted collection of Instagram stories address misogyny is now deleted. It contains 35 story slides that discuss a variety of subjects, mostly through commenting about an ongoing public debate addressing specific cases of misogyny, and often expanding the scope of discussion to cover wider structural issues or personal experiences (Figure 9). Embedding misogyny as a topic in a lifestyle account involves potentially raising public attention on gender issues and feminism while influencer culture impact widely on young and middle-class women (see Khan, Iqbal & Lodhi, 2021).

The story slides contain material Strawberrygirl has shared from other Instagram accounts, newspaper article screenshots and links, and direct messages she has received from her followers detailing their experiences of misogyny (Figure 9). The sharing of other (feminist) posts shows how ideas flow on social media internationally. Discussion through direct messages changes the logic of commenting, as it is more private than publicly commenting on posts. Strawberrygirl both answers messages privately and comments on them publicly, sparking more discussion and creating a feeling of a community discussing things together. The personality makes the atmosphere close and unites women. Compared to the other feminist account we analysed, rhetoric is not iconic or rude but is worried and serious which might be better at reaching the audience who might not feel comfortable with radical content.

The story highlight underlines grievances and injustices women experience in which fear is a key element in situations in which they are not seen, heard or secured. The focus is on injustices women face, but restrictive gender norms are presented as also being harmful to men. Men are not categorically blamed for the grievances, but are seen as potential allies, which dismantles the discourse separating the genders. The issues are discussed by expressing frustration but directed more towards social structures, reproduced by e.g., mainstream media and passive bystanders, maintaining silence around gender violence and harassment than any individuals. The tone is mostly empathic and conciliatory until incels and understanding their claims and violent action, referenced as terrorism by Strawberrygirl, becomes a topic. The stories have a hopeful undertone. They address a need for action, for example by emotional skills training for children, men standing up against injustice, and everybody's interventions when witnessing harassment.

## Discussion and conclusion

The aim of the analysis was to demonstrate how hegemonic gender presentations revealed and reinforced on social media leading (indirectly) to radicalisation. The variety of platforms and text types inhibit direct comprehensive comparison, but the data reflect the conversation around the manifestation and consequences of hegemonic masculinity. In the Finnish culture of strong consensus, it is still significant to note the voices countering the predominant discourse – violent extremism, and the social media discussion on it are marginal phenomena in Finland, but they exist. This, together with the implicit de-radicalisation policies, is likely impact the low volume of communication by de-radicalisation stakeholders. They rarely produce content on radicalisation and de-radicalisation as separate topics, maybe as a strategic choice.

The far-right media content analysed in this report both indirectly and directly address topics related to misogyny, sexism, and gender and sexual minorities. Ideas of hegemonic masculinity, including protection by and supremacy of white men, are maintained as a base of continuity producing gender and race hierarchy and dependence. In the vlog-style YouTube video of far-right activists, hegemonic gender representations are intertwined with ideals about proper, respectable Finnishness, evoking historically masculine projects such as Finnish war history and Christianity. Highlighting the militarist protection, as a way to prevent the insecurity, is used as a rhetorical tool to legitimate the importance of masculinist men and their power.

The feeling of insecurity arises not only in far-right argumentation but is also expressed as a grievance felt by feminist activists and their audience. Two of the activists address incels as (symbolic) far ends of misogyny in the posts. Female empowerment is sought by using feminine aesthetics, which challenges the stereotype of femininity being unpolitical. At the same time the misogynist actors present modern women and minorities as dangerous for not adhering to patriarchal power structures. The role of women is framed in various ways by the de-radicalisation stakeholders. HDL represents undocumented women as passive victims of (intersectional) gendered social structures. The police point out the responsibility of the victim ignoring the gendered character of leaking nudes without consent. This constructs women as actors in a situation in which many is already suffering from gendered shaming. The story collection of Strawberrygirl criticises the expectation that women are the ones responsible for misogynist behaviour and suggest that men act as allies for women by promoting their safety.

At an institutional level, security is supposed to be maintained by officials with the monopoly of violence. Many of the texts analysed discuss or involve state institutions, such as the police or the military, which are highly trusted in Finland. Radically in this context, *Tympeät tytöt* argues against the tradition of hegemonic masculinity of state institutions and structures, presenting them as misogynistic and racist and insufficient to offer equal protection to everybody feeding the feeling of insecurity. In the TikTok video, the police position itself as a neutral force giving top-down, paternal advice to young people, but the comments show this positioning fails, which might feed distrust.

Alongside with masculine protection, the violence can be faced with care, traditionally associated with femininity. FCA represents de-radicalising police as caring and warm. HDL does not reinforce this image on state institutions, while the undocumented migrant woman is presented as having been left out of the safety structure of society. Both CSOs have Christian backgrounds. Despite this, they don't distribute conservative moral judgements, but the legacy is implemented as taking diversity into account and caring for people who are ignored elsewhere. From the far-right viewpoint, care can be seen as a threat to hegemonic gender discourse breaking an image of a surviving, strong man. The misogynist discussants react to traditional structures and white male supremacy being questioned by deeming this change as a threat to safety, dignity and nationality, presenting the institutions as feminised and weak, as seen in the *Partisaani* article.

Wounding masculinity might encourage the practice of violence or feeding in hostile use of language. Typically, in far-right narratives, an idealised image of the past contrasts with a decayed present as seen in both, far-right YouTube video and the *Partisaani* article. The actors use different strategies: in the former, the message is expressed in a non-traditional way through a lifestyle vlog video seeming unpolitical, personal, and approachable, while the latter is directly homo- and transphobic in its statements, constructing a strong antagonism. Claiming victimhood and framing men as oppressed, while at the same time advocating misogynist views, are typical for the anti-feminist discursive strategy aiming to 'reinstate the normalcy of white male privilege through the articulation of its loss' (Ging, 2019, p. 648). This is seen especially in the *Ylilauta* data humorously promoting violence against women, normalising the misogynist discourse and antagonism between genders. Even if the potential of violence never came true, the violent speech can impact vulnerable people.

Social media as an environment can offer tools and platforms to mainstream the counter discourses, both producing or opposing the hegemonic-masculine gender discourse and violent ideologies. In the far-right YouTube video, the most vocal activist being a young woman can have the potential to mainstream traditionally masculine far-right messages to new female audiences. The options for mainstreaming the far-right account content might still be limited by algorithms targeting the content. Most of the people watching the videos are probably already like-minded while the average audience is not guided to see the videos produced by the far right. Also, the format of the *Partisaani* article might lead to confusion within the audience while it mixes a form of a traditional news article and content conflicting with Finnish media professionalism. The hybrid media environment allows platforms such as *Partisaani* to produce content partly or sometimes even quite directly copied from another media source (see Toivanen et al., 2021), in this case the American Breitbart, interestingly circulating content from one cultural context to another without much modification, while at the same time seemingly upholding nationalist values.

Hegemonic masculinity is implicitly embedded in the cultural narratives of society at large, so extremists do not necessarily need to be very radical in their speech to maintain it. Top-down state feminism, which has fed into women's strong position in Finland, maintains an image of 'women friendliness' at an institutional level. For the new generation activists, reaching partly different audiences within mostly like-minded (female) millennials, question it



by raising the problems they face as women, also paying attention to intersectionality. The idea of arguing the feminist counter discourse being radical, is not to compare it directly with the far right, but to demonstrate their need to be radical to raise attention in a country with a strong belief in the existence of gender equality and a traditional cultural gender discourse are shaping the public sphere. A society in which resisting violence linked to hegemonic masculinity as a woman requires radical communication, allows space for the misogyny.

Based on the findings, we conclude that the CSOs produce content with the potential to reduce polarisation and facilitate dialogue, but they have a small audience on social media. The police have a wider following on social media, but they don't address gendered violent extremism or their work on it. Some far-right actors might strategically use a style which does not highlight their most radical thoughts, while some make violent rhetoric against gender prominent. The feminist activists countering hegemonic gender discourse don't de-radicalise their opponents, but mostly communicate to highlight the silenced narratives.

A radical gender discourse, either (violent) masculinist or (non-violent) feminist, does not automatically lead to extremism, but its spread on social media can normalise the specific understanding of gender in the public sphere, depending on the platform and style, and the polarisation in between. Studying a case of subtle contestation like that in Finland may help us to understand better the normalisation of hegemonic masculinity through its mechanisms and the links between normalised hegemonic masculinity and masculinist violence elsewhere.

# Appendices



Figure 1 (Ylilauta, 2022).



Figure 2 (Partisaani, 2022).

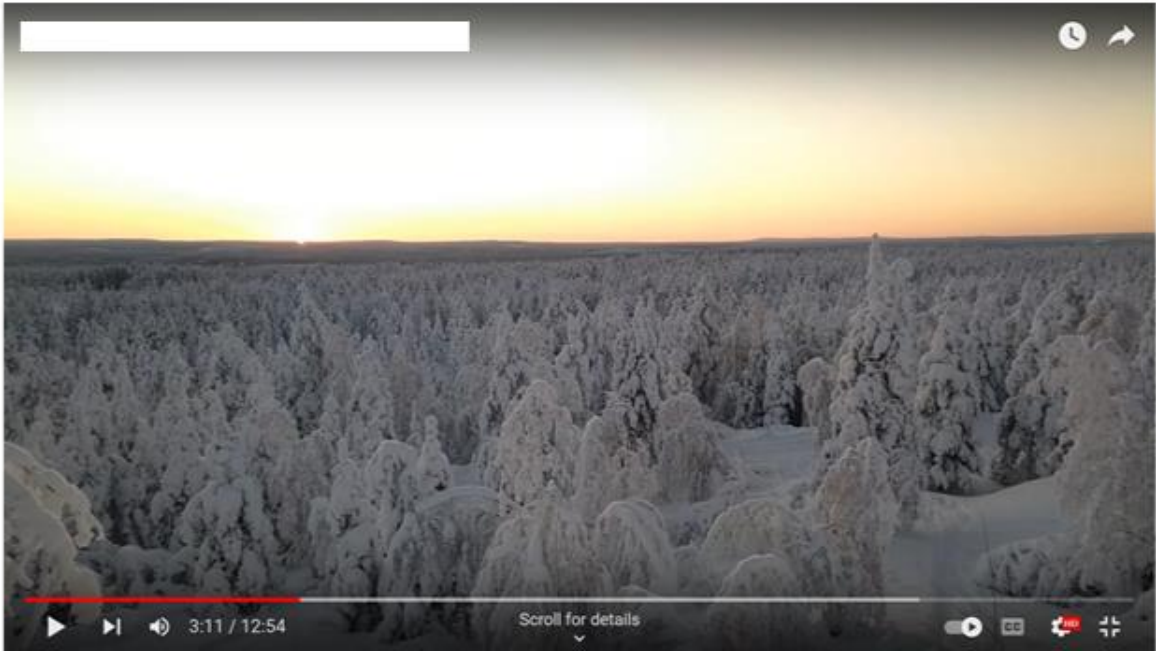
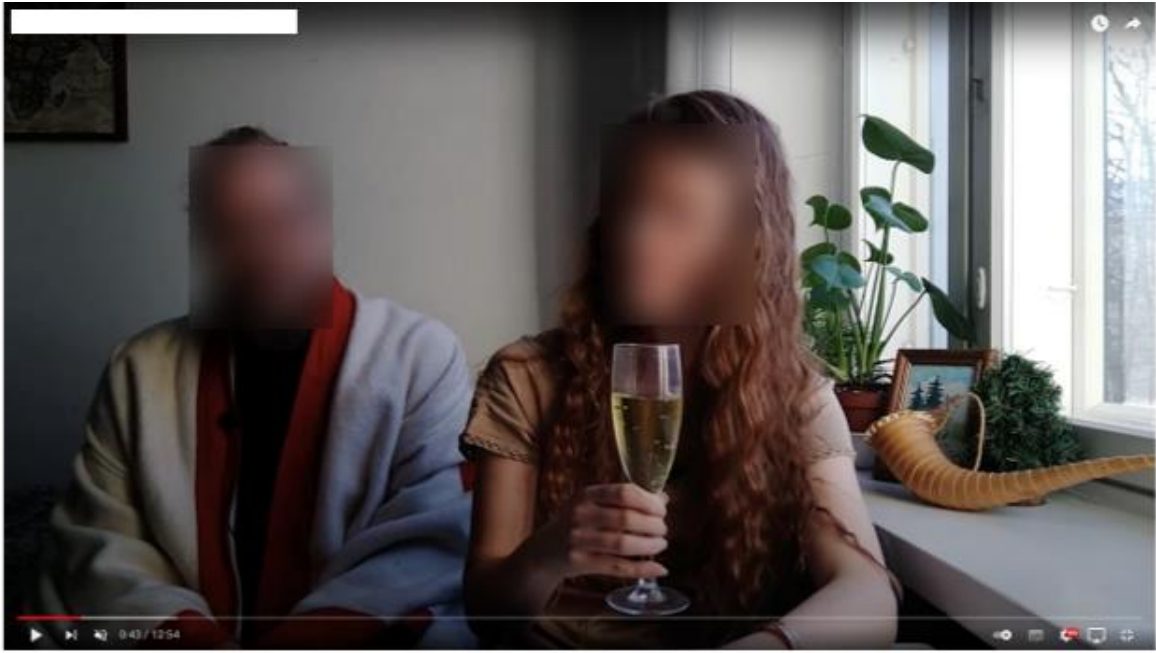


Figure 3 (pseudonymised).

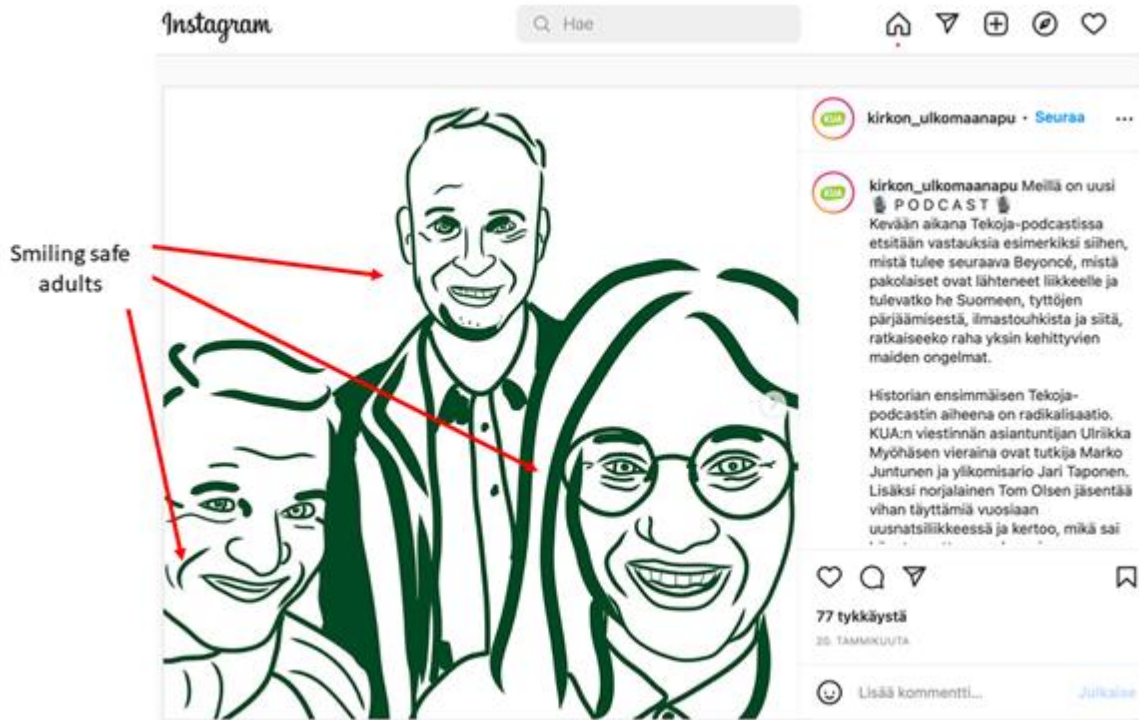


Figure 4, screenshot from March 2022 (Kirkon ulkomaanapu, 2022).

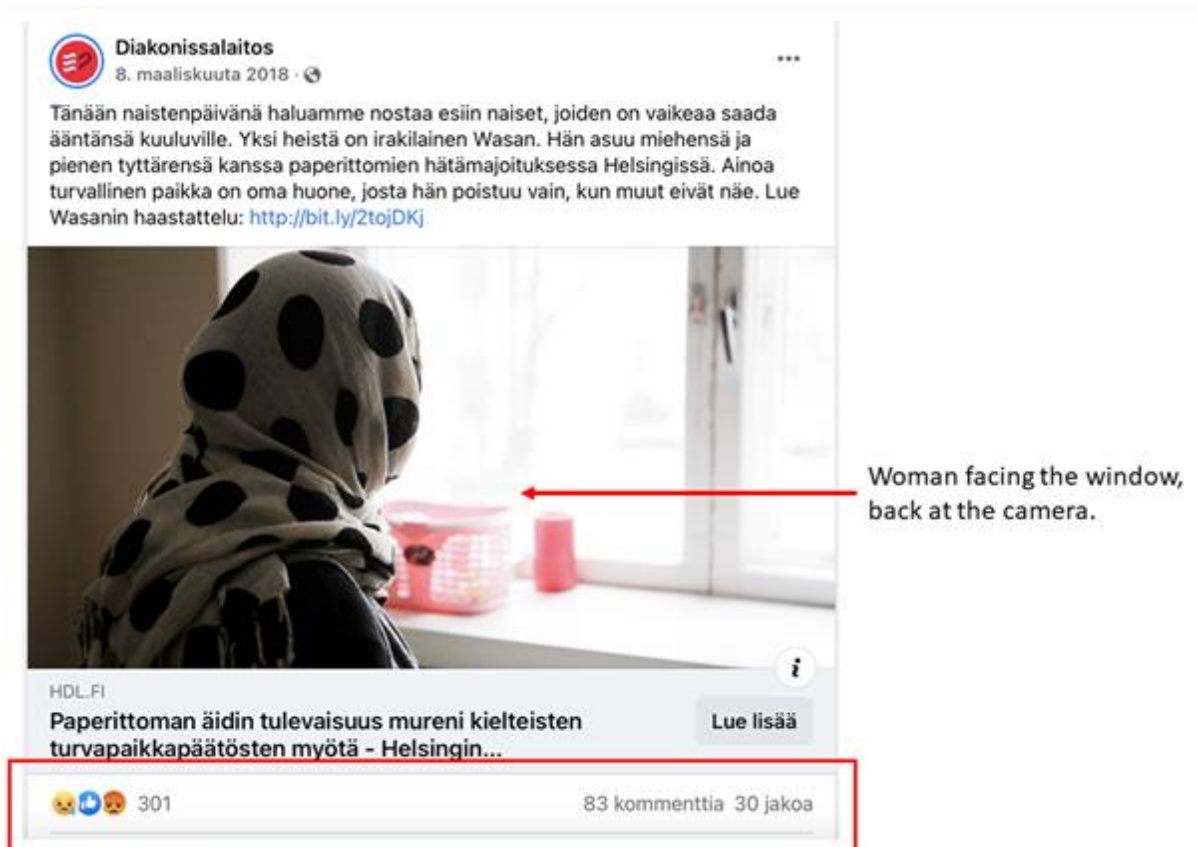


Figure 5 (Diakonissalaitos 2018).

**keskusrikopoliisi** Keskusrikopoliisi · 2020-11-12  
 Takaisinkelaus ei toimi oikeassa elämässä. Mieti, ennen kuin jaat. #krp  
 #poliisi  
 original sound - Keskusrikopoliisi

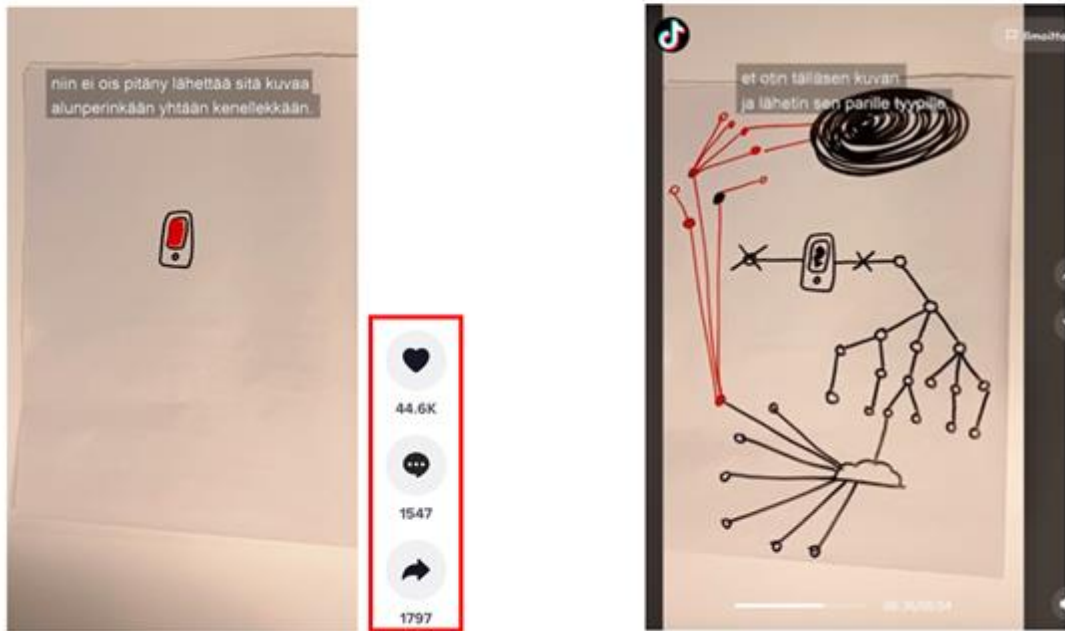


Figure 6, screenshot from March 2022 (Keskusrikopoliisi, 2020).

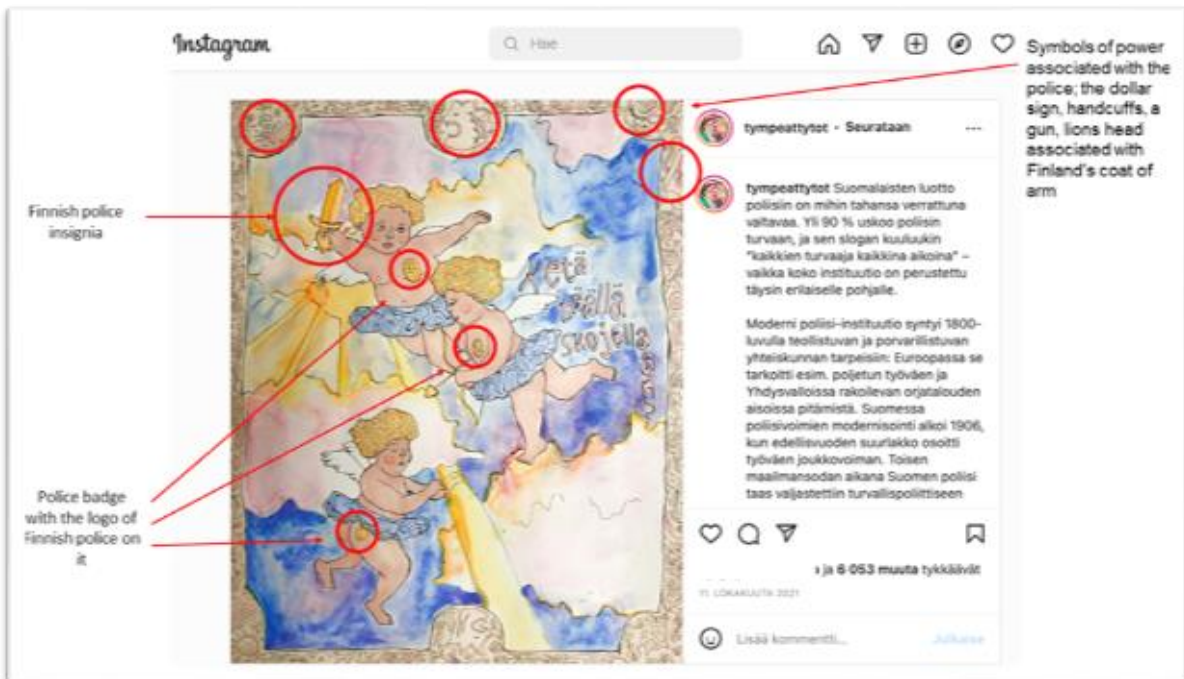


Figure 7, screenshot from March 2022 (Tympeät tytöt, 2021).

**JÄBÄT BE LIKE: MÄ EN  
KYLÄ NÄÄ FEMINISMISSÄ  
MITÄÄN LOGIikkaa TAI  
JÄRJEN HIVENTÄKÄÄN**

@PIKAKAHVIMEMEGIRL

**NO SHIT SHERLOCK KU SUN KÄSITYS  
FEMINISMISTÄ POHJAUTUU  
ANTIFEMINISTISEEN PROPAGANDAAN JA  
MISINFORMAATIOON :D**

**KUVITTELETKO SÄ ETTÄ JOTKU INCELIT  
PYRKIS SELITTÄMÄÄN NE ASIAT SULLE  
MAHDOLLISIMMAN HYVIN JA SELKEÄSTI ETTÄ  
VOIT SITTEN REILUSTI MUODOSTAA ASIOISTA  
SUN OMAN MIELIPITEEN ?? BITCH PLEASE NE  
MANIPULOI SUA**

Figure 8 (Pikakahvimegirl 2020).



Figure 9 (pseudonymised).

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