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Men's Rights, Gun Ownership, Racism, and the Assault on Women's Reproductive Health Rights: Hidden Connections

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Abstract

In this current era characterized by much fear of, and anxiety about, the political influence and actions of the U.S. alternative right (alt-right), only a small number of men's rights organizations receive attention from the media, the Democratic Party, or a large cadre of progressives. This article demonstrates that ignoring all-male anti-feminist organizations is a flawed strategy for challenging the recent rise of the alt-right because these misogynistic groups are heavily involved in the gun rights movement, major contributors to racist practices and discourses, and active participants in efforts to criminalize and curtail women's access to abortion. Another, but equally important, aim of this piece is to briefly suggest new means of creating effective movements aimed at achieving social justice, one that involves a coalition of broader constituencies that prioritize gender and sexuality as well as race/ethnicity and social class.

Keywords

United States, men's rights organizations, gun ownership movement, racism, women's reproductive health

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MEN'S RIGHTS, GUN OWNERSHIP, RACISM, AND THE ASSAULT ON WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS: HIDDEN CONNECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

In this current era characterized by much fear of, and anxiety about, the political influence and actions of the U.S. alternative right (alt-right), only a small number of men's rights organizations receive attention from the media, the Democratic Party, or a large cadre of progressives. This article demonstrates that ignoring all-male anti-feminist organizations is a flawed strategy for challenging the recent rise of the alt-right because these misogynistic groups are heavily involved in the gun rights movement, major contributors to racist practices and discourses, and active participants in efforts to criminalize and curtail women's access to abortion. Another, but equally important, aim of this piece is to briefly suggest new means of creating effective movements aimed at achieving social justice, one that involves a coalition of broader constituencies that prioritize gender and sexuality as well as race/ethnicity and social class.

KEYWORDS

United States, men's rights organizations, gun ownership movement, racism, women's reproductive health

*Never underestimate how much you are hated. I tell women this as a statement of fact. Women in the audience always understand the warning; they don't disagree—but has this visceral dislike and desire to punish us ever been so visible in North America as in the recent U.S. Supreme Court reversal of *Roe v. Wade*? (Mallick, 2022, p. 1).*

WHAT PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING JOURNALIST SUSAN FALUDI said in her 1991 book *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women* still rings true today: "The force and furor of the backlash churn beneath the surface, largely invisible to the public eye" (p. xxi). There are some exceptions, such as the U.S. Supreme court overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in late June 2022, which generated massive protests across the U.S. and other countries. Nonetheless, there is, as Bates (2020) puts it, an "extremism that nobody is talking about" and that is "men who hate women" (p. 2), especially those men

who belong to right-wing men's rights organizations. Although hardline resistance to feminism has a long history (Dragiewicz, 2018; Walby, 1993), these highly mobilized groups emerged in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom in the 1960s in response to divorce law reform and the rising feminist movement (Dragiewicz, 2011), and they have since then played one of the most important roles in "reasserting patriarchy" (Dragiewicz, 2008). Prime examples of doing so are helping their members drag out family court disputes as way of draining their female partners of funds, regain control of their partners, avoid paying child support, and negotiate unfair financial settlements with women who just want closure from their troubled relationships. Men's rights' coalitions also aggressively try to undermine both support services for woman abuse survivors and rigorous research documenting the extent, distribution, sources, and consequences of male-to-female violence in private places (DeKeseredy et al., 2017).

This is not to say that right-wing male collectives fly completely under the social justice radar. One highly influential nonprofit organization deeply concerned about them is the Southern Poverty Law Center, which monitors racist hate organizations and now features men's rights groups in its annual survey of hate (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d). Even so, very few other progressive groups examine and confront men's rights alliances' connections to other extreme right-wing social movements like those promoting unbridled gun ownership, racist discourses and practices, and policies and laws aimed at ending women's control over their reproductive health (Dragiewicz, 2018). Things have not changed much since Jennes (2004) made this declaration about what was then the state of social scientific and legal knowledge about hate crime:

[G]ender is best envisioned as a "second-class citizen" in social, political, and legal discourse in the United States that speaks directly to the larger problem of violence motivated by bigotry and manifest as discrimination (i.e., hate-motivated violence). (pp. 182-183)

This is tantamount to what critical criminologist Elliott Currie (1985) coins as "compartmentalizing social problems along bureaucratic lines" (p. 18).¹ He is specifically talking about governments' failure to curb crime because they believe that the criminal justice system should have the *sole* responsibility for dealing with this harm. Rarely, if ever, will a U.S. state agency (e.g., the Department of the Treasury) that manages economic problems contributing to criminal activity consider how its economic decisions affect crime rates. Nor will such an agency discuss economic issues, such as factory closures, with the U.S. Justice Department or police officers. Consequently, many government policies are developed without pondering the ultimate effect on crime (DeKeseredy, 2021). Thus, police, prison officials, and other criminal justice personnel are called in to "clean up the mess" made by the rest of society (Currie, 1985).

Real life does not play itself out along the above bureaucratic lines set up by government agencies. What you eat, for example, can affect how you behave, and the fact that the nutrition department is in a separate building from the criminal justice

¹ There is no widely accepted precise definition of critical criminology. However, it is defined here as a broad theoretical perspective that views the major sources of crime and social control as the unequal class, race/ethnic, and gender relations that control our society (DeKeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2018; Young, 1988).

department does not affect that truth. In real life, jobs, childcare, nutrition, welfare, and many other events impact your life (DeKeseredy, 2000; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1996). Similarly, it is wrong to believe that right-wing groups of different stripes function in totally separate silos, have no interactions with each other, and do not collectively work toward promoting a worldview and political system that oppress women and people at the margins like the LGBTQ community. Al Jazeera Staff (2017), among others (e.g., Bates, 2020; DeKeseredy & Currie, 2019), remind us that “the U.S. far right is a crowded political terrain” and is a “loosely knit coalition” of groups such as white supremacists, fathers’ rights groups, neo-Nazis, gun rights confederations, and other types far-right organizations” (p. 1).

Following the work of Carrington et al. (2014), this article briefly synthesizes diverse threads of critical, deconstructive, and progressive oppositional projects into a wider, more inclusive, expansive, and empowering intellectual endeavor. It is broadly intersectionalist in its approach and moves beyond disciplinary boundaries, as it sees men’s rights groups as overlapping with other far-right alliances committed to *institutional oppression of multiply marginalized groups* (Durfee, 2021, p. 651). Ignoring this reality is a flawed strategy for those looking to create a more just social order not just in the U.S., but also throughout the world. We cannot eliminate one form of inequality, like racism, by ignoring others. What is needed then, is the creation of “a big tent—and the audacity to build the kind of global collaborative movement that is our best hope for a livable, just, and secure planet” (Currie, 2019, p. 221). How do we achieve this goal? Supplying some short answers to this question is another, but equally important, aim of this piece.

As a prelude to the key arguments featured throughout this offering, I admit that my claims are resolutely sociological, and they must be to meet the goals of this article. In fact, the topics covered here can only be adequately explained by sociology. For instance, if society is regarded as a pie, then economists, political scientists, geographers study slices of it, psychologists and biologists study the individual molecules of which the pie is made of, and sociologists study the entire pie—that is, society as a whole (Alvi et al., 2000; DeKeseredy, 2020). Two of the most common questions that sociologists try to answer are those that heavily inform the intersectional analysis provided here: (1) How and why are societies differentiated by male and female gender roles? and (2) How is society stratified by gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity, and social class?

WHAT ARE MEN’S RIGHTS GROUPS?

Anti-feminist men’s rights groups have mushroomed since the late 1970s in an era when no-fault divorce became commonplace. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) began to encourage the arrest and prosecution of men who beat women, and the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement started to promote the collection of child support by garnishing wages, denying passports, withholding tax refunds, and mandating employers to register new hires with state child support collection agencies (Dragiewicz, 2008, 2011). Since the 1990s, men’s rights groups gained much more visibility when the U.S. federal government began to offer funding through the National Fatherhood Initiative to promote heterosexual marriage (Rosen et al., 2009).

These collectives consist mainly of white, college-educated professionals and their top priorities are eliminating legal sanctions against woman abuse and child support requirements. Their rage is expressed in many contexts, but the internet is their most common means of communication (Barker & Jurasz, 2019; DeKeseredy et al., 2015), with many members only interacting on the web (Kimmel, 2017).

Furthermore, though the precise magnitude of the movement is unclear, some observers contend that it continues to grow. That it now has its own government-funded website (fatherhood.gov) is seen by some observers as a key indicator of its increasing political strength (Spence, 2019).

In addition to using the tactics briefly described previously, men's rights groups' strategies include: campaigns to reverse the progressive changes produced by feminism; blaming feminism for social problems; claims that feminism has "gone too far;" and attacks on women's authority. They also appropriate and reverse the language and concepts of progressive social movements (Dragiewicz, 2018). For decades, too, these prominent themes are endemic to anti-feminist men's groups' complaints about feminism:

- Feminism is defamatory, oppressive, and obsolete.
- Feminism threatens the nation.
- Feminism is an affront to Christianity.
- Feminism strikes at fatherhood and the family.
- Feminism monopolizes the media and throttles free speech.
- Feminism subverts men's rights and unleashes judicial bias.
- Feminism endangers men's health and safety (Menzies, 2007, pp. 72-85).

Much more can be said about how men's rights groups operate, but it is beyond the scope of this article to repeat what has been stated so eloquently elsewhere (e.g., Bates, 2020; Dragiewicz, 2011). Of greater importance is documenting the connections between these alliances and other right-wing social movements. As of yet, social scientists have not done so.

THE HIDDEN CONNECTIONS: "OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES?"

It is true, as Dragiewicz (2018) observes, that:

The 2016 presidential campaign, culminating with the election of reality television personality Donald Trump over former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, pushed vitriolic forms of sexism, racism, and xenophobia back into the mainstream of American culture... Trump took power in the context of overtly sexist commentary and revelations of an alarming catalog of candidates' and appointees' personal histories of violence and abuse against women (p. 334).

Still, the trifecta of harms identified by Dragiewicz existed well before Trump became president and arguably were on an equal plane prior to his ascendancy. Anti-feminist men and their supporters have existed for centuries (DeKeseredy et al., 2015), which is not surprising because patriarchy is an "age-old structure" (Gilligan & Snider, 2018). In the words of Miller (2017), "Patriarchy... as embedded in the Old and New Testaments in the Bible and in Roman legal precepts, has been a powerful organizing concept with which social order has been understood, maintained, enforced, contested, adjudicated and dreamt about over two millennia in Western history" (p. 3).

Men's Rights Groups and Gun Ownership

Fast forwarding to more recent times, a still widely discussed connection between anti-feminist men and gun ownership/use is a mass murder that occurred in Montreal

on December 6, 1989. That day, blatantly misogynist Marc Lepine used a rifle to kill 14 women and wound several others in what is now referred to as the “Montreal Massacre.” He repeatedly declared that he hates women and feminists, a feeling shared by other prominent serial and mass killers who own and use guns (DeKeseredy et al., 2017), particularly those who feel entitled to sex and whose sexual advances are repeatedly rejected by women (e.g., Incels). One prime example is George Sodoni who went to a Pennsylvania gym in 2009 and killed three women, wounded nine others, and then killed himself. In a blog he wrote while preparing for this bloody event, he said, “I actually look good. I dress good, am clean-shaven, bathe, touch of cologne—yet 30 million women rejected me” (cited in Herbert, 2009, p. 1).

Sodoni’s actions are not merely isolated incidents but reflect an ongoing pattern of gun-related mass femicides that involve perpetrators with a history of non-lethal violence against women (Marganski, 2019). Another instance vividly remembered by numerous feminist scholars and activists is, on May 23, 2014, Elliot Rodger murdering six people and injuring 14 others before killing himself in Isla Vista, California. Prior to shooting four people outside a sorority house and killing two of whom were women, he uploaded a YouTube video titled “Elliott Rodger’s Retribution.” It includes a misogynistic diatribe revealing that he was still a virgin at age 22 and the “perfect gentleman,” and he announced his campaign to punish females for not having sex with him and men who are more sexually active than he is.

When one is talking about mass shootings and intimate femicide, one is often talking about the same events. In fact, the typical mass shooting does not take place in a shopping mall, but at home behind closed doors, with most victims being women and children. Such shootings often involve men killing their former wives or girlfriends and their families (DeKeseredy et al., 2017). For example, using 2014-2019 mass shooting data from the Gun Violence Archive, Geller et al. (2021) found that 59% of the mass shootings that occurred then were domestic violence related and in 68.2% of mass shootings, the perpetrator had killed at least one partner or family member or had a history of domestic violence.

A few years prior to Geller et al.’s study, the *Huffington Post* published an analysis of five years of mass shootings, defined as an event where at least four people were killed by a gun. Sixty-four percent of the mass shooting victims were women and children. This is alarming because women are typically only 15% of total gun violence homicide victims, and children only 7%. Of course, mass shootings only account for a small amount of gun deaths each year, “but it is clear who overwhelmingly pays the price: women and children” (Jeltsen, 2015, p. 1).

Granted, murder of any sort is a rare crime (Dobash & Dobash, 2020). Note that in Canada, only 0.2% of violent crimes were officially categorized as first-degree murder, second-degree murder, infanticide, or manslaughter (Armstrong & Jaffray, 2021). Yet, thousands of anti-feminist male members of gun rights groups engage in a myriad of non-lethal forms of violence against women, and major cases in point are misogynist rural men who belong to patriarchal hunting subcultures (DeKeseredy, 2021), as documented by Hall-Sanchez’s (2014) ethnographic work in rural southeast Ohio, which was completed two years prior to Trump becoming president.

She is not the first to make the connection between gun ownership, hunting, rurality, and violence against women. Nearly 20 years before her study, Websdale (1998) found that:

Rural culture, with its acceptance of firearms for hunting and self-protection, may include a code among certain men that accepts the casual use of firearms to intimidate wives and intimate partners. In urban areas it is more difficult for abusers to discharge their weapons and go undetected. People in the country are more familiar with the sound of gunshots and often attribute the sound to legitimate uses such as hunting (p. 10).

On top of being connected to the misogynist actions of anti-feminist men, gun ownership is strongly associated with racist organizations, discourses, and practices as documented by both historical and contemporary sociological research (e.g., Metzl, 2019). This is what sociologist Michael Kimmel (2013) saw in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania:

I had driven to Shippensburg to attend a gun show that was held, as many are these days, in the gymnasium of the local high school... At the entrance to the show, a long table was filled with literature—some advertising circulars for gun merchants and arm/navy supply stores, a couple of catalogs of survivalist gear, and some pamphlets from Patriot groups, some anti-immigrant organizations, and even a single photocopied informational sheet from David Duke and “today’s Ku Klux Klan” (KKK). “How the government is taking away your rights!” announces one pamphlet (pp. 1-2).

Angry White Men

More evidence of the interweaving of racism, gun ownership, and anti-feminism could easily be supplied here (see, for example, Blum & Jaworski, 2022). Again, though, keep in mind that these connections were firmly entrenched well before Trump became president. These, in the words of Hochschild (2016), “mainly white masculine pursuits” have a long history of being unregulated, while the opposite is true for women and black men (p. 68). Nonetheless, the “long-simmering and “widely-shared discontents” of angry white men “came to a boil” and the Trump administration served as their much desired “battering ram against many of the already shaky bulwarks of America’s rather halting steps towards equality, economic security, and social support” (Currie, 2019, pp. 212-213).

The 2016 election proved that angry white men are more dangerous than most progressives realize and some observers contend that their anti-feminist discourses and practices have multiplied and become more serious than ever before in the last 20 years (Donegan, 2022). Reflect on the overwhelming amount of misogynistic social media responses to actor Johnny Depp’s defamation trial against his ex-wife Amber Heard. There was a concerted anti-feminist effort to ferociously mobilize against Heard, and as Scott (2022) correctly points out, Depp’s legal victory is also that of angry white men. “The rage of men whose grievances are inchoate and exhaustible found expression in a 58-year-old movie star’s humiliation of his 36-year-old former wife” (p. 1).

The humiliation and degradation of Heard in social media and legal arenas is now common. Depp is but one of a growing number of high-profile men who have recently retaliated with lawsuits against women who have accused them of violence and journalists who investigated these women’s allegations. Two other men that immediately come to mind are musician Marilyn Manson and Barstool Sports executive Dave Portnoy (Donegan, 2022).

Men's Rights Groups and Women's Reproductive Rights

If women who speak out about male violence against them are now at high risk of experiencing the indignity and cruelty of patriarchal regulation, so do those seeking to maintain their constitutional right to an abortion and other reproductive rights, including affordable and easy access to birth control. Men's rights organizations are currently heavily involved in efforts to curtail and criminalize girls' and women's access to the complete range of reproductive rights (Kimmel, 2017; Rothe & Collins, 2020), but their involvement, too, is not new. Chesney-Lind (2019) is but one of many feminist scholars and activists who reminds us that "the social control over women's sexuality, sexual expression, and reproduction is arguably as old as human civilization, and it is a central feature of the patriarchal sex/gender system" (p. 135).

Evidence strongly supporting Chesney-Lind's statement is found in Trump quietly signing a bill to that gives states the right to withhold federal funds from agencies that provide abortion services, such as Planned Parenthood (Rothe & Collins, 2020). Note, too, Justice Samuel Alito's opinion for overturning *Roe v. Wade*. He approvingly cited the 17th-Century British jurist Matthew Hale who took part in a 1662 witch trial, was opposed to abortion, imposed strict restrictions on female rape survivors' testimonies in courts, and had sharp disdain for the legitimacy of women's speech. He also created *cautionary jury instructions* that were read to rape juries for centuries telling them not to believe rape survivors. These instructions were a required element of rape jury trials in the U.S. until 1976 (Alcoff, 2018; Donegan, 2022).

What do men's rights groups have to say about women's reproductive rights? One of their "top ten" issues is, in fact, reproductive rights, and they complain that men "have no right to choose," "there is no pill for men," and that "there are countless options for women" (Kimmel, 2017, p. 123). Lionel Tiger (1999), former professor of anthropology at Rutgers University, is one of the more vocal men's rights activists who opposes women's reproductive choice. He argues that women's control over birth control gives them "virtually all social power," which, in turn, has caused men and women in advanced industrial societies to "slowly but inexorably" move apart (p. 95).

A healthy part of men's rights groups opposed to medical abortions strongly supports *financial abortions*, which require a woman tell the man who inseminated her that she is pregnant. He would then be able to refuse financial or legal responsibility for the baby if he does not want to be a father (FindLaw, 2018). It should be noted in passing those men (many of whom are influenced by men's rights dogma) who batter women avoid paying child support and negotiate unfair financial settlements with women who just want closure (DeKeseredy et al., 2017).

The anti-feminist backlash against women's reproductive rights contributes to a *direct form of state-perpetrated violence*. Collins' (2016) historical research, for example, shows that "women's bodies and their lives are subject to different types of violence than that of men" and "the state has historically sanctioned violence against women in various forms. Despite 'progress' over the centuries, the institution of law has been instrumental in normalizing gender relations that award rights to men and simultaneously deny the same rights to women" (p. 23).

Some criminologists (e.g., DeKeseredy, 2019a) and human rights activists view abortion bans as forms of *state-perpetrated forced pregnancy*, is one or more assaults on a woman with the intent to impregnate her (Goldstein, 1993). The precise number of rape and incest survivors specifically assaulted by offenders for the purpose of forced pregnancy will never be known and the same can be said about the number of survivors forced by the state to give birth. What is known for sure, nevertheless, is

that survivors forced to be pregnant will be permanently reminded of having been sexually violated and faced with the task of looking after the children of the men who raped them (Collins, 2016; DeKeseredy, 2019a).

What men's rights groups opposed to abortion conveniently forget that is that forced pregnancy is seen as a war crime punishable by the International Criminal Court (Collins, 2016). While the U.S. is technically not at war, some people claim that, with the assistance of men's rights groups and other right-wing organizations, the Supreme Court has essentially helped angry white men and other types of anti-feminist collectives declare a war on women (Crain, 2019). Moreover, in addition to defining total abortion bans as forced pregnancy, some radical feminists, such as Wright (2019) and MacKinnon (2006), deem them as torture and so does the United Nations (DeKeseredy, 2019a).

During his first presidential campaign, Trump suggested that women who seek abortions should be subject to "some form of punishment" (White, 2016). They always were, but the situation is more dire than it was six years ago. Some states now have extreme laws that criminalize women for their own abortions as well as those who provide abortion care. Texas is a recent case in point. Performing an abortion there today is a felony punishable by up to life in prison (Klibanoff, 2022). To make matters worse, not only are misogynist male celebrities like Depp using the law to silence abused women, but some state legislatures are pressured by anti-choice organizations to ban speech about abortion. The reality today is that a woman who challenges sexist actions, laws, and speech will be silenced and face massive legal problems (Donagan, 2022). This is a central strategy that men's rights groups use to seek "equality with a vengeance" (Dragiewicz, 2011, p. 1).

THE WAY FORWARD

Returning to Dragiewicz (2011), over a decade ago, she said:

Anti-feminist attacks not only attempt to undermine the changes that have already been made; they also provide teachable moments by revealing hegemonic social norms and values that are so taken for granted as to be invisible. Ironically, the insistence that feminism is wrongheaded or unnecessary underscores the lingering opposition to women's equality. Attacks against the services and policies that assist abused women indicate that we need to pay more attention to the interrelationship between woman abuse and patriarchy (p. 123).

As we move toward the November 2022 U.S. mid-term elections and soon after another presidential election, it seems that the teachable moments identified by Dragiewicz were, at best, fleeting ones. Progressives were not adequately prepared for the onslaught of Trump and his angry white male followers, and they refused to accept the fact that he stood a very good chance of being elected (DeKeseredy, 2019b). This surprised me and Elliott Currie, which is the key reason why we published our 2019 anthology *Progressive Justice in an Age of Repression: Strategies for Challenging the Rise of the Right*. In the epilogue, Currie (2019) reveals that:

Both of us, in fact, were surprised that so many other people on the left were as surprised as they were. We both felt, too, that the widespread surprise among progressives reflected a troubling obliviousness to the reality that the Democratic mainstream in the United States was remarkably out of touch with the feelings of large parts of the American population and with the social

and economic conditions that gave rise to those feelings: and that those feelings were not confined to a relatively small and marginal group of what Hillary Clinton had with epic insensitivity described as “deplorables” (p. 213).

Most progressives failed to recognize this reality uncovered by Hochschild's five-year (2016) ethnographic study of community life around Lake Charles, Louisiana, which is arch conservative, a “Tea Party stronghold,” and which has much politically, socially, and economically in common with other “hot spots” of conservative white working-class places throughout the U.S.:

Implicitly Trump promised to make men “great again” too, both fist-pounding, gun-toting guy-guys and high-flying entrepreneurs. To White, native-born, heterosexual men, he offered a solution to the dilemma they had long faced as the “left-behinds” of the 1960s and 1970s celebration of other identities. Trump was the identity politics candidate for white men (pp. 229-230).

What Hochschild and some other sociologists (e.g., DeKeseredy & Currie, 2019) uncovered is not restricted to the U.S. right-wing populism promoted by angry white men and embraced by political leaders for hegemonic purposes has risen significantly across the Western hemisphere. In many countries of the advanced industrial world, powerful social movements dominated by men seek to reassert patriarchy, enforce heteronormativity, and “take back their manhood” through other means, such as joining white supremacist groups (DeKeseredy, 2022; Kimmel, 2018; Reid & Valasik, 2020). As Pease (2019) reminds us, it should also be stated that, “in the context of a backlash against feminism, liberal feminist ideas have gained dominance,” and given that such ways of knowing “deradicalize feminism” and “gender analyses” (p. 5), we should not expect liberal feminists to be allies in the progressive struggle called for here.

As we rapidly approach the aforementioned two major U.S. elections, progressives should heed these words of Karl Marx (1977) as a bellwether: “Hegel remarks somewhere [that] all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice” (p. 13). He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. Marx means that the historical tendency is the reincarnation of ideological categories that act as filters through which reality is perceived and understood (DeKeseredy & MacLean, 1993). The tragedies spawned by the election of Donald Trump in 2016 could easily occur again as farce if progressives go down the well-worn path of disbelieving that another regime either led by Trump or Trump-like will be elected.

Trump's 2016 election and the recent polls showing the likelihood of major Republican mid-term electoral victories in November 2022 should be a wake-up call and drive home the urgency of the concerns raised in this article (Currie, 2019). What is to be done? It is beyond the scope this piece to provide a detailed blueprint for challenging the rise of the right. Yet, what is emphasized is the need to develop a coalition of broader progressive constituencies that prioritize gender and sexuality as well as race/ethnicity and social class. In concert with Dragiewicz (2018), a central argument of this piece is that making process on reducing gun use and ownership, mass shootings, participation in racist and anti-immigration activities, and threats to women's access to the complete range of reproductive rights means engaging in resistance strategies that connect the men's rights anti-feminist work to other forms of right-wing extremism. This requires a multi-pronged approach, one that must involve a heartfelt endeavor to craft “a new politics of sameness,” a type of politics that recognizes that a diverse range of people, regardless of their gender, sexual identity, or

race/ethnicity, are subordinated to the capitalist, patriarchal, and racist motives of neo-liberalism (Winlow et al., 2019, p. 43).

The above coalition has “a lot of work to do” (Jensen, 2007, p. 184), some of which is described in detail elsewhere for readers to mull over (see DeKeseredy, 2019a, 2021; DeKeseredy & Currie, 2019). Yet, the new solidarity movement envisioned here cannot afford to sideline initiatives aimed at curbing violence against women. It deserves more than simply a special month of recognition and is, in fact, the key to understanding a broader array of major social problems like those addressed in this article (DePrince, 2022a). For instance, firearm ownership, obviously, is connected to mass shooting and, in addition to the empirical work cited previously, there is research showing that nearly one in three mass shooters in the U.S. were known or suspected of committing domestic violence prior to their shootings (Zeoli & Paruk, 2019). As well, an increase in gun deaths leads to a disproportionate number of female victims (DePrince, 2022a; Goldstick et al., 2019).

What is more, some of the consequences of overturning *Roe v. Wade*, too, are deadly and frequently involve the use of firearms against thousands of women with unwanted pregnancies. These women are two to four time more likely to experience male physical violence than those with planned pregnancies, and homicide is the leading cause of death among pregnant women in the U.S. (Durfee, 2018; Wallace et al., 2021). Equally important is the fact that there is a small but growing social scientific literature on the strong connection between men’s membership in religious and racial supremacist groups that seek to reassert male supremacy and violence against women and girls (see, for example, Belew & Gutierrez, 2021; Dhaliwal & Kelly, 2020; DeKeseredy & Rennison, 2019; Dragiewicz, 2018).

There are many different possible means of solving the problems associated with the hidden connections identified in this article, but efforts to reduce violence against women, for the above and other reasons (see DePrince, 2022a), are among the most important means of achieving this goal. Undoubtedly, as demonstrated by a wealth of interdisciplinary research done over the past 50 years, violence against women is the background context for the other harms examined in this article. It is also a social issue that helps to energize institutional change and helps break down boundaries across organizations, government agencies, and social sectors. Violence against women as a social issue is a catalyst for discovering new ways of working together and helping one another, that encourages people to see how we are all affected by it and how we directly or indirectly contribute to its perpetration through our values, attitudes, and behaviors (DeKeseredy & MacLeod, 1997).

CONCLUSIONS

Maybe the risk of Donald Trump or someone with a similar agenda like Florida Governor Ron DeSantis being elected the next president of the U.S. will influence more progressives to recognize the importance of men’s rights organizations and the anti-feminist backlash in understanding the guns rights movement, the rise of alt-right racist groups, assaults on women’s reproductive rights, and harms we are experiencing in an age of right-wing populist repression. In the words of Dragiewicz (2018), the anti-feminist backlash is “evoked by an experiential threat to privileged status linked to multiple, specific social identities” (p. 342).

This is not to say, however, that the far-right groups examined in this article are always aligned or that members of one coalition are necessarily with the others. Even so, it is always necessary to heed Bates’ (2020) warning:

But failing to recognize the complex connections between them, or overlooking the racism inherent in the manosphere and the misogyny embedded in the alt-right, will only tell half the story” (p. 24).

While new innovative means of challenging right-wing extremist groups will always be warmly welcomed, progressive scholars and activists from all walks of life need to come to the point in their understanding of the rise of the right where they can now see these connections and develop resistance strategies accordingly. As well, all progressives seeking a big tent that houses a truly effective collaborative movement need to recognize that one of their most important common causes is violence against women (DePrince, 2022b).

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