

THE MANOSPHERE IN ARABIC

Mapping Subcultures, Narratives,
and Impacts across Arabic-Speaking
Online Spaces

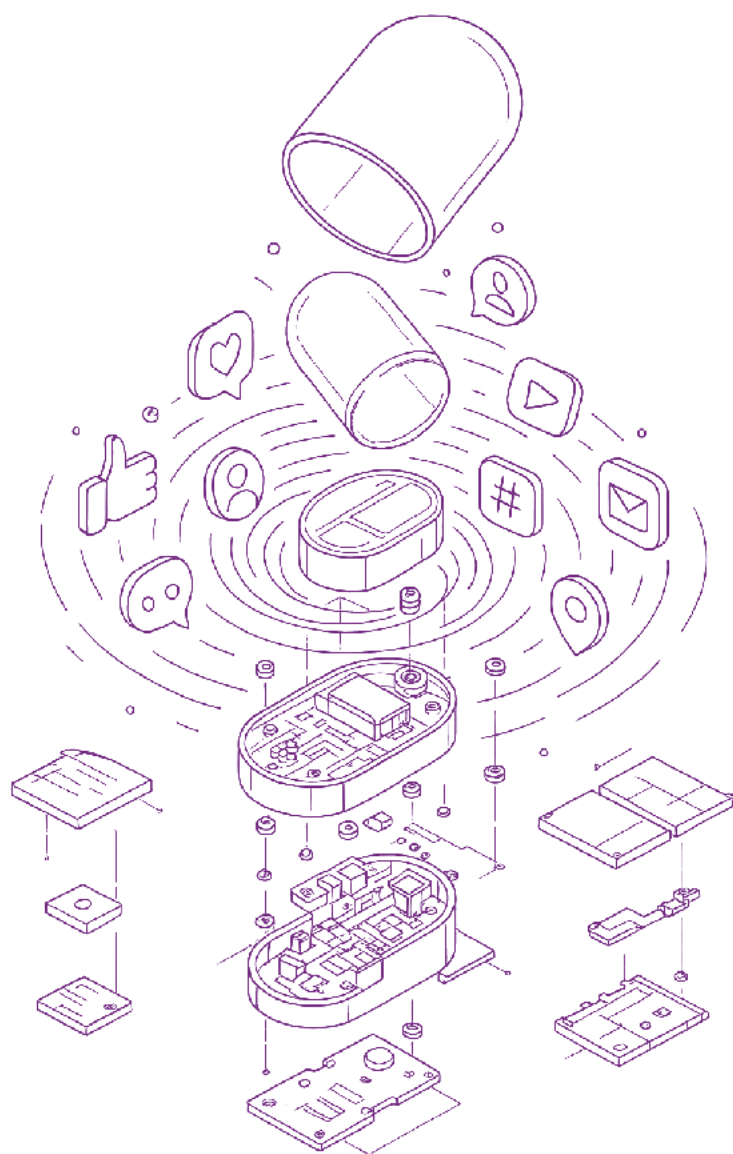
About the author

Sarah Kaddoura is a Palestinian feminist researcher, activist, writer, and content creator living between Madrid and Beirut. Trained as a social worker, she holds a Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies from the Lebanese American University. She currently manages the Political Education Program at South Feminist Futures and is pursuing doctoral research at the Complutense University of Madrid, where she studies the rise of the Arabic-speaking manosphere. Since 2020, Sarah has been producing Arabic-language videos on feminist history, theory, and critical debates through her Youtube channel, "Haki Nasawi" (Feminist Talk). Her research interests span feminist political economy, cyber-feminism and masculine cybercultures, and reproductive justice.

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By Sarah Kaddoura
September 2025



Foreword

Over the past two decades, the structures of social communication and public discourse have undergone profound transformations. The digital sphere has become a contested arena and a central space where identities are produced and symbolic and social meanings are shaped. It has also become a place where new subcultures emerge and existing hierarchies are often reinforced. Within this landscape, feminist and political movements have created counter-public spheres that enabled women and marginalized groups to break the monopoly of power over meaning, expose patriarchal violence, and build transnational networks of solidarity. Such networks helped dismantle the ideological structures that sustained violence and victim-blaming for decades. The broader shifts in societal values unfolded alongside a surge of revolutionary consciousness across the Global South, which exposed the colonial and capitalist structures underpinning political and social life. This awakening was met, however, with intensified surveillance, repression, and the mobilization of power to resist change.

Digital surveillance cannot be understood simply as the use of technology by those in power. It reflects the transformation of the digital sphere itself into a disciplinary apparatus that reproduces colonial and neo-fascist modes of control. Once absorbed into a capitalist ownership structure monopolized by transnational corporations, the internet ceased to be a neutral space for knowledge or communication. It became an infrastructure of domination, where data and algorithms are deployed to sort, control, and exclude.

Algorithmic architectures reinforce hierarchies of language, gender, race, and class. Through mechanisms of digital moderation that reflect the logic of white, masculine, and capitalist privilege, feminist and anti-authoritarian content is systematically excluded. In this way, algorithms have become ideological tools that silence and erase voices deviating from the dominant norms enforced by structures of power.

Such digital censorship is especially alarming as it converges with escalating patriarchal attacks on feminist movements. These attacks intensified after feminist movements succeeded in building transnational networks led by women and historically marginalized groups, including migrants, workers, queer people, and refugees. By breaking the barrier of silencing, these net-

works brought everyday life experiences into the realm of public discourse and, in doing so, challenged masculine privileges built on exclusion and denial. The backlash has taken both digital and physical forms, from defamation and blackmail to harassment, threats, and murder. This convergence reveals the deep entanglement of digital surveillance and political patriarchy, showing how digital tools of repression have become an extension of historical forms of control over bodies and knowledge.

It is within this context that Sarah Kaddoura undertakes the study to deconstruct what is known as the “Manosphere”. The term refers to a loose network of forums, websites, blogs, and online channels that host a wide range of discourses on the social construction of “manhood”, from narratives of men’s rights to movements promoting separation from women or blaming them for personal misfortunes. Such spaces have evolved from isolated groups of discontented individuals into subcultural ideological frameworks with their own language, concepts, myths, and symbols. They have become continuous sites of production for worldviews on self, society, relationships, and sexuality. Those worldviews are built around a binary of “victim” and “perpetrator” that frames men as victims of a feminist conspiracy and women as sources of danger and betrayal.

Studying the manosphere in the Arab context carries particular dimensions shaped by intertwined historical, cultural, and religious legacies. It draws on deeply rooted patriarchal narratives embedded in family and religious structures while simultaneously adopting imported ideas from Western versions, especially biological determinism and theories of male supremacy. This has produced a hybrid discourse that invokes religious texts to justify gender hierarchies while borrowing neoliberal analytic tools based on individualism and competition. It claims to defend Arab and Islamic identity even as it reproduces Western anti-feminist rhetoric. The discourse rearranges the world in a way that detaches victims from their structural contexts. It forges what can be called an economy of male victimhood, which justifies patriarchal, colonial, and class privileges while concealing the real power relations that shape the lives of all social groups.

The study approaches the Arab manosphere not merely as a digital space but as an ideological structure with social and political reach. It seeks to build critical knowledge capable of deconstructing the forms of domination that continue to reproduce themselves even within the most modern spaces. It also contributes to closing the knowledge gap in Arabic on the phenomenon and to developing a critical feminist discourse able to interrogate the economic and political contexts that render manosphere narratives appealing and effective in reproducing patriarchal power.

Souad Asouilem
September, 2025

Souad Asouilem is a Pan-African feminist and social scientist from Western Sahara. Her work examines how political organizing and education can contribute to the dismantling of colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist systems and building revolutionary alliances capable of linking these struggles.



Contents

- Introduction 8
- 1. Objectives and Scope 11
- 2. Influences of the Global Manosphere 12
- 3. Subcultures of the Manosphere 15
- 4. Architecture of the Arab Manosphere 17
- 5. Is It a Movement? 21
- 6. Beliefs and Contradictions within the Arab Manosphere 24
 - Arab Feminism and the Changing Status of the Arab Man 25
 - Marriage and Divorce 25
 - Employment 27
 - Anti-feminist Backlash and Moral Panic 27
 - Masculinity in Crisis? 30
 - The ‘Scientific’ Ideas within the Arab Manosphere 30
 - Biologically Determined Gender Dynamics31
 - Hypergamy 33
 - The Place of Islam in the Arab Manosphere 34
 - Testosterone 36
 - Neoliberal Ideas of Self-Improvement and Success 37
- Conclusion 40
- Bibliography 41

Introduction

Within the first few weeks of its release, the British show “Adolescence” swept the scene worldwide, quickly becoming Netflix’s third most-watched production (Duggins, 2025) and amassing 66 million views in just 10 days (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, 2025). In the Middle East, the TV drama sparked conversations and articles on the radicalizing impact of misogynist cybercultures on young boys (Arabic CNN, 2025).

Spoiler alert: the following passage includes key plot details from *Adolescence*. Jamie, the main character of the series, is a 13-year-old boy who murders Katie, his fellow schoolmate. The show takes place after the murder, covering the course of arrest, investigation, and psychiatric assessment of the accused. Throughout this course, viewers learn that Jamie was influenced by INCEL (Involuntary Celibates) content online, and that he was bullied by his classmates, including Katie. We follow both the investigator and the psychologist as they investigate the crime with the limited tools they have, struggling to comprehend a toxic digital world that their professions have yet to fully grasp (Alaaddin, 2025).

The term INCEL refers to a subculture that belongs to a wider digital sphere built and inhabited by men, for men, called the Manosphere. This Manosphere can be defined as the vast, non-uniform collection of channels, blogs, websites, forums, groups, and other formats of expression, content creation and communication centered around masculinity. A plethora of subcultures co-exist within it, covering a wide range of issues concerning “men’s rights”, interests, stories and lifestyles (Bujalka et al, 2022). Boys and men use these spaces to vent, share stories, give advice, and relate to one another’s struggles with manhood and masculinity (Garcia Mingo & Díaz Fernández, 2023). These spaces often give rise to a sense of community, but they also provoke bullying, self-pity, trolling, doxxing, inciting violence, misogyny and so much more (Bujalka et al, 2022), earning the *Manosphere* its notoriety.

It is not a coincidence that the Manosphere is taking the center stage of many mainstream conversations, to the extent that a TV drama that gives modest

insight into this world gains this much traction. According to the show's creators, the story was inspired by multiple real-life knife crimes committed by young boys in the UK (Bond, 2025). Such stabbings are just one form of misogynistic crime made possible by a so-called "loneliness epidemic" and directly influenced by the Manosphere discourse. While these incidents in particular are committed by young boys, they can also occur later in life through violent crimes committed by young men influenced by the Manosphere. This is the case with the deadly attack carried out by 22-year-old Elliot Rodger, who took the lives of 6 people and injured another 14 on May 23rd, 2014. Prior to committing the killing spree - which ended with suicide - Rodger had posted a YouTube video and an autobiographical manifesto hinting at his motives (BBC, 2018). He was a self-described INCEL engaged in a "war against cruel injustice". He blamed his suffering on "females of the human species" who were "incapable of seeing the value" in him (Rodger, 2014). Rodger's attack inspired many after, and he was hailed as a hero within the Manosphere.

This space has also fostered and facilitated the rise of collective bullying and other technologically-mediated forms of violence towards women. In 2013, a transnational campaign of collective cyberbullying was unleashed against independent game designer Zoe Quinn after her latest release (Dewey, 2014). Her work was praised by reviewers, but Quinn's ex-boyfriend went on the internet to claim that she "sleeps her way" into good game reviews. This prompted a "band of angry, anonymous gamers" to come together to bully, dox, and harass Quinn. This campaign - which came to be known as "GamerGate" - created what some called a culture war, in which gamers extended their hate and harassment to include many other female gamers, game developers and designers, and anyone who supported Quinn, and branded them as intruders who were invading their "masculine" online spaces. GamerGate normalized the act of ganging up on women online, violating their privacy, throwing accusations at them without responsibility, and doxxing them. An entire generation of men acquired a feeling of entitlement to "protect" online spaces that they perceived to be theirs.



Illustration by Marah Al Houjairy

Both of the above cases have also challenged the idea that online violence is less extreme or “real”. In a digital world that is left unchecked and without protective regulations for women and gendered and racialized minorities (Cuklanz, 2022), online violence can spill into the physical world, as seen in the case of Rodger and others. And as the Manosphere has evolved, it has become a potent source of such violence. Its forms have also shifted over time, with the emergence of various subcultures – such as the INCELS, the Red Pillers, and the Black Pillers, all of which are described in detail below. These subcultures share many of the same concepts and symbols and propagate similar (and often Western) ideas (Farah, 2023), but they vary in their responses and the ways that they influence women’s lives.

Objectives and Scope

As the Manosphere has expanded into a global phenomenon, it has put down roots in the Arabic-speaking corners of the internet. What has grown from this is an Arab Manosphere, which has taken its own form under the influence of traditional cultural ideas about gender norms, with an especially prominent influence from Islam (Mustafa & Abed, 2024).

While the research on the Manosphere in other contexts is growing, it is still scarce in the Arabic speaking region. More journalists are engaging with it, notably following the popularity of the show “Adolescence”. Some feminist groups and human rights organizations that are currently tracking, writing about, and resisting the global anti-feminist backlash are also attending to its digital manifestations through the Manosphere. Scholarly work is still catching up, however, and that is perhaps due to the fact that the Arab Manosphere has gone unnoticed for a while. Some articles have recently covered the topic, alongside a few Arab talk shows that platformed Red Pill and Manosphere influencers or ideas. This work is an attempt to provide a glimpse into this Arab Manosphere, and contribute to a body of scholarship that is becoming increasingly relevant as we see more and more of the Manosphere’s influence on young men in the region.

The essay deals with a series of questions surrounding the Arab Manosphere:

- What does it look like?
- What are the main subcultures and communities within it, and how active are they?
- Who are the influencers and leaders reeling young men in?
- What are the theoretical and ideological influences of the Arab Manosphere?
- What concerns are brought up, and what regimens and solutions are provided?

Situating the Manosphere within the backdrop of the global anti-gender and anti-feminist backlash, as well as a rising moral panic surrounding sexuality, I trace the development of its conceptions of women, relationships, manhood and masculinity, and success. To do this, I apply thematic analysis to a range of content including posts, images, memes, videos, reels and messages from Manosphere spaces. Additionally, I explore some of the tensions and contradictions between the White/Western and Arab/Muslim Manospheres. These discourses are largely limited to men who enjoy certain privileges that give them the time, space, and mental energy to engage in Manosphere discourse. They are not so easily applied, for example, to men living in exile or affected by war, for whom questions of masculinity and reproduction are more acutely related to survival and more overtly subjected to subjugation. The Arab Manosphere has little interest in issues faced by men who are displaced, dispossessed, or subjected to oppression by states.

I hope the essay offers some critical insight into a world that is actively harboring and nurturing violent ideas against women, and that is not taken as seriously due to its digital nature.

Influences of the Global Manosphere

Before being named, the Manosphere, as a space in which men blog, write, create content, game and discuss their issues and concerns, has existed ever since the rise of accessibility to the internet and the presence of chat groups (Sugiura, 2021). However, what we refer to today is the more notorious version of this Manosphere, which revolves around sexist anti-feminist and anti-women (and therefore, homophobic and transphobic) ideas and harbors space for more extremist subcultures that engage in digital and physical violence against women (ibid). Studies on the Manosphere in English are plenty (Bujalka et al, 2022; Edstrom et al, 2024; Garcia Mingo & Díaz Fernández, 2022; Sugiura, 2021; van Valkenburgh, 2018, 2019), but the same cannot be said about the Arab Manosphere, or the Manosphere of Arabic speakers. Apart from few articles and papers on the subject, the Arab Manosphere has been largely ignored and treated as an undifferentiated domain of everyday misogyny, despite its changing form and unique effects.

Ideas within the Manosphere can be traced to Men's Liberation Movements from the 1970s and 1980s (Bujalka et al, 2022). In its early days, it paralleled the feminist movement by interrogating gender roles and critiquing gendered axioms for their complicity in men's dissatisfaction and anxieties. The "Godfather" of the Manosphere Warren Farrell worked to raise men's consciousness by facilitating men's support groups and publishing several books, including his 1974 tome *The Liberated Man* (Sugiura, 2021). His books described how men were trapped in the role of the provider, taught that their feelings don't count, and treated as disposable. However, what Farrell and the movement failed to capture was the vital role of capitalist relations in men's alienation. He wrote that men are destined to "a life of earning, competing, and emotional repression", a role that he described as a trap in the same vein as the oppressive roles ascribed to women (Farrell, 1974). Rather than critiquing the larger political economy that imposes these expectations, however, the Men's Liberation Movement turned its ire on the feminist movement, accusing women of neglecting men's shackled position as breadwinners and protectors (Van Valkenburgh, 2019).

The 1980s witnessed a rise in conservative values that threatened to undo the progress of the previous decades – including the liberation of women's sexuality, the challenging of normative constraints on gender, and recognition of the right to welfare and safety nets - with a recipe that converges "neoliberal and neoconservative commitments to 'traditional' family values" (Edstrom et al, 2023). Despite some key advancements in women's human rights on the global scene, this backlash proceeded into the 1990s (Faludi, 1991). As a reactionary opposition to feminist gains, it sought to "restore a patriarchal status quo in the face of progressive social change" (Khan et al, 2023). This term, "Gender Backlash", continues to be utilized up to this day to analyze, describe, and explain the alternation between socially liberal gains and conservative reactions, which often happen in parallel to changes in the economic order.

Moving forward to the digital age of the 2000s, the anonymity of online forums and chat rooms made cyber spaces popular among the socially and politically marginalized, notably queer people and women who found safety in connecting and organizing online (Mouwad & Qiblawi, 2013) (Tazi & Oumlil, 2020). Cyber-feminism swept the entire world, holding on to the potential provided by online spaces that had not yet been harnessed by private capital for the purposes of profit and surveillance. Feminists in countries that limited their access to the public sphere and politics made urgent use of the internet, organizing campaigns, trending hashtags, and exposing stories about systemic oppression while

keeping themselves safe behind pseudonyms and avatars, most notably in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Kuwait, among others (Chaudhry, 2014) (Mustafa, 2024) (Tazi & Oumlil, 2020). However, the increase in state surveillance through digital technologies and the acquisition of online spaces by Silicon Valley companies changed the game.

However, the rise of contemporary communication platforms has significantly fueled an anti-feminist backlash, providing it with a digital infrastructure (traits including anti-anonymity, profit-driven and monetized, amplification of rage-bait and hate content) that entrenches anti-feminist and anti-gender ideas among various generations of users (Wijesiriwardena, 2024).

The backlash has manifested significantly in national and global politics. Whether it's a rollback on the constitutional protection to abortion in the US, or the rise of key right-wing and authoritarian figures such as Donald Trump, Narendra Modi, Javier Milei, Jair Bolsonaro, or Elon Musk, the backlash mobilizes the "men's rights" movement to make political gains that translate into legal restrictions on women's freedoms (Sardá-Chandiramani & Bonilla, 2024). Trump's first and second electoral wins were supported heavily by men in the Manosphere, who saw in him an unabashed opposition to "wokeness" and feminism (Jones, 2020). While the backlash is not in any way limited to the bounds of the Manosphere, it has been significantly accelerated by it.

In addition to early men's rights leaders and politicians, the Manosphere finds influence in the ideas of philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche, whose ideas on power are appropriated to justify hierarchy, as well as Arthur Schopenhauer, whose misogyny and cynicism are heavily quoted (Slim, 2025). Additionally, ancient Greek and Roman ideas on the intellectual subordination of women are referenced (Farah, 2023). A widely held belief is that contemporary society, especially in urban settings, has been decadent and detrimental to men and their traditional role in the family and nation. Here, a very commonly shared quote from the postapocalyptic novel "Those Who Remain" (Hopf, 2016), wrongly attributed by online Arab Manosphere users to Ibn Khaldun due to its reflection of his cyclical theory of civilization, says: "Hard times create strong men. Strong men create good times. Good times create weak men. And weak men create hard times."

Manosphere influencers and users also rely heavily on misinterpreted theories of evolutionary psychology and social Darwinism, instrumentalizing biological

essentialism to draw conclusions and justify social hierarchy and oppression (Farah, 2023). More recent inspirations and influencers include *The Rational Male* author Rollo Tomasi, *The Game* author Neil Strauss, psychologist and author Jordan Peterson, life Coach and YouTuber Richard Cooper, social media personality Andrew Tate, among others (Slim, 2025; Farah, 2023). Their ideas - diverse in many ways, yet convergent in their gendering of emotion, rationality, power, and authority - shape some of the most important and commonly held beliefs within different Manosphere subcultures.

Subcultures of the Manosphere

Despite this convergence of ideas in the Manosphere, there are distinct qualities within its various subcultures. These subcultures are not homogenous, even if they are united in their anti-feminist and misogynistic sentiments. They differ in their diagnosis of the “problem”, their understanding of patriarchy, and their prescriptions for fulfilling manhood. And although they may agree that relationships should be understood within a sexual market of desirability-based valuation and competition, they vary in their perspectives about what constitutes value within this market and how much agency we have as individuals to improve our value.

The most prominent subculture within the Manosphere is that of the Red Pillers. Their name is borrowed from the 1999 film *The Matrix*, in which the protagonist Neo must choose between taking the red pill and awakening to the truth, or the blue pill and living a deluded life in a cognitive prison. The ‘truth’, according to the Red Pillers, is that we live in a society that favors women and “relegates men to a position of subordination and socio-economic submission” (Garcia Mingo & Díaz Fernández, 2023). This is also what Tomassi calls a Gynocentric system (2023). This movement envisions a metaphorical “red pill” as an antidote to men’s subordination and ‘slavery’. It promises to alleviate them from the status of “Betas” (losers, secondary characters, followers) who are culturally subordinated, to “Alphas” (winners, main characters, leaders) by unlocking their muted manhood (Bujalka et al, 2022).

In addition to Red Pillers, there are Pickup Artists, who view women merely as sexual objects to be “picked up” and discarded when needed. They also use terms like “Alpha” and “Beta” to teach techniques for men to attract, seduce and

manipulate women, in order to cheat the shackles of their looks and status (Sugiura, 2021). Pick Up Artists prescribe a very careful guide of interactions that can entrap women who would otherwise not give them attention, and in this way, they unlock the interactions needed to win the game (ibid).

Not everyone in the Manosphere takes the Red Pill or believes that they can follow a prescription to success to cheat their way out of the limitations imposed on them by genetics and the supposedly gynocentric rules of the sexual marketplace. Other corners of the Manosphere are inhabited by men who might take differently colored pills: The Black Pill, for example, conveys a lack of belief in their ability to change the cards dealt to them in life no matter what they do (Sugiura, 2021). Embedded in nihilism, despair, and a lack of confidence in their potential to change, Black Pillers might take one of two main paths. They might choose to be men who “go their own way” (called MGTOW for short), taking a separatist path and refusing to engage in relationships with women, whom they view only as distractions or recipes for further loss and failure (ibid). Alternatively, they might just associate themselves with the more notorious and darker subculture of INCELS.

It can be argued that INCELS hold the lowest status and the most pessimistic worldview within the Manosphere. Unlike Red Pillers who believe that a man's position within the sexual market can be changed if they work on improving their finances and physical attributes, or MGTOWs who don't see women as worthy of the change but might do it for themselves, INCELS believe they are doomed. They ‘accept’ their perceived low position in the hierarchy of men in this market and see their chances at competing for women as predetermined by their genetic, racial, or other intrinsic features. Love and sex are deemed both obsolete and futile (Bujalka et al, 2022). Tensions and bullying exist between these different subcultures, but it seems that no one can be more cruel to an INCEL than another INCEL (ibid).

Within those different subcultures, the most unifying concerns are gender roles, relationships and personal success. They all manifest within the Arab Manosphere, with slightly different distribution of popularity and some Arabized changes in terminology.

Architecture of the Arab Manosphere

It is difficult to trace the beginnings of the Arab Manosphere, or to develop a timeline for when its subcultures started taking root in the region. The internet has always been a space for Arab men to express sexist ideas. There is nothing foreign about anti-feminist fear-mongering in the Arab World (SMEX, 2025). Charting the rise of the Arab Manosphere therefore relies on identifying changes in the lexicon of this anti-feminist discourse, especially the uptake of the specific terminology of the Manosphere.

In an essay on the Iraqi Manosphere, Mustafa and Abed (2024) document the emergence of first-wave Manosphere discourses in atheist and non-religious Facebook groups that identified themselves as the “Iraqi Right” in 2013 and 2014. They argue that many of these groups included men who were able to shed their tribal and traditional beliefs about religion, but not about women. A second wave, the writers explain, was born in 2019 with the creation of multiple private and public accounts that adopted usernames and titles such as ‘red pill’, ‘blue pill’, and/or ‘black pill’, but which incorporated Islamist and nationalist tones. Their focus at that time was on fighting the “feminist agenda” (Mustafa & Abed, 2024). In this context, the Iraqi Manosphere manifests as a backlash to the mainstreaming and popularization of feminist movements and ideas in Iraq, even when there are no notable changes in the law, media or society for the betterment of the conditions of Iraqi women.

In a sociological study of the Manosphere movement, Farah (2022) pinpoints the rise in Red Pill content in Morocco to recent campaigns that opposed women’s participation in the labor market and discouraged men from marrying working women (Farah, 2022). A *Noor Network* report on fascist and fundamentalist narratives and actors in South-West Asia and North Africa (SWANA) Region sheds light on a 2022 campaign launched by Moroccan former rapper Lakhriissi Elias, which promoted hashtags like #Dont_marry_a_working_woman across social media platforms (Wahba, 2024). Alongside working women, such campaigns target divorced women, widowed women, and women with any sexual or romantic past, deeming them less valuable in the sexual market to men of “high value”. Although such campaigns don’t necessarily represent new sentiments towards women with sexual history, they do use a more neo-liberal language that speaks on the “value” of a person, be it man or woman, in an economic way, which will be expanded on in later sections.

One of the more famous Arab Manosphere influencers is a Jordanian content creator known as Coach Kareem, the owner of the YouTube channel “Red Pill Arabic”. In one of his YouTube [streams](#), he claims to have had multiple Facebook pages for Red Pill content back in 2018 and 2019. Despite having up to 100 thousand followers, his former account was regularly deleted by the platform. In the same video, he responds to the claim that Andrew Tate and similar personalities inspired and birthed other Red Pill creators by reiterating that he, alongside a few other Arab Red Pillers, were there first (Red Pill Arabic, 2025).

Red Pill content has been on a steady rise in the Arab world and worldwide in the last few years. If we look at the search volume of the expression “Red Pill” on Google from 2004 to 2025, we see two peaks in 2016 (Google Trends), the year of Trump’s election and the release of the documentary “Red Pill”; and 2020, the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Elon Musk’s [call](#) “to take the red pill 🌹”. Among Arabic-speaking countries, Morocco has had by far the largest search volume, ranking 12th worldwide, followed distantly by the UAE and Saudi Arabia. We get a more in-depth look into the Arab world’s interest in Red Pill by looking at the searches of the Arabic transliteration of the term ريد بيل keeping in mind the possibility of a variety of transliterations and translations (رد بل، حبة، حمراء). Here we find that searches peaked after 2022, with Morocco being the source of most searches, followed by Libya, Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan.

Arab Red Pill creators have enjoyed rapid audience growth during this period, at least based on available data – which might sometimes include artificially boosted follower counts. Between June 2022 and June 2025, the follower count of the “Red Pill Arabic” YouTube channel went from 2,060 to 108,000, among which dozens are paying subscribers (Social Blade). The same channel’s telegram sister channel had 10,880 subscribers during the time of writing in June 2025. When one joins this channel, a number of other similar channels are recommended, all focused on sexist, anti-feminist and anti-women content. Amongst them are channels named Ghabaa’ Al-Harem غباء الحريم (Women’s stupidity), Al-Nasawiya Bela Qenaa’ النسوية بلا قناع (Feminism unmasked), The Masculinity, Nosadeq Al-Najiyat نصدق الناجيات (We believe survivors), and Abu Al-Moheib’s أبو المهيّب channel. Another YouTube channel with considerable following is “[Reda Pill](#)”, with 127K subscribers and more than 600 videos, whose Moroccan creator offers self-help to Arab men and “reveals” all the ways women trick men and manipulate them.

Searching for the words ‘red pill’ in Arabic on Facebook yields results from groups that have tens of thousands of members and followers from across the SWANA region who share memes, translated content and rage bait on a daily basis. On X, formerly known as Twitter, multiple accounts publish Red Pill content in Arabic to tens of thousands of followers. To illustrate the figures, table 1 lists some of the famous accounts that come up in the search engine results on X. The first is a Red Pill **community** that appears to be listed within the “Science” category and states in its rules that women are prohibited from joining. Its admin, Mohammad Al-Rifai, also posts from his personal account, and his pinned tweet is a thread on various Red Pill terms and concepts. He hosts regular X spaces for Red Pill discussions, and also posts through a third account, called **rational_pill**, on which he posts translated videos by Red Pill influencers and coaches. Other prominent and active accounts on X are listed in the table, some of which have AI generated images for profile photos, often depicting an Arab man holding the red pill, as “evident” in the use of the khaleeji hatta head-cover (figure 1). With these numbers, Red Pill content seems to be the most popular among the subcultures of the Arab Manosphere.

Profile name	Username/link	Followers/members
الحبة الحمراء The Red Pill	https://x.com/i/communities/1889343157151617219	5 K
Mohammed Al-Rifai	@mohammed_pill	42.5 K
عقلاني Rational	@rational_pill	15.3 K
ذكوري حتى النخاع Misogynist to the Bone	@redpillisfuture	28.3 K
جاکال Rd	@ham12rd	14.4 K
عدي/واقعي Oday/Realist	@odai_sh77	10.9 K
Khaled	@khaled_pill	16.8 K
الرجل The Man	@goldenmen	24 K

Table 1: Active Red Pill accounts on X, data taken on September 1st, 2025



Figure 1: Profile photos retrieved from @odai_sh77 and @g0lden_men respectively on September 1st, 2025

In addition to Red Pill content, some other subcultures have also emerged but to a lesser extent. For example, Men Go Their Own Way (MGTOW) is a community associated with Black Pillers that advocates men's total separation and abstinence from relationships, marriage and dealing with women in general. But this group has found little support in the Arab Manosphere. Facebook shows one result of a [Moroccan MGTOW](#) page that has been inactive since 2021. The Facebook search engine shows MGTOW cross-posting on Red Pill groups and pages, indicating an overlap of content and members. On YouTube, a channel named [MGTOW Arabic](#) has only 29 subscribers and has been inactive for more than a year, with a few videos explaining what MGTOW ideology is. While there are not many visible or popular MGTOW groups, searching for the Arabic transliteration of the word, ميغتو, on X, reveals dozens of tweets of individuals who identify with their philosophy and encourage men to take the black pill, that is, to stop succumbing to societal pressure to marry or be romantically involved with women. On Google, the term MGTOW was most frequently searched in North America and Oceania, with Morocco topping Arab Countries, followed by the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt (Google Trends). However, the Arabic transliteration has not been searched enough to qualify for trend statistics.

INCELS, on the other hand, have an even more scattered presence. In Google searches, the word INCEL is again most prominent in North America, Oceania

and Scandinavian Europe, without much intensity in Arabic-speaking countries except for the United Arab Emirates and, to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. In order to find posts and pages related to INCELS in Arabic, one has to search the particular keywords developed by the community, including the Arabic transliterations of terms like ‘simp’, ‘alpha’, and ‘beta’. They also adopt other more localized and contextualized terms, gathered concisely by Egyptian feminist artist Dina (@artopathic) in a [tweet](#), and these include: Dayouth ديوث (cuck), Nashez ناشز (disobedient feminine), Fitrah فطرة (instinct), Mutabareja متبرجة (woman with makeup on), Fasawiya فسوية (a play on the word “feminist”, meaning fart), Safera سافرة (uncovered woman), and continuously using Ontha أنثى (female) instead of Amr’a امرأة (woman). Searching for these keywords reveals the popularity of many of the ideas promoted by INCELS, which blame women for their unchosen virginity and communicate an entitlement to sex from the women they deem unreachable.

Self-described narcissism educator, author and YouTuber Sahar El-Nadi published a [video](#) in 2022 on INCELS, narcissism, and the phenomenon of refusal revenge, relating some of the crimes taking place in the Arab world – most notably the 2022 murder of Naira Ashraf – to ideas of INCELDom. Naira’s murder by a colleague took place in front of the gate of her university, after she refused his romantic advances. El-Nadi (2022) argues in the video that INCEL ideas of entitlement to women’s bodies underlies the tendency to justify sexual violence and blame the victim for the actions of the perpetrators. In the case mentioned above, many feminist and human right activists had to write petitions due to the wide belief that Ashraf’s murder was justified (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, 2022).

Is It a Movement?

With the decentralized spread of these communities and the loosely connected ideas across the Manosphere, one is prompted to ask whether this qualifies as a social and political movement. But looking at the timeline of the events, from early philosophical influences and Men’s Rights movements to the viral popularity of Manosphere content online, the impact seems too great to be ignored or written off as a loose network of actors.

There are various definitions of social movements. Researchers like Charles Tilly (2020) relate social movements to contentious politics and their interaction with

the state. Theorists like Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani (2020) define movements as social networks with shared beliefs, resources and political opportunities. Other more digitally-focused researchers like Mendelsohn, Vijan, Card and Budak (2024) argue that movements construct diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames to “build collective identity via social media”. These definitions provide a basis for the claim that the Manosphere is a movement, insofar as it constitutes a space across which certain identities - such as oppressor and oppressed, Alpha and Beta, and man and woman - are produced. The common regimens, advice and tools by which men in these spaces describe their challenges, particularly with women, constitute a shared problem frame. Additionally, the use of shared hashtags, coordinated campaigns, and discussion forums can be understood as collective action.

If we look at feminist groups studying backlash in recent years, their analysis of the Manosphere recognizes it as an undeniable factor of anti-feminist backlash as well as a mirror of it (Wahba, 2024). They view it, therefore, as part of the global movement that, despite not being fully orchestrated behind closed doors like a conspiracy, is still funded, moved and amplified by conservative money moving across borders (Sardá-Chandiramani & Bonilla, 2024). The alliance between fascist and right-wing political forces with tech billionaires and Silicon Valley CEOs is at the heart of this funded movement building (ibid). On one hand, the loosening of internet regulations under the guise of ‘free speech’ has allowed online anti-feminist ecosystems to thrive with an overwhelming number of users, tweets, blogs, and media content that is bound to appear on your timeline at some point, whether you like it or not, making influencers like Andrew Tate a household name (Khan et al, 2023). Social media platforms have been reclaimed by the Manosphere from “social justice warriors”, the most notable example being Elon Musk’s purchase of Twitter, after which he rebranded it as X and immediately took action to restore Donald Trump’s profile (Mac & Browning, 2022). The Manosphere was itself an important contributor to Trump’s success during his first electoral race, as the rude anti-woke media personality resonated with the angry masculine pessimism that prevails in these online spaces (Jones, 2020).

The assessment above does not take into consideration how users of the Manosphere identify their community, or whether they see themselves as part of a movement or not, as that might vary. On his [website](#), Coach Kareem defines Red Pill as a philosophy that “studies the dimensions of human behavior and is concerned with analyzing concepts and logical applications of preferences in choic-

es for men and women” (Red Pill Arabic, n.d.). He also intentionally refuses to call it a movement in a [TV program](#) on the topic, instead, resorting to calling it a “praxeology”, arguing that it is closer to a branch of science, like geology, rather than a movement, like feminism, because “we [the Manosphere] don’t have NGOs and funding and organizations” (Red Pill Arabic, 2025). This insistence about the “scientific” qualities of the Manosphere reflects the patriarchal notion that men are the rational sex, a premise that is often invoked in the sexist dismissal of feminism (P. Van Valkenburgh, 2018). The Manosphere is strategically distinguished from feminist movements in an attempt to obscure the financial and material infrastructure that underlies the viral spread of Manosphere content. Several studies have shown that anti-gender movements receive triple the funding of feminist movements (Baek et al, 2024). Literature on the topic will often refer to the Manosphere directly or indirectly as a movement, but this remains limited within users and influencers of the Manosphere themselves.

Beliefs and Contradictions within the Arab Manosphere

This section explores some of the main beliefs propagated within the Arab Manosphere, similar to and inspired by the global Manosphere, and in some of the cases, contextualized or localized to appeal to Arab men’s concerns and beliefs. This section is based on reading and processing written text and video media material from the following resources:

Platform	Source Name	Type	Size/Reach
Telegram	Red Pill Arabic	Channel	10,961 subscribers
	Ghabaa’ Al Harem <i>Women’s stupidity</i>	Channel	1,074 subscribers
	Abu Al-Moheib	Channel	2,023 subscribers
	Al-Nasawiya Bela Qenaa’ <i>Feminism unmasked</i>	Channel	2,270 subscribers
	The Masculinity	Channel	4,917 subscribers
	Nosadeq Al Najiyat <i>We believe survivors</i>	Channel	3,379 subscribers
X (Twitter)	Al Habba Al Hamraa <i>The Red Pill</i>	Community	5 K members
YouTube	Jalal Abuimweis	Channel	586 K subscribers
	Red Pill Arabic	Channel	109 K subscribers
Website	redpillarabic.com	Website	NA

Table 2: Sources mapped for Arabic Manosphere thematic analysis, data taken on September 1st, 2025

The first section below discusses the rationale by which men in the Manosphere claim that the current world we live in is oppressive to men. The second section describes the ideological beliefs about human nature and gender that underlie the sexist theories and beliefs promoted within the Manosphere about relation-

ships, gender roles, and the sexual market. The third and final section focuses on the neoliberal framework through which ideas of success and recipes for self-improvement operate within the Manosphere, which often instrumentalize social and economic issues - like loneliness and financial insecurity - and individualize men's responses.

The ideas narrated in this section are based on beliefs circulating within the Manosphere based on content analysis, and do not represent the beliefs of the author, even if they read as "objective truths".

Arab Feminism and the Changing Status of the Arab Man

One of the main concerns of men across the Manosphere is the changing position of men in society, a development that they claim favors women. This view is captured by Tomassi's concept of "Gynocentrism" as an emerging world order, where a man who shows "anything less than a complete submission to women" is perceived as a misogynist and oppressor (2023). Feminist agendas are blamed for this transformation because they challenge the patriarchy, promote financial independence for women, and hold men accountable for toxicity. The notion of "toxic masculinity" is strongly denounced, and its use in discourse is perceived as an attack on manhood that problematizes and stigmatizes masculine traits that should be appreciated.

In "Crisis in Masculinity", David Morgan (2006) argues that the notion of masculinity-in-crisis comes from "changes in the family and in patterns of intimate life" that manifest in higher divorce and male suicide rates, alleged declining heterosexuality, and the rise of single-parent (usually mother-led) households. This is facilitated with the introduction of more women into the labor market, education, politics and other spheres that allow women more independence and less reliance on men - rendering the latter expendable. This same rhetoric about a crisis in masculinity, facilitated by an increase in women's rights, is promoted within the Arab Manosphere.

Marriage and Divorce

In the Manosphere, marriage is viewed as a transactional contract through which husbands access sex, parenthood, and care - and their wives receive protection and status (a belief that has historical and material roots that will be

elaborated on later). However, modern marriage, according to the Manosphere, is more beneficial for women, especially with the introduction of more egalitarian laws in divorce, child support, custody, monogamy, among others. The less sole authority husbands have in their marriage, the weaker their position is, and the more skeptical they are towards the institution of marriage. Men of the Arab Manosphere look at the few and slow changes in some marriage laws across North Africa and South West Asia and fear a change in their position. For example, a survey in Jordan showed that 78% of men disagree with the statement that “there should be a law that allows women to stipulate in their (Muslim) marriage contract that their husband is not allowed to have additional wives” (IMAGES Jordan, 2022), indicating the normalized belief that women should have limited say in the marriages they enter. In fact, over one third of the respondents to this survey equated giving more rights to women, in marriage and across different spheres of life, means that men are losing out more (ibid).

In a similar vein, divorce is seen as an indication of the turn into a Gynocentric world, in which neither laws nor shame is strong enough to keep women in marriages. The rise in divorce rates across different Arab countries is used to indicate a shift of power from men to women. For instance, a message circulated across several Arab Manosphere Telegram channels features a video of a lawyer discussing her client - a second wife - who was attempting to file a lawsuit for Nafaqa (financial support stipulated by Islam) after being abandoned by her husband. In the process, she discovered that their marriage was never officially registered in the state despite being officiated with a Sheikh. The caption shared with the video praises the way this husband has cheated his wife and the laws (which they claim are unfair to men) and evaded paying anything to the now ex-wife. The message proceeds to encourage men to find ways to circumvent these anti-men family laws by: marrying without legal papers, removing requirements for divorce payments at the time of marriage, or secretly arranging with someone to pose as a family court representative in order to fake a legal marriage. This message does not necessarily contradict religious beliefs, as the post emphasizes that couples should be married based on Islamic rules – what they evade is the state that they accuse of chipping away at men’s finances and undermining their rights. In contrast to this claim, family and marriage laws across the Arab world still give impunity and privileges to husbands who can divorce easily, and who do not have to pay unless they themselves initiate the process (El Alami & Hinchcliffe, 2023).

Employment

Women in the labor market are heavily attacked within Arab Manosphere spaces, and they are often painted as cheaters, bad wives, neglectful mothers, and seekers of male validation from outside the house (i.e. not their husbands'). Employed women are a frequent focus in YouTube videos, Instagram reels, Telegram channels, and Twitter posts. Influencers of the Manosphere often share anecdotes or articles on women cheating with their co-workers or bosses, or simply ignoring their "wifely duties" and house chores due to fatigue from their jobs. They insist that working women are "not wife material" and should be avoided by any man seeking marriage. Men are told that they should not allow the women of their families to become slaves to men outside the house, and that feminists refuse to slave for their husbands because they would rather slave for a stranger (their employer in this case). This is obviously not a new sentiment, and it is reminiscent of one of the most popular Lebanese pop songs of the 2000s, which claimed that we [Arabs] don't have women who put their diplomas to use. Instead, our women stay at home and avoid all the possible scenarios of being exploited or flirted with by their bosses (Al-Quds Al-Araby, 2010). These are sentiments and arguments that often swing back and forth between two contradictory claims: (1) women should be protected from the evils of other men, and (2) women are essentially manipulative and will always be looking for a more successful partner.

It is worth noting that across the Arab world, women's employment rates remain marginal in comparison to men, and they are often concentrated in feminized roles (Bouri, 2023). It is also worth noting that many of these sentiments found popularity online within Manosphere users from the Gulf region, who object to their governments' attempts to increase women's employment rates as part of workforce nationalization policies (Arab Center Washington DC, 2020).

Anti-feminist Backlash and Moral Panic

Overall, the material conditions of women in the Arab world have not significantly improved, despite the little wins here and there, and they are in fact deteriorating in the context of Global anti-feminist backlash. While feminists may seem louder than before, especially with the popularity of feminist lingo in mainstream culture, women in this region are still faced with major social, political, economic and legal disadvantages (World Economic Forum, 2025). This reality stands in stark contradiction to the narratives that circulate in the Mano-

sphere. The recent Global Gag Rule and defunding of hundreds of feminist and women's rights organizations has hindered access to vital sexual and reproductive health services in the region, while also limiting employment opportunities within feminist and international NGOs that were more accommodating work spaces for women and minorities (Fos Feminista, 2025). The massive arrest campaigns of human rights defenders by Saudi authorities have left dozens of women and human rights defenders behind bars or barred from traveling, despite the Kingdom's claim that it has entered a new era of women's empowerment (ALQST for Human Rights, n.d.). Many regressive laws have been drafted, proposed and approved in the region in the last few years, including laws to criminalize transness and queerness, dancing on social media, and freedom of speech online (Wahba, 2024). In terms of the political participation of women, the Arab region still ranks among the lowest in the world, with Arab women making up only 17.7 percent of Members of Parliament in national governments (ESCWA, 2025).

Despite all these indicators of the disadvantages faced by women in Arab societies, and the lack of legal protections, the Arab Manosphere claims that the Arab man is the one who has been oppressed. These men argue that he needs to address this problem by reclaiming his Arab masculinity. For these users and influencers, anecdotal incidents and stories are enough to prove their case, while out-of-context statistics and viral dis/misinformation are sufficient to obscure the structural inequalities and systemic patriarchy that feminism has laid bare. In a paper called "Wounded men of feminism: exploring regimes of male victimhood in the Spanish manosphere", sociologists Garcia Mingo and Díaz Fernández (2022) show how the Manosphere claims to achieve "the separation of victimhood from structural reality, the severing of victimhood from its context, and the inverting of the roles of victim and perpetrator". It doesn't matter if patriarchy is objectively embedded in the law, the media, and revealed through statistical measures of gender inequality; as long as you can amplify outlier stories, you can convince men that their privileges or their so-called "natural status" are being lost to feminism.

Many of the stories used to support the idea that men are victims come from Western contexts. Rage bait videos from gyms, classrooms, and public spaces in Europe or the U.S. are widely circulated in the Arab Manosphere to signal societal "degeneracy" and construct the claim that men are subjugated to a world that favors women. Such videos include footage of a physical fight between a man and a woman, in which the man is battered. There are also videos of wom-

en filming themselves exercising at the gym, which claims to demonstrate that women only care about being seductive and seen. The content being shared and discussed as evidence of the loss of status of Arab men are often scattered snippets shared without context and are actually from other geographical regions.

Moreover, the Manosphere utilizes moral panic as a tactic to claim that men, and patriarchal society as a whole, are facing an existential threat (Wahba, 2024) (Sardá-Chandiramani & Bonilla, 2024). Coined by Stanley Cohen, a “moral panic” is a collective response to an inflated or exaggerated - and sometimes altogether fabricated - threat, usually attributed to certain social groups who are believed to be endangering the moral fabric of society (2011). In the case of the Manosphere, clips and stories about gender, gender transition, extramarital sex, and other controversial topics are used to dramatize social change and convince the viewers that the world around them is changing into something new, dangerous and frightening. One example from the Arab region is the online smearing of TikTok dancer girls in Egypt, who are described as deviant sex traffickers working against the morals of the Egyptian family (Wahba, 2024).

In Lebanon, Christian fundamentalist men’s group named “*Junoud al-Rab*” (Soldiers of the Lord) has emerged in the last half decade, brought together by security contracts with a banking sector worried about depositors arming themselves to demand the return of their illegally withheld deposits. The group has defined itself ideologically in alignment with traditional family values and proud homophobic narratives (Megaphone, 2023). They first earned notoriety when they destroyed a billboard containing the rainbow flag colors, the footage of which went viral mostly in ridicule (Al-Modon, 2022). However, it did not take long for things to get more serious, when the group attacked drag performances and terrorized gay and trans individuals on the streets of Beirut (Wahba, 2024). They also have a digital presence, in which they spread anti-LGBT content and advocate for the “restoration” of a nationalist heteronormative Christian masculinity. In doing so, they have created a moral panic about the presence and activities of queer people in Lebanon (ibid).

Another example from the region is *the Fitrah* (instinct) campaign launched on Facebook and popularized in 2022 (Al Jazeera Mubasher, 2022). This campaign called for the restoring of our natural heterosexual instinct against “homosexuality promotion campaigns” across social media as well as in Disney and Netflix productions (ibid). The campaign is most notably known for its usage of the col-

ors pink and blue to signify the binary of the female and male sex respectively. This queerphobic backlash has manifested across the Arab Manosphere in a moral panic that targets educational, marketing or manufacturing products that feature the rainbow flag, especially children's toys (Lakhal, 2025). In the Manosphere, the Arabic word for colors “*Alwan*” (ألوان) is used as a euphemism for queer people. The anti-gender backlash was also perfectly exemplified in the panic around the Lebanese Ministry of Education's student survey questionnaire, which allowed children not to disclose their gender by choosing “prefer not to answer” as an option. Social media panickers condemned giving children a choice, interpreting it as a conspiracy to normalize a ‘third gender’ and encourage gender transition (Chahine, 2025). The anti-LGBT backlash is married to the masculinity-in-crisis narrative, as both are fundamentally about protecting traditional gender roles and opposing the normalization of respect for LGBTQ+ identities.

Masculinity in Crisis?

Even though the masculinity-in-crisis discourse is common across the Manosphere, it is not viewed or perceived in a homogenous way. Content across the Manosphere alludes to the different ways feminist agendas, conspiracies, legal changes, or cultural shifts give preference to women and allow them to manipulate men. It argues that it has become impossible for men to fulfill the roles set for them. However, another contradictory discourse co-exists with it, which still believes a form of patriarchy exists and should be protected and preserved. This ‘realist’ current within the manosphere is more forthcoming about the concerns of men in the Manosphere: it is not so much that masculinity is in “crisis”, as that any change to the status of man in the household and society is intolerable and must be confronted. Perhaps it's more accurate to say that a certain way of living and being is under scrutiny, and to preserve it, the men of the Manosphere need to follow certain regimens of masculinity and manhood.

The ‘Scientific’ Ideas within the Arab Manosphere

One salient feature of both the global and the Arab Manosphere is the appeal to a rationality that – so the Manosphere contends – is essentially male. This reflects the much longer-standing patriarchal precept that male equals rationality and reason, and female equals everything at the opposite end of that, particularly emotionality (Lloyd, 1984). Although this idea is rooted in centuries' old patriarchal beliefs, many Manosphere users reference Rollo Tomassi's heavily-quoted book, *The Rational Male*, to promote the association of maleness with

rationality and femaleness with emotionality. Arab Manosphere accounts and channels across X, Facebook, and Telegram often post translated sections from his book that speak about marriage, gender roles, sexual desire, and other essentializing ideas on men and women. According to the book's website, its synopsis describes it as a "rational and pragmatic approach to intergender dynamics and the social and psychological underpinnings of gender relations" (2013). Here, Red Pill ideas in particular are repackaged and promoted in therapy-speak, as a field that can be studied, taught and applied in counseling. We can see this through Coach Kareem's YouTube channel and website, where he promotes his paid counseling and coaching services to men to guide them into understanding "intersexual dynamics", women's traits, and masculinity, all framed within a legitimate and credible field of science. It's worth noting that Tomassi does not have a scientific or professional background in the topic. Still, he is perceived as a credible source on "intergender dynamics" and credited for "hypergamy" (Bujalka et al, 2022), upon which we elaborate later.

Biologically Determined Gender Dynamics

Manosphere narratives depict a worldview in which gynocentrism defines modern day gender relations and serves as a root of men's subjugation. Gynocentrism, according to Tomassi (2023), is a social order that prioritizes women's perspectives as the only legitimate interpretation of the world. Within Manosphere discourse, this social order is seen as anti-rational and anti-natural, in contrast to the supposedly logical and biologically rooted hierarchy and gender roles of patriarchy.

From this essentialist perspective, men are viewed as natural born leaders, rational, strong and protective humans, while women are emotional, manipulative, sensitive and inherently weak. This weakness is linked not only to emotional instability, but also to women's reproductive role - getting pregnant, giving birth, and taking care of entirely dependent vulnerable human children renders women vulnerable and dependent too. The need for care and security during pregnancy and child-rearing is presented, therefore, as the reason women are always looking to land a strong man with material resources and financial capabilities. This is how women ensure their and their offspring's survival. These narratives spin a biologically and socially determined justification for traditional gender roles.

These narratives also relate to the “sexual marketplace” that is so often described in the Manosphere, wherein women’s value is rooted in their beauty, desirability, youth and fertility. Their value is based on reproductive criteria and decreases as they age. Men’s value, however, is in their ability to protect and provide financial security, which has no age limit. Despite this, Manosphere narratives insist that women have the upper hand because they can provide or withhold sex - which is considered to be men’s ultimate weakness. Women get to choose the men they want to give sex to, and who they want to mix their genes with.

By framing relationships as transactional in that biologically-determined sense, Manosphere thinkers assign gendered, classed, and racialized values to what each person can “bring to the table.” Manosphere content in all languages continuously uses terms like “what do you bring to the table?”, “high value woman”, and “high value man” in reference to this logic and understanding of relationships. This value can indicate a number of different characteristics, lifestyle choices, sexual partners’ histories, phenotypical traits, and more. While these justifications are long-winded, their conclusions ultimately boil down to a justification of traditional gender roles, in which men are expected to offer protection and wealth while women provide sexual loyalty, fertility, and care work. According to this view, women implicitly agree to this arrangement when they exchange sexual promiscuity for loyalty to one man in monogamous relationships. This is why many Manosphere users often celebrate the historical event known as “the world-historical defeat of the female sex” (Engels, 1884) – which is the transition from matrilineal to patrilineal societies and from polygyny to monogamy, and the rise of the family as the site of oppression for women. They don’t refer to it as a critique of patriarchy, but rather to celebrate what they see as an “honest” and natural arrangement that benefits men and women.

While Engels links shifts in the role and status of women to historical transitional periods like the agricultural revolution and rise of private property (1884), the Manosphere seems to fixate exclusively on the beneficial outcome of male dominance as natural and desirable. To them, the supposed defeat of the female sex represents the concessions women had to make, by exchanging promiscuity and sexual freedom for a monogamous male partner’s protection. This is seen as a necessary curbing of female promiscuity and deceit. Women are defined as manipulative by nature, willing to lie about paternity, and in need of male guidance to remain loyal. In this framework, women are born feminists (in the most demeaning sense) and have to be actively turned into “proper women” through

socialization, law, and punishment. This is one of the reasons why many in the Arab Manosphere claim that feminism is not entirely a Western import, but rather a natural state for women worldwide. Arab cultures, mixed with some Manosphere pills, can subjugate that nature.

Hypergamy

At the center stage of beliefs inspired by evolutionary psychology and social Darwinism are those relating to hypergamy, as popularized by Tomassi. This theory claims that women have an innate and natural desire to have sexual partners from higher status. For Red Pillers like Coach Kareem, this higher status can be composed of several factors: having a wide social network, high economic capabilities, a solid frame of handling women and their traits, knowledge of the game of seduction, and good looks. In a way, hypergamy is a game in which calculations are made for mating without much emotional input. Because women have the greater say in this match, and can instrumentalize the currency of sex, the top 80 percent of women on a scale of “value” in the sexual market will aim for the top 20 percent of that scale in men.

To win in this game, a man must be able to perform according to the factors that determine women’s attraction so that they can be chosen. Men need to work to secure their futures in order to make sure they can also get someone with better genes and social background. Not only should they work on themselves financially – they should also exercise, improve their testosterone, reclaim their masculinity, and attain “Alpha” status. An “Alpha” is a man who has access to territory, looks and resources, and knows how to handle a woman, as inspired by Rudolf Schenkel’s 1947 outdated study on wolf behavior. He is, according to Tomassi, “the guy other men want to be and other women want to have sex with” (2023). If a man has the money, but doesn’t have high testosterone, physical strength and masculinity, he is a “Beta”. Even if he gets a woman, he will be cheated on when she meets an “Alpha”. Men on the Black Pill side of the Manosphere, like INCELS, do not believe that financial status plays into their chances for attracting women. In their view, genetics and phenotypes are the ultimate defining factor. The top 80% most beautiful women will always try to go for the top 20% most handsome men, and the rest are simply doomed. Red Pillers and INCELS often bully each other online based on this difference.

Hypergamy and women’s selfish choices are identified as the cause of so much loneliness among men. Loneliness in particular is treated like a problem that

disproportionately affects men. A woman can pick and choose any man, any day, and give “sex” to whomever she pleases. She can also withhold sex from men, and contribute to the ever-growing loneliness epidemic.

The Arab Manosphere deals with loneliness by critiquing the ills of the modern day institution of marriage. They argue that women are asking for high dowries that young men cannot afford. They are making it impossible for men who are not rich to afford marriage. A very popular Lebanese pop song (2011) revolved wholly around this theme more than a decade ago. “What can I do if I love you, but I can’t give you a house?” says the chorus. There is no doubt that billions worldwide have a problem affording a house and adult expenses, and that this is affecting relationships. But for manosphere influencers, women who choose to pursue their education and a career, and put marriage on hold, are decreasing the options for men to get married, have access to sex, and have children. In all cases, women have the key, and they know it. The leaders of the Arab Manosphere want to teach men how to hack that game.

The Place of Islam in the Arab Manosphere

Religion – particularly Islam – has an important place in shaping the discourses of the Arab Manosphere. Red Pillers, for example, refer often to Muslim religious texts to support their ideas on gender roles, male supremacy, and structural sexism. Consequently, Muslim Red Pillers, whether Arab or not, claim a superiority within the Global Manosphere, using religion and culture to justify hierarchy and patriarchy as natural and divinely sanctioned.

Red Pill content in Arabic heavily references Islamic and Quranic verses and stories, particularly those which reinforce male authority, leadership, and guardianship over women, to gain credibility within religious audiences. One of the most famous Muslim influencers of the Global Manosphere is English Islamic scholar and men’s rights activist Mohammad Hijab. He has frequently hosted Andrew Tate, especially after the latter’s conversion to Islam, to discuss how Red Pill ideology aligns with Islamic teachings.

Collaborations and discussions between Muslim and non-Muslim Manosphere influencers further reflect the centrality of Islam in Manosphere spaces. One example is an online webinar that gathered Red Pill and Manosphere influencers Rollo Tomassi, Mahdi Tjrdani, Abu American, Coach Kareem, Daniel Haqiqatjou, and Rich Cooper, to discuss the question of whether “Islam can survive Gyno-

centrism?” (2022). During the recorded stream, the non-Muslim influencers praised Islam as the last bastion against feminism and gynocentrism. The Muslim panelists cited the different ways that Islam and its Prophet Muhammad call for a model of a family that is headed by men, who take the role of the leaders, protectors and guides. They also discuss Muslim men who refuse the Red Pill, diagnosing them of being emasculated and feminized due to their fear of being painted as savages and uncivilized by the West (Red Pill Arabic, 2022).

Polygamy is often cited as a Muslim golden ticket that supports Red Pill beliefs about male sexuality and reproductive strategy. In a 2021 streaming session between Coach Kareem and Rollo Tomassi, the former describes the legitimacy of polygamy as a system based on the life of the Islamic prophet and his companions, who had several wives and concubines. Men, unlike women, are meant to practice polygamy and spread their genetic seeds as wide as possible. He even praises a character from Islamic history who “did it even better than Genghis Khan”, and had more than a hundred children. Stories from Islamic history, ancient societies, or even animal behavior are often used to support theories about the legitimacy of hypergamy, the appropriateness of polygamy for men, and the socio-sexual hierarchy. These stories are treated as evidence that gender, attraction, and relationships are based on fixed, essential truths. In this view, things like marriage and desire follow timeless, natural rules tied to essential ideas on gender and human nature.

Despite the instrumentalization of Islamic teachings by some Manosphere influencers to give legitimacy to misogynist beliefs, tensions arise when some Muslims who look down at Manosphere narratives reject their claims. We find several arguments and fights across X spaces and threads on this tension. Two accounts, one named “Harvester of Red Pillers حاصد الرديلة” ([@usergonesoorn](#)) and the other “Red Pillers Out of Context” ([@NoContextofRP](#)), are particularly active. They focus on responding, retweeting, and “debunking” some of the claims of Arab Red Pillers to show what “staying true” to Islamic teachings means. These contested beliefs are usually based on pseudoscientific claims as well as re/misinterpretations of Islam and Quran. According to these accounts, and many of the users that engage with them, Red Pillers and other Manosphere fans follow an extreme view that is blasphemous and contradictory to Islam. They also believe that Islam is very clear in its approach to gender dynamics and marriage, and that the Islamic prophet and his companions encouraged love and friendliness between a man and his wife, rather than the game-fied, competitive and often violent versions promoted within the Arab

Manosphere. To them, Islam also encourages men to get married and form relationships as part of fulfilling their beliefs, which contradicts with the calls by MGTOW and Black Pillers to avoid engaging with women, or give up relationships altogether. Accordingly, Arab Red Pillers and other subcultures of the Arab Manosphere are just copying Western Manosphere users and importing their foreign understanding of relationships to the Arab and Muslim world. With that logic, these accounts claim both feminism and the Manosphere are two sides of the same coin in their ‘extremism’.

In one talking space hosted by Arab Red Pill influencers on the platform X, an argument erupted over whether the prophet encouraged men to beat their wives or not. Attendees who identified as Muslim rather than Red Pillers cited anecdotes and hadiths that emphasized the importance of love, mercy and respect between a husband and a wife. Red Pillers invoked anecdotes and hadiths which spoke to the extent of battering that a man is allowed to do to his wife. Generally, Red Pill influencers encourage violence against the women of the house - whether wives, sisters or daughters - as a method of disciplining and asserting male dominance. This was seen as a transgression by those whose opposition to the Manosphere was based on Islamic convictions.

Testosterone

One last pseudo-scientific claim put forward by the Manosphere is that the world is witnessing a genocide of biological maleness. Those making this claim point to statistics and research on the general trend of decreasing testosterone production among men in the last few decades. This is used to terrify followers, as testosterone is viewed as a signifier of masculinity (read: strength, leadership, physical abilities, among others).

Canadian CBC’s 2008 documentary, *The Disappearing Male*, is frequently used as evidence of this “male genocide” theory throughout the Manosphere. The documentary describes the global decline of sperm counts and the increase in male infertility due to environmental changes, particularly the heavy use of plastics in manufacturing. The Manosphere attributes this decline, in part, to the attack on men and their right to parenthood. Beyond environmental changes, Manosphere influencers identify causes such as the promotion of lazy and abundant lifestyles (“men used to go to war!”), and the prevalence of diets rich in processed fats and chemicals.

The dietary explanation has become a focal point for advice from Red Pill influencers, who offer advice on supplements and recipes for foods and alternative medicines that improve sperm health, sexual performance, and testosterone levels. For example, Coach Kareem dedicates some of his paid counseling sessions to tips specific to increasing testosterone in men, which he claims can improve overall male health and fertility while also strengthening masculinity. In June 2025, he launched a product called “**Hercules Formula**”, which he claims is an organic solution to low testosterone. It’s not just a product, but a “declaration of war against decadence, and submissive masculinities” (Red Pill Arabic, 2025).

The other factors hindering fertility for the Manosphere are tied directly to women’s access to reproductive health services and freedoms. On this topic, the Arab Manosphere is largely united in its stance against family planning, sexual health services, and reproductive rights. Contraceptive methods are demonized across the Manosphere. Users cite studies, statistics and anecdotes that often give out-of-context or simply misrepresented information on the negative impacts of contraception. While contraceptive methods do not fit everyone the same and many can be problematic depending on the patient’s age, health, smoking status, among other factors, the Manosphere does not care to distinguish or even prioritize women’s concerns. Dr. Bandar Kutbi ([@BanderKutbi](#)), a famous Saudi IVF consultant within the Arab Manosphere, often posts tweets which he claims are based on his medical practice, with a hint of misogyny. Many of his tweets discuss “patients” in their late 30s who are struggling with infertility. In a condescending tone, he uses these stories to encourage women to marry early, avoid contraceptives, and have children instead of pursuing studies or a career. He receives a lot of engagement from other Manosphere accounts who cite him to further advance the idea that infertility relates to conscious choices made by women. In contrast, a recent UN report claims that limited household financial resources, job insecurity, and uncertainty about the future are the primary reasons for the plummeting birth rates (Al Jazeera, 2025).

Neoliberal Ideas of Self-Improvement and Success

The Arab Manosphere, like its global and Western counterparts, is not concerned with class analysis or structural approaches to men’s problems. Such concerns featured in the proto-Manosphere discourse of the 1960s and 1970s, but the turn against feminism was accompanied by an alignment with neoliberal principles and an individualist/capitalist mindset. The Manosphere narrative that masculinity is in crisis, threatened, or under attack often alludes to an unre-

alized promise of future economic prosperity. The actual reasons for negative economic mobility - unemployment, wage cuts and stagnation, housing insecurity, inflation, etc - are ignored (Bujalka et al, 2022). The Manosphere insists that these problems stem from decreased masculinity and widespread emasculation by the social movements that are taking away opportunities from men. And the blame is not just levied at feminists: 'cultural Marxists' are accused of curtailing men's rights, as described by right-wing media and Manosphere users in the West. Cultural Marxists, according to the Western Manosphere, want to welcome immigrants and Muslims into the Global North, promote gender ideologies in schools, and impose woke progressive values on society (Wilson, 2015).

The Arab Manosphere, while living in different cultural and sociopolitical contexts, shares a repulsion for Marxists, communists, socialists, progressives, and anyone who promotes ideas of social welfare, community, and feminism. These leftist values contradict completely with their neoliberal understanding of "value", whether it is the sexual marketplace in which each man or woman is valued according to their utility to the other sex, or in the job market, where one is encouraged to hustle into becoming a millionaire. This is why working towards starting a business and generating wealth is an essential prescription within the Manosphere.

According to influencers like Jordanian businessman [Jalal Abuimweis](#), the path to success is not necessarily the hardest, but the smartest. Abuimweis encourages his followers to ditch their education and start a business, and to ditch their dreams of getting a job and instead aim to be the bosses of themselves. For him, going to a university is only for the children of the rich who want to network with other rich people. This is in line with manosphere content globally, which promotes entrepreneurship even for very young men.

This narrative corresponds in its conclusions with some criticisms of contemporary capitalism, wherein the extreme concentration of wealth and income allows a wealthy minority to reap virtually all the fruits of economic production. But instead of class analysis, this narrative points to a lack of entrepreneurial drive among today's men. The anecdote is a hyper-atomized and individualist solution: creating one's own ego-oriented enterprise in pursuit of status and self-reliance. A man must be his own boss. In a similar style to Andrew Tate's lavish display of wealth and luxury assets, Abuimweis is constantly showing off his cars, watches, and expensive items as signifiers of his "value" as a man. At the same time, he claims that money makes weaker and less masculine boys, and

that fathers should teach their boys to be men by limiting their access to a comfortable life.

According to this narrative, attaining good financial status is the signifier that you are a high-value man with the prerequisites to choose a partner of high value in the sexual market. Welfare states and social protection nets are an enemy to the Manosphere, because they replace women's need for male partners with good financial status by providing it to them through the state. Particularly in Red Pill discussions, influencers do not shy away from objecting to any kind of material support that reduces women's financial reliance on men, especially since men rely on women for their sexual needs and need financial leverage in that transactional relationship. Consequently, the Manosphere does not, and would not, provide structural analysis of men's problems, or structural solutions, that address the actual problems that burden young men with financial anxiety, insecurity, and uncertainty. Instead, these worries are blamed on the progress that women achieve through feminist advocacy, which is cast as a manifestation of women's entitlement and selfishness.

Conclusion

The Arab Manosphere is not simply a mirror of the global Manosphere; it is situated within a particular social, cultural and political backdrop that gives it unique characteristics. While inspired by international influencers in the global anti-feminist and anti-gender backlash, it is adapted to the regional context by local content creators. It is fueled by moral panics that are familiar to the West, but takes shape within specific national legal systems and local cultural and religious frameworks.

In addressing real problems and concerns facing young men, the Arab Manosphere provides incoherent diagnosis and shifts the blame from structural inequality to a feminist conspiracy against men. It twists the revolutionary potential of young men into reactionary hate fueled by emotional insecurities and financial anxiety, exploiting loneliness and alienation to channel their rage against social movements that threaten the status quo. The Manosphere monetizes these problems with the provision of individual solutions like life coaching, counseling, investment courses, and classes on masculinity.

It is crucial that we study the manifestations of the Arab Manosphere both online and offline. It is already evident in other contexts that the Manosphere has real material consequences on young men, inciting femicide and other crimes in the name of a so-called “men’s rights” movement. These spaces cultivate support for violence as a means to discipline women or to get revenge for their sexual refusal. Feminists should continue to engage with these phenomena critically through research that can inspire and be used within movements. Work against anti-feminist and anti-gender backlash should invest in studying and countering its digital ramifications. Additionally, men who stand with feminist and socially progressive movements also carry a responsibility: to nurture and model forms of masculinity that don’t rely on the subjugation of women, and to speak about loneliness, isolation and human relationships in ways that do not reduce our interactions to transactional games, in the face of the flood of misogynist content online. Lastly, future research can further document and analyze the monetized areas of the Arab manosphere, and the business model of influencers.

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Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Regional Political Feminism Project
Beirut, Lebanon
Email: feminism.mena@fes.de
↗ www.feminism-mena.fes.de

Author: **Sarah Kaddoura**
Language Editing: **Cory Rodgers**
Design: **Fabrika.cc**

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