

Booklet 6 – Gender divide



William Blomfield - 1892 - New Zealand

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth reposts video of pastors saying women shouldn't vote

Julia Simon – NPR – 9th August 2025

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has reposted and praised a video interview of a self-described Christian nationalist pastor whose church doesn't believe women should be allowed to vote. Doug Wilson, senior pastor of Christ Church in Idaho, said during the interview with CNN that, "Women are the kind of people that people come out of. The wife and mother, who is the chief executive of the home, is entrusted with three or four or five eternal souls," he continued. In the interview, Wilson also defended previous comments where he had said there was mutual affection between slaves and their masters. He also said that sodomy should be recriminalized. The Supreme Court invalidated sodomy laws in 2003. In his repost of the interview on the platform X, Hegseth added, "All of Christ for All of Life."

Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell told NPR in an emailed statement on Saturday that Hegseth is a "proud member of a church affiliated with the Congregation of Reformed Evangelical Churches," which was founded by Wilson. "The Secretary very much appreciates many of Mr. Wilson's writings and teachings," Parnell also wrote. In the CNN video, a congregant in Wilson's church explained that her husband "is the head of our household and I do submit to him." A fellow pastor also said that families should vote as a household, with the husband and father casting the vote.

Andrew Whitehead, a sociology professor at Indiana University Indianapolis and an expert on Christian nationalism, told NPR the goal for Wilson and his followers is to spread these ideas across the country – and ultimately make them enforceable. "It's not just they have these personal Christian beliefs about the role of women in the family. It's that they want to enforce those for everybody," Whitehead said.

Christ Church did not immediately respond to NPR's request for comment. Wilson's church, which is setting up parishes around the country, recently opened a new church in the nation's capital. Hegseth and his family reportedly attended services there, according to CNN. Whitehead says the fact that someone so high up in the government is sharing these views is consequential for all Americans. "It really does matter if the Secretary of Defense is retweeting a video with very particular views about whether women should be able to vote or serve in combat roles or if slavery really isn't all that bad," Whitehead said. "That's not just a person's view. It's a person in a pretty broad position of power."

SYNTHESIS

DOC 1

Horror stories of a ‘feminised workplace’ mask the real crisis in male identity

Finn Mackay – The Guardian – November 2025

First it was mechanisation threatening our jobs, then AI and now this: the Great Feminisation is taking over the workplace. Well, that's according to American journalist Helen Andrews, who popularised this thesis in a speech to the National Conservatism conference in Washington DC. The idea is that too many women in the workplace, and in positions of power, has led to the dominance of stereotypical feminine values, to the detriment of everyone. Girly things like conflict resolution rather than manly plain speaking, fussy HR departments, or a lack of healthy aggressive competition, have all created an imbalance in the workplace and in the world, suppressing stereotypical masculine values. Andrews fears for her sons and their future in the feminised world that she believes threatens us all.

The thesis makes two fundamental errors. First, stereotypes attached to femininity don't represent all women, any more than stereotypes about masculinity define all men. Second, nobody needs a feminised world, whatever that nonsense even means, but we all need a feminist world. There's a big difference.

For centuries, it was policy to keep women out of education and most professions, although women have, of course, always worked – in agriculture, in factories, or in service to rich people. Much of this was not in the formal economy, it was cash in hand. Work like childcare, washing or sewing was done at home, rather than in the public sphere. Yet work has always been gendered as masculine, because formal, paid employment outside the home has been seen as the preserve of men. So work comes to define masculinity, and therefore men, being viewed as core to men's identity.

The real problem facing men is that, like femininity, masculinity is still defined by backward stereotypes about what men should be. These stereotypes – including visible signifiers of financial success, respect and seniority in the workplace and public sphere – have always been put out of reach for many men, and perhaps now for most. A new report, *The State of UK Men*, from Equimundo and Beyond Equality, revealed that 88% of the men surveyed believed that being a man means providing financially for your family – and just over half felt it was more important that men, rather than women, were the breadwinners. However, 40% reported that their income was not enough to meet their daily needs, and more than half constantly worried about their financial future.

Women face these same economic challenges. The same survey found that equal numbers of men and women lack any sense of purpose or meaning in their life. The gender pay gap in the UK is around 13% across all employees and women are still more likely than men to be in part-time work, traditionally lower paid. Women are also more likely to be heads of households and raising children; they are what charities such as the Women's Budget Group call the main “shock absorbers” of poverty.

The violence of poverty affects everyone, yet society responds with peculiar sympathy and grief when men face barriers to success in the arenas we have picked out to define their worth. This is what I call the masculinity burden. Attacks on men's income, employment or job security are viewed not only as challenging in a human way, as they would be for anyone, but doubly challenging because they are portrayed as attacks on, and affronts to, masculinity itself. From this perspective, it is not that 50% of the experiences of precarity – women's – are not seen; it's that they are just not seen as being as bad for women, because women don't carry this extra burden of masculinity.

The gendered effects of life experiences, such as redundancy or low pay, are clearly real. The State of UK Men finds that work and stable finances are still very much classed as the measure of men's worth, leading to failure feeling like an existential threat. This is the pain and shame of not meeting gendered expectations. Women are no strangers to this either, in the ceaseless pressure of beauty standards attached to femininity, the presumption of motherhood and judgments about mothering, or in status being attached to male partners. The expectations can be different, but it's the gendered rules that are the problem, rigging the game for us all, setting us up for failure in one area or another.

What men need to succeed in the workplace has nothing to do with the numbers of women employed – it has to do with job security, livable wages, affordable rents, reliable sick pay and flexible work around parenting and caring. This is what men say they want, too: one of the many positives from the report is that 83% of men believe in sharing housework and care with their partner, and 80% want practical support to help fathers be more present in family life. These policies would help everyone – not just at work, but out in the world, because all of us have human needs to give and receive love and care in our families and communities. If you want to call that feminised, then so be it. I call it feminist.

- Finn Mackay is the author of *Female Masculinities* and the *Gender Wars*, and a senior lecturer in sociology at the University of the West of England in Bristol

DOC 2

Violence against women and girls strategy: Boys to be sent on courses to tackle misogyny in schools

Sima Kotecha, Hazel Shearing [BBC News](#) 18th December 2025

The plans for schools in England - which focus on preventing the radicalisation of young men - have been unveiled as part of a wider strategy which had been delayed three times. Teachers will get specialist training around issues such as consent and the dangers of sharing intimate images.

Responding to the announcement, the domestic abuse commissioner for England and Wales, Dame Nicole Jacobs, said the commitments did "not go far enough". She said while the strategy recognised the scale of the challenge, the level of investment "falls seriously short".

The £20m package will also see teachers get training around how to identify positive role models, and how to challenge unhealthy myths about women and relationships. It will include a new helpline for teenagers to get support for concerns about abuse in their own relationships. The government hopes that by tackling the early roots of misogyny, it will prevent young men from becoming violent abusers. Under the new plans, schools will send high-risk students to get extra care and support, including behavioural courses to tackle their prejudice against women and girls.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch criticised the move, accusing the government of "silly gimmicks". She told the BBC the plans were only being rolled out because "the government spent most of the summer watching *Adolescence*" - the Netflix drama that explored the impact of social media and influencers on teenage boys. She instead called for more police officers, saying "we need to remove people from our country who shouldn't be here - especially those who come from cultures where women are treated as third class citizens. That would be a much smarter place to begin".

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said he did not intend to "diminish the focus on the men that are the perpetrators of this violence", but said the government must address the misogyny and inequality that were the root cause. He added part of that was showing a "positive, aspirational vision for boys and men". Safeguarding minister Jess Phillips described violence against women and girls as a "national emergency", adding the government's aim was to be "so ambitious that we change culture".

Liberal Democrats spokeswoman for women and equalities Marie Goldman welcomed training for teachers but said unless it was accompanied by steps to "properly moderate online content" she had no doubt it would fail. As part of the wider strategy, the Home Office has also announced a ban on "nudification" tools, which use generative AI to turn images of real people into fake nude pictures and videos without their permission. How this will work has not been made clear.

Nearly 40% of teenagers in relationships are victims of abuse, domestic abuse charity Reducing the Risk said. Online influencers are partly blamed for feeding this, with nearly one in five boys aged 13 to 15 said to hold a positive view of the self-proclaimed misogynist Andrew Tate, according to a YouGov poll. The Department for Education's statutory guidance already says secondary pupils should be taught about consent, the negative impacts of pornography on sexual relationships, and that sharing and viewing of indecent images of children is a crime. Paul Whiteman, general secretary of school leaders' union NAHT, said it was positive the government was recognising the importance of training and support for school staff but said schools were "just part of the solution".

DOC 3

The Rise of the Young, Female Conservative Influencer

Newsweek, June 13th 2025

For years, American conservatism had a certain face. It was loud, brash and old, frequently red-faced, armed with a podcast mic and unequivocally male. In 2025, that face is changing. Under the second Trump administration, the cultural, political and social landscape of politics and the media is shifting, ushering a new dawn for a conservative figure whose poise and position are helping to market conservatism for a new generation. Welcome to the era of the young, conservative, female influencer.

The list of young, female conservative influencers who are rising—or maintaining their prominence—on social-media platforms is long. These women may be from different walks of life and live in different parts of the country, their content may focus on specific issues like abortion or more generally about family. What they do share, though, is a conservative belief system that prioritizes traditional gender roles and a social media presence that is as carefully curated as a good manicure.

One such woman is Isabel Brown, author and host of the Isabel Brown Show, who has more than a million followers on Instagram alone. Brown is affiliated with the campus-focused conservative organization Turning Point USA, having started her own chapter at Colorado State University. Brown said: "As our nation continues engaging in what we often call the "culture war," we're watching women shift substantially away from left-wing ideology in pursuit of something more fulfilling.

"We've watched voices like Jordan Peterson, Charlie Kirk and Michael Knowles connect with young men throughout the past several years on social media reminding them that masculinity is not something to shy away from, but to embrace," Brown said, adding that though most people associated "'conservative' media online with the 'podcast bro' genre," she believes the "future of conservatism is entirely dependent on this next generation of young women." As for the message of her content? It's simple: embracing your God-given identity.

National polling shows no measurable migration of Gen Z women toward the political right or a revival of traditional-role attitudes—just a louder online niche.

Laura Toogood, author of the book *Journalism and PR: News Media and Public Relations in the Digital Age*, told Newsweek: "Social media gives influencers direct access to their audience, without the same barriers that are present when information is communicated via the mainstream media, for example, editorial guidelines."

Majid KhosraviNik, a reader in digital media and discourse studies at the U.K.'s University of Newcastle, told Newsweek that that there has been a shift in both digital media and society, leading to media platforms "promoting, normalizing and widening," right-wing populist values. "We are already seeing more and more creators share their beautiful journeys of marriage and motherhood, pursuit of faith in God, homeschooling journey, or quest to Make America Healthy Again—and I predict we are only going to see more of that content in the next few years," the content creator Isabel Brown said. She also said that we are in real time watching what she described as the "lies," sold by leftist feminism be unpacked in real time on social media.

Brown's view sits on one side of the political coin. On the other, are feminists who hold strong in their belief that feminism is essential. Catherine Rottenberg of Goldsmiths, University of London told Newsweek, "On a more profound level this is a backlash and a rejection of feminism." "The return to gender traditionalism is part of the wider cultural shift, where reactionary politics are on the rise," Rottenberg said. "I think that we have entered dangerous and frightening times—where the gains that we have made in terms of gender equality and women's rights are being undone." She added: "The embrace of femininity can have a feminist veneer in the sense that it can be framed as a woman's choice. However, the solutions they posit do not create a more egalitarian society nor do I think that they address the root causes of gender injustice.

DOC 4

<https://yougov.co.uk/society/articles/51745-are-you-a-feminist-it-depends-how-you-ask>

Are you a feminist? How do views vary by age and gender?

% of 6,601 Britons, with one question randomly selected and shown to approximately one third of the overall sample

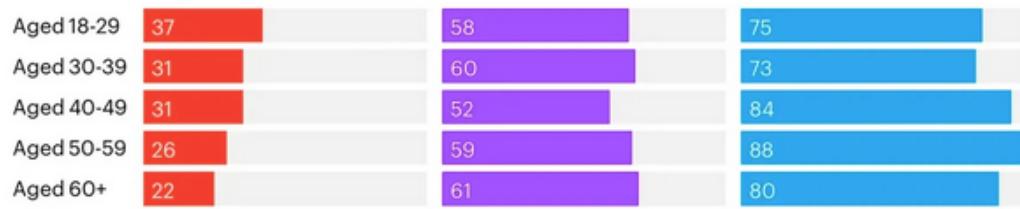
Word + definition: One definition of a feminist is someone who thinks men and women should have equal rights and status in society, and be treated equally in every way. Are you a feminist? % saying Yes, I am

Definition-only: Do you think men and women should or should not have equal rights and status in society, and be treated equally in every way? % saying Should be equal

Women



Men



YouGov

4 – 28 February 2025