Women in the Extreme Right: Implications of female participation

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## Abstract

The recent inclusion of male supremacy under the umbrella of Right Wing Extremism (RWE) can obscure the allure the extreme right holds for women. This study examines female engagement in the extreme and radical right and advances a novel conceptualisation of participation. The six forms of female participation are as violent actors, thinkers, facilitators, promoters, activists, and exemplars for others. This has implications for operations, ideology, and identity. First, recent female participation in violence it has been in the form of dyads or in association with a group: rarely are they lone actors. They can also facilitate or sustain violent operations, and thereby yield valuable intelligence for investigators. Second, they are able to create and promote RWE worldviews, challenging select discourses and magnifying others to cultivate expressions of femininity which are ideologically symbolic. Third, and as a consequence, subscribing to this ideological milieu provides identity security and meaning. Through female participation in the extreme right, we can observe an ideological ecosystem in which women currently interact and thrive.

## Keywords

Terrorism, extremism, radical, right wing, women

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# Introduction

“We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children,” wrote right wing terrorist David Lane in the *88 Precepts* (n.d), coining what would become known as the 14 Words. “Because,” Lane continued, “the beauty of the White Aryan woman must not perish from the earth.” While this may be little more than a motivational slogan, this final sentence of the *88 Precepts* neatly captures the focus of this study. Are women in the extreme right merely the premise for male violence, or does their participation possess its own forms which pose operational and ideological challenges? Looking beyond Lane’s projection of white female peril, this study examines the ways in which women participate in extreme and radical right environments. It therefore spans violent and non-violent forms of extremism.

Right Wing Extremism (RWE) is increasingly prominent in the western world. Following the deadly right wing terrorist attacks in Christchurch, El Paso, Hanau, Halle, and San Diego in 2019 alone, there is new urgency for understanding this threat nature. While RWE violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated by males, female adherents also pose violent and non-violent threats and can influence ideology. This is because women interact with the ideological ecosystem, rather than passively receiving content. Women are able to shape and reshape the contours of the various worldviews, challenge contemporary discourses, and offer an alternate interpretation of reality in which lost white womanhood – and its salvation – is essential. By examining the forms of female participation in such subcultures, we can move closer to understanding the allure the radical and extreme right holds for women.

## Results

This study advances a novel framework for conceptualising female RWE activities by asserting there are six forms of participation: violent actors, thinkers, facilitators, promoters, activists, and exemplars. There forms are not mutually exclusive, with some individuals engaging in multiple forms of participation. Violent actors engage in illegal and violent activities in support of RWE. Thinkers make original contributions to RWE theory or beliefs through the advancement of novel ideas which contribute to the ideological ambit. Facilitators provide direct assistance to RWE movements through legal activities such as running blogs, and canvassing for donations; as well as illegal activities such as providing safe accommodation and obtaining weapons and supplies. Promoters propagate and repackage RWE theories and beliefs on platforms such as Youtube, Instagram, and Twitter. Activists publicly support RWE movements through direct action at rallies or meetings; can hold formal organisational positions; or can privately engage in activism through procreation. Finally, exemplars are women in RWE subcultures about whom cultural constructions have formed, in which they are celebrated as personifying the desired and idealised female identity.

This framework for participation has implications for violent operations, ideology, and identity. First, female involvement as violent actors or facilitators in kinetic operations occurs often as part of a group or a dyad, and encompasses a range of violent activities from assassinations to bomb plots to vandalism, through to providing material support and assistance. This makes some female participants violent threats, and valuable sources of counterterrorism intelligence. Second, female thinkers, promoters, and exemplars are able to shape the ideological space in the extreme Right through constructions on femineity, gender interactions, and behavioural aspirations. It is an interactive dynamic which builds entitativity and identity. Third, women are able to express identity through visual aesthetics which celebrate archetypes of a supposedly lost white womanhood. We can therefore observe an ideological ecosystem – one in which women actively contribute, manage ideological contours, shape gender interactions, and enable the expression of entitativity innately tied to idealised femineity in the extreme Right.

## Definitions and Methods

The extreme right is defined as a heterogeneous grouping of worldviews which are aligned with the right party family, and support anti-democratic beliefs, authoritarianism, and exclusionary nationalism (Carter 2018). They are extreme they have disengaged with liberal democratic processes to support or advocate illegal violence against their enemies and the destruction of democracy (Bjorgo and Ravndal 2019). This is limited consensus on this, however, as Kruglanski, Webber, and Koehler (2019) define extremism as the conscious and wilful deviation from accepted norms, while not necessarily being violent. Some use the term “far right” to encompass all activity beyond the mainstream right– despite there being little literature to distinguish it from extreme or radical. The radical right encompasses mainstream conservatism in conjunction with extreme right ideas, such as the unity of people and state, and the perception of foreigners as a threat to this unity (Bjorgo and Ravndal 2019). Proponents of the radical right support democracy as a system while championing the removal democratically-elected leaders. Some on the radical right can have prominence or influence over individuals in RWE, rendering complete separation between the two impossible.

This study reviewed the scholarly historical and contemporary record for records, notes and details of female individual engagement in the extreme and radical right. Studies by Belew (2018), Durham (2015), Koehler (2017) Cunningham (2003) and Blee (2005) proved most useful in this respect. From this point, the examination shifted to 100 prominent of individuals in the extreme and radical right. Their participation was assessed qualitatively. The outcome of this assessment was six forms of participation, to which individuals were assigned based on publicly available information. The data was limited to English language sources, and further curtailed by the dearth of public data on female skinheads. While neither quantitative nor qualitative analyses can exist in entirely divisible states (Balnaves 2001)5, this study is primarily qualitative. The data herein is designed to qualitatively articulate the breadth of activity in the six forms of participation, rather than construct quantitative weight on participation forms.

By design, leadership was not a form of participation. This is because leadership is commonly conceptualised in terrorism studies as the tangible authority of “top” elites over other members (Hoffman 2017). Terrorism research has largely focused on leadership dynamics or the sensationalisation of charismatic individuals (Hoffman 2017), leadership in strategic directives (Hermann and Sakiev 2011), or leadership deficits (Abrahms and Potter 2015). This study, as suggested by Hoffman, reconceptualises leadership and power as existing in various strata and clusters of organisations and movements. A participant does not need to be a formal figurehead to exert power, influence, and leadership. As seen with the rise of Instagram Influencers, even those adherents who sole contribution is running a channel exalting RWE lifestyles can exert influence on others through exposure to ideology (Lorenz 2019).

## Literature Review

The presence of women in terrorism and political violence has been well established since the 1990s, despite how it is often portrayed. A number of studies have found that female execution of terrorism and political violence is rarely considered to be the result of female agency and choice (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008, Corcoran-Nantes 2011, Sternadori 2007). Female terrorists are considered to be unnatural, and abnormal (Corcoran-Nantes 2011), failed mothers, or vengeful shrews (Sternadori 2007). By extension, female suicide terrorists are often considered to violate traditional gender norms as peacekeepers (Friedman 2008), while others suggest they are helpless “subwomen” or “superwomen” (Marway 2011). This is despite research by Cunningham (2003), who found female terrorists had enhanced operational capacity as a result of diminished credibility.

Debate over female motivations, however, continued. Victor (2004) believed female participation was driven by personal concerns and exploited by male terrorists to ensure media coverage. When Jacques (2013) compared 222 female and 269 male terrorists, she found female terrorists held high levels of employment and often had familial connections to terrorist movements. But this did little to explain female agency or operations, despite female performing a quarter of all suicide attacks between 1985 and 2019 (Bloom 2011). As a result, Bloom (2010)91 was correct when she noted that “[f]orty years of research on terrorism have revealed very little about women’s involvement in it.”

Specific literature explaining female participation in RWE is not insubstantial due to the long history of white supremacy in the United States. McRae (2018) demonstrates long term female involvement in white supremacy movements between 1920 and 1974, and argues they were significant for supporting racial segregation. This was supported by Blee, who noted that “[g]ender is unquestionably an important organizing principle for racist groups” (2002)112. Her examination of women in Aryan Nations, the KKK, and other organisations found that women were portrayed four ways: as goddess and victims, as race traitors, as wives and mothers, and as female activists. Beyond this portrayal, she suggests they occupy three roles: familial, social, and operative. Their familial role was as wives and mothers to their immediate and Klan family. Their social role was to facilitate social activities within movement activities. Their operative role was not to act, but rather, to use indirect influence to maintain group cohesion (Blee 2002).

Cunningham (2003), who examined female participation in the World Church of the Creator (WTCOC) and the Ku Klux Klan noted that women were increasingly visible in leadership positions, account for a quarter of all members, and comprised as much as fifty percent of new members. The creation of the Sisterhood of the WCOTC and its six chapters, and the Women’s Frontier with another four chapters, likely contributed to this growth (Michael 2006)572. Cunningham (2007) later added anti-abortion terrorism by the Army of God to her study, and found that five of the eighteen “heroes” of the anti-abortion movement were women (115). Beyond this, Belew (2018)168 found the primary role of women was as mothers and carers first. Second, women were expected to learn survival skills for the looming race war, from first aid to canning food to making soap. Marriage was a way to buttress the network and cement alliances between groups (2018)180. Other such activism was noted by Blee (2012), who found women supported racial supremacy by using private rumour mills to destroy their opponents instead of engaging in violence. The Klan itself was unsure if women should engage in violence as equal warriors, or if they remained racial victims (Blee 2012)260.

Fangen (1997) engaged with a similar debate in her study, “Separate or Equal?” reviewing female-only right wing organisations in Europe, with focus on Norway’s right wing underground. Fangen found that some men in RWE found combative women “exciting and attractive” while others saw female volatility as an operational risk (Fangen 1997)141. Female roles in gangs were largely seen as being the nurse or mother of men or sexually accessible “mattresses” for male pleasure (Fangen 1997)143. To escape the mattress label, Fangen found that Norwegian right wing women formed their own group, the Valkyria, in January 1995. This allowed for the expression of their own political views and agency beyond the passive roles they held in male dominated organisations, and to take part in all roles and activities including weapons training.

Greece’s Golden Dawn Party (GD) has also ideological space for women (Koronaiou and Sakellariou 2017). Koronaiou and Sakellariou found GD represented women as mothers of the nation and the white race; as supporters and companions of men within the greater nation family; and independent defenders of society’s ideals, values, traditions, and reproductive purity. They are known to distribute leaflets, organise meetings, engage in charitable work, and demonstrations against immigrants (Koronaiou and Sakellariou 2017). This can be seen in other parts of Europe too. In the United Kingdom, the British National Party (BNP) had prominent female members who participated in a number of discourses around issues such as reproductive control, divorce and family (Durham 2015). Female participation was considered an attempt to give the BNP a soft face. This corresponds with the French and German identitarian movements, as Zuquete (2018) argued that female identitarians are strongly engaged in propaganda activities as part of a calculated effort to distinguish itself from preceding “old style” movements (45).

Mattheis (2018) studied a new face of RWE, Lana Lokteff, to understand the discourses providing ideological space for women. She identified three discourses, being the gender complementarity of men and women, alt-maternalism and women as caregivers, and Western civilization as a gift from white men to white women. Lokteff conjures the image of the reluctant shield maiden to allow women to protect hearth and family in the political domain without threatening male political dominance. In a later study, this was compared against the women’s Khansa Brigade of Islamic State. Mattheis and Winter (2019) found that, despite culturally specific differences, the two texts shared ideological logic and exploited similar rhetorical devices to enable female participation in ideological discourse and causes.

Beyond all of this research there must be the acknowledgement that female participation in the extreme right is statistically small compared to that of males. The Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) tool, for example, suggests that of the 922 individuals affiliated with the Far Right ideologies in the US, only fifty-two were female (PIRUS 2020). Of that number, twenty were formal members of extremist organisations, twenty-two were informal members, eight were not members, and two were part of licit political movements. Of that fifty-two, thirteen were involved in successful plots, while another eleven attempted to progress plots, or failed. The record of their affiliations, work history, military links, education and student status had substantive gaps. To look beyond this data, then, is to fill in the gaps around our understanding. This study contributes to conceptualising female engagement through six forms of participation.

# Forms of Participation

We tend to view women in fascism, historically, as passive actors, or mothers of the “new generation of warriors” despite evidence to the contrary (Eatwell 2003)82. The British Fascisti (BF) was founded by Rotha Orman, a female fascist who twice earned the *Croix de Charite* in World War One (Loughlin 2014). The BF spread to Ulster under Commander Florence Waring and her daughter Dorothy Grace Harnett. Harnett was known for strip searching republican women suspects, editing *The British Lion*, and later, leading the BF. Rival to the BF was the British Union of Fascists, with female activists such as Nellie Driver, who, as the Woman District Leader, propagated propaganda was involved in violent confrontations with anti-fascists, and organised local meetings (Mayall 1989). Indeed, nearly 100 female British fascists were interned during World War Two (Gottlieb 2004)11. After World War Two, Heinrich Himmler’s daughter, Gudrun (nee Burwitz) was intrinsic to supporting Nazi war criminals escape prosecution in the sixties, seventies, and eighties through the secretive *Stille Hilfe* (Silent Help) organisation (Sandomir 2018). Such hints indicate that historically women participated in more ways than expected. Our attention must turn to the forms of female participation more broadly. It is proposed here that the activity of RWE women could fit into are six forms of participation: violent actors, thinkers, facilitators, promoters, activists, and exemplars.

### First Form: Violent Actors

As the literature reviewed earlier suggests, women can operate as violent actors in a variety of terrorist movements. This does not necessarily mean acts of terrorism, but covers the spectrum of extreme right terrorism, to extreme right violence, to hate crime.[[1]](#footnote-1) The term “violent actor” is used to cover this spectrum of violent action, and was chosen instead of “combatant” – whose definition under International Humanitarian Law renders it incompatible; and “militant”, which, while more confluent with usage here, is commonly applied to activists as a measure of their political commitment. By academic definitions mentioned earlier, these violent actors fit within extreme right definitions because they seek to or support illegal violence against enemies.

Earlier actors who fit this category include The Order women, such as Jean Craig and Sharon Merki who were instrumental in the murder of Jewish radio host Alan Berg;[[2]](#footnote-2) Kathy Ainsworth, known as the Synagogue Bomber; and Beate Zschape, who was critical to the National Socialist Underground (NSU) operations. More recently, female violent actors have engaged in shootings, such as Francine Graham; planned to fire-bombing and shoot malls, such as Lindsay Souvannarath; prepared explosive attacks, such as Erica Chase; or otherwise participated in vandalism, intimidation, and lesser forms of violence. Beyond this, of course, women affiliated with violent organisations such as the Atomwaffen women engage in military-style training with firearms. The table below indicates that female violent actors are able to fill diverse operational needs beyond mainstream expectations. It also suggests that female violent actors are more likely to be part of, or connect with, a formal organisation or act in as half of a dyad. As a result, they rarely work alone.

Table 1: Violent Actors

| Name and Nation | Ideological Alignment | Organisational Links | Roles |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rebecca Matathias  United States | Unknown | NA | Together with partner Andrew Costas, Matathias was arrested for defacing religious property, arson, and malicious destruction of property targeting places of worship (AP 2020). |
| Francine Graham  United States | Black supremacist, anti-Semitic, anti-White, anti-law enforcement | Black Hebrew Israelite Movement | Together with partner, David Anderson, Graham is accused of murdering a Jersey City detective, and shooting three individuals at a Jersey City Kosher supermarket on 10 December 2019. The attack was later described by FBI officials as domestic terrorism. Also suspected of the murder of Michael Rumberger earlier on 7 December 2019 (Gold 2019). |
| Lindsay Souvannarath  Canada | Neo-Nazism, white supremacy, | NA | Together with partner James Gamble, Souvannarath planned a firebombing and shooting attack on Halifax Shopping Centre in 2015. She also ran a blog called Cockswastica (Lamoureux 2019). |
| Kiyomi Brewer  United States | Neo-Nazism, | NA | Brewer, with partner Nolan Brewer, vandalised an Indiana Synagogue with swastikas and set fire to the yard in 2018. Plans to use Drano bombs (pressurized IEDs) were changed at the last minute (Mettler 2019). |
| Erica Chase  United States | White supremacy | World Church of the Creator, Prison Outreach Program | Chase, with partner Leo Felton, was convicted of bank robbery, counterfeiting, purchased firearms, and began construction of an explosive device in 2002. They planned to bomb Jewish targets, or kill Jewish, black, or civil rights leaders to provide a race war (Justia 2005). |
| Beate Zschape  Germany | Neo-Nazi | National Socialist Underground | Zschape, along with two men, was convicted for a campaign of assassination against ten migrants and a police officer between 1999 and 2011. The judge suggested during sentencing that Zschape was critical in the group’s undercover operations (Hillebrand 2018). |
| Holly Dartez  United States | White supremacy | Klavern 1500, Invisible Empire, Ku Klux Klan | Dartez, along with four men, was indicted for three counts of cross burning the home of three black men, in addition to intimidation, and using fire to commit a felony in 2003. She was the driver for the attack, and also held a role as Klavern secretary (Appeals 2010). |
| Tristain Frye  United States | Neo-Nazi, white supremacy | Volksfront | Frye, along with three men, beat a homeless man to death, believing he was a drug dealer in 2003. Frye was pregnant with an accomplice’s child at the time of the attack, which was believed to be an initiation for red shoelaces (SPLC 2004). |
| Christine Greenwood  United States | Neo-Nazi, white supremacism | Blood and Honour, Women for Aryan Unity | Greenwood, with partner John McCabe, were charged with possession of bomb making materials, including 50 gallons of gasoline and battery operated clocks. Greenwood also founded Women for Aryan Unity and launched the Aryan Baby Drive (Blee 2005). |
| Kathy Ainsworth  United States | White supremacy | White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan | In 1970, Ainsworth and two men were implicated in a string of bombings against black and Jewish targets in 1967 and 1968 (Wexler 2015). |
| Jean Craig  United States | White supremacy | The Order, Bruder Schweigen | Craig, in addition to other Order members, was implicated in the killing of Jewish radio host Alan Berg in 1984. Craig allegedly followed Berg for weeks prior the attack, filming and taking photographs (Hilliard 1987). |
| Shelley Shannon  United States | Anti-abortion, Christian Identity | Amy of God | Shannon was involved in six fire-bombings of abortion clinics, two acid attacks, and was found guilty of shooting and wounding a Wichita abortion doctor in 1993 (Thomas 2018). |
| Tammy Williams  United States | White supremacist | Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord | Williams, along with husband Londell, were charged with threating an informer, possessing an automatic rifle, and planning to assassin Democratic presidential candidate Reverend Jesse Jackson in 1988 (1988). |
| Bolona Bomber  Germany | Neo-Nazi | Possibly Paramilitary Sports Group Hoffman | An unknown woman claimed responsibility for the bomb laid at the Munich Octoberfest by on 26 September 1980, killing twelve and wounding 200 (AAP-AP 1980, Manthe 2019a). |
| Melany Attwood  Australia | Neo-Nazi | Aryan Nations, Aryan Girls | Attwood, with lover Robert Edhouse and friend Corey Dymock murdered Attwood’s former partner, Alan Taylor. Attwood was the leader of Aryan Girls (Clarke 2018). |
| Sharon Merki  United States | White supremacy | The Order | Merki, with husband Robert, engaged in racketeering, counterfeiting, among other crimes, on behalf of The Order in 1984. The proceeds were allegedly used to purchase weapons (Khalsa 1986). |
| Franziska Birkmann  Germany | Neo-Nazi | Hoffman Paramilitary Sports Group | Birkmann, along with Uwe Behrendt and Karl-Heinz Hoffman, was implicated in the murder of a Jewish publisher and Rabbi, Schlomo Lewin and his partner in 1980. Birkmann’s sunglasses were found at the scene of the crime, although she was acquitted of conspiracy to commit murder (Manthe 2019b). |
| Christine Hewicker  Germany | Neo-Nazi | Otte Group and Uhl/Wolfgram Group | Hewicker, and the Otte Group, participated in a number of crimes including the targeting of courts to interfere with lawsuits against comrades. Among these was a bank robbery, for which Hewicker received a six year prison sentence (Manthe 2019c, Kruglanski, Webber, and Koehler 2019). |
| Sibylle Vorderbrugge  Germany | Neo-Nazi | Deutsche Aktionsgruppen | Vorderbrugge committed several lethal arson attacks in Hamburg in August 1980, killing two Vietnamese refugees. She received life imprisonment for murder (Manthe 2019c). |

### Second Form: Thinkers

Secondly, there are the thinkers. The thinkers are heavily embedded in the creation and propagation of extreme right ideas. They may not engage in violence themselves, but they create the justifications which enable other people to validate violent actions. The term “thinker” is used here to describe the intellectuals who make original contribute to RWE pool of ideas, or who have established sophisticated intellectual positions, similar to the selection of thinkers in Sedgwick (2019). The terms “ideologist” was not used because of its connotations the study of ideology, while “theorist” was avoided as theorists do not commonly engage in direct action. Importantly, the ideological alignment of the thinker does not always correspond with the incorporation of their ideas by seemingly ideologically dissimilar elements of the RWE milieu.

In the RWE, prominent historical thinkers who have received recent attention include the so-called three furies of libertarianism: Ayn Rand, Isabel Paterson, and Rose Wilder Lane, all of whom created the basis of free market fundamentalism and capitalist individualism in the United States (Burns 2015). Their primary point, which has since been adopted by other elements of RWE, is that individual choice separates the winners from the losers, and it is not the role of government to even the playing field through initiatives such as social welfare, thus embodying the fascist conceptualisation of *kampf*/struggle. Arguably, the three furies of recent times are Lana Lokteff, Lauren Southern, and Tara McCarthy – all of whom lead the anti-feminist charge and dominate radical right discourses on women by creating narratives extolling so-called traditional values, femininity, and extolling a transcendental space for conforming women. These three thinkers, in addition to Rachel Summers and Robyn Riley, have cooperated in the past.

Table 2: Thinkers

| Name | Ideological Alignment | Organisational Links | Roles and Source |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Savitri Devi Mukherji  India | Nazism, anti-semiticism, paganism | Third Reich, World Union of National Socialists (WUNS) | Devi was a Hindu-Nordicist who rejected Judeo-Christian beliefs and embraced Aryan-Vedic culture and national socialism as a religion of nature. Her work, *The Lighting and the Sun*, was highly acclaimed by contemporary neo-Nazis in the sixties, seventies, and eighties. More recently, her teachings have been adopted by the American ‘alt-right’. (Goodrick-Clarke 2002) |
| Rose Wilder Lane  United States | Libertarian,  Economic rationalism, monetarism | NA | Lane was a writer whose works such as *The Discovery of Freedom* championed the negative freedom of libertarianism: the all people succeed or fail based on their own choice and action, and that society should be constructed in such as way allow that triumph or failure to occur (Burns 2015). |
| Ayn Rand aka Alissa Rosenbaum  United States | Libertarian,  Economic rationalism, monetarism | NA | Rand was a novelist of books such as *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead*. She gave weight to free market fundamentalism; the so-called virtue of selfishness (greed is good); condemned humanitarianism as feminine weakness and celebrated hyper-masculine heroes. Her work has experienced new popularity in the American far right (Burns 2015). |
| Isabel Paterson  United States | Libertarian,  Economic rationalism, monetarism | NA | Paterson was a book critic who argued for limited government, and created a duality between the “productive man” and the “prohibitive government”. When government ventured out of law and order, it inhibited production (such as through initiatives like social welfare). (Burns 2015)761 |
| Lisa Turner  United States | white supremacy, Creativity | Women’s Frontier, World Church of the Creator | Turner was the Women’s Information Coordinator for the World Church of the Creator, and author of the ‘Women of the Creativity Revolution’ and ‘The Co-Option of White Women.’ (Michael 2006). She has long argued that feminism used women as pawns in a white-hating media machine run by Jews (Michael 2009b)136. |
| Ingrid Rimland  Ukraine | Neo-Nazi | NA | Rimland is a fiction author of *Lebensraum!*, which uses the Mennonite identity to project neo-Nazi propaganda, spanning anti-Semitism, holocaust denial, anti-miscegenation, and hatred of non-Germans. Mennonite faith, according to Urry, becomes synonymous with “ethnic pride, Germanness and the Fuhrer” (1999)121. |
| Lana Lokteff  United States and  Sweden | Alt right | 3Fourteen Radio, Red Ice TV | Lokteff invokes Viking Shieldmaiden tropes to argue gendered complementarity of men and women in RWE; defines female roles in white supremacist futures; and frames male defence of so-called ‘Western civilisation’ as the ultimate romantic gesture towards females (Mattheis 2018). |
| Lauren Southern  Canada | White nationalism | NA | Southern was the social media personality who created a video called “The Great Replacement” in 2017, watched 648,000 times; generated the conspiracy theory that the South African government was engaged in genocide against white farmers; and traded heavily on identity politics to oppose immigration, NGOs, and feminism. (Southern 2016 - 2019). She was also known to have blamed Muslims for the Holocaust (Ganesh 2018). |
| Tara McCarthy  United Kingdom | White supremacist | NA | McCarthy was a social media personality who ran a podcast, Reality Calls, to provide “alternative media,” celebrating ethno-nationalism as a tradition and nature way of life apparently demonised by the mainstream media (McCarthy 2017). |
| Rachel Summers  United States | Neo-Nazi | NA | Summers, aka the Dropout Philosopher, is a fiction author and contributor to the Europa Sun and Red Ice Iv. She argues against Christianity, claims the Nuremburg trials were a miscarriage of justice, and believes that the right needs a pagan hero to defeat the left, whom she calls modern day witch hunters (Lokteff 2017). |
| Ayla Stewart  United States | White supremacy | NA | Stewart is a blogger and high profile TRADWIFE tied to various sites, including Wife With A Purpose, who launched the White Baby Challenge to combat what she believed was low white birthrates, leading to replacement by other ethnicities (Judd 2020). |

### Third Form: Facilitators

The third form of participation is the facilitator. The facilitator describes those who act in a enabling, organisational, or logistics role as part of, or on behalf of, a movement or organisation. The term “facilitator” was selected because of its connotations with indirect or unobtrusive assistance, the direct bringing about of an outcome, or assisting in the progression of a goal or task. Competing terms like “enabler” were not adopted due to cultural connotations with of enabling being the giving or transfer of power in interpersonal (and often destructive) relationships. The term “networker” was also considered, but proved not to be fit for task given the varied nature of the activities.

Facilitation traverses a variety of activities including running blogs, magazines, and websites, canvassing for donations, managing finances and dispersing donations through networks. In many countries, such financial contributions are legal. It also covers illegal activities, such as providing safe accommodation for violent actors and obtaining illicit weapons and materials for others to use – making some of them extremists by definition. Illegal activities by facilitators appear to occur in conjunction with organisational links to illicit groups such as Blood and Honour (BnH) and the National Socialist Underground (NSU). Because facilitation infers the assistance of others, it was not observable in instances of dyads or lone actors, making it therefore linked to groups and organisations.

Table 3: Facilitators

| Name and Nation | Ideological Alignment | Organisational Links | Role |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Vigdís, aka Nicole Childers  United States | White supremacy , neo Nazi | Hammerskins, WAU | Vigdís was a moderator for Hammerskin Nation’s Forum 38, writes for Women for the Aryan Unity, and actively posts in Stormfront (Potok 2013), effectively bridging WAU and Hammerskin movements. |
| Vicky Cahill  United States | White supremacy, neo Nazi | WAU BnH | Cahill is a leader of WAU who fundraises for WAU, promotes networks with BnH whom she did weapons training with, and posts Stormfront. (Potok 2013) |
| Women for Aryan Unity  Transnational | White supremacy, neo-Nazi, wotansvolk | BnH, Combat 18, Hammerskins | Women for Aryan Unity canvass for donations which are distributed to white children, and also to incarcerated right wing extremists through the Adopt a Bruder program. They sell far right paraphernalia, run raffles, and competitions (WAU 2020). |
| Kathleen Metzger  United States | White supremacy | Aryan Women’s League | Metzger was the wife of Tom Metzger of White Aryan Resistance (WAR). In the late 1980s, she ran the Aryan Women’s League as a supplementary group, and published a Far right materials focusing on home, family, and white birth rates. (Belew 2018)167 |
| Claudia Patatas  United Kingdom | Neo-Nazism | National Action | Patatas was convicted of membership to National Action, a proscribed terrorist group in the United Kingdom. She was active in private discussions, allegedly saying that ‘all Jews must be put to death” but the extent of her activity is not yet public (Simone 2018). |
| Antje Probst  Germany | Neo-Nazism | BnH, NSU | Probst and her husband owned Far-Right apparel store and sold military items in Saxony. She gave her passport to Zschape and make plans with BnH to extradite the NSU trio to South Africa. (Koehler 2017)144 |
| Many Struck  Germany | Neo-Nazism | BnH, NSU, White Brotherhood Erzgebirge (WBE) | Struck was part of a BnH subsection, White Brotherhood Erzgebirge (WBE) living in Chemnitz. Struck and her boyfriend gave their names to NSU to use as alias personalities, with Zschape using Struck’s identity. In a separate event, Struck and her boyfriend also provided a safe house for two skinheads from the 88ers in the late nineties. (Koehler 2017)144 |
| Juliane Walther  Germany | Neo-Nazism | BnH, NSU | Walther and her boyfriend supported NSU in the late nineties by reclaiming Zschapes keys, and otherwise securing evidence or items for NSU. (Koehler 2017) 137 |
| Suzanne Tornatzky  United States | White supremacy | The Order | Tornatzky helped count $3.5 million stolen by The Order from an armoured car in 1985. She also helped plan another robbery which was never undertaken. (AP 1985) |
| Deborah Davila  United States | Neo-Nazi | Aryan Nations | Davila, with husband Rafael Davila, were charged with illegally obtaining top secret military documents to disseminate for profit in 1999. Deborah sold three packets of documents for $6,000. (AP 2003) |

### Fourth Form: Promoters

In contrast to the thinkers, promoters are actors who engage in information sharing, dissemination and provocation (commonly online), but who largely re-package and share ideas rather than create them. The term “promoter” has been selected because it has neutral connotations aligned with the dissemination or promotion of ideas. The term “propagandist” has similar meaning, but carries further implications of “deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour” – with emphasis particularly on its deliberate nature (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006)269. Others suggest propaganda is “intentionally manipulative and deceptive” (Walton 2007)93. There is that there is little evidence to suggest that actors in this domain are being deliberately deceptive, but rather, subscribe to ideological worldviews in which RWE content is accepted as axiomatic truth. Few promotors explicitly call for violence, and many could be considered radical right rather than extreme.

Promoters play a significant role in ideological magnification. They are skilled at re-packaging the ideas of others, taking abstract theories and making them readily understandable. This can provide a translation-type service between thinkers and various audiences. Promotion uses many platforms, canvassing Youtube, podcasts, blogs, Instagram, and artistic content creation on Telegram. Promoters themselves can be public individuals, or hide behind only pseudonyms. While pseudonyms obscure identity, the representation of being female has influence over the perceived legitimacy of the message. Promoters are also highly networked, sometimes with thinkers. For example, Lauren Southern, Tara McCarthy, Brittany Sellner, Bre Faucheux, Robyn Riley, and Blonde in the Belly of the Beast all cross-promote each other’s content, and to content hosted by male promoters. In Telegram, promoters such as the Right Wing Art Squad, also cross-distribute artistic works promoting RWE.

Table 4: Promoters

| Name | Ideological Alignment | Organisational Links | Roles |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Katja Lane  United States | White supremacy, wotansvolk | The Order | Lane, with husband David, created the publishing outfit, 14 Words Press, which Katja ran to disperse David Lane’s ideological writings (Michael 2009a). |
| Brittany Pettibone nee Sellner  United States | Conservative | NA | Sellner is a social media personality who ran a podcast called *Virtue of The West*, and was active in the 2017 Defend Europe campaign (Ganesh 2018). Her videos often focus on women’s issues. |
| Liv Heide  United States | White supremacy | American Renaissance | Heide is a blogger and writer for American Renaissance who writes on topics such a single-ethnic couples, white dating, and anti-miscegenation. (Heide 2017 - 2019) |
| Cecilia Davonport  Germany | Alt-right, white nationalism | Radix Journal | Davenport was a blogger and writer for altright.com and Radix journal between 2016 and 2017, and has been described as one of the “poster girls” (Gaugele 2019). |
| SOPH  United States | White supremacy | NA | SOPH is a fourteen year old Youtube personality who went viral in 2019 for her sarcastic video Be Not Afraid in which she wears a hijab and targets Muslims (among others) which gained 800,000 views (Bernstein 2019). |
| Laura Towler  United Kingdom | White nationalist | Patriotic Alternative | Towler is a Youtube creator with 50.7 thousand subscribers as of April 2020, who promotes replacement theory, white identity politics, and the deportation of migrants to achieve a white Britain (Towler 2020). |
| Bre Faucheux | White supremacy | NA | Faucheux runs the No Time For Silence website, which acts as an index to promote Extreme right individuals, from Adolf Hitler to William Pierce to fellow women such as Laura Southern; and ideas such as white genocide, ZOG, white guilt, and replacement (Faucheux n.d). |
| Blonde in the Belly of the Beast | White supremacy | NA | Beast is a podcaster and Youtuber with 127,000 subscribers as of April 2020. One video seeks to excuse and explain the actions of terrorist Brenton Tarrant as a logical reaction to western culture and nihilism, which was watched over a hundred thousand times (Beast 2019). |
| Robyn Riley  Canada | White nationalist | NA | Riley is a Youtuber with 31.2K subscribers, who ran popular series including Girl Talk, where she talked with other promoters, and other clips. Her most popular video, “I lost all my friends in the culture war” was viewed 234K times (Riley 2020). |
| Carolyn Emerick | Identitarian | NA | Emerick is a writer and author, as well as editor of the “first unabashedly pro-west history and culture magazine, Europa Sun” according to her Amazon profile (Emerick 2017 - 2019). |
| Faith J Goldy  Canada | White nationalism | NA | Goldy is a Youtube personality with 104,000 subscribers as of April 2020. She talks on matters of identity, nationalism, Catholicism, degeneracy, and recently made an unsuccessful bid for mayor of Toronto (Goldy 2020). |
| Daisy Cousens  Australia | Alt Right | NA | Cousens is a Youtuber with 160k subscribers, who also contributes to Sky News promoting alt right ideas, and frequently targeting female politicians (Cousens 2020). |
| Dia Beltran  Australia | Alt Right | NA | Beltran is a Youtuber with 3.27K subscribers, who frequently interviews other alt right personalities such as Lana Lokteff, Avi Yemini, and Gavin McInnes (Beltran 2020). |
| Olena Semenyaka  Ukraine | Neo-Nazism | Azov Battalion | Semenyaka is the leader of the International Department for the National Corps, linked to neo-Nazi Azov Battalion (FBI 2017). She is the spokesperson for the movement (Colborne 2019). |
| Gemma Bernadette Kits  Estonia | White nationalism | Allegedly Blue Alarm | Instagramer (@gemkits) with 1109 followers as of April 2020 who shares white nationalist content, frequently with the white power “okay” hand movement, and has been accused of trolling. |
| Melissa Guille  Canada | White supremacy | Canadian Heritage Alliance | Guille designs and maintains the website of the Canadian Heritage Alliance, considered to be a white supremacy group (Monteiro 2001). |
| Rachel Pendergraft  United States | White supremacy, Christian Identity | Knights Party of the KKK | Pendergraft and her father host a weekly radio and television show (Dentice 2013). As of 2015, Pendergraft is the national membership coordinator of the Knights Party of the Ku Klux Klan (Chan 2015). |
| Philosophi­\_­Cat  United States | White nationalism | NA | Twitter user, @Philosophi\_Cat (aka Cat Weiss) has 6,654 followers as of April 2020, and runs a Youtube channel with 9,34k subscribers discussing concepts like femininity, gender interactions, and a series called Revolt against the Modern World (PhilosophiCat 2020). |
| Manoncaroni  Unknown | White supremacy | Right Wing Art Squad | This individual draws in Manga / Waifu style. She restyles existing XRW memes, such as those depicting Christchurch terrorist Brenton Tarrant, and using prominent RWE symbols (Manoncaroni 2020). |
| Missgore-houndart  Unknown | White supremacy | Right Wing Art Squad | This individual posts their own Waifu style drawings, redistributes memes, drawings, and content celebrating Brenton Tarrant and Dylan Roof. She encourages women to have children or martyr themselves (MissGorehoundArt 2020). |
| FrauleinFash-Art  Unknown | Neo-Nazi | Right Wing Art Squad | FrauleinFashArt posts their own memes, usually modified graphic photographs, which commonly celebrate Hitler, Nazi Germany, and female shieldmaidens (FrauleinFashArt 2020). |
| Cami Debolt  United States | Neo-Nazi | National Socialist Movement | Debolt is a fetish model who poses for NSM records and Deviant Art, and online advertising companies (Potok 2013). |
| Leni Riefenstahl  Germany | Nazi | Third Reich | Riefenstahl was an actress and cinematographer during Nazi Germany. A scene from her film, Triumph of the Will, depicted Nazis marching through the streets with torchers chanting “You will not replace us” – a scene replicated in Charlottesville 2017. She is celebrated on Bre Faucheux’s website. |

### Fifth Form: Activists

The fifth form of participation is activism. Activism is the most populace domain of participation, and most individuals noted in all proceeding forms can be considered activists as well. The term “supporter” was considered because it infers actors who support ideas, groups, or people and also pervades the private sphere, but the issue with this term is how academics can measure the authenticity of that support if not through deeds. The term “activist” was chosen because it infers agency and choice to the actor, and has connotations with direct and noticeable action to achieve political or social change in the public sphere. Activism is used here to describe active participation and support for individuals, organisations, and movements associated with RWE subcultures. They are commonly aligned with the radical right than the extreme.

In the public sphere, activists are individuals who front and attend rallies, protests, political meetings, and/or social meetings. They can engage in stickering and postering while not being content generators, as is the case with the women in Antipodean Resistance. They can engage in pamphleteering for licit organisations, and also hold formal or public positions therein, such as with the BNP. Some activists work in an organisational capacity, arranging social events for women alongside more traditional male-dominated political events, and found organisational offshoots. Activists are often intrinsic to the establishment and maintenance of formal and informal networks through such work. Activism can also take place in the private sphere, with respect to quiverful and unrestricted procreation. While quiverful is a theological position, it is also championed by some in RWE to boost white birth-rates as part of a defence against ethnic replacement. Activism spans public and private spheres, and encompasses an array of activities.

Table 5: Activists

| Name and Nation | Ideological Alignment | Organisational Links | Roles |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ricarda Reifling  Germany | Neo-Nazism | Brown Cross  NDP | Reifling was a member and later leader of the Ring of National Women within the National Democratic Party of Germany (NDP) (Fekete 2012). |
| Lisa Beulah (nee Sandford)  Australia | Neo-Nazism | One Nation, Lads Society | Beulah and her husband were found to be involved in a fascist group which infiltrated the Young Nationals group in New South Wales, Australia in 2018 in order to distort their immigration policy. She was known as MsNatSocialist on Discord forums (Worthington, Investigations, and Tighe 2019). |
| Anais Ligner  German | Identitarian | NA | Leads self-defense courses for white women to protect themselves from being raped by Muslim refugees (Zuquete 2018)186. |
| Annika Franziska | Identatarian | Female wing of Generazione Identitaria | Leader of the 120 Decibels campaign. This is a campaign against the abuse of European Women by migrants. The campaign invokes Ebba, Mia, and Maria (Zuquete 2018)193. |
| April Gaede  United States | Neo-Nazi | National Vanguard, various others | Gaede was the mother of the twin girls who performed in Prussian Blue, and she received David Lane’s body after his death in prison (SPLC 2020). |
| Suzy Cass | White nationalism | British National Party Wives | Cass was one of the founders of BNP Wives who was interviewed by SkyTV in 2008 (Durham 2015)81. |
| Sharon Ebanks  United Kingdom | White nationalism | British National Party | Ebanks was the successful BNP candidate for Birmingham in 2007, but lost her seat after a recount (Durham 2015)73. |
| Cathy Duffy  United Kingdom | White nationalism | British National Party | Duffy was the BNP candidate of Charnwood who was successfully elected in 2007 (Durham 2015)73. |
| Sadie Graham  United Kingdom | White nationalism | British National Party | Graham was the BNP party development officer. She was later expelled from the party. (Durham 2015)81. |
| Jennifer Griffin | White nationalism | British National Party | Daughter of Chairman Nick Griffin, Jennifer often spoke on behalf of the BNP and sought a leadership role (Durham 2015)82. |
| Sharon Edwards | White Nationalism | British National Party | In the late 1990s, Edwards stood as deputy to the BNP chairman, and organised the family offshoot, Renaissance, and family fun days (Durham 2015)79. |
| Bev Jones  United Kingdom | White nationalism | British National Party | Jones was the North-West regional organiser for the BNP and acted as a spokesperson (Durham 2015)80. She was later expelled from the party. |
| Marlene Guest  United Kingdom | White nationalism | British National Party, BNP Wives | Guest was a BNP organiser and frequent party candidate in Rotherham (Durham 2015)81. She also featured in the SKYTV BNP Wives documentary. |
| Lynne Mozar  United Kingdom | White nationalism | PROFAM and BNP Wives | Mozar set up the PROFAM website ostensibly separate to BNP, while she herself held BNP membership (Durham 2015)79. |
| Kay Ryan | White supremacy | AKKKK | Ryan is also known as Kathryn Christy Sonner Negley Hedrick. In 1999, Ryan was the state leader of the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (AK KKK) in Pennsylvania (SPLC 1999). |
| Ann Corcoran  United States | Anti-immigration | NA | Corcoran is an anti-immigration and anti-refugee activist who heads Refugee Resettlement Watch and is the author of *Refugee Resettlement and Hijra to America* (Griswold 2016). |
| Alison Weir  United Kingdom | Anti-Semitism | NA | Weir runs If Americans Knew, an organisation which claims to tell Americans the truth which is supposedly withheld by news media. The ADL argues that Weir is anti-Semitic (ADL 2013) |
| Alison Chabloz | Anti-Semitism | NA | Chabloz is a blogger known for writing and performing songs which mock the holocaust. She was convicted and handed a 20 week suspended sentence (2019). |
| Monika Schaefer  Canada | Holocaust denial | NA | Schaefer is a Youtube personality known for calling the Holocaust the “six-million lie.” Schaefer, and her brother Alfred, were convicted for incitement to hatred while in Germany for Sylvia Stolz’s trial for the same charge (Snowdon 2018). |
| Zillah Craig  United States | Christian Identity | The Order, Bruder Schweigen | Zillah was the daughter of Jean Craig of The Order, who became the mistress of Robert Mathews, and mother of his child (Barkun 1997)230. |
| Brandi Houston  United States | White supremacy, Creativity | World Church of the Creator | In 1999, Houston was the leader of the California chapter of the WCTOC called “Sisterhood” (SPLC 1999). She published a newsletter and engaged in propaganda creation and distribution, events organising, and recruiting. |
| Melody La Rue  United States | White supremacy,  Creativity | World Church of the Creator | In 1999, La Rue was the leader of the Washington Chapter of the WCTIC called “Sisterhood” (SPLC 1999). She also published in the Sisterhood newsletter. |
| Rosemary Sisson  Australia | Neo-Nazi | National Front | Sisson was, for a short time, leader of the National Front in Australia (1980). She also had connections with the National Front in New Zealand. |
| Mary Bacon  United States | White supremacy | KKK | Bacon was a prominent American jockey who became publically linked to the KKK in 1974. She told media that ‘When one of your wives or one of your sisters gets raped by a nigger, maybe you'll get smart and join the Klan’ (Klemesrud 1975). |
| Sandra Bergeron | White supremacy | KKK | Bergeron was area coordinator for the KKK in New Orleans (Klemesrud 1975). |
| Sharida Hoyt  United States | White supremacy | KKK | Hoyt was Exalted Cyclops of New Orleans den of the KKK (Klemesrud 1975). |
| Janice Schoonmaker  United States | White supremacy | KKK | Schoonmaker was the director of the Northern Independent Ku Klux Klan of New York State (Klemesrud 1975). |
| Barbara Wilkinson United States | White supremacy | KKK | Wilkinson was the information officer for the KKK in her congressional district (Klemesrud 1975). |
| Chloe Duke  United States | White supremacy | KKK | Wife of David Duke, Chloe was Grand Geni of a Louisianan Klan chapter (Klemesrud 1975). |
| Judy Badon | White supremacy | KKK | Badon was a member of the KKK in Louisiana and part of the same den as Duke (Klemesrud 1975). |

### Sixth Form: Exemplars

Finally, there are exemplars. This is not defined solely by the participation of women, but by the cultural constructions and celebrations of them. These constructions turn women into symbols, into the saints and heroines of their respective subcultures. The term “exemplar” was chosen here because it is defined as a person serving a high standard which should be imitated or copied by others. It is used here to describe individuals who are elevated within subcultures as the ultimate or idealised model of femineity. The term “example” was not chosen because it can be considered representative or typical of all things in a group, rather than a standard to achieve. Similarly, the term “icon” was not used because it usually connotes veneration which, while evident with some examples, is not so evident among others.

Exemplars epitomise a desired and idealised female identity. They become icons of the movement through sacrifice and martyrdom; by symbolises certain value-sets including devotion to male partners; and by personifying a way of life glorified within RWE milieus. They can gain significance through death, or the death of a male partner. They can be deliberate, symbolic and performative actors; or symbolism can be attributed to them *ex post facto*. The exemplars, through their actions and also through the narratives which are created to interpret these actions, can become the idealised feminine models in extreme right milieus. One of these feminine models is the Tradwife movement, which can be described as women who abide by nostalgic interpretations of the traditional family unit, and have political opposition to feminism, Islam, immigration and multiculturalism (Stendahl 2020). Among participants, the Tradwife life is seen as the salvage of lost white womanhood and the ultimate expression of liberated femineity – free from mainstream oppression and corruption.

Table 6: Exemplars

| Name | Ideological Alignment | Organisational Links | Roles |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sheila Beam  United States | Christian Identity | KKK, various militias, Aryan Nations | Beam was the fourth wife of Louis Beam. When he was arrested by authorities in 1987, Sheila shot at an officer, wounding him. She was injured by arresting officers, and her injuring became part of the narrative created around her injuries: that of a defenceless, innocent white woman, willing to sacrifice her life out of devotion to her husband. Belew (2018)176 suggests the community rallied around Sheila, who became a symbol of white sacrifice and used her platform to protest her husband’s innocence. |
| Vikki Weaver | Christian Identity | Aryan Nations | Vikki Weaver was the wife of Randy Weaver and mother to an infant daughter. During the Siege of Ruby Ridge, Vikki Weaver held the door open for Randy as government snipers shot at him, whilst holding her daughter. A stray bullet passed through the door and killed Vikki. The RWE community rallied at her death, describing her as “the model white woman they failed to protect from a rampant super state” (Belew 2018)188. |
| Debbie Mathews | White supremacy | The Order | Mathews was the wife of Robert J. Mathews who, after his death, achieved celebrity status as his “honoured widow” according to Belew (2018)198. |
| TRADwives | Various | NA | The TRADwife movement has many Far Right champions, such as Ayla Stewart of the White Baby Challenge, Lacey Lynn, Alena Kate Pettitt, and the Blonde Buttermaker. These individuals are seen to be conform to the idealised standard, often countering feminist narratives by arguing the natural role of women as wives and mothers. In the Far Right, this becomes a racial position as a reclamation of white heritage, culture, traditions and identity. |
| Miss Hitler Contestants | Neo-Nazi | National Action | National Action ran the Miss Hitler contest in 2016. One contestant, Alice Cutter, entered under the name “Buchenwald princess”, alongside the “Galloping Gestapo”, “Lady of the Lolocaust”, “SugardustedSchutzsta el”, “Eva Bin Gassin”, and “xXKaminski-KochXx”. The point of this contest was allegedly to recruit more female members and to raise the group’s profile. Cutter said that “we need to be the lionesses we ought to be and rip apart hyenas laughing at us as we get raped, beaten, brainwashed and de-feminised en mass” (Halliday 2019). |
| Marika Rokk |  |  | Rokk was dancer, singer, and actress who was considered the epitome of beauty in Nazi Germany. Many styles and beauty models are modelled off her style, with particular reference to her frequent use of winged eyeliner being imitated by female far right Youtubers including Bre Faucheux. |
| Katherine  (fictional) | White supremacist | The Organisation | Katherine was a female member of The Organisation in *The Turner Diaries* fictional novel (MacDonald 1978) who works as a propagandist. She becomes the lover of the protagonist, Earl Turner, and is portrayed as a steadfast and loyal partner doing her part for the revolution (but not a violent actor). |

# Implications

The implications of female participation in various terrorist movements is often recognised *ex post facto*, such with the women of Islamic State (IS) (Spencer 2016, Khalil 2019). The first operational challenge posed by IS women was delineating the scope and focus of female involvement beyond the ideological constructions on women. The second challenge was reconciling the ultraconservative ideology with the appeal it held to female IS members (Europol 2019, Khelghat-Doost 2017). In the extreme right, there are similar challenges regarding the operational behaviour and norms of women, and the ideological space in which they operate. The operational implications will be addressed first, as most of these should come as no surprise given extensive female involvement in modern terrorism.

## Operational Implications

Female violent actors participate in a variety of kinetic operations. In the past, this violence has commonly been connected with females who are part of organised groups, such as The Order. Recently, it would appear female violent actors often form as half of a dyad: a pair of individuals independent of a group or wider network, as defined by Knight, Keatley, and Woodward (2019). This would suggest that female actors do not require the normative environment of a group to turn to violence, meaning that membership in groups or organisations is not always indicative of the violent propensity. Their range is extensive, with bomb plots, arson, shootings, and assassination/murder amongst the more recent activities. This means that, far women only being the wives of the movement, they can be wolves, engaging in direct violent activity, motivated by extreme right beliefs.

Females can also facilitate operations and provide resources. The more recent examples of facilitation come from the women of BnH who supported the NSU in Germany, providing NSU with support which extended to passports, aliases, safe houses, and securing materials. The canvassing, management and expenditure of donations by female members plays a significant role in facilitating or sustaining movements. These actors can work below the threat detection threshold. As a consequence, facilitators are a valuable source of intelligence for financial crime investigators as well as counter terrorism investigators, as they tend to span multiple networks and stratus. Such intelligence can explain how RWE movements and networks are supported and sustained.

Female activists and promoters pose a very different challenge. As they often have public profiles, the threat posed by female activists is fundamentally distinct. They engage with the public openly, rather than seeking to remain below the threat detection threshold. They can hold formal positions, attend rallies and protests, and lead campaigns in defence of white women, such as the 120 Decibels campaign. Through this, activists are able to normalise attitudes and behaviours and shift the public discourse. Promoters, meanwhile, are able to use the activist networks to cross-promote ideas and expand their reach to recruit. They are able to buttress the movement against criticisms such as misogyny, and shape female discourse on topics such as feminism. The implications of this is the magnification of identity politics and the subsequent slow erosion of democratic principles.

## Ideological Implications

The contentious inclusion of the male supremacy (also referred to as Incels, meaning Involuntary Celibates) under the extreme right ideational nexus can obscure the appeal RWE ideology has for women.[[3]](#footnote-3) Ideology is not a passive or static system, but rather, lived social reality: “an essential element of every social formation” according to Althusser, cited by (Ackerman and Burnham 2019). If ideology, then, is a consequence of social formations, we must conceptualise female participation in the ideology as a consequence of their interaction within those subcultures. It is through participation, then, that the ideological implications are manifest. This is shaped by three forms of participation.

The thinkers play a role in the construction of ideology itself. As seen with earlier thinkers such as Lane, Paterson and Rand, women were able to make original contributions to theory regarding free market fundamentalism and right Libertarian ideas. More recently, thinkers such as Lokteff, Southern, and McCarthy are able to counter Left progressivism and feminism by trading on identity politics, femineity, and gender relations. They especially celebrate ethno-nationalism as a traditional, natural, and desirable way of living and the last hope for white civilisation. This provides a cohesive set of ideas which firmly bridge traditional lifestyles, gender and mainstream conservatism with extreme right perils such as white genocide. Thinkers not only engage with ideology, but shape it.

The promoters play a role in propagating narratives of white women’s peril on the one hand, and gendered complementarity on the other, as noted by Mattheis (2018). Promoters especially engage with narratives on sex realism. Sex realism is the belief that women are not equal to men, but adherents argue that inequality does not necessarily make women lesser. Women are instead portrayed as fundamentally different to men, which makes equality neither possible nor desirable. They also challenge feminism, target female politicians, and celebrate exemplar tropes. This is often framed in accordance with what some label Nature’s Laws (Gardell 2003)133, or the natural order (Campion 2019). The implication is that, while promoters magnify RWE ideology and challenge feminist discourses, they also create an alternative interpretation of reality which can foster female (and male) ideological engagement.

The exemplars have the highest ideological significance. They may be loyal wives and widows, innocent martyrs, or the reproduction future of a peoples with some radiant destiny. Racial purity and motherhood are inseparable, intertwined as the salvation of the race. Through emulating exemplars, participants may find identity security and significance. Kruglanski (2020)67 suggests the quest for significance leads into extremism, where individuals can fulfil fundamentals needs and allows them to “live up to their gender expectations.” It may be argued that RWE expressions of femineity allow adherents to attain identity security and significance through the performance of gendered role, imitating the exemplars. The exemplars provide the highest standard of behaviour, and it is upon that standard that transgressors can be condemned (Gardell 2003), or conformers welcomed.

This stands somewhat in contrast to male supremacy. The ADL found a “symbiosis between misogyny and white supremacy,” bridged by opposition to feminism and veneration of the natural order (ADL 2020). The Southern Poverty Law Centre (SPLC) describes male supremacy as a “ideology advocating for the subjugation of women,” citing key ideas such as opposition to Cultural Marxism, Feminism, and gender equality, and violence against women (SPLC 2018). DiBranco (2020)2, moreover, found male supremacism was based on the belief men should be entitled to sexual access to women, and that feminism is a “malevolent force controlling society.” Jackson (2019)3, however, states male supremacy should be conceptualised as its “own form of extremism.” It is argued here that while there are misogynist elements within and beyond the extreme right, there are nonetheless female participants who are active, not passive, contributors to the ideological environment.

## Identity Implications

Ideology shapes the desired social and collective identity. The exemplars, through romanticisation, become the desired archetype and project social identity in the subculture. Lauren Southern speaks of Venus; Philosophi\_Cat talks of the Demeter and Aphrodite complex; Lana Lokteff describes the reluctant Viking shieldmaidens. The Right Wing Art Squad project female beauty and combat-readiness through manga and waifu styles. A European aesthetic is frequently used, exploiting pre-Raphaelite artistry, styles from the 1940s and 1950s, and genteel historical photos to symbolise lost innocence and purity in an increasingly corrupt modern world. The women in this visual aesthetic combine archetype and identity – the reconquest of which is considered the salvage of pure white womanhood. In accepting ideology and assuming identity, female adherents engage idealisation, but also in self-realisation, finding identity security, entitativity, and belonging. This can occur across the forms of participation, with identity to be found in violence as much as promotion, activism or procreation.

The consequence of this interchange is the manifestation of an ideological ecosystem. It is an ecosystem because it has the characteristics of particular community interacting with in a specific environment. In extreme right subcultures, members interact with ideology through their social formations and realities. They are active contributors, emitters, and disseminators of ideology. Interaction is key, and interdependency is common. Adherents do not always shelter in the typical ‘echo-chamber’ which confirms existing beliefs (Behr et al. 2013), which frames ideological reception as one way. Rather, women in the extreme and radical right flourish in an ideological ecosystem where active participation shapes the very environment in which they thrive. It is organic, and because of that organic nature it has the propensity to shift and adapt according to conditions. The ideological ecosystem provides women with constructions of idealised femineity, interactional gender norms, and the ability to shape and contribute to the ideology itself. Within that ecosystem, women can be wives or wolves – or both.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, women in the extreme right engage in six forms of participation that range from violent to nonviolent and from public to private. This participation can take form as kinetic and violent threats, to facilitating the violent operations of others, to sustaining networks through finance management. Beyond this, they are able to make original contributions to ideology, to shape discourses, champion causes, and express entitativity through the emulation of exemplars. Rather than having forms of participation deliberately constructed and assigned, female participation is agile because the ideology itself is adaptive, and can be shaped and reshaped by female participants. Women in both the radical and extreme right are able to interact in an ideological ecosystem which positions them as the key to racial salvation, legitimises violent and nonviolent action, and enables them to select and project an idealised and ideologically loaded expression of femininity. Through such participation, women can find identity security and meaning – both of which need to be addressed if the allure of the extreme right is to be effectively challenged.

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1. This is not comprehensive coverage of women engaged in hate crime, especially given the skinhead movements Red Shoelace initiation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. While these women were the only ones convicted of crimes related to The Order, Belew notes that the wives, girlfriends, and daughters of The Order performed a significant amount of support work (Belew 2018)129. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Largely driven by the Toronto massage parlour stabbing on 24 February 2020, Scott Beierle’s attack on 2 November 2018 in Tallahassee, Alek Minassian’s alleged attack on 23 April 2018 in Toronto, and Elliot Rodgers’ attack on 23 May 2014 in Isla Vista. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)