

## **Call for Papers: ‘Critical Feminist Theorising on “the manosphere” : gender, inequality and power in the digital age’**

Digital technologies provide a platform to enhance human communication and knowledge. These positive attributes notwithstanding, online spaces are increasingly shot through with ‘technosocial practices of online misogyny’ (Penny 2013). The locus of this misogyny is the constellation of anti feminist online male peer groups called ‘manosphere’ (Ging 2017). Spurred on by the affordances of digital technologies, young men congregate online and direct their aggrieved sense of male entitlement at women. To be sure, not all online abuse is directed at women. It is the case that women comprise the majority of those subjected to forms of online sexual abuse and gender-based violence.

The pace at which digital technologies are developing means that we need more granular empirical research in this area. And yet, it is impossible to expand our knowledge base without theory. Particularly, if we want to change the socio-economic, cultural, political and legal conditions that enable the manosphere to exist and flourish. Therefore, we must go beyond explaining and interpreting digital spaces such as the manosphere, and become catalysts for change by decolonising masculinist digital spaces.

Critical feminist research has been at the forefront of theoretical development around technology-facilitated gender-based harms. Researchers argue that such harms are not discrete or new phenomena that exist outside social relations. But rather, they are expressions of a continuum of misogynistic practices that are embedded in, and reproduce, gendered power relations, systems of inequality and patriarchy that pre-date the internet and that have always structured social relations.

Taking inspiration from feminist scholarship, this Call for Papers invites contributions that use insights offered by critical, social and feminist theories to ‘think’ the manosphere differently. Specifically, it invites researchers to come together to discuss theoretical frameworks that reject the manosphere as either a ‘thing’ or as a ‘form of practice’ that somehow compels men to be misogynistic in their online behaviours (Adorno 2005). Instead, it calls for papers that view the manosphere as a social construction or the product of dominant and hegemonic cultural and institutional beliefs and practices that reflect and reinforce gender inequality. To approach online misogyny from this perspective is to attempt to extend our understanding of how the values, attitudes, beliefs, identities and desires that permeate the manosphere are rooted in older patterns of social experience. Social and critical theory has the tools to assist us to reveal the hidden workings of power and patriarchy that sustain the manosphere by enabling us to interrogate the mechanisms of gender inequality and oppression that uphold relations of domination and subordination in general and in the digital world.

We call for theory-informed papers that interrogate the following—but not limited to— areas relative to digital technologies:

- Patriarchy and sexual politics;
- Gender, technology and misogyny;
- Anonymity; identity politics and public sphere
- Masculinity, homo-sociality and hate crimes;
- Intimate privacy violations, gender and consent;
- Human rights, law and policy;
- Social justice and digital citizenship
- Gender-based and sexual violence;
- AI, gender and deepfake pornography;
- Technology companies and responsibility and
- Advocacy and organising.

We welcome researchers and activists working in this—and related fields—to submit abstracts of 150 words to [VAWG-RN@uos.ac.uk](mailto:VAWG-RN@uos.ac.uk) by **31 May 2025**

**For informal enquiries, please feel free to contact [admin@lexnetwork.org](mailto:admin@lexnetwork.org)**