

A backlash to gender equality in full swing:

**women teachers' experience of 'manfluencer'-
inspired sexism in Australian schools**

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Context: The Manosphere

- Tate belongs to an emerging ‘loose confederacy of interest groups’ (Ging 2019, p. 2) referred to as the ‘manosphere’
- Prolific content creators, whose main themes are centered on alleged erosion of men’s power and rights, and on encouraging boys and men to embody and enact traditional masculinity
- Exploit very real afflictions among men and boys: loneliness, rejection, poor mental health, economic struggle (Rich & Bujalka, 2023)
- Recent survey data from *The Men’s Project* (2024) has found that boys and men aged 18-30 years old who prescribe to limiting beliefs about masculinity are more likely to have perpetrated violence
- New research from the Dublin City University’s Anti-bullying centre shows that algorithms amplify misogynist, anti-feminist and masculinist content to boys’ accounts, regardless of whether users search for it



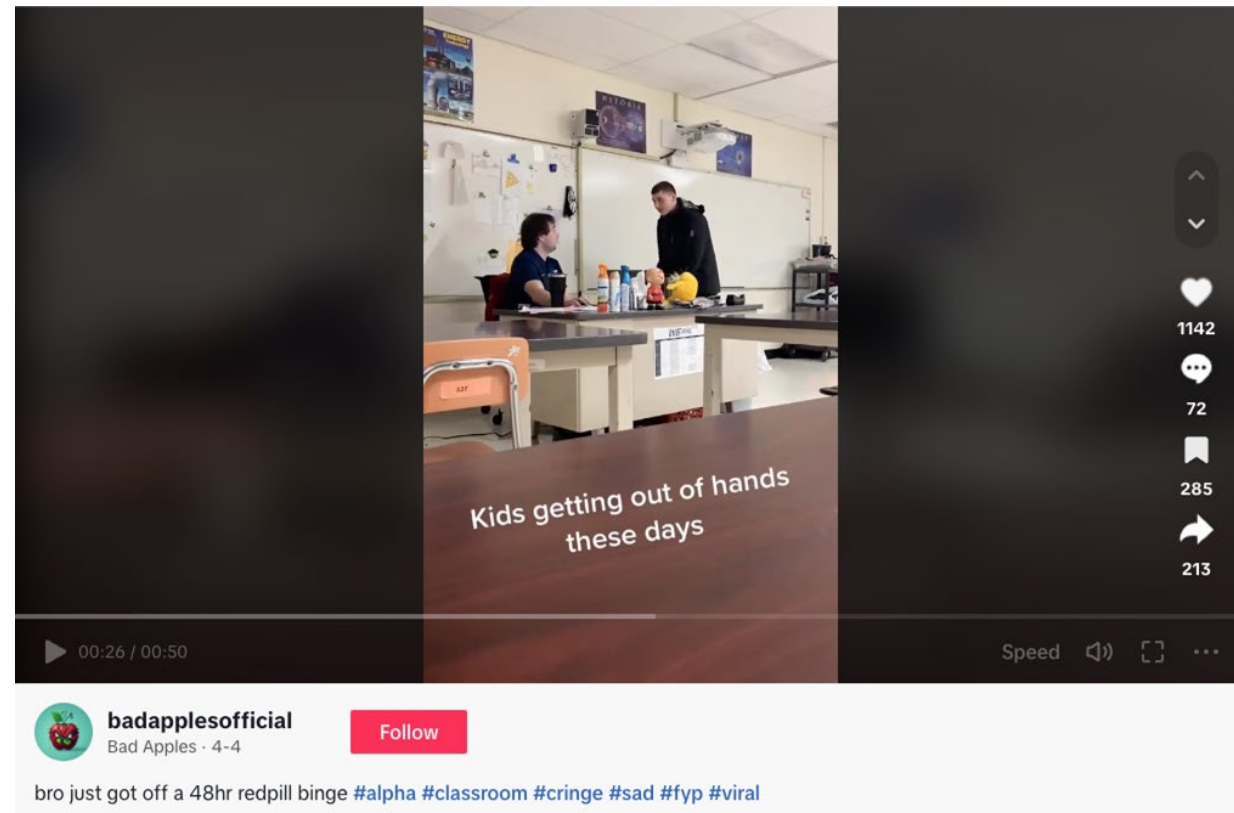
Context: Andrew Tate

- Extremist misogynist, recently charged with rape, human trafficking & organised group crime
- Referred to as a 'Manfluencer' - a term used to categorise figures who share regressive misogynist content online
- Although banned from various platforms, his content is still available and receives *billions* of views



Context: Tate's influence & schools

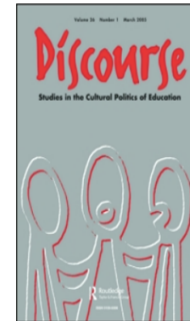
- Schools are important sites of masculinity formation (Connell 1996)
- Attention to this issue complements research described on effects of Tate's content on young people & relationships
- Academic research is only just beginning to explore how the influence of manosphere figures is presenting in schools – our study is one of the first globally
- Non academic work has illuminated that teenagers as young as 13 engaging with his content (Safer Schools 2023), although our research indicates even younger
- Young people who have viewed Tate content 5x more likely to have harmful views on relationships (Women's Aid 2023)



TikTok video of an American student telling his teacher he is the 'alpha' and that the alpha 'takes priority'

Caveat: there is a long-standing history of sexism & misogyny in Australian schools

- A longstanding and endemic problem but remains under-researched in Australia (Willis and Kenway 1986; Robinson 2000)
- A survey of almost 2000 members of the Australian Education Union (AEU) (2019) reported that 80% of those who have experienced sexual harassment in schools are women
- Occurs both in-person (in schools) (Robinson, 2000) and online (e.g., social media) (Variyan and Wilkinson 2022), resulting in teachers' feelings of humiliation and fear and thoughts of leaving teaching profession (Lahelma, Palmu, and Gordon 2000)
- Often being seen as a discipline problem rather than a problem of gender and power (Robinson, 2000)
- School's trivialisation and silencing of boys' perpetration of women particularly pervasive in elite boys' schools (Variyan




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"Great Tits, Miss!" The silencing of male students' sexual harassment of female teachers in secondary schools: A focus on gendered authority

Kerry Robinson



First phase study design & participants

- 60+ expressions of interest
- Recruited 30 women teachers from government, Catholic and Independent schools in Tasmania, Victoria, SA, NSW, WA & QLD
- Both primary and secondary teachers were interviewed
- Broad range of subject areas and career experience
- Interviews over Zoom ~1 hour across May-June 2023



Call for participants for research on

Misogynist radicalisation among boys in Australian schools

- Are you a woman-identifying teacher currently working in an Australian school?
- Have you noticed a shift in boys' treatment of women and girls?
- Do boys at your school follow and support figures such as Andrew Tate?

Dr Stephanie Wescott and Professor Steven Roberts (Monash University) are investigating boys' changing behaviour in response to the rise of radical misogynist figures such as Andrew Tate.

We would love to speak with you for a 45-minute Zoom interview. Your participation will be kept anonymous.

Please contact stephanie.wescott@monash.edu

This research has approval from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee
Project ID 37547

Key finding: Infiltration of Tate tropes & ideology

I'll bring up, you know, he's in prison for abusing women. That's why he's been arrested. And I've had boys say to my face, oh no, he didn't do that. The women are lying.

[Students say], 'Andrew Tate says women shouldn't be able to drive because they get in more accidents than men.' And like, they just tell me these things, and I tell them, 'I'm like, standing in front of you as a woman.'

**Key finding:
Widespread
sexual
harassment
and misogyny
in schools**

I've left this school because of sexual harassment from teenage boys. Disgusting behaviour, such as year 8 boys making sexual moaning noises in the classroom.

You just hear them talking behind your back about what you're wearing, or 'Miss, your boobs look really big today.'

**Key finding: A
resurgent
masculinist
supremacy in
schools**

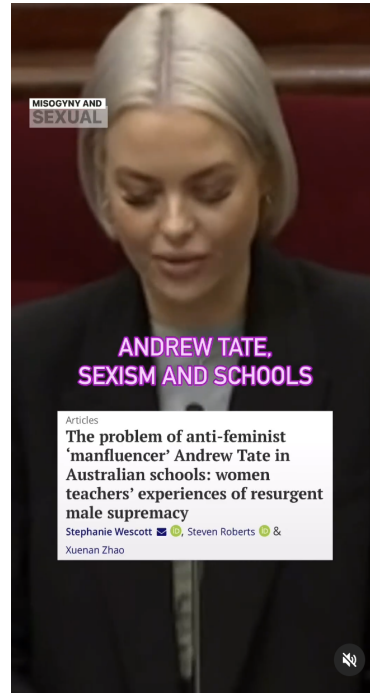
The entitlement and audacity that a lot of male students are having...it was just wearing me down a lot. And that sense of responsibility of trying to cut through this really deep seated hatred and disdain... in particular for women

I've had to learn how to have a more constructive conversation without me having to actually defend myself against Andrew Tate to a 15-year-old boy, which is not something that I feel like I should have to do in my professional life.

Future directions

- We need an urgent study into the wider prevalence of this phenomena – it's very present but the detailed stats will help drive the necessary next steps.
- We need the federal government to lead a national campaign calling for a zero-tolerance approach to violence against women and girls in schools. It needs to specifically use the words "sexism", "misogyny" and "violence against women".
- We need national, consistent guidelines and advice for schools on how to respond to incidents of sexism, sexual harassment and misogyny, and a national code of conduct for sexism and sexual harassment in schools with reporting guidelines.
- Respectful Relationships Education should be mandatory across all Australian schools, and implemented as a whole-of-school approach.

Advocacy & awareness in Australian media



georgie.purcell.ajp • Follow
UVB • Masculinity

georgie.purcell.ajp Boys who disrespect girls can turn into dangerous men.

Boys need support and positive role modelling to grow into respectful, secure men.

But instead, research is telling us that while women teachers and the girls in their classes are subject to sexist abuse by boys, while school leadership does little to fix it.

I'm calling for an investigation into the problem, particularly school leadership responses to this harassment and abuse.

It's what experts say we need.

4,737 likes
3 May

Log in to like or comment.

Opinion

Stephanie Wescott, Steven Roberts | Schools need more support to stop the spread of toxic masculinity

By Stephanie Wescott, Steven Roberts
Updated June 14 2023 - 12:13pm, first published 5:30am | 1 Comment | [f](#) [x](#) [g](#) [m](#) [e](#)

Podcasts

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MARCH 2024 ESSAYS

The Tate race

By Anna Krien

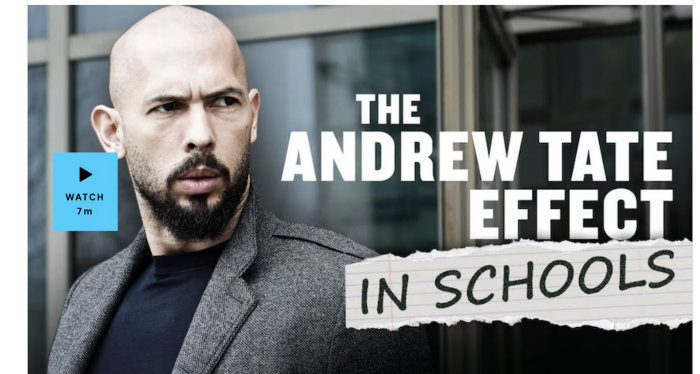


Andrew Tate attending his trial in Bucharest, Romania, July 2023. © Andreea Alexandru / AP Photo / AAP Images

Andrew Tate's ideology driving sexual harassment, sexism and misogyny in Australian classrooms

7:30 / By Norman Hermant and Ahmed Yussuf

Posted Tue 2 Apr 2024 at 5:50pm, updated Tue 2 Apr 2024 at 9:46pm



Andrew Tate's ideology inducing misogyny in Australian schools. (Norman Hermant)

Publications

GENDER AND EDUCATION
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2023.2292622>



OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

The problem of anti-feminist 'manfluencer' Andrew Tate in Australian schools: women teachers' experiences of resurgent male supremacy

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ABSTRACT

There is growing visibility of online 'manfluencers' who espouse extreme masculine ideals and share them with their audiences of boys and young men. Taking this phenomenon as a launch-pad, we join the tradition of research that exposes sexism in schools and theorizes girls and women's experiences of working within and against masculine hegemony. Drawing on qualitative interviews with 30 women teachers in Australia, we suggest the sexism identified in early research endures in schools today, resurrected in part by the ubiquity and influence of one specific misogynist 'manfluencer', Andrew Tate. Employing Connell's hegemonic masculinity, we suggest boys' sexist practices towards their teachers and girl peers forms part of a strategy of gender inequality legitimization, stabilizing and reinvigorating a regressive 'male supremacy'. These behaviours represent a backlash from boys and men who perceive a loss of gendered power in the post-#metoo era and have implications for girls and women in schools.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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KEYWORDS

Andrew Tate; hegemonic masculinity; sexism; teachers

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OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

Institutional responses to sexual harassment and misogyny of women teachers from boys in Australian schools in the post-#metoo era

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ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment and misogyny are historical experiences of the teaching workforce in Australia. While #metoo promised a moment of reckoning for all girls and women, this reckoning has been less acutely felt in Australian schools, evidenced by a persistence of sexual harassment and misogyny despite progress allegedly made in political and public discourse. In this paper, we draw on data from interviews with 30 women teachers and critically examine their reflections on responses from their school leadership to sexual harassment and misogyny from boys. We demonstrate that school-level responses to misogyny do not reflect broader attitudinal shifts initiated by #metoo, indicating that school leadership largely remains beholden to institutional norms and gender regimes that legitimate and consolidate practices of hegemonic masculinity that subordinate girls and women. We conclude by calling for a renewed focus on addressing cultures of misogyny and sexism in schools at both a policy and classroom level.

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KEYWORDS

Sexual harassment; educational leadership; Andrew Tate; gender regimes; gender order

EDUCATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST
<https://doi.org/10.1080/20590776.2024.2329083>



COMMENTARY

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To quell the problem, we must name the problem: the role of social media 'manfluencers' in boys' sexist behaviours in school settings

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KEY POINTS

What is already known about this topic:

- (1) Sexism and sexual harassment are longstanding issues in schools, identified by decades of research.
- (2) Young people who view social media masculinity 'influencer' content are more likely to normalise controlling and other harmful behaviours.
- (3) Narrow and limiting social constructions of masculinity are harmful for boys and young men's mental and general health.

What this topic adds:

- (1) Content by the most prominent masculinity influencer, Andrew Tate, has infiltrated classrooms across Australia; his tropes, quotes and ideas are invoked regularly by students.
- (2) Women teachers report a noticeable shift in boys' behaviour and attitudes towards women and girls that they attribute to Tate's influence.
- (3) Women teachers need greater support from school leadership to address boys' concerning attitudes and behaviour to make their workplace safe.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 26 December 2023
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KEYWORDS

Sexism; women teachers; social media; masculinity; boys; misogyny

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