

**Behind The Apron: Tradwife Culture, White Femininity, and Far-Right Radicalization on
Social Media**

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Introduction

A century ago, women in the U.S. Ku Klux Klan understood themselves as progressive even as they propagated a white-nationalist agenda, serving as the movement's promoters and its respectable public face. That history offers an uncomfortable lens for a contemporary phenomenon: the "tradwife," a social-media figure who presents traditional wifehood as an aspirational lifestyle for a new generation of women. This study takes seriously the possibility that, then as now, women are not bystanders to reactionary politics but among its most effective messengers.

Over the past several years, a genre of social-media content has made traditional wifehood newly visible and aspirational. Known as the "tradwife," or traditional wife, this figure publicly embraces homemaking, motherhood, and wifely submission, presenting them through a polished aesthetic of domestic warmth. The content is widely consumed as lifestyle material—cooking, homemaking, fashion, and family life—and is often received as apolitical. Yet a growing body of scholarship situates tradwife culture on a spectrum that runs from mainstream conservatism to overt far-right and white-nationalist ideology and identifies women not as passive participants in these movements but as active producers and promoters of their ideas. This study examines that tension. Its central problem is the gap between the "harmless" surface of tradwife content and the ideological commitments that can underlie it: how an aesthetic that appears to be about domesticity can also function to normalize anti-feminist, Christian-nationalist, and racial messaging, and to do so for a broad and politically diverse audience. The study approaches this not by asking whether individual creators are extremists—a question it cannot and does not answer—but by asking how the content itself is structured, and whether it is structured in ways that could serve as an accessible entry point toward harder ideology.

Accordingly, the study asks one primary research question: how do white women digital influencers use tradwife culture to commodify and normalize alt-right ideology across social media platforms, and how is this content structured to function as a potential gateway to far-right ideology? Three subquestions follow. First, what rhetorical and visual strategies do tradwife influencers use to make alt-right ideology appealing and accessible (SQ1)? Second, how does platform type shape the way tradwife content is framed and escalated (SQ2)? Third, how does tradwife content layer soft lifestyle aesthetics with harder ideological messaging in ways that construct a potential entry point to far-right ideology (SQ3)?

The study is significant for several fields. For media studies, it contributes a close account of how ideology travels through influencer culture and platform affordances. For feminist theory, it examines the paradox of “empowered submission,” in which the language of choice and empowerment is mobilized to market traditional gender roles. For platform policy and the study of online radicalization, it offers an analysis of how low-barrier lifestyle content can be structured as a gateway, and of how overt content migrates into closed and ephemeral spaces when mainstream platforms moderate it.

Several key terms recur throughout. The tradwife is a woman who publicly embraces an ultra-traditional marital and domestic role. The alt-right refers to a loosely organized, largely online movement premised on the belief that white identity is under threat. Commodification denotes the transformation of identity and ideology into marketable products through influencer practices. Radicalization is understood here as a gradual process by which audiences may be moved toward more extreme positions; consistent with the study’s design, the analysis concerns content that is structured to function as a potential gateway rather than measured effects on audiences.

The literature review situates the study within scholarship on tradwife culture, online white nationalism and the role of women within it, the commodification of ideology in influencer culture, and theories of online radicalization. The methodology section sets out the qualitative content-analysis design, the tiered creator sample, the codebook, and the analytic procedure. The findings section reports the results across five themes, and the discussion interprets them in light of the theoretical framework and answers the research questions. The conclusion summarizes the argument, considers its broader implications, states the study's limitations, and proposes directions for future research.

Literature Review

Scholarship on the tradwife, the “traditional wife” who publicly embraces homemaking, motherhood, and wifely submission, has emerged at the confluence of several distinct literatures, yet has rarely been brought into sustained dialogue. This review reads them together, tracing a conceptual path from the historical and aesthetic foundations of tradwife culture, through the gendered and racial logic of online white nationalism and commodification of feminine discourse, to theories of radicalization that explain how soft lifestyle content can function as a conduit toward extremity. The aim is to establish both what is known and where the existing scholarship falls silent.

While the figure of the traditional wife is long-standing, its contemporary digital iteration is recent. The term gained cultural traction following a 2020 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) interview in which a British tradwife described her life as submitting to and spoiling her husband as though it were 1959 (Gatenby, 2020). Search-interest data confirm a steep rise in tradwife culture after 2020, peaking in mid-2024 (Stotzer & Nelson, 2025a; Sykes & Hopner, 2024). Most scholars locate tradwives along a conservative-to-extremist continuum, while

cautioning that creators occupy widely varying positions upon it (Stotzer & Nelson, 2025a; Sykes & Hopner, 2024). In their study of thirty-six profiles, Sykes and Hopner (2024) characterize tradwives as right-wing women who mobilize social media to commodify a traditional, heteronormative femininity that is simultaneously ideological and aesthetic. Far from being merely wives and mothers, these women operate as skilled influencers who cultivate substantial audiences and monetize their output. Their belief systems typically center the nuclear family, heterosexuality, and religious faith, while more extreme articulations extend toward nativism and racial supremacy (Sykes & Hopner, 2024). Analysis of #Tradwife on TikTok corroborates this account, finding that creators naturalize women's return to the domestic sphere through a romanticized iconography of baking, aprons, and biblical submission (Scott & Day, 2025).

What renders tradwife content persuasive is, above all, its visual grammar of nostalgia. Tradwives construct their authority through an aesthetic of mid-century domesticity – period dress, immaculate homes, and scenes of warmth and abundance (Scott & Day, 2025). Tebaldi (2025) theorizes this technique through the concept of the chronotope, the binding of a particular time and place to a moral order, arguing that tradwives summon idealized pasts (i.e., the 1950s suburb, the pioneer homestead and the medieval manor) and juxtapose them against a degraded modernity that feminism has ostensibly corrupted. Her formulation of “pearl nationalism” captures the way emblems such as a string of pearls index not only mid-century femininity but also whiteness, affluence, and submission. This aestheticization is not racially neutral, the historical settings tradwives invoke implicitly privilege white families and elide the experience of marginalized communities. An overwhelming majority of creators were white and whiteness operated as the unmarked ground of family life (Scott & Day, 2025).

The political salience of this whiteness becomes legible only against the broader literature on critical whiteness studies. Frankenberg (1993) argues that whiteness characteristically goes unnamed and is constituted as the normative standard against which racialized others are measured, a structured invisibility that is itself an effect of dominance. Dyer (1997) similarly contends that whiteness secures its cultural power precisely by presenting itself as the unraced, universal human norm. Far-right movements convert this invisible norm into an explicit and defended identity, and Daniels (2009) documents how that conversion operates online, as white-supremacist actors repackage their messaging through ostensibly ordinary websites in a strategy of “clocked” cyber racism. Within white nationalist discourse, women are positioned as “white activist reproducers” whose primary obligation is the bearing and rearing of white children, such that feminism and abortion are construed as threats to the survival of the race itself (Bjork-James, 2020; Blee, 1991). It is precisely this logic that invests the tradwife’s preoccupation with motherhood and family with a political charge exceeding the domestic, for reproduction is reframed as a radical project.

These themes connect tradwife culture to the wider apparatus of the alt-right, a loosely organized and predominantly online movement premised on the conviction that white identity is besieged by multicultural forces (Gallaher, 2021). Hawley (2019) characterizes the movement as largely anonymous, dispersed across forums and platforms, and adept at trolling and meme culture. Its conversion narrative, such as “taking the red pill,” figures radicalization as an awakening to purportedly suppressed truths about race and gender. Nagle (2017) situates the movement’s sensibility within the transgressive, anonymous culture of imageboard such as 4chan, where irony and deliberate offense operate as instruments of recruitment. More abstractly, Berger (2018) defines extremism by its reliance on sharp in-group/out-group distinction in which

the in-group's survival is held to depend on hostility toward an out-group highlighting a structure that maps directly onto the alt-right's framing of white identity as besieged. Central to the movement's strategy is metapolitics, the Gramscian premise that cultural transformation must precede political change (Gallaher, 2021; Stern, 2022). Gallaher's (2021) analysis of alt-right Twitter demonstrates that "mainstreaming," the rendering of fringe positions palatable to broader audiences, is integral to the movement's influence, accomplished in part by displacing overt misogyny with familiar conservative tropes of female protection. Stern (2022) extends this argument by identifying social media as the far-right's preeminent metapolitical arena, well suited to anonymity, visual content, and recommendation systems already disposed toward sensational material.

Crucially, women are not peripheral to this project. Despite the masculinist character of the early internet and its "manosphere," a growing network of women has secured space to disseminate far-right gender ideologies (Stern, 2022; Daniels, 2009). Stern (2022) observe that these actors eschew explicitly neo-Nazi branding in favor of an affirmative, family-centered identity organized around "white well-being," and, drawing on Campion's typology, theorizes their roles as thinkers, promoters, and "gender exemplars" who model how traditional femininity might reverse "white erasure." Furthermore, alt-right women podcasters construct a "liberated" feminine identity and mainstream racist ideas through narratives of white victimhood (Kisyova et al., 2022). Their findings explicitly content the longstanding assumption that women in extremist movements are passive participants, reframing them instead as active ideologues and recruiters.

Underlying the tradwife's self-presentation is the premise, central to feminist theory, that gender is constructed rather than natural. Butler (1990) theorizes gender as performative, constructed through repeated, stylized acts rather than expressing an inner essence. West and

Zimmerman (1987) describe gender as something “done” in routine social interactions. The tradwife’s elaborate staging of domestic femininity is, in these terms, precisely such a doing: naturalized as innate even as it is carefully produced. If this insight clarifies how the tradwife performs an ideological identity, the literature on commodity feminist explains how the identity is rendered marketable. Goldman et al (1991) introduced the concept to describe advertisers’ appropriation of feminist language and imagery (e.g., independence, choice, empowerment) and its reduction to style affixed to commodities, a process that strips feminism of its political demands and reconstitutes it as a posture that may be worn. Goldman (1992) links this dynamic to postfeminism, a sensibility that presumes feminist gains while disavowing the feminist label; Gill (2007) elaborates postfeminism as a constellation of disposition, a preoccupation with body, individual choice, self-surveillance, and empowerment, that supplants collective politics with personal lifestyle; and finally McRobbie (2009) similarly contends that postfeminist culture treats feminism as accomplished and therefore obsolete. The tradwife inverts this logic to powerful effect: where commodity feminism marks feminism as a product, the tradwife markets submission through the idiom of empowerment, presenting domesticity as an autonomous and even courageous choice (Scott & Day, 2025; Zahay, 2022). This is the paradox of “empowered submission” that anchors the present study. The critique of empowerment branding articulated by Banet-Weiser (2018) and cited in Duffy (2017) is instructive here, for it located such empowerment in self-improvement and consumption rather than collective struggle, recasting the self as a flexible commodity to be packaged and sold. Hochschild’s (1989) account of the “second shift” clarifies what this aesthetic obscures, the unremunerated domestic labor that tradwife content reframes as leisure and personal fulfillment.

This packaging is sustained by the political economy of influence. Duffy (2017) theorizes “aspirational labor” to describe the predominately female content creators who undertake in under-compensated work in the expectation the passion will eventually yield reward, even as a only minority profit. Authenticity is the central instrument of this labor, creators perform “realness,” relatability, and ordinariness to secure trust, though such authenticity is meticulously produced and frequently conceals advantage of class and capital (Duffy, 2017). Abidin (2018) adds that influencers cultivate an intimacy with followers and fold promotion into personal narration through the “advertorial.” Tradwives deploy precisely these mechanisms, monetizing their content through affiliate links, brand partnerships courses, and small enterprises oriented towards the propagation of the lifestyle itself (Sykes & Hopner, 2024). The competencies that render a fashion blogger profitable thus equally render ideology saleable.

That ideology reaches and moves audiences is the concern of the literature on online radicalization. A growing consensus holds that radicalization is no longer confined to face-to-face interaction but may be initiated and accelerated online, where extreme messaging circulates rapidly and at scale (Shin & Jitkajornwanich, 2024). Conway (2017) cautions, however, that establishing the internet’s precise causal role in radicalization remains methodologically difficult, and calls for research that specific the mechanisms at work rather than assuming them. Munn (2019) disputes the conversion-in-an-instant model arguing instead that the alt-right “pipeline” operates incrementally, nudging users through successive “red pills” across three overlapping phases – normalization, acclimation, and dehumanization. This conception of radicalization as a gradual process rather than discrete event underpins the gateway logic of this study. Recommendation algorithms are widely theorized as the masochism driving this gradualism. Algorithmic radicalization highlights the propensity of platforms to

channel users towards progressively more extreme content in pursuit of engagement (Shin & Jitkajornwanich, 2024). Extending the analysis to Tiktok, Shin and Jitkajornwanich (2024) identified a “loop effect” whereby exposure to extreme content elicits further such content, confining users within an ideological “rabbit hole” and reflected the platform’s capacity to sort users into categories and reinforced their predispositions.

Such mechanisms are inseparable from the architecture and governance of the platform themselves. Gillespie (2010) demonstrates that intermediaries such as YouTube strategically describe themselves as open, neutral “platforms” in order to elide responsibility, even as they make consequential and continuous decisions about what content appears, how it is organized, and what is amplified. These interventions shape the contours of public discourse and help explain the proliferation of sensational and hateful material (Gillespie, 2010; Stern, 2022). van Dijck (2013) likewise argues that platforms are not neutral conduits but are governed by an underlying logic of "connectivity" that engineer engagement and visibility, while Marwick and Lewis (2017) demonstrate how far-right and media-manipulation actors strategically exploit these features, and the broader attention economy, to amplify fringe messaging. This insight motivates attention to the ways platforms type conditions the framing and escalation of tradwife content. A final affordance concerns the parasocial address built into influencer content itself. Influencers cultivate parasocial relationships, better known as one-sided attachments in which followers feel they personally know a creator (Horton & Wohl, 1954; Duffy, 2017). Tradwife volggers exploit this trust through an "anti-feminist populist aesthetic," in which the repeated performance of feminine self, home, and family by many trusted creators leads an anti-feminist message the appearance of consensual common sense (Zahay, 2022). That a search for terms as innocuous as “feminine outfits” may return fashion and alt-right content that are visually indistinguishable,

underscores how viewers seeking advice styling advice may absorb extremist messaging unaware (Zahay, 2022). The pipeline, the algorithm, the platform, and the parasocial mode of address describe not a measured audience effect but a set of textual and infrastructural conditions through which soft lifestyle content is structured to function as a pathway from soft lifestyle content to harder, more radical ideology.

Notwithstanding the maturity of the aforementioned scholarship, they seldom converge. Research on the manosphere and networked misogyny has concentrated overwhelmingly on men, leaving women's distinctive pathways into such space comparatively understudied (Stotzer & Nelson, 2025a). Compounding this, much existing tradwife scholarship begins from creators who are already avowed white nationalist, a sampling tendency that conflates extremists with the far larger population of ordinary tradwives and obscures the process connecting them (Stotzer & Nelson, 2025a). The consequence is a missing middle: studies tend to examine either the innocuous aesthetic or the overtly extremist fringe, but rarely the mechanism that links the two. Three more specific gaps follow. First, although radicalization scholars have mapped pipeline and algorithms in general terms, few have applied these frameworks directly to tradwife content as a low-barrier entry point to far-right ideology. Second, the literature remains largely single-platform, despite the differential circulation of tradwife content across TikTok, Instagram and Twitter. As noted by Shin and Jitkajornwanich (2024), they explicitly call for the comparative, cross-platform inquiry. Third, while the soft-to-hard movement is frequently posited at the level of audience trajectory, scholarship has rarely examined how the ideological gradient is constructed within the text themselves – how individual posts and bodies of content layer benign lifestyle aesthetics with progressively harder ideological messaging. The present study addresses these gaps through a comparative case study of three exemplary creators, one

drawn from each tier of mainstream-to-extremist gateway continuum, conceptualizing the tradwife not as a fixed category but as an ideological gateway. It examines the rhetorical and visual strategies that render alt-right ideas appealing and accessible, comparing how distinct platforms shape the framing and escalation of that content. Lastly, it analyzes how tradwife content layers soft lifestyle aesthetics with harder ideological messaging in ways that construct a potential entry point to far-right ideology.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs qualitative content analysis to examine how tradwife influencers commodify and normalize alt-right ideology, and how their content is structured to function as a potential gateway to far-right ideology. Qualitative content analysis is an interpretive, meaning-focused method for the systematic study of communicative materials, well suited to research concerned with latent meaning (Krippendorff, 2004; Schreier, 2012). As tradwife content conveys ideology less through explicit statement than through aesthetics, tone, and implication, a method attentive to connotation and visual signification is more appropriate than a quantitative design oriented towards measurable variables. The analysis followed a hybrid approach that combines deductive and inductive coding. In the directed mode, codes are derived in advance from the study's theoretical framework, while in the conventional mode, additional codes are permitted to emerge from the data itself (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Theme generation proceeds according to established thematic procedure, in which codes are organized into broader patterns of meaning across the corpus (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The design directly serves the study's question, which ask what rhetorical and visual strategies render alt-right ideology appealing (SQ1), how platform type shapes the framing and escalation of content (SQ2) and how content layers soft lifestyle aesthetics with greater ideological messaging to construct a potential

entry point to far-right ideology (SQ3). As the study concentrates on a small number of information-rich cases, the study is best characterized as a comparative case study in which two creators, one representing the mainstream gateway (Tier 1) and one the ideological bridge (Tier 2) are subjected to direct qualitative content analysis, while the over far-right endpoint (Tier 3) is documented through monitoring-organization reports and existing scholarship rather than primary coding. This structure reflects a constraint that is itself consistent with the study's argument. Overt Tier 3 content has been deleted, set to private, or migrated to closed and ephemeral platforms, the very displacement the gateway model predicts.

Data Sources and Sampling

The study uses purposive sampling, a strategy in which cases are selected deliberately for their relevance to the research questions rather than at random (Patton, 2002). Sampling is tiered, and the tiers are defined by the combination of two dimensions: ideological explicitness and audience reach. Thus, the sampling logic minors the study's gateway framework. Tier 1 (Mainstream Gateway) comprises creators with a large following whose ideology is embedded in polished, ostensibly nonpolitical lifestyle aesthetics. Tier 2 (Ideological Bridge) comprised mid-reach creators whose content moves between lifestyle framing and increasingly explicit anti-feminist, Christian nationalist, or coded racial messaging. Tier 3 (Overt Alt-Right Alignment) comprises creators with smaller but highly engaged audiences whose far-right or white-nationalist affiliations are documented by external monitoring organizations, namely the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). This external-documentation requirement ensures that the most consequential category does not rest on the researcher's judgement alone.

Three creators were selected, one per tier. Tier 1 comprises Abby Shapiro (Classically Abby); Tier 2 comprises Estee Williams; and Tier 3 comprises Brittany Pettibone (Brittany Sellner). These creators were chosen because each exemplifies a distinct position along the gateway continuum. The content of the two lower-tier creators, Shapiro and Williams, is directly captured and coded. The tier 3 creator, Sellner, instead serves as the study's documented overt endpoint; her overt content has been deleted, set to private, or migrated to closed platforms and is not preserved adequately in public web archives, and so cannot be reliably captured for primary coding. Her position and affiliation are evidenced through the reports of the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, and through peer-reviewed scholarship analyzing overt alt-right women (Gallaher, 2021; Kisyova et al., 2022; Stern 2022). The inaccessibility of this content is treated not only as a limitation but as evidence in its own right, illustrating the deployment and migration dynamics the gateway model anticipates.

Consistent with the prominence of cross-platform migration in the gateway argument, the analysis spans two platform groups. The mainstream group includes TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X, and YouTube; the alternative or migrated group included Rumble, Telegram, and Substack. The act of migration between these groups is itself treated as analyzable evidence of escalation rather than as a mere logistical detail. The coded creators are sampled only on the platforms where they are active during the study period: Shapiro on YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter/X and Williams on TikTok and Instagram. Instagram, common to both, serve as the anchor for cross-creators comparison, while platforms used by only one creator (notably TikTok) yield observations specific to that creator rather than generalizable platform effects. Where a coded creator's content has been removed or set to private, archived snapshots are retrieved

through the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine where available, with the acknowledged caveat that archival capture is incomplete and time-stamped. The study period spans 2020 through 2024, a window selected because the 2020 COVID-19 lockdowns drove a surge in domestic content, the post-2021 deplatforming wave prompted migration to alternative platforms, 2022-2023 saw the mainstreaming of "trad" aesthetic, and the 2024 election year intensified the overlap between lifestyle content and explicit political messaging. Williams' tradwife content dates from 2022 onward, her sampling window is correspondingly shorter than Shapiro's and compresses the longitudinal range available for her. Approximately ten to fifteen items were sampled per coded creator, yielding a corpus of roughly twenty to thirty pieces of content. Each item was preserved through screenshots and screen-recording, transcribed where necessary, and logged in a tracking sheet recording creator, platform, and date.

Codebook Development

Coding was organized through a codebook comprising six categories and thirty codes, developed in ATLAS.ti and applied through the hybrid deductive-inductive logic described above. The six categories were derived deductively from the theoretical framework: Domestic Ideology Signifiers (DIS), Racial and White Nationalist Markers (RWN), Anti-Feminist Rhetoric (AFR), Christian National Cues (CNQ), Commodification Strategies (COM), and Radicalization Language and Pipeline Indicators (RAD). Within each category, individual codes were refined inductively as patterns surface in the data. Each code specifies a definition, observable verbal and visual indicators, a representative signal phrase, a theoretical link, and a primary tier; grounding every code in observable indicators ensures that ideological interpretations remain anchored in identifiable content features. Furthermore, codes are linked to the study's theorists, including Butler on gender performativity, Frankenberg and Dyer on whiteness, Daniels on cyber

racism, McRobbie and Goldman on postfeminism and commodity feminism, West and Zimmerman on “doing gender,” Hirschfeld on domestic labor, Hawley and Nagle on the alt-right, Beger on extremism, and Marwick and Lewis and van Dijck on platforms and media manipulation. A summary of the categories appears in Table 1.

Table 1

Codebook Categories

| Code | Category | Analytic Focus |
|------|---|---|
| DIS | Domestic Ideology Signifiers | Construct idealized domestic feminist as natural and superior (e.g., idealized homemaking, nostalgic femininity, motherhood glorification, submission framing). |
| RWN | Racial and White Nationalist Markers | Center whiteness as normative or superior (e.g., racial homogeneity signaling, white natalism, dog-whistle language, demographic threat framing). |
| AFR | Anti-Feminist Rhetoric | Frames feminism as harmful and traditional gender roles as corrective (e.g., feminist-betrayal narrative, choice-feminism inversion, gender essentialism) |
| CNQ | Christian Nationalism Cues | Invokes Christian framework to legitimize traditional gender and racial ideology (e.g., biblical submission language, Christian nationalism, anti-secular framing). |
| COM | Commodification Strategies | Transform domestic ideology into a marketable product (e.g., sponsored content, lifestyle-brand identity, paywalled content, feminist-language co-option). |
| RAD | Radicalization Language and Pipeline Indicators | Signals escalation or active direction towards extremist content (e.g., ideological escalation over time, cross-platform migration, in-group/out-group construction, conspiracy framework). |

The RAD category is built out specifically to address subquestion 3 (SQ3). Several of its codes operate comparatively rather than at the level of a single post. For example, ideological escalation over time (RAD-1) is identified through longitudinal comparison of a creator's early and later content. Also alternative-platform explicit content (RAD-4) is identified by comparing the same creator's output across mainstream and migrated platforms. Together these codes allowed the soft-to hard ideological gradient to be traced within and across a creator's body of work. A number of codes are intentionally assigned to more than one tier, which reinforces the gateway logic by showing how a single signifier can recur in progressively more explicit form along the continuum.

Analysis Procedure

All content was imported into ATLAS.ti for coding, organization, and theme generation. The primary unit of analysis is the individual post, understood to encompass the video or image, its caption, on screen text, and visual composition. Comparative codes within the RAD category are additionally applied across a creator's content and across platforms. The individual post remains the unit of analysis, with fifteen posts per tier. Because multi-image posts (carousels) are imported into ATLAS.ti as separate documents, code frequencies are reported as coded instances rather than as post-level presence; a multi-image post may therefore contribute more than one instance of a given code across its slides. Reported counts should accordingly be read as coded instances, and comparisons emphasize the direction and relative prominence of categories rather than exact magnitudes. Analysis proceeded in stages. The corpus was first reviewed in full for familiarization. A deductive coding pass then applied the six theoretically derived categories, after which an inductive pass refined and added code to capture patterns not anticipated by the framework. Throughout, analytic memos documented interpretive decisions

and the evolution of the codebook, producing an audit trail that supports the transparency and dependability of the findings. Coded material was then organized into themes mapped onto the research questions: the DIS, AFR, CNQ, COM, and RWN codes speak primarily to the rhetorical and visual strategies of subquestion 1; comparison of coding patterns across the two platform groups addresses the framing and escalation of subquestion 2; and the RAD strand, together with the dual-tier codes, addresses the soft-to-hard layering of subquestion 3.

Positionality and Limitations

I approach this work as a woman and as a member of a heavily online generation among whom the resurgence of cultural traditionalism circulates most visibly, where content produced by women is addressed to other young women. I came to the topic through coursework on nationalism, extremism, and the alt-right, and my reading of scholarship on women in historical white-supremacist movements reframed my understanding of these women as active agents rather than symbolic participants. I hold the normative view that the mainstreaming of alt-right and white-nationalist rhetoric, and the role of social media in normalizing it, are not politically neutral developments. I name this stance because it shapes what I notice and how I interpret it.

Several limitations follow from the design. As a qualitative content analysis conducted by a single coder, the study relies on an audit trail and analytic memoing rather than intercoder reliability, and its interpretive findings are not intended to be generalizable. The small, purposive sample is selected for analytic relevance, not statistical representativeness. The final design included only one creator per tier, the tiers function as illustrative examples rather than representative samples. A pattern observed within a tier cannot be distinguished from the idiosyncrasies of the individual creators who represent it. The cross-platform comparison central to subquestion 2 (SQ2) is correspondingly constrained. It relies on Instagram as the one platform

shared by the two coded creators, supplemented by single-creator observation on YouTube, Twitter/X, and TikTok, and is therefore offered as more illustrative than comprehensive. Most significantly, the overt tier 3 endpoint could not be subjected to primary content analysis, because the relevant accounts have been deleted, set to private, or migrated to a closed platform and are not preserved in public web archives. This tier is therefore documented through monitoring-organization reports and existing scholarship rather than original coding. While this constrains the directness of the Tier 3 evidence, the inaccessibility itself substantiates the deplatforming and migration the gateway models predict, and is discussed in the finding as evident rather than treated solely as missing data. The study analyzes content rather than audiences; it can describe how that content is structured to function as a potential gateway, but it cannot measure actual radicalization effects among viewers. The ephemerality of social media content, and the reliance on archived material for deplatformed creators, mean that the corpus is necessarily partial and time-bound. Finally, the Tier 1 creators are analyzed only for how their content functions aesthetically as a gateway. The study makes no claim that the individual personals holds, endorses, or intends alt-right ideology. Claims regarding documented affiliations are attributed throughout to the external organizations that have made them.

Findings

The results of the qualitative content analysis are organized around five themes that emerged from the coded corpus: the aesthetic packaging of ideology, commodification strategies, the normalization of anti-feminist, Christian-nationalist, and racial rhetoric, platform-specific framing, and the soft-to-hard layering that constructs a potential gateway. The section addresses the three subquestions in turn: the rhetorical and visual strategies that render alt-right ideology appealing (SQ1), the way platform type shapes the framing and escalation of content (SQ2), and

the way content layers soft lifestyle aesthetics with harder ideological messaging (SQ3).

Findings are reported descriptively here; their interpretation, and their relationship to the study's theoretical framework, is reserved for the discussion that follows.

The corpus comprises thirty posts, fifteen for each coded creator: Abby Shapiro (Classically Abby), representing the mainstream gateway (Tier 1), and Estee Williams, representing the ideological bridge (Tier 2). Because multi-image posts are imported into ATLAS.ti as separate documents, code frequencies are reported as coded instances and read for the direction and relative prominence of categories rather than as exact magnitudes. Two summary tables anchor the analysis. Table 2 reports the distribution of code categories across the two tiers; Table 3 reports their distribution across platforms. The overt far-right endpoint (Tier 3) is documented rather than coded and is therefore not represented in these counts.

Table 2

Code Frequencies by Tier (Coded Instances)

| Code category | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Direction (T1 → T2) | What it signals |
|---|--------|--------|---------------------|---|
| DIS – Domestic Ideology Signifiers | 8 | 21 | ↑ Rises sharply | The soft domestic aesthetic intensifies up the gateway: the “packaging” deepens rather than recedes as ideology hardens. |
| RWN – Racial & White Nationalist Markers | 1 | 9 | ↑ Rises sharply | Explicit racial markers, near-absent at the mainstream entrance, emerge at the ideological bridge — the clearest evidence of the soft-to-hard gradient. |
| AFR – Anti-Feminist Rhetoric | 15 | 10 | ↓ Declines | Anti-feminist framing is foundational at the gateway entrance and remains present, though less dominant, further along the continuum. |
| CNQ – Christian Nationalism Cues | 16 | 15 | → Steady | Christian-nationalist framing is a near-constant across both tiers, binding the lifestyle aesthetic to a shared ideological vocabulary. |

| | | | | |
|---|----|---|----------------|---|
| COM – Commodification Strategies | 12 | 6 | ↓ Declines | Overt monetization concentrates at the mainstream entrance, where reach and commercial opportunity are greatest. |
| RAD – Radicalization Language | 3 | 1 | Low throughout | Explicit radicalization and pipeline language is minimal in the coded corpus, consistent with the overt endpoint being the documented (uncoded) Tier 3. |

Note. Values are coded instances across fifteen posts per tier (Tier 1 = Abby Shapiro; Tier 2 = Estee Williams). Because multi-image posts are imported as separate documents, a post may contribute more than one instance of a code; counts therefore indicate the direction and relative prominence of categories rather than exact magnitudes and are not treated as statistical estimates.

Table 3

Code Category Distribution by Platform (% within platform)

| Code category | Instagram | TikTok | Twitter/X | YouTube | What it signals |
|---|------------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| DIS – Domestic Ideology Signifiers | 18.60% | 50.00% | 12.50% | 9.09% | Domestic aesthetics dominate TikTok, the short-form, algorithm-driven surface — the platform where the soft “packaging” is most concentrated (Williams only). |
| RWN – Racial & White Nationalist Markers | 13.95% | 9.38% | — | — | Racial markers appear chiefly on Instagram and TikTok and are absent from the text-based Twitter/X and from YouTube; Instagram, the one cross-creator platform, carries the largest share. |
| AFR – Anti-Feminist Rhetoric | 23.26% | 9.38% | 50.00% | 24.24% | Anti-feminist rhetoric is most concentrated on Twitter/X, the text-based platform best suited to combative arguments (small base). |
| CNQ – Christian Nationalism Cues | 20.93% | 28.12% | 37.50% | 27.27% | Christian-nationalist framing is substantial on every platform, the most evenly distributed category across the corpus. |
| COM – Commodification | 18.60% | 3.12% | — | 33.33% | Overt commodification concentrates on YouTube, the long-form platform best suited |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|---|---|-------|--|
| tion Strategies | | | | | to monetization, and is minimal on TikTok. |
| RAD – Radicalization Language | 4.65% | — | — | 6.06% | Explicit radicalization language is minimal across all mainstream platforms, consistent with the overt endpoint being the documented (uncoded) Tier 3. |

Note. Each cell is the category’s share of all coded instances on that platform; columns sum to 100%. Dashes indicate categories not coded on a platform. Counts indicate direction and relative prominence, not statistical estimates.

Read together, the two tables describe a clear movement across the gateway. From Tier 1 to Tier 2, domestic-ideology signifiers rise sharply (DIS, 8 to 21) and racial and white-nationalist markers, near-absent at the mainstream entrance, become prominent (RWN, 1 to 9). Anti-feminist rhetoric and commodification, by contrast, are heaviest at Tier 1 and recede somewhat at Tier 2 (AFR, 15 to 10; COM, 12 to 6), while Christian-nationalist cues remain steady across both tiers (CNQ, 16 to 15). The five themes below give qualitative substance to these patterns.

At the visual level, posts present homemaking itself as the content. A Shapiro Instagram post (P003_AS2, June 1, 2020) depicts an idealized home-cooking scene, coded for both nostalgic femininity (DIS-2) and idealized homemaking (DIS-1); the post makes no political claim, presenting domestic labor as aspirational lifestyle imagery. At the verbal level, the same aesthetic carries claims about gender relations. In a YouTube video, Shapiro reframes wifely support as a positive act of devotion rather than obedience:

“...we help our husband grow not by obeying their every word but by bolstering their strengths...” (P001_AS2, YouTube, March 27, 2020, 0:47–0:53; DIS-4 Submission Framing).

Williams performs a comparable move on TikTok, recasting financial financial dependence as an expression of trust rather than incapacity:

“Being financially dependent on a man doesn’t showcase that you’re incapable.... It displays complete trust in your partner to provide for you” (P005_EW4, TikTok, July 2, 2022, 0:13–0:16; DIS-4 Submission Framing).

Together, these two levels reinforce one another: the warm, nostalgic imagery establish domesticity as desirable, while the verbal reframing of submission as strength and dependence as trust recasts unequal gender arrangement as a fulfilling personal choice. The effect is to make the underlying ideology feel benign and aspirational rather than political.

Theme 2: Commodification Strategies

A second strategy turns the tradwife identity into a marketable product. Commodification codes were prominent across the corpus and concentrated at the mainstream entrance (Tier 1, 12 instances), where reach and commercial opportunity are greatest. Commodification took several forms: direct sponsorship and affiliate promotion, the construction of an aspirational brand, and the co-option of feminist vocabulary as a marketing hook.

Sponsored and affiliate content was frequently embedded within ostensibly personal material. A Williams Instagram caption promoting a televised appearance directs followers off-platform to download an application in order to watch (P012_EW4, Instagram, May 3, 2024; COM-1 Sponsored Content and Affiliate). On TikTok, the commercial layer appears in the metadata itself: a Williams post pairs tradwife hashtags with promotional and trend tags such as #PrimeDayDreamDeals and #AmazonMusic (P005_EW4, TikTok, July 2, 2022; COM-1). Commodification also appears in the appropriation of feminist phrasing as a hook; a Shapiro post opens with the framing “What women really want:” as a marketing device (P008_AS2, Twitter/X, March 18, 2022; COM-4 Feminist-Language Co-option). Across these examples, commodification binds the lifestyle and the ideology into a single saleable package. The same content that promotes traditional femininity also markets products, appearance and the creator’s

brand. The fusion is clearest in P006_AS2 (Theme 5), where an affiliate link directing viewers off-platform is attached directly to feminist-betrayal narrative.

Theme 3: Normalization of Anti-Feminist, Christian-Nationalist, and Racial Rhetoric

The third theme concerns the content of the aesthetic packages: anti-feminist, Christian-nationalist, and—particularly at Tier 2—racial messaging. Anti-feminist rhetoric was foundational across the corpus, while racial and white-nationalist markers rose sharply from Tier 1 to Tier 2 (1 to 9), the clearest single indication of ideological hardening along the gateway. Anti-feminist rhetoric appeared most often as the inversion of feminist language and the disparagement of careers. Shapiro frames the channel’s project as the recovery of a femininity that contemporary culture rejects:

“How to embrace femininity and womanhood in this crazy world that we live in—that kind of rejects traditional values and classic living...” (P015_AS2, YouTube, September 27, 2024, 0:55–1:03; AFR-5 Gender Essentialism).

Williams stages the same opposition more directly, positioning the homemaker against the “boss babe” as a free and happier choice:

“In a world full of boss babes... I decided not to be one and I’ve never been happier” (P002_EW4, Instagram, July 6, 2022; AFR-2 Choice Feminism Inversion; AFR-3 Career and Education Discouragement).

Christian-nationalist cues were steady across both tiers and frequently fused moral, religious, and political claims. A Shapiro post links sexual conduct to childbearing in absolute terms (P002_AS2, Twitter/X, July 8, 2020; CNQ-3 Religious Purity Signaling). The fusion is most explicit in a Williams Instagram post that stacks national, marital, religious, educational, and partisan identities into a single declaration:

“Proud to be an American | Proud to be a wife | Proud to have a blue-collar husband | Proud to be a Christian | Proud to have left college behind | Proud to stand by Donald Trump | God Bless America” (P014_EW4, Instagram, May 31,

2024; CNQ-4 Christian Nationalism; RWN-1 Racial Homogeneity Signaling; RWN-2 White Natalism; RWN-3 Dog-Whistle Language).

Racial and white-nationalist markers were largely visual or implicit rather than explicitly stated. A Williams TikTok defines the tradwife role through an on-screen text asserting that “a woman’s place is in the home,” coded for submission framing and racial homogeneity signaling (P003_EW4, TikTok, September 8, 2022; DIS-4; RWN-1). The visual dimension is clearest in a carousel slide showing Williams washing her husband’s feet, in which the imagery of a uniformly white domestic scene carries the racial signal that the caption—framing the act as Christian humility and service—does not state (P006_EW4, Instagram, January 15, 2023; RWN-1 Racial Homogeneity Signaling; DIS-4 Submission Framing; AFR-4 Male Authority Affirmation). In the coded corpus, racial signaling is overwhelmingly implicit and visual rather than explicitly stated: it surfaces through uniformly white domestic imagery and coded language rather than overt racial claims. This indirectness is precisely what allows such content to function as a low-barrier entry point, the gateway dynamic developed in Theme 5.

Theme 4: Platform-Specific Framing and Escalation

The fourth theme concerns how the same ideology is framed differently across platforms (SQ2). As Table 3 shows, the platforms specialize. Domestic-ideology signifiers dominate TikTok, where they account for half of all coded instances; commodification concentrates on YouTube, the long-form platform best suited to monetization; and anti-feminist and Christian-nationalist claims are proportionally heaviest on Twitter/X, the text-based platform. Instagram, the only platform used by both coded creators, carries the broadest mix of categories and the largest share of racial markers.

These tendencies are visible in the examples. The TikTok material is the most aesthetic and short-form: Williams’ financial-dependence clip (P005_EW4) and tradwife-definition post

(P003_EW4) lead with styling, on-screen text, and trend audio. The YouTube material is longer and more discursive, as in Shapiro's extended talks on femininity (P001_AS2; P015_AS2). The Twitter/X material is terse and declarative (P002_AS2; P008_AS2). Instagram hosts the widest range, from idealized homemaking imagery (P003_AS2) to the layered identity declaration of P014_EW4. These platform patterns should be read cautiously: the Twitter/X and YouTube figures rest on very few coded items, the TikTok pattern derives from a single creator (Williams) and so cannot be separated from her individually, and only Instagram—used by both creators—supports a defensible cross-creator comparison.

Theme 5: Soft-to-Hard Layering and the Construction of a Gateway

The final theme concerns how content layers benign lifestyle aesthetics with harder ideological messaging (SQ3). Two patterns support this. At the level of the corpus, the tier gradient in Table 2—domestic signifiers and racial markers both rising from Tier 1 to Tier 2 while other categories hold steady or recede—indicates that the soft aesthetic and the explicit ideology intensify together rather than trading off. At the level of the individual post, several artifacts compress this gradient into a single piece of content.

The clearest single-post example is the Williams identity declaration (P014_EW4), in which the soft, relatable markers of wife and homemaker sit in the same list as explicit partisan and racial-natalist signals—domestic identity and hardened ideology layered in one artifact. The foot-washing carousel (P006_EW4) performs the same layering visually: an aesthetically warm, domestic Christian image that simultaneously signals female submission and racial homogeneity. The tradwife-definition TikTok (P003_EW4) shows the co-occurrence of a soft submission frame (DIS-4) with a racial signal (RWN-1) inside a single short-form video.

A distinct sub-pattern is the active direction of audiences elsewhere. A Shapiro Instagram post reframes marriage against “patriarchal” framings, attaches a feminist-betrayal narrative, and directs viewers off-platform to a video linked in the profile bio:

“...I figured out the truth and why this information is so hard to find. I did a whole video on my channel breaking down the history of marriage... Head to the link in my bio to watch it!” (P006_AS2, Instagram, July 29, 2021; RAD-2 Cross-Platform Migration Direction; AFR-1 Feminist Betrayal Narrative; COM-1 Sponsored Content and Affiliate).

Taken together, the within-post layering of soft and hard content and the active direction of audiences off-platform describe content structured to function as a potential gateway: an accessible entrance that points beyond itself. Its overt destination is the documented Tier 3 endpoint, which the coded corpus points toward rather than contains.

Discussion

This section interprets the findings considering the study’s theoretical framework and answers the three research questions. It argues that the coded content functions as a potential gateway: an attractive, monetized domestic aesthetic that embeds anti-feminist, Christian-nationalist, and increasingly racial messaging, framed differently across platforms, and structured so that soft lifestyle content shades into harder ideology. The chapter then connects this pattern to the documented overt endpoint and considers where the findings confirm, extend, or complicate existing scholarship.

Aesthetic Packaging as Ideological Work (SQ1)

The first research subquestion asked what rhetorical and visual strategies make alt-right ideology appealing and accessible. The findings indicate that the central strategy is aestheticization. Ideology is carried less by explicit argument than by an attractive surface of nostalgic domesticity and by the reframing of submission as strength and dependence as trust. This is consistent with Butler’s account of gender as performative, constructed through repeated,

stylized acts rather than expressing an inner essence and with West and Zimmerman's notion of gender as something "done" in everyday practice. The tradwife's elaborate staging of domesticity is precisely such a doing: a performance naturalized as innate. The aesthetic's reliance on nostalgic, mid-century, and rural imagery also functions, in the terms developed in the literature, as a chronotope that binds an idealized past to a present moral order, and its uniformly white settings render whiteness the unmarked norm of family life in the manner described by critical whiteness studies. This is the paradox of empowered submission that frames the present study: the language of choice, strength, and fulfillment is used not to contest traditional gender roles but to make submission to them feel self-authored and desirable. The aesthetic does the persuasive work that explicit argument cannot, presenting an unequal arrangement as a freely chosen good.

Selling Submission: Commodification and the Empowered-Submission Paradox

The prominence of commodification, especially at the mainstream entrance, supports the study's framing of the tradwife as an influencer who renders ideology marketable. The findings echo the concept of commodity feminism, in which feminist language and imagery are appropriated and reattached to products: here the logic is inverted, and the vocabulary of choice and empowerment is used to market submission, as when the homemaker is positioned against the "boss babe" as the freer and happier choice. This is the paradox of empowered submission identified at the outset of the study. The mechanism also reflects the dynamics of aspirational labor and authenticity in influencer culture: the relatable, "real" self is the vehicle through which both lifestyle and ideology are sold, and the two are bound into a single saleable package, as in the post that attaches an affiliate link to a feminist-betrayal narrative.

Platform Affordances and Differential Framing (SQ2)

The second subquestion asked how platform type shapes the framing and escalation of content. The findings suggest that platforms specialize the same ideology to suit their formats: TikTok foregrounds the short-form aesthetic, YouTube the long-form commercial pitch, Twitter/X the terse rhetorical claim, and Instagram the broadest mix. This is consistent with the argument that platforms are not neutral conduits but are governed by an underlying logic of connectivity that shapes what content succeeds, and with accounts of how far-right and media-manipulation actors exploit those affordances. The cross-platform direction observed in the data—content steering audiences from mainstream platforms toward off-platform material—further supports the view of platforms as architectures of circulation rather than mere containers. These platform-level claims must remain tentative. The TikTok pattern reflects a single creator and so cannot be separated from her individual style, the Twitter/X and YouTube observations rest on very few coded items, and only Instagram—used by both creators—supports a comparison not confounded by creator identity. The platform tendencies described here are therefore best read as suggestive rather than conclusive.

The Gateway Gradient (SQ3)

The third subquestion asked how content layers soft lifestyle aesthetics with harder ideological messaging to construct a potential entry point to far-right ideology. The findings provide two kinds of evidence. Across the corpus, the tier gradient shows the soft aesthetic and the explicit ideology intensifying together: domestic signifiers and racial markers both rise from Tier 1 to Tier 2. Within individual posts, soft and hard elements are layered in a single artifact—domestic identity beside partisan and racial-nationalist signals, or a warm domestic image that simultaneously signals submission and racial homogeneity. This is consistent with accounts of online radicalization as a gradual, incremental process rather than a single moment of

conversion, and with the idea that recommendation-driven platforms can move audiences along such a gradient. Consistent with the study's framing, the evidence describes content that is structured to function as a potential gateway; it does not, and cannot, measure radicalization effects among actual audiences.

From Coded Gradient to Documented Endpoint

Because the overt far-right endpoint could not be subjected to primary coding—its content having been deleted, set to private, or migrated to closed platforms—the destination of the gateway is established through documentation rather than coding. The monitoring organizations cited in the methodology, together with existing scholarship on overt alt-right women, describe the explicit white-nationalist content toward which the coded gradient points. The inaccessibility of this material is itself consistent with the study's argument: the displacement of overt content into closed and ephemeral spaces is the very migration the gateway model anticipates, and the cross-platform direction observed in the coded data is a visible trace of it. The coded corpus thus captures the entrance and the bridge of the gateway, while the documented record captures the destination.

Relationship to Existing Scholarship

These findings confirm, extend, and in places complicate prior work. They confirm accounts that treat tradwife content as right-wing influencer culture that fuses ideology and aesthetic, and that identify women as active agents rather than symbolic participants in far-right movements. They extend that work by tracing, within a single comparative design, how the soft-to-hard gradient is constructed inside the texts themselves rather than inferred from audience trajectories, and by attending to differences across platforms. They also complicate any treatment of tradwife content as uniformly extreme: the racial signal in the coded corpus is

overwhelmingly implicit and visual rather than explicitly stated, and the most overt material lies beyond the reach of primary capture. The study's contribution is therefore to show how ordinary, monetized, aesthetically pleasing domestic content can be structured as a low-barrier entry point—and to do so while attributing overt affiliations to the organizations that have documented them, and making no claim about the privately held beliefs of the creators analyzed.

Conclusion

This study set out to understand how tradwife influencers use a domestic aesthetic to commodify and normalize alt-right ideology, and whether their content is structured to function as a potential gateway to far-right ideology. Through a qualitative content analysis of two coded creators—one representing the mainstream gateway and one the ideological bridge—together with a documented account of the overt endpoint, the study found that the answer is yes: the content is structured as such a gateway, though the analysis describes that structure rather than measuring its effects on audiences.

The central argument can be stated directly. Tradwife content embeds ideology within an attractive, monetized domestic aesthetic; the soft surface does not fade as content moves along the gateway but intensifies, even as explicit racial markers emerge. Anti-feminist and Christian-nationalist messaging is normalized through the inversion of feminist language—the paradox of empowered submission—and through the fusion of lifestyle and commerce. Platforms specialize this content to suit their formats, and within individual posts soft and hard elements are layered so that benign lifestyle material shades into harder ideology. The overt destination of this gradient lies in the documented Tier 3 endpoint, toward which the coded content points and toward which it actively directs audiences, and whose migration into closed and ephemeral spaces is itself the displacement the gateway model predicts. Taken together, this

answers the central research question: tradwife influencers commodify and normalize far-right-adjacent ideology through aestheticization, and structure it as a low-barrier potential entry point.

The broader implications follow from this. For media literacy, the findings underscore how political meaning can travel inside content that presents itself as apolitical lifestyle material, and how difficult that meaning can be to detect when it is carried by imagery and coded language rather than explicit statement. For platform policy, they highlight the role of platform affordances and cross-platform migration in circulating such content, and the limits of moderation that pushes overt material into less visible spaces rather than removing its appeal. For counter-radicalization, they suggest that interventions attentive only to overt extremism may overlook the accessible entrances through which audiences first encounter these ideas.

The study has clear limitations. As a small, purposive, single-coder qualitative analysis, its findings are interpretive and not generalizable, and its tiers function as illustrative exemplars rather than representative samples. Because it analyzes content rather than audiences, it can describe how content is structured to function as a potential gateway but cannot measure radicalization among viewers. The overt Tier 3 endpoint could not be coded directly and was documented through monitoring-organization reports and existing scholarship, and the cross-platform comparison rests largely on a single shared platform. Throughout, affiliations are attributed to the organizations that have documented them, and the study makes no claim about the privately held beliefs of the creators analyzed.

Future research could extend the study in several directions. A larger and more varied sample, including multiple creators per tier, would allow patterns to be distinguished from individual idiosyncrasy. Audience-level research—through reception studies, interviews, or

analysis of engagement—could test whether the gateway structure identified here corresponds to actual pathways of radicalization. Cross-platform and longitudinal designs could trace escalation over time and across migrated platforms more fully than was possible here. Finally, comparative work across national contexts, or across adjacent genres such as homesteading and wellness content, could clarify how far the dynamics identified in tradwife culture extend across the broader landscape of aestheticized online conservatism.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Content Creator Sample

| Creator | Tier | Platform | Handles | Peak Following | Status in Study |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| Abby Shapiro (<i>Classically Abby</i>) | Tier 1 Mainstream Gateway | YouTube Instagram Twitter/X | @classicallyabby (Twitter/X, Instagram) @ClassicallyAbby (Youtube) | 91,700+ (Instagram) 83,600+ (Twitter) 112,000+ (YouTube) | Coded (primary content analysis) |
| Estee Williams | Tier 2 Ideological Bridge | TikTok Instagram | @esteecwilliam (Instagram) @esteecwilliams (Tiktok) | 107,000+ (Instagram) 197,300+ (Tiktok) | Coded (primary content analysis) |
| Brittany Pettibone (<i>Brittany Sellner</i>) | Tier 3 Overt Alt-Right Alignment | YouTube Twitter/X Rumble Substack | – | – | Documented endpoint – not coded |

Note. Creators are selected purposively and ordered along a mainstream-to-extremist gateway continuum, with tier defined by combination of ideological explicitness and audience reach. Following figures are approximate peak count during the study period (2020-2024) and are not used as a sampling threshold.

Appendix B – Codebook

| Code | Sub-code | Definition | Indicators (verbal / visual) | Example signal phrase | Theoretical link | Tier |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|------|
| DIS — Domestic Ideology Signifiers: constructs idealized domestic femininity as natural and superior. | | | | | | |
| DIS-1 | Idealized Homemaking | Cooking, baking, cleaning, or home organization depicted as fulfilling and virtuous. | Soft lighting, golden-hour footage, slow-motion food preparation. | “Homemaking is my calling” | Butler – Gender Performativity | 1 |
| DIS-2 | Nostalgic Femininity | Vintage, 1950s, cottagecore, or Victorian aesthetics. | Prairie dresses, linen aprons, vintage props, sepia tones. | “Living like my grandmother did” | Butler – Gender Performativity | 1, 2 |
| DIS-3 | Motherhood Glorification | Large families, pregnancy, and child-rearing framed as the highest calling. | Multiple children featured; pregnancy framed as triumphant. | “Being a mother is the highest calling” | Frankenberg – Critical Whiteness | 2 |
| DIS-4 | Submission Framing | Female submission to male authority portrayed as positive and strengthening. | Terms such as headship, covering, surrendered wife. | “Submission is strength” | Butler – Gender Performativity | 2, 3 |
| DIS-5 | Rural and Natural Environment | Farm life, homesteading, or rural settings framed as morally superior. | Farm animals, vegetable gardens, wood-fire cooking. | “Away from the noise of the world” | McRobbie – Postfeminism | 1, 3 |
| RWN — Racial and White Nationalist Markers: centers whiteness as normative or superior. | | | | | | |
| RWN-1 | Racial Homogeneity Signaling | Systematic absence of racial diversity; exclusively white families and imagery. | Exclusively white family imagery; white European aesthetics (visual). | Visual only — absence of diversity is the signal | Daniels – Cyber Racism; Dyer – White | 1 |
| RWN-2 | White Natalism | Explicitly or implicitly advocates increased white birthrates. | “Saving Western civilization” language; replacement framing. | “Having babies is my contribution to Western civilization” | Frankenberg – Critical Whiteness | 2 |
| RWN-3 | Dog-Whistle Language and Coding | Terms carrying white-nationalist meaning to in-group audiences. | Heritage, tradition, Western values; “14 words” references. | “Protecting our Western heritage” | Daniels – Cyber Racism; Hawley – Alt-Right | 2 |
| RWN-4 | White Cultural Heritage Invocation | White European cultural practices framed as ancestral norm. | European-heritage references; medieval or Norse imagery. | “Honoring my European ancestral heritage” | Frankenberg – Critical Whiteness | 3 |
| RWN-5 | Anti-Immigration / Demographic Threat | Immigration or demographic change framed as an existential threat. | “Protecting our way of life”; demographic-replacement framing. | “We are being replaced” | Berger – Extremism; Nagle – Kill All Normies | 3 |
| AFR — Anti-Feminist Rhetoric: frames feminism as harmful and traditional gender roles as corrective. | | | | | | |
| AFR-1 | Feminist Betrayal Narrative | Feminism positioned as having lied to or harmed women. | “Feminism sold women a lie”; testimonials of leaving the feminist path. | “Feminism robbed women of their true happiness” | McRobbie – Aftermath of Feminism | 2 |
| AFR-2 | Choice-Feminism Inversion | Feminist language of choice and empowerment co-opted for submission. | “I choose this freely”; “this is my feminism.” | “Choosing home is the most radical feminist act” | Goldman – Commodity Feminism | 1 |
| AFR-3 | Career and Education Discouragement | Content explicitly discouraging women from careers or higher education. | Warnings about “lonely career women”; celebrating leaving work. | “A degree won’t keep you warm at night” | Hochschild – The Second Shift | 2 |
| AFR-4 | Male Authority Affirmation | Content affirming male headship and household authority. | Husband as head of household; deference to husband. | “My husband is the head of our home” | Butler – Gender Trouble; West & Zimmerman – Doing Gender | 2 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|------|
| AFR-5 | Gender Essentialism | Gender roles asserted as biologically determined. | “Women are wired to nurture”; “men are natural leaders.” | “Women are built for the home — it is in our DNA” | Butler – Gender Trouble; West & Zimmerman – Doing Gender | 1, 2 |
| CNQ — Christian Nationalism Cues: invokes Christian frameworks to legitimize traditional gender and racial ideology. | | | | | | |
| CNQ-1 | Biblical Submission Language | Citation or paraphrase of scripture to justify wifely submission. | References to wives submitting; Proverbs 31. | “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord” | Frankenberg – Critical Whiteness | 2 |
| CNQ-2 | Christian Family Structure | The nuclear Christian family presented as divinely ordained. | “God’s design for the family”; childlessness framed as selfish. | “This is God’s design for the family” | Berger – Extremism; Frankenberg – Critical Whiteness | 2 |
| CNQ-3 | Religious Purity Signaling | Sexual purity, modesty, and chastity emphasized as core values. | Modesty language and imagery; purity-culture references. | “Dress to honor God and attract a godly man” | Butler – Gender Trouble; Frankenberg – Critical Whiteness | 2, 3 |
| CNQ-4 | Christian Nationalism | Christian identity explicitly connected with American national identity. | “Take back our country for God”; “Christian America.” | “We are in a spiritual battle for this nation” | Hawley – Alt-Right; Nagle – Kill All Normies | 3 |
| CNQ-5 | Anti-Secular and Anti-Modern | Secular modernity and progressive values framed as corrupting. | “Escaping modern culture”; homestead “away from society.” | “We are building a sanctuary from the secular world” | Berger – Extremism; Munn – Alt-Right Pipeline | 2, 3 |
| COM — Commodification Strategies: transforms domestic ideology into a marketable product. | | | | | | |
| COM-1 | Sponsored Content and Affiliate | Commercial partnerships embedded within ideological content. | #ad, “sponsored,” affiliate links in bio. | “Use my code for 20% off” | Goldman – Commodity Feminism | 1 |
| COM-2 | Lifestyle-Brand Identity Construction | Tradwife identity constructed as a coherent aspirational brand. | Consistent visual branding; merchandise; courses. | “Join my traditional homemaking course” | Goldman – Commodity Feminism | 1, 2 |
| COM-3 | Subscription and Paywall Content | Substack, Patreon, or membership platforms used to monetize content. | Links to paid newsletters; exclusive-content promises. | “Find me on Substack for what I can’t say here” | Marwick & Lewis – Media Manipulation | 2 |
| COM-4 | Feminist-Language Co-option | Deliberate use of feminist vocabulary (empowerment) to frame submission. | Empowerment language applied to submission. | “The most radical choice a woman can make today” | Goldman et al. – Commodity Feminism | 1, 3 |
| COM-5 | Aesthetic Packaging and Algorithm Optimization | Visual aesthetics and platform optimization used to maximize reach. | High production quality; consistent palettes; trending audio. | Visual only — cinematic quality and trend aesthetics are the signal | van Dijck – Culture of Connectivity | 1, 2 |
| RAD — Radicalization Language and Pipeline Indicators: signals escalation or active direction toward extremist content. | | | | | | |
| RAD-1 | Ideological Escalation Over Time | Documented movement from soft lifestyle content toward harder messaging. | Early-vs-late comparison; introduction of new themes (longitudinal). | Identified through longitudinal comparison — not a single post | Berger – Extremism; Munn – Alt-Right Pipeline | 3 |
| RAD-2 | Cross-Platform Migration Direction | Content directing audiences from mainstream to alternative platforms. | Direct links to Rumble, Telegram, Substack. | “Find me on Telegram for the uncensored version” | Marwick & Lewis – Media Manipulation | 2 |
| RAD-3 | In-Group / Out-Group Construction | Language creates a bounded ideological community against outsiders. | Us-versus-them framing; “real women” language. | “We are the last women who still understand what it | Berger – Extremism; Hawley – Alt-Right | 2, 3 |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| | | | | means to be a woman” | | |
| RAD-4 | Alternative-Platform Explicit Content | Rumble/Telegram/Substack content measurably more explicit than mainstream. | Explicit white-nationalist language absent from mainstream posts. | Identified through cross-platform comparison | Munn – Alt-Right Pipeline; Conway – Role of the Internet | 3 |
| RAD-5 | Conspiracy and Extremist Framework | Established extremist or conspiracy frameworks invoked. | Great Replacement references woven into homesteading content. | “I homeschool because I will not let globalists program my children” | Berger – Extremism; Nagle – Kill All Normies | 3 |

Note. The codebook was developed in ATLAS.ti and applied through a hybrid deductive–inductive logic: the six categories were derived from the theoretical framework, while individual codes were refined as patterns emerged in the data. Each code specifies a definition, observable verbal and visual indicators, a representative signal phrase, a theoretical link, and a primary tier. Tier values indicate the gateway position(s) at which a code most often appears; where two values are listed, the first is the primary tier and the code is intentionally cross-tier, reflecting how a single signifier can recur in progressively more explicit forms along the continuum. Example signal phrases are illustrative paraphrases of the kinds of statements coded, not quotations of any specific creator.