

# Gender Terrorism [C1]

L'attivista britannica Laura Bates analizza l'influenza dannosa della manosfera, una rete di forum online che promuovono la misoginia. Invita all'educazione, alla responsabilità delle piattaforme e all'azione politica per affrontare questa crescente minaccia.

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In her 2020 book *Men Who Hate Women*, British activist Laura Bates evaluates the frightening influence of the manosphere, a set of online forums that promote misogyny. The manosphere is divided into various communities, among which are incels (involuntary celibates), a group of men who are angry at women who [deny](#) them sex, and [pickup](#) artists, who believe they can achieve sexual success by applying learned seduction. It all sounds very adolescent. But the manosphere can incite, and has incited, violence against women, the Black community, and others. In fact, its impact on society is so serious that Bates believes it should be treated as a terrorist group. Speak Up attended a conference in which Bates spoke about the issue. As she explained, the manosphere is an [exploitative](#) system that [targets](#) young men. **Laura Bates (English accent):** Men who profit from the manosphere deliberately exploit other vulnerable men. [Whilst](#) claiming to want to support them, they reproduce exactly the conditions that caused that pain in the first place. So if you have men who are struggling with mental health problems, men who are struggling in relationships, the answer to that is really good psychological support in society, it's [tackling outdated](#) gender stereotypes, it's providing [outlets](#) for them to feel that they can [reach out](#) for support. And what the manosphere provides is precisely the opposite of that.

## SAME OLD STORY

The manosphere promotes the [age-old](#) practice of [commodifying](#) and dehumanising women to gain a sense of power and control. **Laura Bates:** They see women as [slot machines](#) and that [paying out](#) sex is women's sole purpose. So if you're an incel, you think that the machine is [rigged](#) and you

want [to smash](#) it. If you're a [pickup](#) artist, you teach people that if they pay you enough money you will teach them the exact number of buttons to press to force that machine to pay out every time. These different systems are always about power and control.

## DISEMPOWERED

The manosphere thrives on [hopelessness](#), [drawing on](#) many systems of oppression to persuade young men that there is no support and that things cannot be changed. A captive and desperate audience is then convinced to finance an imaginary war on women. **Laura Bates:** All of these systems depend on the idea of an oppressed minority group being [recast](#) as the oppressor. So we can see a really crucial [overlap](#) between the manosphere portraying men as victims with this sense of something being taken away from them, and at the same time there are deeply racist descriptions of women of colour. We're looking at these intersecting systems of oppression: capitalism, patriarchy and white supremacy are all impacting on these communities.

## MISINFORMATION

Many ordinary people don't accept that sexism and racism is as serious as it is. Teenagers today are repeating dangerous [quotes](#) from the manosphere because these ideas are so [pervasive](#). **Laura Bates:** I noticed a massive shift in the attitudes of the young people I was working with in schools: there were teenage boys who were repeating [verbatim](#) the same [quotes](#), the same misinformation, the same false statistics from the manosphere: "The [gender pay gap](#) is a myth", "Men are the vast majority of victims of domestic abuse", "Women everywhere are lying about rape" ...

## A PUBLIC ISSUE

To deal with the issue, says Bates, we need education [from primary school age up](#), as well as support for young people. Politicians, platforms and the media must all be [held accountable](#). **Laura**

**Bates:** It's not just individuals who are profiting from this but also social media platforms who are monetising it, mainstream media platforms who are recycling it, it's interlocutors, men who are [conduits](#) for these ideas but who [dress them up](#) in academic-sounding terminology. And it's politicians, it's political parties who are using dog-whistle references to these racist and misogynistic online groups as a way of gaining support and votes.

## THE EVERYDAY SEXISM PROJECT

In 2012, Laura Bates founded The Everyday Sexism Project, a website that documents examples of sexism from around the world. It rapidly expanded to cover multiple countries and languages, with entries able to be [submitted](#) directly to the site or by email. Over the past decade The Everyday Sexism Project has been able to work on policy with politicians in many countries, provoked conversations about consent in schools and universities, tackled sexual harassment in businesses and workplaces and helped police forces raise the reporting and detection rates on sexual offences.

[www.everydaysexism.com](http://www.everydaysexism.com)

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# Glossary

- **conduits** = intermediari
- **rigged** = truccata
- **pervasive** = onnipresenti
- **commodifying** = commercializzare, rendere merce
- **pickup** = partner sessuale
- **hopelessness** = mancanza di speranza
- **drawing on** = attingere
- **from primary school age up** = dall'età della scuola elementare in su
- **dress them up** = mascherare
- **outlets** = sbocchi
- **reach out** = chiedere
- **verbatim** = alla lettera
- **slot machines** = macchinette mangiasoldi
- **paying out** = provvedere
- **to smash** = distruggere
- **overlap** = sovrapposizione
- **gender pay gap** = divario salariale di genere
- **deny** = negare
- **exploitative** = sfruttatore
- **outdated** = obsoleto
- **age-old** = antica
- **recast** = rielaborare, riadattare
- **held accountable** = considerare responsabili
- **submitted** = inviare
- **targets** = avere come obiettivo
- **Whilst** = mentre
- **tackling** = affrontare
- **quotes** = citazioni