Masculinity in a time of crisis

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Professor Jordan Peterson in YouTube Shorts

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Abstract

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The topic of masculinity is something that has a lot of research done on it with it covering different spectrums of masculinity and how it affects society. Media has always played a part in how society is shaped and what is valued and therefore has had its effect on how masculinity is viewed. Today however social media has taken an important spot for both political and societal topics for younger individuals (Zimmerman, 2020), meaning more power for the individuals who create this type of content as they are seen as role models by their audience (Zimmerman, 2020). There are a few big creators who cover the topic of masculinity with one of them being Jordan Peterson. The format of short videos has exploded in popularity on platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and Instagram but as it is a newer format of video less research has been done on the topic of masculinity and the material of shorts. This thesis will analyse videos in the form of shorts where Jordan Peterson is present with an aim of getting an understanding what type of masculinity is being presented as there are several different types of masculinity that have different traits. The thesis will also look for a connection between what is presented in the videos and the crisis of masculinity which refers to that there is something that is troubling men in today’s society (McDowell, 2000). In the end the findings will be presented which indicate that there is a connection between what is being said in the videos and the crisis of masculinity as well as several examples that highlight both hegemonic masculinity, toxic masculinity, and patriarchal power structures.

Key words: Masculinity, Jordan Peterson, Crisis of Masculinity, communication

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1 Introduction

Masculinity can be defined as a configuration of practice organized in relation to the structure of gender relations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and within masculinity there are different types of masculinity that all are defined by their differences in practices. These types of masculinity have different impacts on both the individual preforming the practices but also individuals in their surroundings. Masculinity is however not something that is set in stone as it is susceptible to change as its standards are set through social and cultural aspects (Jefferson, 2002).

Through the rise of social media, it has opened up for a possibility for individuals to spread different practices regarding masculinity as a way to gather an online following but also to change the view of masculinity. There are different key figures that have played a role in making the topic the size that it is today, with a noticeable example being Andrew Tate who basically took over the internet during the last couple of years. Andrew Tate often explored different sides of masculinity but usually drew from toxic masculinity which refers to an extreme form of masculinity that revolves around traits related to dominance (Kupers, 2005).

But what is it that makes these influencers be able to gather such a large following online? There has for some years been talks about a crisis of masculinity, a phenomenon that refers to that there is something that is troubling men in different areas of society (McDowell, 2000). Is this something that they have been able to use in order to gather a following on social media?

Before Andrew Tate exploded in popularity there were others who also used the power of social media in order capture their audience in an attempt to reach younger males and convey them about their messaging regarding masculinity. One of them stands out from the rest with a background that allows him to have high credibility regarding the topic of masculinity and he has found a lot of success on social media platforms thanks to this, this person is Professor Jordan Peterson.

This study will be analysing Jordan Peterson messages regarding masculinity in order to get an understanding of what values young males’ role models are spreading through social media. Jordan Peterson is a former professor at the university of Toronto who in 2016 came into the public light by protesting against Bill C-16 which is an act in Canada regarding gender identity. The act that later passed added the words gender identity and expression to three
places in the law (Dragicevic, n.d.) with a goal of protecting individuals of discrimination (Walker, 2016). Peterson was part of the opposition against the act as he thought it would infringe on the freedom of expression (Choise, 2017). After this Peterson would quickly build a following and by 2018 he was cited as the most influential public intellectual in the Western world in the New York Times (Brooks, 2018). Prior to this he has written a book in 1999 called Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief and he has followed up on this by releasing several books since then, with the bestselling books 12 Rules for Life, and Beyond Order (Jordanbpeterson, n.d.). With this he has managed to build a large online following with 7.3 million subscribers on YouTube alone (Social Blade, n.d.) where he uploads videos discussing various topics.

2 Aim and Research Questions

2.1 Aim
The aim of this thesis is to get an understanding of how masculinity is being presented during the so-called crisis of masculinity. This will be done by looking at YouTube shorts that have Jordan Peterson in them. YouTube shorts is newer form of video that is usually somewhere between 30-60 seconds and gets fed to the audience by an algorithm rather than the audience choosing the videos by themselves. With the rise of short format videos through platforms such as TikTok, YouTube and Instagram it has opened a market for short videos containing messages that are quick and effective at capturing the audience attention. This thesis has chosen this type of material as it is a new way of growing an audience and as it is a newer form of media there is less research done on this type of content.

As mentioned before, Jordan Peterson has managed to grow a large audience on YouTube and a big part of his content surrounds the topic of masculinity. The analysis of the videos will be looking for connections with different traits and practices within masculinity and connecting them to the different types of masculinity, the different traits and types of masculinity will be presented in the literature review chapter of the thesis. The thesis will also see if there is a connection between what Peterson is presenting and the crisis of masculinity. The thesis will be looking for three different topics within the crisis of masculinity which are boys are failing in school, in their relationships and in the labour market and are based of McDowells (2000) study. By doing this the thesis will be able to present insight into where Peterson draws his conclusions regarding masculinity and the way he presents it to his audience.
2.2 Research Questions

- What type of masculinity is being presented in Jordan Peterson's videos and how is it being presented?
- What are the connections between the discourses of masculinity Jordan Peterson constructs and the crisis of masculinity?

3 Background

This section will contextualize the role that influencers may have to people and how they can affect them and give a brief overview on political and societal content on YouTube. It will also give background to Jordan Peterson, what role he plays for the audience, and which sphere he exist in on YouTube.

3.1 Influencers

As social media platforms become more prevalent in everyday life so does influencers, today there are different influencers that cover different aspects of society, some in the form of entertainment and some in the form of information. Something that can be done in an easy and approachable way (Riedl et al., 2021) meaning that it is easier to digest for the audience. The power that comes with influencers is that they have the ability to create a connection with their audience and can be seen as role models for some of the audience (Zimmermann et al., 2020), thereby the name influencer.

YouTube is one of the most popular social media platforms (Dixon, 2023) and mostly consist of user generated content meaning that the platform itself does not produce the content but rather the users themselves. This leads to that all kinds of topics are available on the platform, including political and societal topics (Zimmermann et al., 2020) which includes the topic of masculinity. With influencers acting as role models and information sources on these topics for younger individuals (Zimmermann et al., 2020) it opens up for the possibility to spread all types of different information to an impressionable audience. Jordan Peterson is an influencer that makes content in both the societal and political genres and therefore has the ability to influence his audience regarding the topics that he chooses to talk about in his videos.

3.2 Jordan Peterson

There has been some research done regarding Jordan Peterson that looks at various aspects of how and what he is presenting. de Van & van Gemart (2020) did a study that looked at the rhetoric Jordan Peterson uses in both his writing and speaking. In the study they found that
he uses understandable language while explaining different topics, making it easy to absorb topics that otherwise are complex. Another interesting point in the study is how they connect his stance with hybrid masculinity and how it might affect is popularity with incels and geeks, as he is slim and has a high pitch voice, he is different than the usual male ideal, meaning it might inflict hope to his followers and showcase that it is possible to rise through the hierarchy of the world. There are other things that can connect him to the incel culture as well with him fitting the description of incels that Morris and Ratajczak (2019, p., 1997) use and how de Ven & van Gemart (2020) note his showcasing of emotions that usually are sadness and anger.

While looking through the previous research that has been done on Jordan Peterson a term that was commonly used was “Father figure” (Nesbitt-Larking, 2022; de Ven & van Gemart, 2020; Feldman, 2020), which allows for the conclusion that he is seen as a role model by his audience. Nesbitt Larking’s (2022) study was what drove this assumption home as he looked at how Peterson’s followers on the Jordan Peterson subreddit talked about him, several comments fell under the category of “The abandoned son” where the posters saw Jordan Peterson as a form of a father figure. Lewis (2018) who wrote a report on the alternative influence that social media provides and specifically the reactionary right on YouTube included Jordan Peterson in this sphere, which also adds to the claims of Nicholls (2019) who connects him with the New Right. The thing that makes this interesting is how the algorithms plays a part in what the audience will watch next. So, if an influencer works with other influencers in a certain sphere their audience is likely to be recommended other people’s videos in that sphere. In Jordan Peterson’s case this means sending people down what is usually referred to as the right-wing pipeline and the further the audience goes the more extreme the opinions get. In Lewis’ (2018 p., 11) work this gets showcased by a graph connecting the different influencers with each other. With the father figure status that was mentioned above this can become problematic as young men who see him as this father figure get introduced to a world of right-wing extremist thoughts.

4 Literature review

This chapter will firstly give a brief explanation of masculinity as a whole to later focus hegemonic masculinity as this type of masculinity is the most relevant for this thesis. Throughout this chapter the focus will lay on structures, effects and different terms that are relevant to hegemonic masculinity.
Masculinity is something that can take many forms and there are several different terms being used for describing it. But before going into the ways and forms of different terms of masculinity can be described it is important to define masculinity, as mentioned before it can be defined as a configuration of practice organized in relations to the structure of gender relations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). With manhood also being something that has to be earned through different types of metrics (DiMuccio & Knowles, 2020; Kaplan & Offer, 2022), how it can be earned will be covered throughout the literature review with different types of masculinity valuing different things. The term that is most relevant to this thesis is hegemonic masculinity and it will be covered in the next subchapter, but the literature review will also be covering some of the other types of masculinity in order to give context to the complexity that is masculinity.

4.2 Hegemonic Masculinity
Hegemonic masculinity as a subject has been researched for quite a while and is something that is consistently changing as it can be quite hard to define as the word hegemonic is defined as something that is ruling or dominant in a political or social context. Although hegemonic masculinity can be hard to give a definite structure, previous research has named concepts such as domination of women (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, p. 840) but also the concept of heterosexuality and homophobia (Jewkes et al. 2015; Andersson & McCormack, 2016). All these three concepts have a connection with power as it allows for a specific type of men to collect more societal power while pushing others down the ladder as they are climbing it.

Masculinity in general is something that is argued to be something that is not “natural” but rather something that is socially and culturally constructed by identity (Itulua-Abumere, 2013). The same argument has been made about hegemonic masculinity where the standard within hegemonic masculinity is being set by social and cultural aspects (Jefferson, 2002). Jewkes et al. (2015) highlights that hegemonic masculinity can stem from men feeling like they are not in a powerful position, meaning that hegemonic masculinity does not come from a specific person but rather a sense of powerlessness within men. What makes this interesting is that masculinity is not something that is natural with there being a “correct” answer but rather that it is something that is formed by the environment surrounding individuals. This means that if the public opinion changes regarding the topic, the phenomenon itself can change. This has happened before and is still happening with the feminist movement as it has...
allowed for more rights for women, but it also means that it can change direction if society were to think differently.

The phrase crisis of masculinity has become popular within both journalism and scientific writing. Jefferson (2002) connects the crisis of masculinity with hegemonic masculinity by stating that the crisis of masculinity is not something that only affects hegemonic masculinity but masculinity as a whole, as society is changing in a number of various aspects. These changes in the societal structure are something that could make men confused about their identity and place in the world, although this confusion can be hard in the first place it could lead to a positive change within hegemonic masculinity as there are several negative consequences within it today.

One of the negative consequences of hegemonic masculinity is violence, although violence is not a central part of hegemonic masculinity it is still a tool that can be used in order to force domination over other individuals (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). It could also be used in order to answer challenges of masculinity, then violence can be used as a sport in order to reinstate masculinity (Alisson & Klein, 2019). Morris and Ratajczak (2019) built a theoretical framework from several different studies regarding violence against women within masculinities. Throughout the text there was a clear message that violence is being used in order to heighten the status of power within masculinity. They do however highlight that how men also can use violence against women to emasculate other men by highlighting that they need to use violence against a woman (Morris & Ratajczak, 2019, p. 1994).

The focus of the negative side effects of hegemonic masculinity is usually on women as they are usually those who are affected by it (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, p. 840), it is however also a system that has negative consequences for men that can lead to a cost of health and quality of life (Jewkes et al, 2015). Lomas et al. (2015) found in their study that signs of hegemonic power structures where being built in a closed group of men that led to jealousy and friction within the group. It was shown in the study that the competitiveness of masculinity was present in the closed group even though it was supposed to be an environment where these structures where obsolete. A criticism that was highlighted on the field of hegemonic masculinity was that it mostly focused on younger men (Thompson & Bennet, 2015). This criticism has however been somewhat answered by Smith et al. (2022) whose study focused on older men. In their study they found that men who scored higher on a scale of hegemonic masculinity where less likely to report symptoms of depression, which
correlates with the idea that men are not supposed to show emotions. The side effect of not showcasing emotions was that it could lead to anger (Smith et al., 2022) meaning that it does not only affect the individual in question but also those surrounding the individual. They also connect this to the loss of both health and wealth making it possible to connect the two to important values for men (Smith et al., 2022) and the wealth aspect could be coming from the norm of breadwinning.

The concept of breadwinner refers to someone being the primary or sole income source in a household, this was something that was more relevant during the mid-19th century but now it is a concept that has been pushed away by the second wave of feminism during the 1960-1970 which led to more women in the workspace (Nijjar, 2019, p. 27). The concept of breadwinner and masculinity was then connected by Kaplan and Offer (2022) when they did a study regarding insecurity about masculinity. In the study they found that insecurity about masculinity could affect housework and childcare and that there were correlations between money earned and housework and childcare, once again showing how masculinity affects others. It was showcased that insecurity regarding masculinity played a big part in how men acted in their home and how they interacted with their family, they also found that men who had more traditional beliefs regarding masculinity where more sensitive regarding the topic.

Hunnicut (2019, p., 560) aligns the term breadwinner with violence against women, stating that violence towards women may occur when men fail to reach the state of breadwinner. Aligning with statements that manhood is something that is needed to be earned and that it is something that can be lost at the cost of how an individual is acting or presenting themselves (DiMuccio and Knowles, 2020; Kaplan & Offer, 2022). This means that some men can feel like there is a constant pressure of living to a certain expectation in order to be considered masculine. This was highlighted by Lomas et al. (2015) where they studied masculinity within a meditation centre and found that participants in the study found it hard to talk about or take what they learned into the “real world” where they often suffered negative comments from friends.

4.3 Toxic masculinity
Toxic masculinity is a phrase that has grown in popularity during the last year and draws from hegemonic masculinity in its characteristics with a focus on extreme competition, greed, lack of empathy, need for dominating and controlling others, fear of being dependent, ready to be violent, and stigmatising and subjugation of women, gays, and men who show feminine
characteristics (Kupers, 2005). In the study Kupers (2005) note how important respect is within masculinity, although the study focuses on men in prison it still highlights how a feeling of lack of respect can bring forward these toxic traits. When talking about toxic masculinity it is however important to note that this phrase is something that has a lot of things attached to it, as it now is commonly used in everyday life by a lot of the population. Harrington (2020) brings this forward in her study where she talks about her experiences as a someone who has both taught and studied gender violence. Harrington notes that there has been a rise in its use from her students even if she does not use the term in her teachings, meaning that this is a term that has spread from being seen in little academic work to a term that gets used in everyday life.

4.4 Other types of masculinity
As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter it is important to recognize other types of masculinity in order to get an understanding of the different types of masculinities that exist. These will not have a larger section about them but will be brought forward here in order to create a reference point against hegemonic masculinity as it will be relevant for the thesis. While researching about masculinity one of the types that was brought up was hyper masculinity, which was described rather easily with the explanation of being the same aspects of hegemonic masculinity but with higher intensity and that there is a requirement of physicality, violence, and sexist attitudes towards women (Morris & Ratajczak, 2019, p. 1985). Hybrid masculinity was also highlighted, it was showcased in Arxer’s (2011, p. 417) study where they found that hegemonic structures and goals of domination were used in combination with features that are usually not found in hegemonic masculinity. Things that were used were cooperation within the group and emotional sharing, but it was ultimately done to gain access to women’s bodies. Arxer (2011) highlights in the findings different conversations between men showing how they weave away from showcasing emotions to acknowledging them to swiftly move away from the topic and switching to mostly talking about women.

There have been studies that have examined how masculinity is portrayed in different types of media. Ricciardelli’s et al. (2010) study covers how masculinity is portrayed in men’s lifestyle magazines and finds that even if different magazines highlights different types of masculinities, hegemonic masculinity still finds a way through and is apparent in all of the empirical objects. They also highlight how these magazines highlight certain things in order
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to make a man successful and therefore enhances consumerism. Nijjar (2019) looked at two popular tv series in order to identify different types of masculinities such as “new lad” and “new man” through a critical discourse analysis. Finding that the characters struggle with hegemonic stereotypes and with a newer way of thinking that has been enabled through the second wave of feminism (Nijjar 2019). These studies highlight how hard it can be to break away from hegemonic mindset with it being present in today’s media in various types of ways.

This literature review covers hegemonic masculinity, hybrid masculinity, toxic masculinity and hyper masculinity which is needed in order to get an understanding of what it entails and why it is important to research the topic of masculinity. This study will use these throughout the process of this study, and they will be crucial for making this study be able to present an analysis that carries value. As also shown in the literature review there are studies on how masculinity is being presented in media but there is a gap in the media that is being analysed, something that this study will cover by the selection of media it analyses. It also covers a certain side of influencers that are yet to be analysed to the full extent of how they can be analysed as they can have a large impact on the younger generations.

5 Theoretical Framework

This chapter will contain the theoretical framework that is required for getting an understanding of why certain things might be mentioned but also to get an understanding of what the effects can be from what is being said. Within this chapter the topics of patriarchy, masculinity as social performances and discourse and the crisis of masculinity will be covered.

5.1 Crisis of masculinity

The crisis of masculinity is a phenomenon that refers to that something is troubling men and that it gets shown through “laddish” behaviour in public spaces and to a rising suicide rate amongst young men (McDowell, 2000). The name of this phenomenon is quick to point out that there is something wrong within the gender of men, that there is something that disturbs the way of men’s living. This notion of there being something wrong with men in today’s society could be one of the reasons in the rise of these male influencers that offer some sort of guidance aimed at men who are struggling with their masculinity. A connection between men losing their status of breadwinners and the crisis of masculinity is possible, with the role of breadwinner empowering men (Ruggles, 2015). With more women starting to work it led to more independence for them, meaning less influence for the men. McDowell (2000) also
states that the crisis of masculinity may be influenced by the reconstruction of the economy and with that challenging hegemonic masculinity, the old ways of being a man are increasingly becoming counterproductive with the social and economic changes in the west. Since this article was posted there has also been an enormous shift within the job market regarding digitalization and more robotics taking place within factories. Making an even larger shift in today’s working climate and the conditions for getting a job.

In McDowell’s (2000) study she identifies three themes of the crisis of masculinity from looking at newspapers articles headlines, these include (1) boys are failing in school, (2) in their relationship and (3) in the labour market. In order to connect Jordan Peterson to the crisis of masculinity these three themes will be looked after to see if they are being discussed and what types of discourses are being created about the topics.

5.2 Masculinity as social performances and cultural discourses
For this thesis gender will be presumed as social performance, this means that gender is seen as performances and that there is nothing that is true or false, real, or distorted acts of gender, meaning that gender would be considered regulatory fiction (Butler, 1999). For this thesis this means that gender is something that has to be proven through different social performances, these performances are driven from the discourses of masculinity and what they entail and for this analysis it will be the discourses Jordan Peterson presents. It is however important to understand what the main discourses surrounding masculinity are and how they are expressed in order to create the analysis. Kiesling (2007) wrote a theoretical overview regarding this topic stating, “Masculinity is expressed in language through features of language indexical of cultural discourses of masculinity, or through features directly indexical of certain kinds of men.” (p. 661).

In the text Kiesling (2007) mentions that there are four main cultural discourses regarding masculinity with them being (1) gender differences which highlights that there are biological and behavioural differences between men and women. (2) Heterosexism which declares that masculinity as a discourse is supposed to sexually desire women and not men. (3) Dominance which is stated as the main discourse when it comes to masculinity and usually revolves around power and hierarchy. (4) Lastly is male solidarity which regards a bond among men and that men want and need to do things as a group exclusive of women. These four discourses will be pillars of the analysis in discourses to look for throughout the videos and if Peterson follows or break these discourses. There are clear connections between these and how
hegemonic masculinity is described in the literature review above (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, p. 840; Jewkes et al. 2015; Andersson & McCormack, 2016) and this theory will add an understanding of what types of masculinity is being discussed and if it breaks the norms of the discourse of masculinity. And although the author states that these are specific to USA (Kiesling, 2007, p., 657) it gives a good sample as Peterson is mainly big in the western world.

These discourses regarding masculinity can be displayed in different ways and can be enhanced by using certain traits and qualities. One of the ways of showcasing dominance and power is as an example showing superior knowledge or physical violence (Kiesling, 2007). This highlights what is being respected in masculinity and the values that are important to “succeed” as a man and thereby being able to climb the social hierarchy. Men can therefore lean towards these points when they aim to displaying their masculinity.

5.3 Patriarchy
With this thesis’ goal of studying masculinity, it is also important to highlight the perspective of how masculinity can affect individuals in its surrounding and therefore the thesis will include a theoretical section regarding patriarchy. Hunnicutt (2009) defines the term patriarchy as the following “social arrangements that privilege males, where men as a group dominate women as a group, both structurally and ideologically—hierarchical arrangements that manifest in varieties across history and social space” (p., 557). This is important as for example one of the core elements of hegemonic masculinity is domination over women (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, p. 840) and with patriarchy as a theory it will enable the analysis to bring forward a critical perspective towards the domination over women. Patriarchy is however not something that only affects women. Idriss’ (2022) study highlights how patriarchy also affects males and how individuals who are considered the “wrong sort” of man. Meaning that men who do not conform to gender-role expectations could be the target of abuse by other men. Stating that “both male and female victims are fighting the same battle—patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, and male domination over those who are weaker” (Idriss, 2022, p.,11920). Although this study focuses on honour-based violence and forced marriages it showcases how the patriarchy plays a big role in conforming norms within the society that are enforced through the patriarchy. The patriarchy mostly effects women as highlighted before but as this thesis mostly focuses on masculinity and its effects on men there is an importance in highlighting how it affects men as well.
It is also important to understand how patriarchy can affect women and in what scenarios it can occur so that the analysis can look for themes regarding the topic. Khelghat-Doost and Sibly (2020) highlight in their text that one of these areas lays within politics and they conclude that even though there are few legal obstacles for women to participate in politics, the patriarchal structure of politics, socio-economy and culture can directly or indirectly affect women’s participation in politics. This serves as an example of on which scale that the patriarchy can operate upon and the way it affects approximately half of the population, but it also gives insight to what to look for in the videos when it comes to domination of women. Hunnicutt (2009, p., 567-568) who uses patriarchy as a theory regarding violence against women brings forward the viewpoint that violence against women is a product of patriarchal social arrangements and ideologies that are sustained and reinforced by other systems of domination. Meaning that violence is itself is not part of the patriarchy but instead a by-product that gets used in order to maintain it. This view once again concurs with hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, p. 832) and will be an important part to look for in the videos to see if discourses surrounding the topic gets brought forward.

6 Method and Material

Within this chapter the explanation of why the method and material were chosen will be explained. It will also explain important aspects of the method that are needed to get an understanding of how the analysis will work. The last part of the chapter will also explain how the material was selected through a process in order to remove biases from the author.

6.1 Qualitative method

To be able to fulfil the aim of the thesis it was important to select a method that would allow interpretation of the ideas Jordan Peterson is presenting. Brennen (2017, p., 7) describes qualitative methods as interdisciplinary, interpretive, political, and theoretical in practice. It also works well as it builds upon that reality is socially constructed. With this as a starting point it was clear that a qualitative study would be best for completing the aim of this study as it usually allows for interpretations by the researcher themselves with a theoretical background. Hansen and Machin (2019, p., 23) mentions several different methods that are appropriate for analysing media content such as content analysis, semiotics, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, narrative analysis, and genre analysis. With these being presented as good options for analysing media content they were the methods that was in consideration for the method of this analysis.
With the thesis focusing on masculinity, it was important to choose a method that would allow for reflections regarding power structures as it plays a significant role within masculinity. As shown in the theoretical section of this thesis there is a large focus on domination within masculinity, and with masculinity being the dominant ideology it was important to be able to capture these elements as well. In order to be able to conduct the analysis and find the connection between Jordan Peterson and what he is presenting, if there is a focus on domination, power structures and if it can be connected to the “crisis of masculinity” it was important to have a method that would allow for in-depth analysis of what was being said in the material to the last-minute detail. Therefore, a critical discourse analysis was chosen as it fits the criterions mentioned above. It also works well with a heavy theoretical background which is needed in order to be able to give the analysis weight in both the thesis and the real world.

A quantitative study could also have been an option for this thesis as it would have allowed for other different interesting reflections regarding the subject such as a shallower analysis of several other influencers that talk about the subject of masculinity. This would have allowed for more comparisons between influencers in order to lay a mapping of the climate on social media platforms. Another option could have been to analyse how individuals responded to the videos that was chosen for the thesis in order to understand the climate in certain groups of people. But it would also stray away from the aim of thesis as the goal is to establish if there is a connection between Jordan Peterson and the crisis of masculinity.

6.2 Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) analyses different types of material with a loose set of tools to describe the language and grammatical choices (Hansen & Machin, 2019) in order to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimised through language use and discourses (Wodak & Mayer, 2009, p., 10). What makes CDA is that it is not necessarily focused on a linguistic unit but rather the social phenomena (Wodak & Mayer, 2009, p., 2), which in the case of this study means masculinity and the discourses Jordan Peterson is presenting. It is important to remember that CDA aims to capture the more hidden and everyday beliefs which are often disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies (Wodak & Meyer 2009, p.,8). With masculinity being a dominant ideology, the discourses surrounding it can appear natural and that is why it is important to critically analyse the discourses that are being presented within it, as it can come off as something that is normal
when in reality it is harmful as shown in the literature review. An example of this could be the lexical choices while describing a certain type of people, for example how a man gets described compared to a female. The lexical choices of these descriptions could then be analysed to get an understanding of how the speaker wants their audience to perceive the groups. This could be done to enforce the power structures in society through language, with language being the way that individuals create an understanding of events, people and how reality is represented (Hansen & Machin, 2019). This leads to language being an important part of how these power structures are both created and maintained. Power is a central concept within masculinity as shown in the literature review with power being described as to having an advantage in different ways and then acting on that advantage. With masculinity being the dominant ideology power will come with it and even if men do not act upon it, they still benefit from it (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). CDA allows for breaking this down by deconstructing the linguistics used by speakers and authors. This study will be focusing mostly on the social power, but economic power can also be relevant as show in the literature review.

6.3 Discourses and social practices
In order to get an understanding of what is being analysed and why it is important the terms discourse and social practice will be described. Discourses is a central concept in CDA and can be described as an extended stretch of connected speech or writing (van Leeuwen, p., 144, 2009). But as this study will be using the approach of recontextualization it will use van Leeuwen’s (2009) explanation of it instead which is a context specific framework of making sense of things. But discourses are ultimately modelled on social practices (van Leeuwen, 2009) meaning that individual’s knowledge is based upon what individuals do. The discourses can however be transformed by leaving out some of the things that can be considered frowned upon and therefore legitimizing these actions (van Leeuwen, 2007 in 2009). This study will be analysing the social practice elements of masculinity that Jordan Peterson is presenting while adding the context of why they exist. With there being many different discourses surrounding masculinity Jordan Peterson will serve as an example of one of the discourses surrounding masculinity as he is one of the biggest influencers that covers the topic. In order to break this down the study will be analysing social practices which can be described as socially regulated ways of doing things (Van Leeuwen, 2008). He does however add:
“But the word ‘regulate’ may give the wrong impression here, since “regulation,” in the sense in which we normally understand it, is only one of the ways in which social coordination can be achieved. Different social practices are ‘regulated’ to different degrees and in different ways—for instance, through strict prescription, or through traditions, or through the influence of experts and charismatic role models, or through the constraints of technological resources used, and so on (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2005a: ch. 3).” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 6-7).

The regulation comes in here with Jordan Peterson being seen as a role model to a part of his audience who views him as a farther figure that they look up to (Nesbitt-Larking, 2022; de Ven & van Gemart, 2020; Feldman, 2020). Meaning that the social practices that are presented by Jordan Peterson can be influenced by the role that Jordan Peterson has for his audience. Social practices can be put into different elements such as participants, actions, presentation style and so on (van Leeuwen, 2008, 2009). These can be seen as different ways of creating meaning and are what humans use to be able to draw conclusions from different contexts. Recontextualization of these elements of social practice will allow for an understanding of what Peterson draws his arguments from and the theoretical framework will allow an understanding of the context. The elements of social practices will be presented in a subchapter below.

6.4 Recontextualization
Recontextualization refers to the process of that a discourse has come from what is being said or written about in that context. Throughout this process what is being said or written about will be repeated or paraphrased in different texts and made into new texts. Recontextualization puzzles these pieces back together in order to get an understanding of what these new discourses draw their inspiration from (van Leeuwen, 2009). This concept was presented by Bernstein but was later borrowed by van Leeuwen (2009) and adapted to CDA with the description:

“(1) how to use text analysis to piece together a discourse, and to connect it to the practice from which it ultimately derives its meaning, and (2) how to analyse the processes of transformation, or recontextualization (Bernstein, 1981, 1986), that occur as practices are turned into discourses” (van Leeuwen, 2009, p., 145).

For this thesis it applies to the social practices that Jordan Peterson is presenting regarding masculinity and how he lays them forward in order to create discourse surrounding masculinity. As Peterson has made a choice of how he communicates his thoughts regarding
masculinity it is possible to analyse these recontextualization that has taken place in order to persuade his audience. With the elements of social practices that van Leeuwen (2008, 2009) provides it is possible to break down the videos from social practices to be put into different categories, these will be presented below. Recontextualization can be used in different ways and van Leeuwen (2008) presents eight different categories which include substitutions, deletions, rearrangements, additions, reactions, purposes, legitimations, and evaluations. Not all of these categories will be as relevant for this thesis and the ones that are the most relevant will be presented below in a subchapter. van Leeuwen (2009) also mentions that recontextualization can be applied to different types of material as the term discourse is not limited to the material of texts, allowing for all types of material to be analysed.

6.5 Elements of social practices
There are many tools that can be used in order to recontextualize material and not all of them will be used in order to conduct this study as they are not relevant for this study and what it aims to accomplish. The tools presented below are those which were deemed to be relevant for completing the aim of the thesis. This section will also be highlighting terms that are relevant for the analysis.

- **Addition:** With this it accounts for that discourses can add reactions and motives to the representation of social practices. Meaning the reactions are the mental process which according to a given discourse will accompany specific actions or specific actors. This can account for how actors feel about specific actions or how they interpret it (van Leeuwen, 2009). This represents the captions of the videos as they speak as a clear reaction to the social practice that is being presented.

- **Legitimisation:** This adds the “why” to the representation of social practices, this can also work in the reverse order with delegitimating or critiquing something (van Leeuwen, 2008), adding this to the analysis is crucial for the explanation of why things are being said and “legitimised”.

- **Deletion:** With this it allows for comments on what is missing as elements from the social practices. As these things can be planned and have an equal importance for the discourse it is just as important to analyse this as things that are included (van Leeuwen, 2009). This will be used to describe what is not being brought forward in the videos and the theoretical framework will be used here to describe what is missing.

- **Metaphors:** As Petersons aims to convey a message in the videos these can serve as a bridge between him and the audience in delivering this message, therefore they are
important to analyse as they serve as a way of explaining different situations in a pedagogic way while being able to hide underlying power structures (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Peterson uses metaphors in several of the extracts that are being analysed and therefore they are important to break down and analyse.

- **Hyperbolic language**: This is when exaggerated language is used in order to garner more effect and can be looked after in texts to see if there is anything that is being concealed, or if it is used in order to describe something or someone in a certain way (Machin & Mayr. 2012).

### 6.6 Critiques and reflections of method

There have been some critique pointed towards CDA as a method with one of them being that it is only able to analyse a small amount of material and that it gets picked by the author, this is however where its strength also lays as it allows for a deeper understanding of a certain discourse (Machin & Meyer, 2012, p.207). The criticism of picking the material is rather misguided as the material has to be picked somehow and most of the material in research is picked for a certain reason. This thesis also tries to stray away from handpicking the videos completely with randomizing what videos get picked for the analysis. This was done in order to counteract this argument and therefore strengthening the reliability of the thesis. Another critique of CDA is that its analysis stems from biases. Something that is somewhat true but as Fairclough (2003) describes it in Machin and Mayr (2012) so is every research with the difference being that a CDA presents it while other research claims to be natural and objective. With CDA at its core being critical of discourses in society it is necessary for it to take a standpoint. This is where reflexivity comes in where it is important to critically consider the role as a researcher that is being played in combination with the individual interpretations (Brennen, 2017). To counteract this the theoretical framework will be used in combination with interpretations in order to create conclusion about the material.

### 6.7 Material

The material that is analysed will be videos that contain Jordan Peterson where he is discussing masculinity. In order to be able to analyse more videos the videos will be in what you could call “short” format videos. These videos are usually between 30 to 60 seconds and are usually served to the audience by an algorithm. The importance of analysing these types of videos comes from them being both a newer form of media that has not gotten that much research done on them, but also because this form of media is one of the quickest ways to
gather a new audience as these videos are spread by the algorithm in a much more efficient way.

The videos that will be used for this thesis will however be searched after in order to harness the best result with relevant discourses that fits the aim of the thesis. The search term will be “Jordan Peterson masculinity” as this is the subject the study wishes to analyse. The usage of shorter videos also stems from the length of the thesis, as a CDA analyses the material in depth it would therefore be impossible to analyse longer videos. The fact that they are shorter videos will also allow for different areas of masculinity as a topic. Machin and Mayr (2012) state that the material usually consists of a smaller number of text and that it gets chosen by the author and in the interest of the analyst as there they have observed a discourse where there are choices made in order persuade the audience. After selecting a sample of videos it was decided that an analysis of the video imaginary was to be removed from the analysis as they did not appear to add a lot to the discourse surrounding the topic of masculinity. In combination of that the visuals do not add to the discourse and the limited time frame of the thesis it was decided to not proceed with a visual analysis. The body language has already been analysed before by de Van and van Gemart (2020) and therefore could be seen as redundant research and with these reasons it was chosen to be removed from the analysis. What is being said in the videos will be transcribed and then analysed in order to get an understanding of the discourse being presented.

With the material already being reuploaded by another individual the videos have in a sense already been recontextualized. They have been put into a compact message from what originally could have been part of something longer in order to deliver it to an audience in a faster pace where the message of the videos is perhaps more efficient. This is a part of something that is called remix culture and it is crucial to analyse this type of material as this is a staple of young individuals’ consumption of media, identities, worldviews, and an integral part of their digital media interactions (Burwell, 2013).

6.8 Selection of material
In order to not make the videos being subject to biases the videos will be selected at random through a lottery drawing. The videos that are being chosen does not have to be uploaded by the individual themself and there are two major reasons for this (1) videos that appear in the shorts format are normally not uploaded by the creator themselves (2) the videos with the most engagement on them is not uploaded by the creator themselves. Metrics of the result of
the videos will not be accounted for in the thesis but it showcases how videos are being spread through this medium. Although this could be seen as something that weakens the reliability of the thesis as the influencer is not in control of the content it is a necessity because of the reasons listed above.

Criteria for videos:

- Jordan Peterson is present in the video.
- He talks about masculinity.
- The video is minimum 30 seconds and maximum 60 seconds.

All these criteria were chosen in order to make the aim of the thesis possible and feasible with the timeframe that was given in order to complete the study. Jordan Peterson being present in the videos is a must as he is the subject of the thesis and with the study wanting to see if there is a connection between his discourses surrounding masculinity and the crisis of masculinity it is necessary that he is present. This ties into the second criteria of that he talks about masculinity with this criterion being the same as mentioned above. The length of the videos comes down to that a video that is shorter than 30 seconds would have a challenging time presenting a discourse worth analysing and it being longer is impossible as YouTube shorts are only 60 seconds long.

There were several videos that did not fit the criteria’s that were removed from the process. After spending some time looking for videos to be part of the selection it also became apparent that several videos were just reuploaded from the same interviews as part of the remix culture we live in today where content gets edited in order to produce a product. After seeing the same videos over and over again it was decided to stop the sampling process.

After this process was done twenty videos were picked that fit the criteria mentioned above. They were then numbered from 1 to 20 in order to separate them and added to a separate document. This numbering was then used in order to randomize what four videos were chosen for the analysis in order to enhance the reliability of the study as the videos was not handpicked in order to garner the best results. There is of course an argument that the selection of videos was also handpicked but the material had to be searched for and therefore the criterions was set up in combination with the process of randomly picking which videos to analyse. The process of randomizing the videos was done through Googles random number generator where the selection numbers was set to 1-20. The numbers that were chosen was 5, 11, 17, 18 and covered different topics that was connected to the aim of the thesis. The title
of video number 5 was “Jordan Peterson Debunks Toxic Masculinity”, number 11 “ANTIDOTE to toxic masculinity │ Jordan Peterson”, number 17 “The Dangerous Man Is A Good Man │ Jordan Peterson”, number 18 “Jordan Peterson: Weak Men”. It is important to remember that the captions were not chosen by Jordan Peterson as they are not from his channel, but they still tell a rather clear story of how the topics discussed are being perceived. The videos were then downloaded in order to save them in case they were to be deleted.

7 Analysis
The analysis will firstly present the themes in masculinity that are apparent in the extracts before giving a short description of the scenario the extract is taken from. Later the full extract will be presented in order to provide the full context of what is being analysed to later provide a in detail analysis of that extract to give context to what is being presented by Peterson and why it is being presented in that way. The structure of the analysis is chosen as it represents the experience of the audience the most. Before this there will be a short section that covers aspects that is true for all the extracts.

7.1 Jordan Peterson
It is important to remember who Jordan Peterson is throughout this analysis and the role that he plays in presenting his arguments. Jordan Peterson is someone who would fall under the category of expert authority in the process of legitimisation (van Leeuwen, 2008) as he is a well-known professor within the field of psychology. As mentioned earlier he is also seen as a role model to his audience (Nesbitt-Larking, 2022) meaning that he also falls under the category of role model authority. This means is that Peterson does not always have to give his reasoning behind is statements as he is seen as both a role model and an expert on the subject (van Leeuwen, 2008).

7.2 Men should be dangerous
In this extract the themes that get presented are domination, gender differences and discipline. The extract is a transcription of video number 17 “The Dangerous Man Is A Good Man │ Jordan Peterson” where Peterson answers a question from an interviewer of how men should become more dangerous.

Extract 1:
Interviewer: “You said that a harmless man is not a good man. A good man is a very dangerous man who has that under voluntary control. How should people become more dangerous?”

Jordan Peterson: “Oh becoming more articulate is definitely, that’s the primary array of weapons. This is one thing that isn’t taught well, especially to boys. It’s more important to teach it to boys. I would say because they are more sceptical of such of the educational enterprise in general. Partly because they are less obedient, partly because they are less agreeable and agreeable boys get higher grades independent of their IQ and their academic achievement because they are easier to deal with. So what do you tell disagreeable boys? That nothing that makes you more formidable than verbal competence than being able to articulate, be able to think, to marshal your arguments right? To get everything in order, all your information straight. I mean that’s part of the reason that rap artist are so popular. Because they are able unbelievably articulate. They have this incredible verbal prowess. Its unbelievably attractive.”

In response to the interviewer’s question regarding of how men should become more dangerous Peterson uses the metaphor “array of weapons”. Using a metaphor is a lexical choice by Peterson that provides a linguistic way of hiding underlying power structures (Machin & Mayr, 2012), it is important to highlight what the use of this metaphor implies. Weapons are usually tools that are meant for hurting another individual and it implies that men should have something that they can hurt individuals with, but also as a tool that allows individuals to press someone for something they want. The word weapon itself has several different connotations with different parts of the world thinking of it differently. The first connotation might be danger but for some individuals it can be something that keeps individuals safe from danger, as many people have weapons at home in order to protect themselves in case of danger. If weapons have the connotation of being something that is used in order to be safe from intruders, then an example of using being articulate can be to argue with someone who is trying to diminish someone’s masculinity. With metaphors being a way of simplifying a concept and persuade an audience (Machin & Mayr, 2012) it allows for Peterson to highlight the importance of being dangerous to his audience in a simplistic way that is easier to understand while at the same time presenting hegemonic masculinity traits. With the context of the conversation that is taking place an “primary array of weapons” implies that men should have several things that would be considered weapons and if being articulate does not work using your fists could be considered an option instead. With being
dangerous there comes a possibility of domination of others as the likes of both mental and physical threats can be used in order to establish dominance. Although Peterson advocates for articulate dangerousness it still confides within the picture that men should be able to dominate their surroundings which is common within hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and can allow for keeping the structure of patriarchy in society. Language is the way individuals create an understanding of events and persons (Hansen & Machin, 2019), with Peterson telling his audience that being articulate is important it can influence them in a way that they can influence others through conversations.

Right after Peterson's metaphorical use in extract 1 he focuses on why it is important for boys as he says, “This is one thing that isn’t taught well, especially to boys.”. Within this sentence he sets up the discourse for how boys are at a disadvantage as they do not have the same conditions as girls in schools by highlighting how this “especially” effects boys. By using overlexicalization in the form of “especially” to describe the situation Peterson creates friction between the genders as the word highlights that boys are the ones who are mostly affected by this. The sentence would have worked by just saying “This is one thing that isn’t thought well to boys” but by adding the especially he highlights that there is an injustice in the education system that affects boys. As overlexicalization can be used in order to try to persuade the audience (Machin & Mayr, 2012) this can be seen as an example of Peterson trying to create this friction between the genders. With having this as a base of the conversation he continuous by giving his reasoning to why it is more important to teach boys to be articulate “I would say because they are more sceptical of such of the educational enterprise in general. Partly because they are less obedient, partly because they are less agreeable...”. This section of the extract uses something in society that is already a well-established sentiment which is “boys will be boys”. This is done by the lexical choices of describing boys as “less obedient” and “less agreeable” to describe why they are more sceptical of the educational enterprise. Something that matches McDowell’s (2000) behaviour description of “laddish behaviour” and the sentiment of “boys will be boys” which has the connotations of that men or boys will behave in a noisy way and not an obedient way. By using something that feels familiar to the audience by describing boys in this fashion he can mask the use and purposes of being articulate, which for this extract is being dangerous as established by both the interviewer and Peterson himself. With the emphasis on “less” while describing boys it is clear that Peterson is comparing boys with girls in this instance as they are the other metric to compare to in this context. Once again pushing for the disadvantage that boys have in school which he further demonstrates when
talking about how agreeable boys get better grades as “they are easier to deal with.”. By doing this he also demonstrates the importance of being disciplined as it provides benefits through academic achievements as stated, “and agreeable boys get higher grades independent of their IQ and their academic achievement because they are easier to deal with”. Through this statement Peterson shows a clear reward for being disciplined as he describes that by being disciplined men get rewarded through academic achievements independent of their IQ. Adding a reward to the actions he proposes is an effective way of motivating actions to his followers as there is a clear benefit for following his advice.

Even though Peterson never mention girls in extract 1 there is still interpretations that can be done by analysing the lexical choices he uses. By saying “This is one thing that isn’t taught well, especially to boys.” Peterson has made a point about how there is injustice in the school system as girls are being taught to be articulate while boys are being left behind. When he is talking about boys it is clear that he is comparing them with girls “It’s more important to teach it to boys. I would say because they are more sceptical of such of the educational enterprise in general. Partly because they are less obedient, partly because they are less agreeable…”.

As Peterson describes it as “they are more” he has to be comparing boys to someone with the logical choice being girls given his standpoint. By this he uses a common discourse within masculinity being gender differences (Keisling, 2007) to portray what is by his statements an unfair educational system based upon the attributes he assigns to the genders as agreeableness and being obedient helps with academic achievements according to Peterson.

Extract 1 can be seen as a way to validate those who feel like they did not receive the proper education and therefore is lacking the ability to articulate themselves in a “proper” way. It can be aimed at those who are still studying, with the message being to keeping working on themselves to be able to achieve their academic achievements even though they are at a gendered disadvantage. The sentiment that it is important to be able to articulate yourself is something that can easily be applied to all people with it being an important skill for everyone. But in this case Peterson highlights the especial importance for boys as he feels like boys in general have a harder time in school, which is one theme that gets highlighted within discussion of the crisis of masculinity (McDowell, 2000). By saying that boys have a harder time in school as an argument to why it is especially important to learn boys being articulate, he can use this pre-existing discourse of boys having a hard time in school to mask the underlying implications of its use which is being dangerous, which is the premise of the question that Peterson answers.
Throughout the extract Peterson gives the actions he is proposing a purpose through different awards that are mentioned throughout the extract, the first one being through the rap scene which has seen a lot of mainstream success during the later years, making it a clear example of it paying off being articulate. The other one is that it is an “attractive” feature amongst men. With the rise of incel culture this can be an effective way of motivating being more articulate and as shown in Arxer’s (2011) study the domination of females is usually the ultimate goal for young men meaning it would be a good motivation for his audience. He also uses it while talking about discipline as mentioned before, by referring to how agreeable boys have an easier time achieving their academic achievements as they are easier to deal with. By giving these actions a clear example of how they would benefit the audience it becomes an effective way of motivating the audience to follow these actions.

7.3 Weak men

In this extract the themes that get presented are domination, discipline, and stoicism. The extract is a transcription of video number 18 “Jordan Peterson: Weak Men” where Petersons talks about how to make men stronger

**Extract 2:**

Jordan Peterson: “You don’t make men safe by making them weak. In fact, they are much more dangerous when they are weak, because they will stab you in the back when they get the chance or take advantage of you when they get the chance. You make men safe let’s say by making them strong and then by making sure that they are disciplined. It’s the men that have the most aggressive and fearless temperaments that can be the best men. But it’s like having a very powerful dog. You better civil, you better discipline because otherwise it’s gonna be a monster.”

What a weak man is never gets explained in this extract, but Peterson does however say that “In fact, they are much more dangerous when they are weak, because they will stab you in the back when they get the chance or take advantage of you when they get the chance.”. Here the term “dangerous” is used in a negative sense unlike in extract 1 where being dangerous is something that gets described as something to strive after. Here the weak men are dangerous because they are someone who cannot be relied upon and are people who will “stab you in the back when they get the chance or take advantage of you when they get the chance.”. These are not descriptions of what makes a weak man, but rather what the consequences of being one or rather having them in your surroundings can cause. In Petersons explanation of the
consequences of a weak man he uses the metaphor of “stab you in the back” referring to someone who cannot be trusted as they will betray individuals. The individual will not actually take a knife and stab someone in the back, but this is a common saying that describes the scenario of someone betraying someone. The usage of the metaphor here is a way of describing a situation that is easier to visualize and getting the audience a sense of what it will feel like when this happens to them. With metaphors being a way of persuading the audience (Machin & Mayr, 2012) this can be seen as a way of Peterson trying to motivate the audience from becoming “weak men” or surrounding themselves with them. Even though it is never described what a weak man is he does describe how to make a man safe, and that is by making them “strong” and “disciplined”. Here he uses the opposite word of weak as in “strong” in order to enhance the contrasts between the two types of men, making the entire picture rather black and white and easy to understand for the audience. Whether Petersons refers to mental or physical strength is never mentioned directly but with his talking points throughout the extract it can be interpreted in both ways. Strong and weak is something that usually have the connotation of the body but while talking about the situations that individuals might find themselves in regard to weak men Peterson implies more mental situations with things like “stabbing someone in the back” or “taking advantage of someone”. But with the following context that Petersons gives in the extract it implies a more physical side as well, with describing the best men as two physical entities meaning that he can be referring to both practices of mental and physical strength.

Peterson once again uses a metaphor in the context of becoming a strong and disciplined man and what this entails “It’s the men that have the most aggressive and fearless temperaments that can be the best men. But it’s like having a very powerful dog. You better civil, you better discipline because otherwise it’s gonna be a monster.”. Here men get described in the metaphors of both a “powerful dog” and “a monster”. Both of these lexical choices have harsh connotations as they are both things that humans can fear as they have the possibility to harm individuals. In this instance the term “powerful dog” stands for someone who is disciplined in the sense of controlling their emotions who do not act out on their “aggressive and fearless temperaments”. Dogs are usually seen as animals who are both domesticated and trained to follow their owners’ orders. With how many domesticated dogs there are in today’s society with it being one of the more common pets amongst humans, there is a high chance that people have a certain connotation connected to the word “dog” that lays within the thinking of what is mentioned above. What this means is that men have to act civilised and not act upon their
“instincts” in order to comply to the rules of society instead of their own instincts, which are related to violence with the context of this extract. This is what it means to be successful according to Peterson, being disciplined enough to be able to control the sense of violence within, but it is equally important to look at the opposing side which in this case is the “monster”. The monster stands for someone who cannot control these instincts that are found in the best men’s “aggressive and fearless temperaments”. These men instead act upon their instincts of being aggressive as they are uncivilised and do not follow the orders of society. With the context of the extract these are the men that are considered weak as they do not show control of their emotions, something that is clearly valued by Peterson. Although it is clearly good not to act upon emotions of aggression that can lead to violence, not showcasing emotions in general is something that can be led back to hegemonic masculinity as this is seen as something that is desired within hegemonic masculinity (Smith et al., 2022). The problem with teaching men to not showcase emotions and bottling them up is that it can lead to several negative consequences for the individuals themselves and those in their surroundings, such as depressions and more anger (Smith et al., 2022), essentially being counterproductive to the things that the individual is trying to control. The belief that not showcasing emotions is something positive most likely comes from stoicism and emotional control which is common within western masculinity beliefs (Resser & Gottzen, 2018). It is throughout these metaphors that he legitimises these practices of that men should be dangerous. This is seemingly the tactic that Peterson uses for the argument that men should be dangerous in different capacities as this is used in both extract 1 and 2.

Peterson also uses the phrase “in fact” while describing how to make men safe, but he does not supply any kinds of “facts” as to why this is a fact but rather uses it as a springboard in order to start the sentence. This works for Peterson as he is seen as an expert authority regarding the subject meaning that he does not have to use references, but can rather just say it with confidence and due to the role he has in this scenario individuals will believe him (van Leeuwen, 2008). Meaning that it is not only a way to phrase a sentence but actually an effective way of convincing the audience that there is a sense of truth in his statements.

7.4 Working life of men
In this extract the themes that get presented are breadwinner, toxic masculinity, patriarchy. The extract is a transcription of video number 5 “Jordan Peterson Debunks Toxic Masculinity” where Peterson discusses men who have trouble with their manhood.
Interviewer: “We have met some of your fans and, we got the impression they were all male fans, the ones that we talked to and that they were struggling with their manhood and that you give them this message that it is okay to be a man.”

“It’s not okay. It’s necessary. What the hell are we going to do without men? You look around this city here you see all these buildings go up. These men, they are doing impossible things. They are under the streets, working on the sewers, they are up on the power lines. In the storms and the rain. They are keeping the impossible infrastructure functioning. This thing that works in miraculous manner. They work themselves to death. And that that’s not toxic masculinity, that appalling phrase. It’s what keeps the world going round.”

The scenarios that Peterson paints are hard working men who are working in dangerous conditions in order to make the world go around. This extract serves as a way to legitimise the practice of men who “work themselves to death” by making it seem like something to strive for by using praising words such as “impossible” and “miraculous” to describe the effects that these men have on society. The usage of these words falls under what is called hyperbolic language and, in this case, it is used by Peterson in order to normalise a work ethic that can lead to harm amongst those who carry it out. These types of jobs would be considered blue collar jobs meaning jobs that require manual and physical work. These jobs have largely been male dominated in the past and played a pivotal in constructing the society of today. Through this process he does however delete the other jobs that make the world go around such as nurses which is usually female dominated and instead chooses to focus on the jobs that are usually male dominated. With the interview talking about men and manhood it makes sense for Peterson to focus on men, but it does not take away from the fact that he only highlights how it is these male dominated jobs that make the world go around. The focus on jobs is also a part of one of the discourses that McDowell (2000) brings forward regarding the crisis of masculinity. In the study McDowell (2000) highlights that females are now being recruited more often meaning a threat to the role as breadwinner among men. Being a breadwinner is something that is heavily related to masculinity with money being one thing that can influence the wellbeing of men (Kaplan & Offer, 2022). With the emphasis that Peterson puts on men’s working situation it can be linked towards the importance of the breadwinner status that men have had and by using hyperbolic language he creates a sense of
its importance, not to just men themselves but also the rest of society. Through creating this sense of importance regarding males in society Peterson is able to add to the patriarchy as the jobs he describes are male driven and also usually taken by “tougher men” in the sense that they require physical strength and men that are able to work in these conditions he is describing.

The extract also touches upon that masculinity is being threatened with the opening sentence from Peterson being “It’s not okay. It’s necessary. What the hell are we going to do without men?” in response to the interviewer saying that Peterson gives his audience a comforting message that it is not just okay to be a man but that it is a necessity. Here it is important to put focus on how he carries out this part of the extract as it illustrates how Peterson thinks about how men are being affected by the norms of today’s society. He does this by emphasizing what the reporter has already said with her saying “you give them the message that it is okay to be a man” saying that “It’s not okay. It’s necessary”. With this Peterson uses the word “necessary” in an effective manner that highlights clearly that men are needed (which he later explains to why they are necessary). It is however with the following section that he makes it clear that men or masculinity is being threatened by saying “What the hell are we going to do without men?”. It is clear that this is something he feels strongly about by using a swear word, emphasizing the importance of what he is saying and by using the word “without” he clearly points out that men’s role in society is being threatened. This can be referred to masculinity as a whole or simply masculinity as Peterson sees it. With more females entering the workspace thanks to the feminist movement (Nijjar, 2019) it has also led to changes in the work life balance between men and women, making men lose their purpose as the breadwinner in their relationships in some capacities (even though the wage gap still exists). By only highlighting the “masculine” jobs as important for the world to go around it can help to shape a world where males find their importance in life by having important jobs instead for a focus on money, but at the cost of dragging everyone else down at the same time as their jobs do not share the same importance.

In the last section of the interview Peterson says “And that that’s not toxic masculinity, that appalling phrase. It’s what keeps the world going round.”. This comes right after Peterson say that men sacrifice their life for the world’s wellbeing. This extract adds up to what Kupers (2005) stated about toxic masculinity where a lack of respect can lead to toxic masculinity itself. In the extract the discourse that gets presented is one of a lack of respect for men and their sacrifice and this can be the reason to why Peterson presents discourse regarding
violence, stating that a man needs to be able to be dangerous in extract 1 and 2, were he describes the best man as having aggressive and fearless temperaments. Which in itself lies within the definition of toxic masculinity as it entails domination and violence (Kupers, 2005).

It is however hard to know what type of the toxic masculinity Peterson is referring to, if it is the everyday usage of it that has grown with the feminist movement (Harrington, 2020) or is it the one that was used by Kupers (2005) that uses a more medical perspective. With the context which this is presented in one can assume that he refers to the “new age” way of thinking about toxic masculinity where it stands for misogynistic, violent, and homophobic.

Which in that case he is right, but it is however destructive behaviour that he is promoting with how men should work themselves to death. Adding to the destructive discourse within masculinity by preaching that men work themselves to death as a necessary thing for the world to go around. It is also important to look at how he presents toxic masculinity within this sentence as he clearly takes distance from the term by saying “that appalling phrase”. By phrasing it like this Peterson belittles the meaning of toxic masculinity by first highlighting the good of men and their work ethic to later use it as a closing punchline as if someone would call this toxic masculinity. This makes it out to seem like there is something out there that threatens this type of “masculinity” that Peterson is presenting. Peterson explains in the next video in how toxic masculinity is countered with responsible masculinity and this will be analysed within the next extract.

7.5 Responsible Masculinity
In this extract the themes that get presented are discipline and stoicism. The extract is a transcription of video 11 “ANTIDOTE to toxic masculinity │ Jordan Peterson” where Peterson answers a question from a person in the crowd regarding toxic masculinity.

**Extract 4:**

Person in the crowd: “So what is the antidote towards toxic masculinity?”

Jordan Peterson “Well, the antidote is responsible masculinity. And what does responsible mean? It means, well if you are responsible, then you are trying to do, trying to do what’s honest first. So you are careful with your speech and your actions. You are careful with your speech and that you don’t say things that are known to be false. And you are careful in your actions so that you don’t have to lie about what you do. That’s a good start. And then the next thing would be that you are capable of taking responsibility for yourself, at least. So that once you are an adult no one else has to bend
over backwards to ensure that you don’t unduly suffer in the world. And so that’s responsibility for yourself and then if you get halfway as good at that well then you might think about taking on the responsibility of a family and contributing to your community and doing all those things in a harmonious manner.”

The response he gives is responsible masculinity, something that he describes as being honest. Something that sticks out in Peterson's response is how he uses lexical choices of describing the actions of being honest. “So you are careful with your speech and your actions. You are careful with your speech and that you don’t say things that are known to be false. And you are careful in your actions so that you don’t have to lie about what you do.” An action that Peterson keeps referring to is being “careful”, the constant notion of being “careful” ties into the messaging from extract 2 where the focus is about controlling yourself or having a certain degree of discipline. Here Peterson instead uses the word “careful” when describing this sense of discipline, this is a gentler way of describing to be disciplined that also ads the notion of danger. Which comes from the fact the being careful has the connotation of an individual being in a dangerous situation and therefore should take steps to not harm themselves in that situation. As most individuals seek to stray away from danger this can be an effective way of motivating an audience to follow his advice but it also a sense of danger and that there is something out there to be cautious about. Something that gets further incentivised by “so that you don’t have to lie about what you do”. This adds up with extract 3 where a similar feeling of fear was shown by Peterson. In both of these extracts the lexical choices adds up to something that highlights a sense of fear of masculinity being threatened and therefore a need of being “careful” is created.

After this he continues “And then the next thing would be that you are capable of taking responsibility for yourself, at least.”. Taking responsibility is not something that only applies to men and is something that every gender has to deal with, the fact that Peterson suggest this as an action directly to men can be because that he feels like they are in more need of taking responsibility, or capable of doing it. But it is the sentence directly after that is heavily loaded with the belief that men should be stoic as he says, “So that once you are an adult no one else has to bend over backwards to ensure that you don’t unduly suffer in the world”. Of course, it is good if an individual can take care of themself, this is not where the problem lies but it is rather that this sentence creates a meaning of that it is not okay to feel bad and then ask someone for help. Peterson once again uses a metaphor to disguise this sentiment as he says “bend over backwards” in order to say that no one else should have to sacrifice parts of their
life in order to help. Which as mentioned before is great in theory, but with the stigmas regarding asking for help and talking about feelings that exist within masculinity it does not help the process. This sentiment is something that can be connected to the notion of “be a man” as it sets up the man to be someone who is self-reliant and that can handle their own emotions or simply ignore and push them to the side as a more stoic approach, even though there might be negative emotions affecting the individual. As shown in the literature review this can lead to anger amongst men (Smith et al., 2022) which can lead to further negative consequences for those in the individual’s surroundings. With Smiths’ (2022) study focusing on how not talking about symptoms of depression and the consequences, it becomes rather clear that there is danger in not asking for help. As mentioned before a certain type of discipline appears to be important for Peterson when it comes to emotions, he does not say that men should not be able to feel things but rather focuses on how to handle it, which seems to be to bottle it up or control as showcased from extract 2 and 4. Extract 2 and 4 covers two different topics regarding masculinity with extract 2 being how to be a strong man and in the 4 extract it is how to be a responsible man, but they do both boil down to the same thing which is discipline. Although he never says the word discipline in extract 2 it is rather clear that it is this concept that he is referring to, he just uses different ways to describe it.

In the last part of the extract Peterson uses the motivation of relationships in order to give purpose to these actions he wants his audience to follow by saying that if one can take responsibility of themselves there is also a possibility of moving forward towards a relationship with someone. This gives a clear example for the audience to why they should follow the advice of Peterson as it is a direct award that is easy to understand. For this it is important to remember Petersons connection to the incel community, this is why Peterson uses it as part of his argument to covey to his audience to be disciplined as it very clearly targets the goals and dreams of these men that struggle with women in general. Here Petersons sells them a recipe for being able to find someone to build a family with, making it an efficient strategy to connect to the audience.

8 Discussion
The analysis shows that Peterson presents masculinity with practices that builds of the trait’s domination, discipline, stoicism, and being a breadwinner. These traits are all common within masculinity and the once that were the most present were domination and discipline. As highlighted in Kiesling’s (2007) study dominance is the most common discourse within
masculinity and is most certainly prevalent in Peterson beliefs regarding masculinity. With extract 1 and 2 presenting a discourse that enables domination, even though he is not explicitly talking about domination in the extracts. Instead, it is presented as that men should be able to be dangerous in different ways, which can be a way of establishing domination. Peterson never says to use violence in order to establish domination but rather uses the word dangerous which has the connotation of violence in the context of masculinity. Although specified as being dangerous by being articulate in extract 1 he does say that it’s the “first choice of action”, meaning that other measures can be used in order to be conceived as dangerous, something that could be violence. As mentioned, discipline is also important to Petersons, so it is not masculinity that uses violence that is being promoted by him but rather one that is capable of using it. This is consistent with Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) statement regarding hegemonic masculinity where it is stated that violence is something that can be used in order to keep dominance in check, but it is not necessarily used. The focus on domination also matches Kupers (2005) statement regarding toxic masculinity and a need for controlling and dominating others.

Another common discourse within masculinity is gender differences (Keisling, 2007) and this was also highlighted by Peterson by stating that there are differences in how boys and girls behave which leads to different treatment and results in school in extract 1. The discourse of gender differences also gets brought forward in extract 3 with how Peterson presents men’s contribution to society with him simply removing females from the question. By doing this it allows for men to reclaim the status of breadwinner as they become the focus point of creating an income.

An idea of stoicism was also brought forward in the extracts with Peterson highlighting how men should not seek help of others when in need, which can be harmful for men as it can lead to depression and anger (Smith, 2021), this is something that is found within toxic masculinity with a fear of being dependent being one of the traits (Kupers, 2005). Peterson’s connection to toxic masculinity is something that could stem from the lack of respect that he feels men are getting (Kupers, 2005), something that gets shown in extract 3 where he expresses how men don’t receive any gratitude for the sacrifices they make.

Peterson also gives some insight to what he considers to be a good man throughout the different extracts with him highlighting some different traits and practices in the extracts that he clearly values. As mentioned above so is discipline something that Peterson values with
examples being restraint, he also values being capable of being dangerous, self-dependent, contributing to society through working tougher jobs, and finding a partner. There are no signs from the video that leads to believes about homophobia or pushing for heterosexuality even though they are common within hegemonic masculinity (Jewkes et al. 2015; Andersson & McCormack, 2016). It is however important to remember some tendencies such as his remarks about Bill-C 16, although it was argued from the perspective of free speech it can still be seen as a way of diminishing those who are affected.

All the three themes that McDowell (2000) identified about the crisis of masculinity were also identified throughout the extracts. With boys are failing in school being touched upon in extract 1 where Peterson talks about how boys have a harder time in school due to the nature of being boys and how it affects their academic achievements. The second being how men fail in their relationships, this somewhat gets highlighted through extract 4 and extract 1 as Peterson chooses to use being in relationships as the motivator for following the practices that he is presenting. The last one is failing in the labour market, this takes form as he talks about how men work in extract 3, when Peterson is talking about jobs there in a sense of men losing their place in the world. A sense of how things are shifting from the way that they used to be and therefore men are losing their place as breadwinners and thereby losing their identity and sense of purpose in life. So, although the crisis of masculinity is not mentioned by name once in these clips, it is clear that these topics play a big part in influencing Petersons beliefs regarding masculinity that he later introduces to his audience.

9 Conclusion
To end it all and maybe what is the most important aspect of the topic that is covered in this study is that masculinity is a socially performance (Butler, 1999) that is socially constructed by identity (Itulua-Abumere, 2013) and is controlled by social and cultural aspects (Jefferson, 2002). With the practices that Jordan Peterson presents and the size of his audience it is a real possibility of him influencing millions of individuals towards a type of masculinity that hinges on being dangerous, disciplined, self-dependent, and being able to dominate others that by his standards are considered weak, and by that making it possible for the patriarchy to keep on going as he is taking inspiration from both hegemonic masculinity, toxic masculinity, and the structures of the patriarchy. While Peterson presents masculinity, he uses the topics within the crisis of masculinity that McDowell (2001) study presents as a way to motivate the actions he is presenting, which can be an effective way of presenting the actions as they are then
connected to problems that individuals have heard about in other media or experienced themselves.

It is important to remember that this is not just a study about Jordan Peterson, but it also gives an insight to what some young males relate to and how they feel about the world. The practices that Jordan Peterson is spreading through his platform would lead to a less free world where people are not able to express themselves the way they want to but instead has to fall in line to fit in to a destructive masculine performance that Peterson and his audience share through the digital space.

With masculinity being an ever-evolving thing that changes with society there will always be a need for future studies regarding the topic. With influencers being seen as role models for their followers and affecting the way individuals shape their reality this becomes an important area to keep researching. The research that was conducted in this study can be applied to many more influencers as it is important to understand the individuals who play a part in shaping the current and future generations society through their influence. Therefore, it is extra important to analyse influencers that share societal talking points in general. There could also be studies that compare different influencers to each other as a way get a bigger understanding for the field itself.
References


Appendix


