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Members in Good Standing? The Relationship Between NoFap/Reboot Communities and the Manosphere

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NoFap/reboot communities are online groups of mostly men trying to abstain from pornography and/or masturbation. For researchers exploring the manosphere, a loose collation of digital communities in which men affirm and replicate antifeminist/promale hegemonic identities and attitudes, controversy exists as to the extent to which they align with other groups. Members and content creators share fundamental manosphere values, including the perception of a battle for masculinity, a natural male hierarchy, and the instrumentalization of women. However, individuals abstain for many reasons, indicating motivational variance. There are also competing narratives surrounding the supposedly harmful impact of pornography that vary in their compatibility with the manosphere. The potential for ideological crossover and a pipeline into more extreme content are discussed.

Keywords: NoFap, manosphere, pornography, masculinity, rebooting

Technology is inextricably linked to human sexuality. Modern developments are regularly created or repurposed for self-expression, courtship, and accessing pornography. Most relevant to the current article is how the Internet has facilitated the mass congregation of people to form international spaces dedicated to exploring aspects of male sexuality. One example is NoFap¹, a subculture of predominantly men who abstain from viewing/masturbating to pornography to “reboot” their brains.

Historically, institutions and public figures have linked masturbation to adverse outcomes including mental or physical health problems (Johannsen, 2021). However, NoFap’s gamification and transnational membership represent relatively recent developments requiring the advent of online social networking. Its messaging is also less condemnatory than past incarnations, utilizing the aspirational language of self-help instead of moral disapproval (Smith, Butler-Warke, Davidson, & Stevens, 2022). At the time of writing, the largest outlet, r/NoFap, the Reddit for support group NoFap LLC, has 1.1 million members, though there are several notable competitors (e.g., r/pornfree and Reboot Nation [n.d.]). Guidelines are similar across sites: Challengers abstain from pornography (soft mode), pornography and masturbation (medium), or orgasms entirely (hard) for three months and use forums to share their progress with others.

¹ Though NoFap LLC is a private company, other pornography abstinence sites/coaches use the term generically (Burnett, 2021; Hartmann, 2021). Here, NoFap is used interchangeably with reboot communities as a general term for content creators or people posting on rebooting forums. The exception is when NoFap LLC is specifically cited.

NoFap may seem like yet another Internet curiosity. However, unlike other viral challenges, such as pretending to be a mannequin, it represents a lifestyle change rather than an isolated action done for clout. Mass video-sharing platforms and social media have recently increased public awareness of rebooting. User-generated content is typically presented as educational, though it is often grounded in medical misinformation (Dubin et al., 2022). Its popularity is concerning because participation can lead to anxiety in men worried about pornography's adverse effects (Prause & Binnie, 2022). Recent articles have also illustrated a commonality between the content of NoFap forums/resources and the manosphere (Burnett, 2022; Han & Yin, 2022; Johannsen, 2021): an informal digital ecosystem of interconnected subgroups that cultivate, affirm, and replicate antifeminist and promale hegemonic identities/attitudes. Thus, young men may reboot out of health concerns, then feel worse and/or be exposed to misogynistic material.

This commentary summarizes research into commonalities between NoFap and the manosphere. I introduce the foundations uniting manosphere identities and explain how NoFappers relate to these. I then outline why NoFap may be broader than other groups included in this constellation, highlighting individual differences between members' motivations. In writing this, I do not intend to definitively suggest whether NoFap should be canonized as existing inside or outside the manosphere. Instead, I hope to add to the growing literature on how heterosexual men's understanding of their sexuality can police their behavior and subjugate women. I also aim to show why a challenge that can appear trivial or even humorous can provide a gateway into misogynistic beliefs.

The Manosphere

Manosphere groups share a userbase of alienated young men aggrieved by what they see as feminism's transformative influence (Han & Yin, 2023). Their beliefs tend to be, but are not always, built on a reductionist interpretation of evolutionary psychology explaining gender differences as a function of ancient social arrangements. From this perspective, feminists have usurped men's natural dominance through gynocentric social engineering. One apparent consequence is that most men are sexually underprivileged since women's empowerment has prompted them to pursue only the best partners. Using the metaphor of a marketplace, the manosphere argues that women are only sexually interested in a small elite of the most attractive and socially dominant alpha males. However, they may pair up with a beta male for financial security if they cannot attract these superior men (i.e., the manosphere phrase "alpha fux and beta bux" [Ging, 2019, p. 650]). Thus, manosphere taxonomies stratify men by their distance from hegemonic ideals, encouraging conflicting attitudes about women. Members desire them as sexual partners and status markers but resent them for overturning a functional patriarchal society (Johannsen, 2021).

No official list of manosphere outlets exists since it is not a formal union and subgroups are not necessarily allied (e.g., Pick-Up Artists see incels as losers, and incels think Pick-Up Artists are frauds (Han & Yin, 2022). Still, they overlap in lexicons, attitudes, and membership (Ribeiro et al., 2021). Several reviews include the following groups as part of the manosphere (e.g., Bates, 2021; Ging, 2019; O'Neill, 2018).

- i) Pick-Up Artists (PUAs) teach "game" techniques to help men seduce women.
- ii) Involuntary celibates (incels) define themselves as entirely unable to attract partners and fulfill sexual/relationship goals.

- iii) Men's Rights Activists (MRAs) argue men are systematically discriminated against, and society should return to traditionalism.
- iv) Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) is a male separatist group that rejects romantic relationships with women.

Recent reviews characterize NoFap as a subcommunity in the manosphere (Han & Yin, 2022; Johannsen, 2021), reflecting a change in the scholarship. Though NoFap has sometimes been cited as a tool adopted by manosphere members, these reviews consider it a distinct identity with recognizable norms, beliefs, and discourses. The following section explains how reboot communities naturalize essentialist power relations between genders and outlines some narratives they attach to pornography. This provides a basis for understanding its possible canonization.

How NoFap Aligns With the Manosphere

Though NoFap forums condemn discrimination, a survey suggests almost three quarters of members have seen misogynistic content on them (Prause & Binnie, 2023). Others witnessed bullying (48%), anti-LGBT+ content (42%), antisemitism (32%), and threats to themselves (23%) or others (21%). These trends echo the antisocial behavior and heteronormative antiwomen discourses observed across the manosphere. r/NoFap has also shared members with manosphere spaces such as r/MRA, r/MGTOW, and r/Incel (Khan & Golab, 2020). Hence, it makes intuitive sense that the literature links their rejection of pornography to expectations of normative masculinity. Based on this, I propose that NoFap discourses align with the manosphere in the following ways: (1) the battle for masculinity, (2) a hierarchy of men, and (3) neoliberal sexuality.

Masters of Their Domain: Why Men Join NoFap

[Orgasm] is a reward that is normally only achievable by meeting a potential mate, coming off as an attractive mate, and eventually growing the balls to make a move and having sex. (NoFap content creator, as cited in Hartmann, 2021, p. 417)

NoFappers believe pornography exploits an adaptive masculine sex drive calibrated toward novelty (Hartman, 2021; Taylor & Jackson, 2018). They argue that this mindset, which evolved to help men fertilize multiple sexual partners, has been hijacked by the easy availability of pornographic material and cannot distinguish between stimulation obtained via real intercourse versus the artificial alternative: "Sex with women on screen must be stopped. It's real vs. reel . . . Real = good . . . Reel = bad" (r/NoFap user, as cited in Smith et al., 2022, p. 15). Like the manosphere more broadly (O'Neill, 2018), NoFap links sexual intercourse to labor through intrasexual competition and self-determination. The masturbating man goes from an active participant in his sex life to a passive consumer of others. Reboot communities argue that a Pavlovian cycle of pornography, masturbation, orgasm (PMO) leaves him docile, his sexuality governed by instinct rather than personal autonomy (Hartmann, 2021). In contrast, the postmasturbatory man reaps the benefits of self-ownership, including increased testosterone, motivation, and control (claimed by mindset coach Graves, 2020) to a bigger penis size (claimed by School of Masculinity coach Jeffrey Buoncristiano,

2017). These alleged gains support the natural economy of masculine subjecthood and sexual success. From this foundation, three key discourses align reboot communities with the manosphere.

The Battle for Masculinity

I want that power back as well. Real women, real life, real respect. It's out there for us.
(r/NoFap user, as cited in Taylor & Jackson, 2018, p. 628)

The most apparent way NoFap aligns with the manosphere is its homosociality. Forums are almost entirely male (Prause & Binnie, 2023), and though women can participate, they have a boys club mentality: "Taking control of your sexuality and regaining masculinity is something I can talk about as I am a man . . . There's no point pretending this is an androgynous shared experience" (r/NoFap user, as cited in Taylor & Jackson, 2018, p. 630). Members explain problematic pornography consumption as a distinctly male experience, arguing that fundamental biological/libidinal differences mean women experience the allure of pornography in a dulled way. So, while they can join, they are not necessarily welcome.

For some NoFappers, pornography's popularity is an unfortunate byproduct of a Stone Age brain in a digital world. Others believe nefarious groups have created pornography to manipulate men, valorizing their internal battle into defiance against an external agent (Burnett, 2021). They suggest some subtypes of pornography are specifically designed to feminize men by degrading traditional masculinity. These include videos with transgender performers or men watching from the sidelines as their female partners have intercourse with another man (Johanssen, 2021). NoFappers advancing these theories understand pornography as something they must fight to overcome dependence and reconnect with the natural masculinity that they have been robbed of. These ideas evoke the red pill tenet that feminists subvert hegemonic masculinity to weaken men and change what it means to be one (Ging, 2019).

Like other parts of the manosphere, NoFap discourses stipulate that men must look out for their own interests since wider society will not. Bujalka, Rich, and Bender (2022) have compared this practice to a protection racket (i.e., the manosphere creates a danger to men and extracts social/financial resources to protect them). Conspiracies require a nefarious enemy, and the NoFap rogues' gallery has included liberals, socialists, and feminists (Burnett, 2022), who are cited as agents of change throughout the manosphere. Some have also interpreted pornography as a Jewish plot to enact social control, recalling a decades-old stereotype that Jews threaten the sexual order through subversive cultural products (Kerl, 2020).

By constructing an identity around combating plots to undermine conventional patriarchal values, rebooting communities and content creators can provide an avenue into extreme politics. This may explain why public figures who are popular with the far right have endorsed aspects of the challenge (Smith, 2023). For example, the Western chauvinist Proud Boys promote #NoWanks (Burnett, 2022), prohibiting their members from masturbating more than once a month to prove group loyalty. In the following section, I expand on this understanding of NoFap as a measure of a man's commitment and the taxonomies of pornography abstinence.

A Hierarchy of Men

If you have a porn addiction or you have a problem with porn, you have a problem with yourself . . . If you're the kind of man you're supposed to be, you would have no time for that, and you wouldn't need it." (Andrew Tate, as cited in Peaklyf, 2023, 02:43)

NoFap's operationalization of competitive masculinity highlights another manosphere convention: a natural hierarchy of men (Ging, 2019). Manosphere groups construct their identities around a taxonomy of alpha to beta males. In this system, PUAs position themselves at the top—they are coaches and gurus who can impart wisdom to others. In contrast, incels place themselves at the bottom, viewing their inferiority as a matter of objective science. Reboot communities better resemble the former since they see rebooting as a way of winning. In this market, they are the best, most disciplined competitors. However, they differ in the emphasis they place on genuineness. Whereas PUAs sanction manipulation and deception to meet the ideal (O'Neil, 2018), NoFap groups emphasize men being true to their authentic selves.

This does not mean NoFappers celebrate men being open about their feelings. Instead, members argue that men must shake off the misandrist social expectations they have internalized and take ownership of who they *really* are (Taylor & Jackson, 2018). True masculinity is, therefore, conceptualized as both a natural trait and an aspirational state. Rebooters often denounce effeminate characteristics in other men they argue have been conditioned by pornography and the status quo. For example, emotional men are called "bitch" or "mangina" (Hartmann, 2021, p. 420) because they cannot control their feelings. Men's masturbatory habits are therefore framed as a microcosm of their masculinity. Because members are committed to regaining something core to their being, relapses are frustrating and potentially devastating. Members have reported feelings of self-loathing, depression, and even suicidality after failing (Prause & Binnie, 2023).

It may seem counterintuitive that abstinence provides a measure of manliness since alpha males presumably have strong sexual drives. However, NoFappers advance the argument that a failure to yield control over them shows a feminine lack of regulation (Hartmann, 2021). The success with which men enact power over their bodies indicates strength in other areas typically associated with stoic archetypes (e.g., industriousness, physical fitness, morphological masculinization and subjecthood). By controlling their sexual instincts, they exhibit the determination necessary to succeed in contemporary society. Hence, Smith and associates (2022) found that some r/NoFap members viewed COVID-19 social distancing restrictions as a proving ground. Online provocateur and, at the time of writing, alleged sex trafficker Andrew Tate is not affiliated with any rebooting group. However, he shares their belief that pornography habits correspond to a masculine hierarchy. In the extract cited above, he claims pornography "cucks" men who watch others have sex they cannot (Peaklyf, 2023). Instead, they should aim for "masculine excellence," manifested by material success and recognition. His embrace of the framework further exemplifies NoFap's overlap with antifeminist movements.

NoFap also shares rhetoric with the far right since members frame performative machismo as an alternative to the degeneracy/weakness of modern civilization (Elley, 2021). In far-right messaging, men's self-improvement and actualization are motivated by resistance to tyranny. The wider manosphere's guiding

principle of an order of men, organized by how they meet a patriarchal ideal, recalls this dynamic. Like these groups, fascism historically idealizes men's control over their bodies and labor, seeing both as prerequisites to male supremacy (Johannsen, 2021). Thus their improved productivity and discipline are interwoven with their physical forms and lives. PUAs and reboot communities alike encourage men to practice self-improvement through remasculinizing. For instance, endurance and resistance training are auxiliary in both journeys since they can temporarily increase testosterone (O'Neill, 2018; Smith et al., 2022). The importance of a man's physicality aligns with gendered scripts integral to the community, as does how his sexuality is framed. The following subsection furthers this discussion about the role of self-improvement through NoFap by extending the focus to their reductive views of women.

Neoliberal Sexuality

This is where the quote-unquote superpowers come in: the confidence, the motivation, the drive to make money, the burning desire to leave your mark on this world. All of these benefits stem from your brain giving you the highest chance to reproduce." (NoFap content creator, as cited in Hartmann, 2021, p. 422)

Because of their focus on subjecthood and self-determination, a neoliberal ethos informs many self-help groups/movements (Elley, 2021). This imperative is consistent with how the manosphere evaluates men through the mechanism of competition, using the language of self-help to inspire competitive, self-expressing, and risk-bearing masculinities (Bujalka et al., 2022). Not all believe that individual-level behaviors can influence a man's success. For example, fatalistic incel communities understand their subordination as an inevitable function of biology (Bates, 2021). However, whether individuals see themselves as alphas or betas, a popular manosphere principle is that human sexuality follows market logic.

In this natural economy, men are active sexual entrepreneurs competing for a finite resource: women's interest. Manosphere discourses convert the endorsement of women into a metric of men's value. Through learning to seduce women, men gain the self-confidence that the sexual empowerment of women has denied them (Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019). Reboot communities employ a similar neoliberal logic of individualization, and the language of totalizing meritocracy is present in the messaging of many sites and coaches (Hartmann, 2021), discussions on social media (Burnett, 2022), and dedicated forums (Fernandez, Kuss, & Griffiths, 2021; Taylor & Jackson, 2018). A consistent belief is that after men have reconnected with authentic masculinity, their new hunter mindset will calibrate them for success in other areas, such as business. Through these achievements, they will attract women.

In line with the Andrew Tate extract above, NoFap links success at abstinence with success under capitalism. The reboot website Mr Mind Blowing (n.d.) teaches men to achieve Elon Musk's mindset and take control of their bodies rather than giving in to temptation. The billionaire is also evoked by masculinity coach Alexander Graves (2020), who argues that NoFap predicts business and sexual success because people respond to the "'manliness, creation, and power' men 'radiate'" (Section 3.1, para. 2). He challenges readers to imagine Musk masturbating before telling them he would be too busy. The dichotomy of lazy demasculinized masturbators and productive masculine abstainers is consistent across NoFap discourses

(Burnett, 2022; Taylor & Jackson, 2018). Real men are sexually and economically productive, with high performance in one informing the other.

These understandings of male sexuality instrumentalize and objectify women, framing them as rewards for worthy men instead of agentic decision-makers (Johanssen, 2021). When endorsing this view of sexuality, NoFappers echo parts of the manosphere that associate being an alpha male with sexual conquest (Bates, 2021). Like PUAs and incels, they gamify encounters, framing them as a metric for superiority versus subordination between men. In doing so, they codify women's sexual interest into an unconditional response to men pushing the right buttons. Sexual intercourse, therefore, represents masculinity reassurance (Chasioti & Binnie, 2021). It is not to be mutually enjoyed as much as had.

Individual Differences in NoFap Communities

Seeing other journals and other posts motivate[s] me and make[s] me feel like I'm not alone." (Reboot Nation user, as cited in Fernandez et al., 2021, p. 720)

So far, I have argued that NoFap communities and content creators share behavioral and ideological terrain with the manosphere. Nevertheless, reviews that include NoFap in the manosphere have done so with the caveat that they are less hostile than other communities (Han & Yin, 2022; Johanssen, 2021). This could be owed to strong individual differences in their membership. Unlike MGTOW, incels, and MRAs, whose identities imply specific sociopolitical aims, NoFap communities do not tend to advertise a concrete philosophy beyond avoiding PMO. Moreover, users may see their sites as resources for abstaining without internalizing or identifying with the discourses they build around doing so. Other explanations for why people join NoFap are discussed below, as well as how they vary from other manosphere outlets.

NoFap and Central Authorities

We are a community of people who have discovered the negative effects of pornography. If you or loved ones struggle with porn addiction and/or porn-induced sexual dysfunctions, this place is for you! (Reboot Nation, n.d., paragraph 3)

Unlike most canonical parts of the manosphere, except some PUAs, reboot sites are typically trademarked organizations or monetized services hosted by individual content creators. Thus, while others are decentralized factions, they can be shaped by their respective companies' attitudes and values as expressed by communications and sanctions. For example, r/pornfree supports abstinence from PMO, though is less strict and masturbation-negative than r/NoFap (Chasioti & Binnie, 2021). Individuals' behavior can be judged against a standard they agreed to when signing up, making NoFap less loosely defined and theoretically more accountable than groups like incels or MRAs. However, since Internet fora can be hostile and cultivate norms against their publicly stated rules, it would be naive to assume all members follow community guidelines. For example, r/NoFap prohibits discriminatory comments about women, yet posts analyzed by Taylor and Jackson (2018) and reported to Prause and Binnie (2023) show misogyny persists. A study by Prause and Levy (2023) found that this forum is more prone to violent posts/threats than

comparable subreddits. Importantly, these were consistently affirmed/rewarded with upvotes by fellow users, suggesting that they do not represent trolling.

Religious and Cultural Reasons Men Abstain

My identity is not my addiction or my struggles . . . My identity is in Christ, not in sin.
(Religious member of a pornography addiction recovery program, as cited in Burke & Haltom, 2020, p. 246)

NoFap sites are secular, though many participants cite religious reasons for participating (Burke & Haltom, 2020; Burnett, 2021; Prause & Binnie, 2023). Obviously, individuals may be religious and endorse manosphere values since faith can promote essentialist gender beliefs and politics (Burke & Haltom, 2020). However, it is also likely that religious members utilize NoFap to support a practice they already engage in for other reasons. New-age authors advance abstinence for sexual transmutation (i.e., channeling sexual energy into a higher energy center [Dispenza, 2019]). Christians also see masturbation as a sexual sin comparable to extramarital affairs (Burke & Haltom, 2020). Elsewhere, Indian culture characterizes semen as a life force and its loss with adverse psychosomatic symptoms (e.g., fatigue and weakness [Paris, 1992]). This localized neurosis corresponds to NoFap's masturbating man, yet incentive variance undermines their status as a coherent manosphere identity. Similarly, millions of men in China partake in *jiese* (i.e., abstaining from masturbation and pornography; Zou, Zhang, & He, 2023). However, they see it as resistance to capitalism and reinforcing local traditions versus challenging perceived gender power relations. As such, uncritically aligning NoFap with the manosphere arguably promotes a Western-centric perspective of sexualities.

Other Reasons Men Abstain

I am feeling closer to my wife than I have in a long time. (Reboot Nation user, as cited in Fernandez et al., 2021, p. 721)

Imhoff and Zimmer (2020) found that men were most likely to want to abstain from pornography if they thought it negatively impacted them socially, including their connection with a partner. In line with this, research into Twitter (Burnett, 2021), Reboot Nation (Fernandez et al., 2021), and r/NoFap (Osadchiy, Vanmali, Shahinyan, Mills, & Eleswarapu, 2020) found anxiety about a link between pornography and erectile dysfunction is a common reason for abstaining. Men may believe in this for ideological reasons, imagining pornography as a means of population control. However, they could be insecure about their sexual performance and seeking help. Some may see their anxiety as a failure of their manhood. For example, men with erectile dysfunction are disproportionately likely to link potency with manliness (Thomson & Barnes, 2013). This equivalence could make them more vulnerable to the manosphere's grievance politics and sense of masculinity in crisis. However, it would be too simple to state that they participate because of a dislike for feminism or belief in male hegemony.

The competitive aspect of NoFap has also been publicized independently of specific outlets, meaning men may partake for its novelty, popularity, or perceived difficulty. Semen retention and NoFap have been

popular on TikTok and Instagram, with videos receiving millions of views (Dubin et al., 2022). Other examples include the memeification of No Nut November: an initially satirical take on viral challenges that trends every year. Thus, like other self-help pledges, such as Sober October or Veganuary, NoFap's sociocultural significance transcends an individual company or political principles.

In their analysis of social media posts, Burnett (2021) identified seven NoFap identities that vary in their compatibility with other areas of the manosphere. Arguably, the most relevant to the manosphere are "meninists," who view abstinence as men taking back control, and "self-masters," who prove their masculinity via high-performance achievements. A third, "alt-righters," share the antisemitic tropes above. However, other subjectivities, such as "fetishists" and "believers," are less clearly manospheric. "Fapstronauts" worry they are functionally addicted to pornography and do not necessarily partake in discursive attempts to make abstention meaningful. For them, NoFap may represent the only game in town. The medicalization model of pornography addiction is discussed below.

NoFap and Addiction

Our website is for recovering porn addicts and was made by recovering porn addicts. We believe that recovery is for everybody. (NoFap LLC, n.d., paras. 4–5)

One of the main reasons men participate in NoFap is concern about pornography interfering with their connections to the real world. Hence, NoFap LLC (n.d.) explicitly position themselves as a recovery resource rather than an antipornography group. There is an ongoing debate about whether or not pornography is addictive (Duffy, 2016). However, at present, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders does not recognize pornography addiction as a disorder. Biomarkers associated with problematic substance use are also absent in studies comparing neural activity in supposedly pornography-addicted versus nonaddicted participants' viewing sexual images. For example, Prause, Steele, Staley, Sabatinelli, and Hajcak (2015) explored neural activation in response to sexual imagery among participants as a function of their reported pornography use. They found that responses typically associated with addiction-related images were *lower* among participants citing problematic pornography use than those who did not.

Regardless of its validity, pathologizing high pornography use does not divorce it from the social lens through which people see their use as problematic. The addiction label arguably reduces sexuality to physical behaviors, prioritizing abstinence over a fulfilling experience of sexuality as the purpose of recovery (Hall, 2021). This framing recalls how the diagnosis of sex addiction pathologized the taboo but common desire for relations with multiple partners (Reay, Attwood, & Gooder, 2015). As per PUAs responding to and politicizing men's understandable desire to be more confident (O'Neill, 2018), reboot communities legitimize their perceived struggles against pornography by erecting explanatory narratives around them. Research indicates people's perception of their addiction is not determined by their time spent looking at it but by the significance they place on it (Grubbs, Stauner, Exline, Pargament, & Lindberg, 2015), so catastrophizing it can increase concerns. In some ways, this makes reboot communities' messaging more troubling than nakedly political MRA groups since men worried about being preoccupied with sex may seek support out of fear rather than regressive sociopolitical opinions.

Discussion

The presence and perseverance of misogynistic beliefs at a communal level should be a cause for concern to reboot websites/content creators. Subjectivities constructed around strengthening male hegemony, dehumanizing women, and reconnecting with an innate male power are commonplace across the manosphere. Likewise, the idea of a male hierarchy determined by their sexuality and resource acquisition. Hence why some researchers have aligned them with the manosphere (Han & Yin, 2022; Johanssen, 2021). Evidence of crossover between participants and other constituent groups further suggests that, at the very least, a notable subgroup of NoFap harbors misogynistic or antifeminist beliefs (Khan & Golab, 2020).

Despite meeting with other areas of the manosphere, reboot communities seem to have a less-defined identity. This may be because their sociopolitical prescriptions are not always explicit. Individual coaches advertise it as a secret to attracting women or freeing men from an oppressive force (Hartmann, 2021). However, other sites situate themselves as apolitical remedies for anyone, despite the arguably inherently political implications of medicalizing/stigmatizing high pornography use. Community discourses promoting a sexual work ethic follow self-governing practices that are consistent with how other parts of the manosphere teach men to change themselves physically and mentally to attract women. In that respect, a man's NoFap streak represents a meritocratic tool to quantify their masculinity.

Ironically, this framework can increase men's problems. Prause and Binnie (2022) demonstrate that anxiety predicts erectile dysfunction regardless of pornography consumption, resulting in a negative feedback loop. They suggest NoFappers feel more masculine in the short term since they see their resistance to pornography as a trial. However, if they experience urges or shame, it maintains or strengthens their worries. As with how incelism can make men increasingly convinced of their inferiority (Ging, 2019), NoFap's challenge element may amplify the nervousness that first brings men to it.

It remains to be seen if long-term contact with NoFap communities influences men's beliefs about the world (i.e., Do sexual anxieties give way to the resentments fueling the manosphere more broadly?) Longitudinally analyzing individual accounts might reveal changes in ideology. Further research could also focus on intergroup differences since perceptions of masculinity intersect with characteristics like religion and race. Social scripts corresponding to acceptable discourses and behaviors among dominant groups may be considered reckless among marginalized ones (e.g., the hypersexualization of some non-White and working-class masculinities [Laurie, Driscoll, Greal, Tang, & Sharkey, 2021]). Therefore, members may respond to group incentives differently, and others could receive their relapses more negatively.

The manosphere is not a single united group. However, there is overlap between the membership of its different subcommunities, and members regularly go from one identity to another (Ribeiro et al., 2021). For example, many incels began as unsuccessful PUAs (Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019). If they do not reap the benefits associated with abstinence and lose self-confidence, NoFappers may undergo a similar trajectory. Those engaging out of sexual anxiety, perceived addiction, or religious motivations could also become convinced by others' sociopolitical framing. Therefore, NoFap could act as a pipeline into the manosphere. Alternatively, its proactive emphasis on accountability could mean that it offers a way out of incelism's helplessness, albeit in a way that legitimizes other red pill narratives. Burnett (2022) cautions

that groups' interconnectedness and parameters are missed when researchers dichotomize them into manospheric or not. Thus, while its communities and content creators share philosophical similarities with the manosphere, NoFap may not be best placed on a spectrum between in and out. Instead, we should perhaps consider a spectrum of individuals and subgroups within it that vary in how they align with the manosphere's excesses.

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