



UNIVERSITÄT
LEIPZIG

CfP: Online Workshop (Leipzig University – September 18-19, 2026)

Christian Semantics and Forms in (Right-Wing) Conspiracist Male Culture

In recent years, Christian semantics and imagery has become increasingly prominent within far-right discourse. What often characterizes this field is the convergence of three dimensions that prove to be deeply interwoven: *Masculinity*, *conspiracism*, and *cultural pessimism* frequently operate as a triad that structures Christian-influenced right-wing ideology. Themes such as sin, purity, and apostasy organize individuals in male-centered online and offline communities alike, as exemplified by the NoFap movement where practices of public confession may be read as secularized forms of penitence. Moreover, spiritual transformation narratives in far-right culture reframe Christian conversion into heroic masculine self-fashioning ("I feel reborn"). This symbolic repertoire is no longer confined to explicitly White Christian Nationalist spaces. It has become a broadly connective tissue across different male-dominated spaces, providing an ideological framework to communities that might otherwise appear disparate. These dimensions are not additive but structurally interlocked: Perceived threats to masculinity are amplified and generalized by conspiracist narratives, while cultural pessimist retrojection supplies a normative horizon. Together, they thus form a mutually stabilizing configuration that makes the religious charge of masculinist online cultures legible as a coherent whole.

Drawing on concepts such as Connell's hegemonic masculinity or Theweleit's analysis of *Verpanzerung* (male 'self-armor'), we ask for contributions that explore the role of Christian semantics and forms in the emergence of reactionary masculinity formations. Kimmel's account of entitlement and status anxiety, Kaiser's work on the 'manosphere' as a political movement, and the convergence of anti-liberalism, misogyny, and bodily self-discipline may offer further entry points to understanding these configurations. In this gendered context, Christian semantics such as chastity, sacrifice, and spiritual warfare may serve as ideological justification for male dominance and self-stylization. Furthermore, drawing on Fritz Stern's account of the German cultural pessimist tradition and Nachtwey's notion of *retrotopias*, an idealized past of the Christian Occident and the patriarchal family can function as a normative counterimage to the perception of a crisis-ridden present. Whitehead and Perry's work on Christian Nationalism in the United States demonstrates how such a past can be loaded with religious authority and mobilized politically.

In line with findings by Barkun, narratives and forms of conspiracism further transform diffuse anxieties (Abalakina-Paap et al.) into intentional enemy frameworks coupled with an apocalyptic dimension (Ritzmann and Ruf). An imagined former order is thus held to be

worth defending against foreign, conspiratorial forces and generalized social decay. Millenarian structures that Cohn described in medieval contexts recur in secular modernized form in digital spaces, such as 'red-pilling' as an awakening that frames the present moment as an apocalyptic decision-point. The religious charge of these narratives, we argue, is not incidental but structural, providing moral urgency and a grammar of salvation.

The interdisciplinary workshop proceeds comparatively and self-reflexively: The suggested theoretical framework is not to be applied mechanically, but tested against primary material and refined or corrected where necessary. Proposals for papers can relate to but are not limited to the following topics:

- NoFap as neo-ascetic movement and secularized spiritual discipline
- Narratives of spiritual transformation in Incel communities and 'Pilling' taxonomies (Red Pill, Black Pill, MGTOW)
- Relationships between Christianity, neopaganism, and reactionary masculine aesthetics (e.g. Bronze Age Pervert)
- Evangelical bodybuilding culture ("Pumping Jesus")
- (Restorations of) Christian family models in digital culture (e.g. Tradwives)
- Christian Nationalism and its overlaps with Manosphere rhetoric
- Right-wing masculinist publishing in English- and German-language conspiracist contexts (e.g. *Compact*, *Infowars*, Telegram channels)

We invite contributions from across the fields of cultural and literary studies, theology or religious studies, history, sociology, and political science not limited to a particular national context. A joint publication of the workshop results is planned.

Please send a 300-word abstract and a short bio (150 words) by **June 15, 2026** to the workshop organizers Matthis Glatzel (matthis.glatzel@uni-jena.de), Peter Hintz (peter.hintz@uni-leipzig.de), and Samir Taher. You will hear back from us by June 30, 2026.