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How To Make An Incel: Mapping The Gendered Journey to Antifeminism and Misogyny.

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Policy, Criminology, and Social Policy

December 2024

University of Southampton

<u>Abstract</u>

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The involuntary celibate or 'incel' phenomenon has received significant academic attention in the last six years, spanning security and terrorism, critical gender, and psychological research. As this community is associated with increasing levels of violence, antifeminism, and misogyny, it is imperative the pathway into this identity is understood. To date this area has received limited academic attention, with most research focusing on the extant actors and their actions through spatiotemporally static analysis of individual forums or distanced surveys within dialectical lenses of social structure or individual experience.

This research remedies these issues, employing an immersive ethnography conducted across 10 digital platforms combined with reflexive thematic analysis of nine semi structured interviews with current and former incels to both map the incel technoscape and determine the causal mechanisms responsible for an incel identity. This collective analysis of the incel digital ecosystem conceptualised an Incel Network, a three-tiered assortment of websites, platforms, and forums in which incel ideology is progressively disseminated. Applying Raewyn Connell's theory of gender, Joseph Pleck's traditional masculine ideology, and Magaret Archer's theory of reflexivity, the impacts and influences of a gendered social structure upon 'failed' men, their resulting lived experiences, and conscious deliberative responses involving engagement with the Incel Network reveal the process through which men become incels.

As the first to both conceptualise incel digital space in unison and relativity and also theorise the journey into an incel identity through the abridgment of structure, experience, and agency, these findings offer a significant original contribution to an emerging field. Understanding the structural causes and individual responses to the events and experiences that lead to an incel identity permits the generation of tailored digital, education and therapeutic strategies to deter young and adolescent men from performing the identity and associated violence and misogyny.

Table of Contents

Table of Tables

Table of Figures

Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Stuart Lucy

Title of thesis: How To Make An Incel: Mapping The Gendered Journey to Antifeminism and Misogyny

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signature: .... Date: 20.12.2024

Acknowledgements

I don't think I really knew what I was signing up for when I decided to completely switch professional trajectories, chose to start an academic journey, and research incels. This has been not only the characteristic marathon that completing a PhD usually entails, but a personally and psychologically taxing endeavour given the abhorrent nature of much of the material I exposed myself to. That said I think I have produced a decent insight into this world and identity which could not have been accomplished without a whole bunch of excellent people.

First, my supervisor trinity in their own individual ways have helped me over the line and have given me a whole host of skills and opportunities. Lisa you've been here from the beginning and have been instrumental in my positional journey, your compliments, encouragement, and pastoral care have set a high bar that if I ever have the opportunity to supervise, I will hold as a gold standard. Charlie, your theoretical knowledge and at times candid analysis of my work has pushed me towards a theoretical body that I think will underpin my career and thinking about our gendered world. Mark, while only a small part of this journey, your calmness, experience, and assuredness have quelled anxiety and uncertainty throughout this rollercoaster. Thank you for concerted efforts. Also, a big thank you to Anita, my initial supervisor who wisely decided to leave the UK and head back to native pastures, you set me off with a strong foundation and enabled my first attempt at published work.

A big thank you to the ESRC and specifically the SCDTP for funding this project. Without your money there is no way I could have ever achieved this; I hope the value that can come from this research will do the belief you placed in my initial proposal justice. I also want to thank my faculty, department, and wider school for the various degrees of support and opportunity they have provided, even to you Ashton for teaching me early on you will not always align with everyone, and that there are several ways of performing in this field.

Outside of the university bubble I am lucky enough to have had the love, care, and support of a wealth of good men and women that have explicitly and indirectly got me here. In no order a huge thank you to Nat, Jen, Gray, Mitch, Becca, Andrea, Oki, Alice, Arjun, Pete, Jake, Simon, Andy, Anna, Tom, Felix, Bill, Eduardo, Tarendeep, Steph, and George. The fact that most of you are still in my life helps make me the person I am and hope to become.

It's been emotional.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Becky ....Red and blackpill ideological construct of an averagely sexually successful young woman embodying non-dominant traits of feminine heterosexual attractiveness (subordinate to Stacy).

Blackpill ....Fatalistic ideological extension of the redpill in which the social world is governed by fixed biological traits that cannot be altered.

Bluepill............................Ideology housing rejected tenets and beliefs of the red and blackpill.

Chad ....Red and blackpill ideological construct of a sexually successful man embodying dominant traits of masculine heterosexual attractiveness.

Decile Scale ....Interval ranking system between 1-10 indicating attractiveness.

DVW ....Deep Vernacular Web.

FCR.................................Feminist Critical Realism.

Femoid............................Portmanteau of female and android used as a derogatory term to denote a woman.

Foid ....Shortened version of Femoid.

Gymcel ....An incel who frequents the gym to engage in physical improvement.

Incel...............................Portmanteau of involuntary and celibate, a heterosexual man who is unable to have sex due to reasons outside of his control.

IP....................................Inner Periphery.

IT ....Acronym used by incels to denote the subreddit r/IncelTears.

LMS ....Looks, money, status.

Lookism ....Discrimination based upon presentation of a non-normative physical ascetic.

Looksmatch.....................A person perceived as matching in level of attractiveness, usually indicated through equal scores on the decile scale.

Maxxing ....Improvement of an aspect of self. Often used as a suffix in conjunction with a particular activity, e.g. 'statusmaxxing' – improving one's social standing.

MLM................................Men's Liberation Movement.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Normie...........................Red and blackpill ideological construct of an average member of society.

OP ....Outer Periphery.

PC ....Performative Core.

PUA ....Pick Up Artists.

Redpill ....Ideology of truth which understands the social world as gynocentric and governed by biologically determined sexual market value.

RQ ....Research Question.

RTA ....Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

SMP ....Sexual Market Place.

SMV ....Sexual Market Value.

Stacy.............................Red and blackpill ideological construct of a sexually successful woman embodying dominant traits of feminine heterosexual attractiveness.

Subreddit ....A collection of threads associated with a particular category, theme, or topic.

TMI................................Traditional masculine ideology.

TFL................................True Forced Loneliness.

Thread............................A subsection of a website headed by a user-generated comment/statement which is subsequently commented upon by other members of the website in a conversational manner.

Vlog ....Portmanteau of video and log, a type of blog that uses video as its medium.

Vox pop ....An opinion usually in video format represented by informal comments from members of the public.

Chapter 1   Introduction

An alarming parallel reaction to the progression of women's socioeconomic and political rights in the twenty-first century is the development of an androcentric reactionary cluster of performative digital masculinities known as the manosphere (Messner, 1998; Ging, 2019a; Van Valkenburgh, 2021). Predominantly congressing online, the manosphere consists of self-identifying groups of heterosexual Western men subscribing to antifeminist and antiwoman ideologies that objectify, denigrate, and dehumanise women (Han & Yin, 2022; Rothermel, 2023). Believing their position as the rightfully dominant demographic of society is at risk of deposition by the progress achieved by successive feminist movements, a sexist and misogynous tone typifies these collectives (Baele, Brace & Coan, 2021). Incels, a portmanteau of involuntary and celibate, comprise one such cluster of gendered response to progressive feminist sociopolitical action. These men are characterised by a perceived inability to obtain a purported right of romance, sexual intimacy, and marriage (Sugiura, 2021), amassing in online spaces known as 'the incelosphere' (Brace, 2023) in which heteronormative, cisgendered, and misogynistic discourse dominate their masculine performances (Andersen, 2024a). While many incels vent these frustrations through symbolic violence within online forums and message boards (Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024), some have gone on to commit acts of ideologically informed physical violence; mass killings enacted in the name of their in-group upon women and men they see as responsible for their repression (Bates, 2020; Gentry, 2020).

It is these physical acts of violence, most notably the Toronto van attack of 2018 in which 10 people (eight women) were killed with another 16 injured (Baele, Brace & Coan, 2021), that has catalysed a flurry of academic attention, spanning multiple disciplines including security and terrorism, critical feminism and the study of men and masculinities, and psychological research. Originally (and somewhat understandably) perceived as a security threat, recent years have seen compartmentalised disciplinarity directing efforts towards juxtaposed and dialectical positions. Most notably, critical gender studies place male supremacist ideology embedded within cisheteropatriarchy at the centre of analysis of these men's actions, performances, and ideology (DeCook & Kelly, 2022). Conversely, evolutionary psychology and psychopathology research grounded in positivist ontology focuses on the lived experiences of these men, characterised by adverse mental health (see Whittaker, Costello & Thomas, 2024). Each position is grounded respectively by the social or the individual, with little researching bridging the gap between structure and individual agency and experience. Further, almost all research has so far concerned the extant incel, their ideology, and their performances in digital space,

dominated by secondary data analysis. Comparatively little interest has been given to the journey that leads some men (and boys) towards an incel identity, and the digital communities in which both misogyny and adverse mental health coexist. It is these specific issues this thesis addresses.

The overarching aims of this research were to (1) conceptualise the nature of incel digital space and (2) understand the process through which men assume an incel identity. This was achieved through two core objectives. First, incel digital spaces needed to be understood both in unison and relative position to each other. This provided a contextual basis for digital space in the adoption of an incel identity and broadened understanding of how each site influences and facilitates the incel community. The structure-experience dialectic of current research needed to be bridged to consider how both society and the individual each and together play a role in the generation of an incel identity. This enabled appreciation of the synergy of external influences and internal responses together, rather than as separate entities, providing a full, connected picture of how men arrive at an incel identity. Accordingly, this thesis sought to answer three research questions (RQs):

RQ1: *Are there any structural and content features of the digital spaces housing incel communities and related ideology that impact upon men who adopt an incel identity and engage with the incel community?*

RQ2: *How does social structure impact men who adopt an incel identity and engage with the incel community?*

RQ3: *How do resulting individual experiences and responses lead men to adopt an incel identity and engage with the incel community?*

To answer these questions, a sequential methodology first employed an extensive digital ethnography to illustrate the structural and content features of the digital spaces housing incel communities and related ideology, revealing an 'Incel Network'. This network comprises a three-tier arrangement of digital arenas of ideological dissemination and identity performance. Each tier serves a particular function and exhibits unique characteristics that contribute to the distribution of incel ideology and fostering of incel identities. Building on additional findings of the ethnography regarding factors influencing adoption of an incel identity, thematic analysis of semi-structured, asynchronous interviews of current and former incels produced three overarching themes, addressing the social structure, individual experiences, and subsequent responses of these men influencing the choice to identify as an incel.

The thesis adopted a feminist critical realist position, selecting theories with the greatest intrinsic merit to explain the generative mechanisms instructive in the adoption of an incel

identity. Raewyn Connell's (1995, 2000, 2009) theory of gender underpins analysis of the social structures and resulting events impacting incel men during their formative years. Joseph Pleck's (1995) traditional masculine ideology compliments gender theory to conceptualise the individually held beliefs of men resulting from the prevalence and reverence of dominant masculine performances. Finally, Margaret S. Archer's (2007, 2012) theory of reflexivity mediates social structure and action through individual agency. Events and experiences produced through and by social structure impels a subjective process of deliberative rumination in which the individual mulls over the experiences, how these events make them feel, and decides how to act according to the positive or problematic reflexive processes employed. The social action that results emerges from this reflexive process, leading some men to adopt an incel identity and engage with the incel community.

Before outlining the subsequent eight chapters that comprise this endeavour, the following section contextualises the incel phenomenon and the community's central ideology within twenty years of androcentric sociopolitical positioning.

1.1   Welcome to the Incelosphere

The inability to find a romantic partner itself is not a particularly novel phenomenon. The situation of involuntary celibacy has been noted throughout history across numerous cultures and civilisations (Gendler, 2020; Brooks, Blake & Fromhage, 2022). This includes contemporary China and Japan where specific terms, *guanggun* and *soshoku danshi* respectively, have arisen, colloquially signifying modernity's apparent increase in prevalence of a life position of heterosexual men unable to find a partner (Brooks, Russo-Batterham & Blake, 2022; Linder, 2024). The men at the heart of this thesis, incels, differ from these and other men unable to find romantic and sexual partners due to the commitment to a reactive, essentialising ideology and identity forged within digital communities linked to explicit misogyny, suicidal ideation, and acts of gendered symbolic and physical violence (Daly & Laskovtsov, 2021; Johanssen, 2022a).

The term incel did not originate from the current subculture at the heart of this investigation. The portmanteau of involuntary and celibate was created at the end of the twentieth century by a bisexual woman named Alana in an inclusive and supportive online forum, denoting anyone experiencing negative emotional and cognitive experience due to sexlessness and a life absent of romantic connection (Kassam, 2018; Hoffman, Ware & Shapiro, 2020). The appropriation and discursive evolution to current usage occurred over the next two decades, as some men within this forum began to break away. Barred from the forums and sites associated with the inclusive community, these men and adolescent boys espoused a militant, misogynistic, and rejectionist identity inherent to contemporary incel digital spaces, explicitly blaming women for their life

position (Ging, 2019b). Self-identifying incels would soon spread across digital space with two distinct positions. The inclusive, supportive heterosocial communities of *IncelSupport.com* and *Alana's Involuntary Celibate Project* contrasted with homosocial bio-deterministic antifeminists housed in websites such as *Loveshy.com* (Byerly, 2020). Following the takeover of Loveshy.com by a comparatively restrained moderator in 2013 who removed antifeminist posts and users, the second major exodus of incels from moderated digital spaces took place. These incel men migrated to dedicated threads of Reddit, a website already used by such individuals in a fragmented and dispersed manner as means of online socialising (Cottee, 2020; Hoffman, Ware & Shapiro, 2020). The coalescence of large numbers of incels within these digital forums and threads coincided with their concurrent use of *4chan* (Ging, 2019b), another user generated content forum site awash with antifeminist, misogynistic, and dissimulative rhetoric (de Zeeuw & Tuters, 2020). The contemporary discursive mechanisms of the incel community in part owes itself to the imageboard environs of online sites such as 4chan; unregulated arenas in which hypermasculine, misogynous rhetoric merged with 'trolling'[1] and 'shitposting'[2] (Nagle, 2016, 2017; de Zeeuw et al., 2020). According to Hoffman, Ware & Shapiro (2020), incels' use of Reddit and 4chan perpetuated an increasingly "extremist sentiment" that "disguised their true aggressiveness" using *"outrageous statements (...) intended to generate an escalatory spiral of reactions and responses"* (p. 565).

Concurrent to the incipience and growth of Alana's inclusive gendered project, a broad digital embodiment of predominately homosocial, patriarchal, antifeminist space known as the manosphere also began to manifest (Jane, 2018; Ging, 2019a; Van Valkenburgh, 2021). The origins of this reactionary movement can be traced as far back as the 1950's androcentric sociopolitical men's liberation movement (MLM). Purportedly predicated upon androgynous collaborative political liberation in unison with second wave feminism, the MLM soon evolved from egalitarian emancipation from patriarchy towards regressive narratives of men's rights. This mutated androcentric collective adopted an affective activist sentiment, denying the existence and benefits of patriarchy, and casting women and feminism as the enemy (Hanisch, 1975; Messner, 1998, 2016). This combative stance soon evolved as transnational digital space brought together scattered men's rights groups within online networks, focusing on the purported ills imparted on men by the familial judicial system, asymmetrical domestic violence support services, and progressive gains of women in social, political, and economic spheres (Dragiewicz, 2008, 2011; Marwick & Caplin 2018). Rather than freeing both women and men

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[1] The posting of deliberately provocative or offensive content.
[2] Acts of supposed irreverent and ironic humour indistinguishable from content with genuine malicious intent.

from the gendered constraints of patriarchy, men's rights groups instead pursued an affectively charged victim narrative.

The manosphere grew from this aggrieved victim rhetoric simultaneously denying the disadvantages of women in androcentrically constructed societies, while complaining of the unjust suffering men endured due to women. The incipience of men's rights bombast entering networked, user-generated, digital space rapidly expanded into multiple masculine performances of antifeminist misogyny under the umbrella term of the manosphere, containing, among others, men's rights activists, pick up artists, men going their own way, tradcons[3], and incels (Ironwood, 2013; Riberio et al., 2021). Metaphoric 'pill' social ontology lies at the heart of manosphere performances. Derived from the popular film *The Matrix,* a foundational redpill/bluepill dialectic facilitates the encapsulation of specific and rigid ways of understanding the social world, fixing three core social ontologies into the redpill: neoliberalism, biological determinism, and postfeminism (Ging, 2019b; Burton, 2022). To take the redpill in manosphere culture is to awaken to the 'truth' of the unjust gynocentric society men find themselves repressed within (Rothermel, Kelly & Jasser, 2022; Vallerga & Zurbiggen, 2022). The bluepill exists as a dialectical-relational structure to the redpill; an amorphous theoretical trashcan in which all perspectives that challenge or contradict a biologically determined, neoliberal, and postfeminist conceptualisation of sociosexual relations are expelled into.

Redpill neoliberal political economy commodifies 'erotic capital'[4] (Hakim, 2011) performed within a sexual marketplace (SMP). Men and women are understood as 'prosumers' (Douman, Hguyen & Kok, 2022); simultaneously producing and consuming, in this case, heterosexual interpersonal intimacy and sex as commodified goods (Burton, 2022). Romance and sex are reconfigured into a series of market interactions, a "relentless and ubiquitous economization" (Brown, 2015, p. 31) characteristic of late-stage capitalist political economy. Social life is configured through hierarchical physical and ascetic 'sexual market value' (SMV) (Van Valkenburgh, 2021) allocated through reductive numerical ratings based on specific masculine presentations, improved via 'maxxing' practices; the (e)valuation and entrepreneurial modification of self to conform to heteronormative tropes of desirable physical appearance (Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019). Redpill ideology rejects social constructivist perspectives of sociosexual relations, favouring instead a rigid framework predicated primarily upon dis/misinformative reading of academic research concerning evolutionary biological and psychological proximate mating behaviours. SMV is framed explicitly within fixed physical traits,

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[3] TRADitional CONservative.
[4] Defined as aesthetic, visual, physical, social, and sexual attractiveness.

with women supposed as universally attracted to only the genetically fittest alpha males known as 'Chads' (Menzie, 2020; Bachaud & Johns, 2023). Finally, a postfeminist sentiment produces a gynocentric understanding of gendered social relations. Feminism, a site of resistance to gendered structural power, is transformed into a site of oppression by men perceiving suffering and loss due to feminist victories in institutional and sociopolitical transformations (Van Valkenburgh, 2021). Women are subsequently characterised as hyper-sexualised, self-indulgent, and power hungry. Redpill postfeminist sentiment refutes and obscures unequal gender relations, via this transvaluation of gender power imbalances and sexual (em)power(ment) of women, obscuring men's privileges (DeCook & Kelly, 2022; Rothermel, Kelly & Jasser, 2022) behind claims of biologically determined, 'lookist'[5] discrimination and victimhood within a neoliberal sexual marketplace.

Many incels ejected from supportive digital spaces migrated towards pick up artist (PUA) forums and sites of the manosphere. These spaces promote and provide manipulative and derisive pseudo-psychological seduction techniques deployed by men to 'game' the biologically determined, sociosexual hierarchy, acquiring sexual access to unsuspecting women (O'Neill, 2018; Rüdiger & Dayter, 2020). Many men unable to achieve the successes promised after adopting such techniques disavowed themselves from the redpill derived ideology espoused by ideologues of the PUA world, joining the ranks of the emerging breakaway militant incel community coalescing in 4Chan and more mainstream sites such as Reddit (Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019; Cottee, 2020). Rejection of pick-up artistry by these men led to the development of forums such as *PUAhate*; a subreddit[6] devoted to critique of the tenets, proponents, and veracity of the gaming of women. It is here we can assert the earliest informal manifestations of pill ideology central to the incel community; the *black*pill.

Retaining a postfeminist and biologically determined standpoint of a gynocentric sexual marketplace, blackpill social ontology rejects redpill neoliberal political economy of maxxing self-improvement of SMV, refuting agentic capacity, favouring instead a defeatist attitude towards this social structuring (Green, Fowler & Palombi, 2023). Consumers of the blackpill remain eternally sociosexually unsuccessful as a self-identifying, immutable 'loser' at the bottom of this sexual marketplace dynamic, as redpill game and 'alpha male' presentation necessary for sexual success is considered either invalid or unachievable (Burton, 2022). To be 'blackpilled' is to exist in self-denigration, ideologically transfixed upon a societal dynamic

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[5] Lookist discrimination of 'lookism' is defined within the manosphere as discrimination based upon presentation of a non-normative masculine physical ascetic.
[6] A subreddit is a collection of forum board discussions associated with a particular category, theme, or topic hosted on the digital social network platform Reddit.

purportedly constructed through biologically determined social ordering in which one embodies a physicality too unattractive to achieve heterosexual intimacy (Fowler, 2022; Lindsay, 2022).

As user-generated content redefining contemporary online space and action provided opportunity for groups of men and adolescent boys to network over shared beliefs of gendered discrimination, other hitherto male-dominated spaces were also espousing similar antifeminist and misogynistic discourse. The videogaming world found itself at the centre of a user-generated controversy commonly known as 'Gamergate'; a coordinated digital attack upon numerous women gamers, game developers, and journalists in response to a falsified personal story by an ex-boyfriend of an outspoken feminist game developer (Massanari, 2017; Nagle, 2017; Mortensen, 2018). The subsequent trolling, shitposting, doxing[7], and the tirade of social media abuse and hate these women received for simply being women was born from the same 4Chan message board environs that incel culture had originated (Fisher, 2023). Men and adolescent boys accustomed to online digital spaces and gaming performed toxic 'beta' or 'geek' masculinities, in which women were cast as weak and inept, and subsequently expelled from these spaces (Massanari, 2016; Salter, 2018). This relative positioning of these women as inherently inferior to these geek masculinities is undergirded by a biological essentialism also resonant in pill ideology. The networked antifeminist misogyny of Gamergate overlapped and intersected with the development of the incel community, acting as "a blueprint" (Johanssen, 2022a, p. 99) for online misogyny found in incel digital space (Marwick & Caplin, 2018; Johanssen, 2022b). A gendered radical dualism was emerging between men and adolescent boys self-cast as biologically determined victims of oppressive, yet supposedly inferior, feminism and women, with pill social ontology the memetic discourse unifying a diverse group of androcentric perspectives that included incel ideology (Ging, 2019a; Fisher, 2023).

By the mid 2010s, alongside *PUAhate*, the incel community began to penetrate mainstream digital space via subreddits such as *r/ForeverFucked*, *r/ForeverUnwantedMen*, then later *r/truecels*, *r/incels*, and *r/braincels*, as increasing numbers of incels coalesced in networked digital space (Cottee, 2020). Seeking to eradicate hate fuelled and filled forums within Reddit, the successive banning of incel-specific subreddits such as r/incels and r/braincels led to incels converging within purpose-built homosocial incel forums (Jaki et al., 2019), buttressed by an increasing number of YouTube and TikTok Channels, Facebook groups, and incels active on Twitter (Papdamou et al., 2021; Sugiura, 2021; Solea & Sugiura, 2023). Dedicated websites such

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[7] Doxing involves the online distribution or provision of personal contact and location information of an individual without prior consent.

as *Incels.me[8]*, Love-shy.net, ForeverAlone, and later Blackpill.club9 arose, moderated solely by incels with a decidedly antifeminist and misogynist tone enshrined in blackpill social ontology. This expulsion into self-modulated digital space resulted in pill social ontology and nomenclature, and incel identities nesting and evolving in anonymous, unregulated, homosocial echo chambers that now house the current manifestations of the incel digital community (Zimmerman, Ryan & Duriesmith 2018; Baele, Brace & Coan, 2021; O Donnell & Shor, 2022; Stijelja & Mishara, 2022). With the history of incels, pill social ontology, and the performative spaces in which these identities operate outlined, the following sections sets out how this thesis answers the three research questions outlined above, mapping incel digital space and plotting the journey to an incel identity.

1.2   The Path Ahead

The thesis is set out across eight further chapters. Chapter two critically addresses existing literature across numerous disciplines, demonstrating an emerging polarising dichotomy between critical feminist and psychological disciplines bound by disciplinary ontology and researcher identities. Further noting disproportionate reliance on thematic analysis of forum data and a relative absence of research investigating the journey men take into the incel identity and community, this analysis contextualises and informs the thesis' framework, theoretical toolbox, and methodologies.

Chapter three sets out the chosen theoretical framework. Adopting a feminist critical realist position, several useful theories are selected based on utility in providing a means with which to explain a limited observation of the objective real world (Bashkar 1979; Archer, 1995). Theories that span sociological and psychological disciplines are employed to consider structure, experience, and agency as causal mechanisms responsible for the adoption of an incel identity. Together this toolbox overcomes previous limitations grounded by positivist and constructivist ontologies that only consider part of the incel identity in theoretical isolation.

This leads to Chapter four in which the epistemological position of the research and resulting methodology are laid out. Critical realist understanding of our limited capacity to observe this world dictates that we must select methods and positions most useful to acquiring knowledge that can explain the behind-the-scenes generative mechanisms of incel identity adoption. A critically empathetic research position of a feminist man safeguarded by sustained reflexivity results. This limited way of seeing the world ensures a sufficient degree of criticality that

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[8]

[9] Now incels.in.

simultaneously recognises the complexity of men (and boys) navigating patriarchy. The remainder of the chapter details a sequential methodology; an extensive digital ethnography of incel digital space, and nine semi-structured, asynchronous interviews of current and former incels. The digital ethnography answers RQ1; identifying structural and content features of digital spaces containing incel ideology and housing incel communities. Semi-structured interviews build on initial findings of the digital ethnography to answer RQs 2 & 3, determining the causal mechanisms of social structure and individual experience, and how these impact subsequent subjective agentic responses within the social world.

Chapter five, The Incel Network, addresses RQ1; offering a novel and original contribution to the field through a descriptive framework of the arenas that (re)produce pill ideology and facilitate performance of incel identities. The Incel Network consists of three tiers of digital space, each with unique functionality. The first of these tiers, the Outer Periphery, contains mainstream social media platforms in which diluted ideology and terminology are embedded in content concerning dating and attraction. Pill ideology and incel terminology are normalised through a process of normiefication (de Zeeuw et al., 2020), in which niche incel ideology reaches into mainstream space penetrating socially dominant ways of thinking. The next tier, The Inner Periphery, continues to normalise the incel identity and pill social ontology unabated in a purpose-built wiki[10] and a maxxing forum dedicated to physical self-improvement. Other sites afford the incel community boundary construction through relative oppositional antagonism and continued housing of pill terminology and concepts. The final tier, the Performative Core, houses notorious incel forums in which rampant misogyny and victimhood underpin the performance of numerous incel identities policed by each forum's underlying ideological position. This Network however only accounts for part of the causal mechanisms operant in men adopting an incel identity. The remaining elements are addressed by three further hybrid chapters that cumulatively build critical discussion based on the results of interviews and supporting data derived from the ethnography, sequentially addressing social structure, individual experience, and agency.

The first of three chapters, Man Up, answers RQ2; discussing the impacts of gendered social structure constructed through material, social, and discursive practices. The construction of uneven gender relations relies upon revered masculine traits and practices framed in a position of relative legitimacy to both femininities and other subordinated or marginalised characteristics. (Connell, 1995). As adolescents and young men, incels experience social policing in local environments by fleeting dominating hegemonic masculinities and compliant

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[10] A website developed collaboratively by a community of users allowing any user to edit or add content.

femininities shoring up a hegemonic gender structure in which being the wrong type of boy or man is materially and discursively punished. Further, the societal discourses that emerge from the reified sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality (Rich, 1980), and the importance of and need for the participatory body reflexive practice of heterosex (Connell, 2000; Pascoe, 2011) influence the way incels understand and prioritise an absence of sex and intimacy.

Chapter seven, Man Down, builds upon these social events and absences through discussion of subsequent consequences to the individual, addressing RQ3. Through an initial self-reflection these men experience adverse affect as they mull over how these (non) events make them feel. Holding rigid beliefs about what a man should be and do causes these men to comparatively place themselves in positions of inferiority. Perceiving themselves as unable to perform the traits and practices of the imagined ideal man, and the dominant masculinities observed in their immediate social environments, these reflective experiences provide the base of the reflexive process responsible for the social act of adopting an incel identity.

Chapter eight, Deal(ing) With It, further addresses RQ3; discussing the final aspects of subjective reflexive action that leads to the adoption of an incel identity, building upon and drawing together the previous three chapters. Through a process of communicative reflexivity, men experiencing perceived masculine inadequacy and adverse affect from the impact of gendered social structure seek external sources to 'complete and confirm' their internal conversations ultimately leading to future social action (Archer, 2007). Through engagement with the Incel Network embedded in popular and accessible social media platforms of the Outer Periphery and forums of the Performative Core, these men are exposed to alleviate pill and incel ideology. This ideology contextualises their social experiences and position as immutable, steering these men to the conscious deliberate decision to adopt an incel identity. Through sustained contact with and interaction within the Network these men develop a fractured reflexivity; a distorted and disjointed internal conversation in which their agency becomes paralysed by the internalisation of a futile nihilism that dictates individual change as impossible. By maintaining this identity and interaction with the community these men chose not to engage in prosocial and proactive action to improve their social position. Of the men who have resigned their identity, such a proactive and prosocial *autonomous* reflexivity underlies the social action leading to improvement of their social position, and a conscious shedding of the incel identity.

The final chapter summarises the thesis. A feminist critical realist ontological position, merging social structure, personal experience, and agency within longitudinal and primary qualitative methodologies has mapped incel digital space and theorised the journey to inceldom. Both endeavours are original and significant contributions to a field that has remained focused on individual arenas, or the extant incel viewed through structural or individual lenses. The incel

identity is a product of the agency of the individual man experiencing unwanted social events contextualised within the Network's problematic pill social ontology through which men choose to enact a regressive social resignation, and the deployment of antifeminism, victimhood, and violences. Concluding, subsequent policy and research responses are considered in relation to both the Network and the gendered social structure these men must live within.

What follows critically reviews relevant incel research, building a case for the need to map the incel technoscape and understand the causal mechanisms behind an incel identity.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Considerable research has accumulated mainly in the last six years seeking to address the incel phenomenon, arising from several theoretical positions. The following chapter journeys through portions of this research, first discussing problematic attempts to classify the incel community through security and terrorism lenses. Predominantly applied to incel forum discourse these analyses fail to reach a meaningful consensus nor recognise and include the structural impacts of cisheteropatriarchy. Substantial critical feminist analyses of the incel community and identity offer gendered lenses with which to understand the overarching structural ideology from which pill social ontology and subsequent incel performances both originate. Yet this structural theory alone fails to offer insight into the lived experience and agency of incels, remaining cautiously wedded to positions critiquing these men's privileged societal position buttressed by male supremacist ideology. Psychological research grounded by positivism has attempted to interrogate the lived experiences of incel men but again does so from a position that fails to consider gendered social structure or the agency of these men. Survey investigations emerging from this pillar of incel research ignore broader patriarchal influences and seemingly validate these men's victimhood claims, through conceptually, epistemologically, and methodologically problematic research designs. These two dominant streams of critical feminist and psychological interrogation have produced a 'mental health vs misogyny' individual-structure dialectic, unable to reconcile ontologically bound positionality. Mixed methods and interview-based research, while sparse, recognises a complex interplay of masculine vulnerability, pervasive structural narratives permitting male privilege, and adverse mental health. Further, almost all research focuses on the extant community, failing to dedicate inquiry towards the generative mechanisms that lead to inceldom. The limitations of critical feminist and psychological research, and a relative absence of direct contact with incels via combined and longform qualitative methods, justify a need to mediate structure, experience, and agency within combined and immersive methodologies to interrogate the evident synergy of social and personal dynamics operant in the journey into an incel identity.

2.1   The Incel Threat (?)

The taking of multiple lives by men associated with the incel identity catalysed and accelerated academic investigation of the associated online community. Primarily concerned with the nature of the ideological foundations from which the perpetrators developed the philosophies underpinning their violent acts, numerous scholars within the fields of security and terrorism studies sought to analyse the content of incel digital space and artefacts produced by specific actors, generating varying conclusions.

Baele, Brace and Coan (2021) employed a mixed-methods approach in the collection of six months of digital data from incels.me (now incels.is), a prominent self-moderated incel forum site, collating 770,000 messages to investigate the incel worldview associated with the 2018 Toronto attack. Results concluded cognitive linguistic mechanisms within incel discourse formed classification and explanation strategies reifying an immutable radical dualism position between an incel in-group status and out-group 'normies' and women, necessitating violence to neutralise perceived oppression enacted by the outgroup. Sex was an entitlement denied to incels by women, with violence serving as a coping mechanism to overcome the rigidly constructed boundaries that blackpill ideology confined them within. The study concluded that as acts of sporadic violence had been committed by incels, and that these acts were encouraged alongside wider societal violence imagined in incel spaces, incel ideology should be classified as a form of violent extremism.

Simon Cottee (2020) took an alternative position to that of Baele and colleagues, distinguishing actor and ideology as separate phenomena. Analysing just 50 threads from incels.co as well as the manifesto and social media videos of a perpetrator of a mass killing in 2014 assumed to be an incel, Cottee did not regard incel ideology as violent extremism due to the nature of the violence committed. For these actions to be such, advocation must derive from a necessity for in-group defence, exampling jihadist attacks on designated infidels to maintain Islamic purity, or white supremacist attacks on people of colour to defend against the supposed 'great replacement' of the white race. The violence of incels instead served to remedy the emotional state of shame. This has been defined as a process of "dehumiliation" (Jurgensmeyer, 2017, p. 199); rectifying feelings of inadequacy resulting from the inability to achieve sexual fulfilment. Further, as incel ideology did not seem to evoke any clear political agenda in relation to sociopolitical macrostructural transformation, Cottee sees the terrorism of incels as atypical; "a non-coercive form of political violence" (2020, p. 14) serving to punish, de-humiliate, communicate pain, and attack a purportedly indifferent society.

Extending this theme of terroristic atypicality, Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro (2020) also note the apolitical position of incel ideology, whilst adhering to traditional in-group/out-group radical dualism and the resulting violence directed, and effected, at a societal level. The nature of the terrorism committed by incels at a social stratum (vs individual or interpersonal violence) aims not to enact political macro-level change, but is rather bound within a hate crime framework, with misogyny at its core. Hoffman and colleagues detail various taxonomies of misogynistic terroristic acts both in relation to the 2014 and 2018 attacks, as well as similar mass murders where incel ideology is implicit or explicit in non-identifying incels, extending the categorisation to include "ex post-facto inceldom" (p. 574). This retrospective incel identity designation was applied to specific perpetrators of mass murder prior to the California attack, including attacks

carried out in 1989 and 2009, long before the incel community was visible. In contrast to Baele and colleagues, this analysis considers the violence carried out by individuals classifiable as incels as apolitical misogynistic hate crime, rather than traditional violent extremism. Converse to Cottee's position, incel ideology and action is recognised as similar to, and overlapping with, established terrorist positions such as the far right and jihadism, through their utilisation of vehicular weapons and subjectivities of sexual frustration, martyrdom, and antisemitism.

The apolitical classification of an ideology that specifically attributes blame and targeted hatred towards women was understandably received contentiously by some feminist scholars researching incels. DeCook and Kelly (2022) considered Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro's and Cottee's conclusions of incel ideology as apolitical and advocation for the securitisation of incel and the associated ideology as problematic. Whilst primarily in agreement with Hoffman and colleagues' assessment of incel as *shaped* by misogyny, they criticise the authors for not extending their analysis to include the broader men's rights movement. These authors DeCook and Kelly claim, place their assessment of incels into an "ideological vacuum" (p. 710) in which incel violence predating the incel term and problematic identity is included. This exceptionalises such gender-based violence under the incel label despite no clear link or explicit association, "cherry picking to fit a certain research agenda, one that does not understand [...] the power of misogyny and how it drives violence against women" (p. 712). The securitisation of incels is conducive to the erasure of violence against women, as doing so exceptionalise these acts rather than acknowledging this violence is exemplary of the continuum of violence against women perpetuated by men, facilitated by the misogyny and male supremacist ideology inherent to patriarchal social structure (Kelly, 1987; Bendfeldt, 2024; Carian, DiBranco & Kelly, 2024; Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024). Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook (2021) reiterate this position, refuting calls for the pathologizing of incel violence as either exceptional terroristic behaviour or due to mental health influences, as incels and associated pill social ontology should be understood as another manifestation of male supremacy. Thus, rather than securitising the threat, male supremacy and "cisheteropatriachy" (p. 1) should be challenged within society at policy, structural, and interpersonal levels, deconstructing the underlying sexism, and accompanying racism, that are responsible for fuelling these beliefs and normalising everyday violence against women (Sugiura, 2021; DeCook & Kelly, 2022).

Although gender-based analyses have been consistent in identifying underlying male supremacist and misogynistic drivers for incel violence, studies that directly address the terroristic acts and violent capacity of incels have also recognised the operant factor of misogyny. Zimmerman, Ryan and Duriesmith (2018) assert that incel ideology fits an emerging framework of misogynistic terrorism, directly linking incels' violence and discursive incitement of violent retribution within online spaces to the white supremacist call to arms, echoing Baele,

Brace and Coan (2021). Zimmerman and colleagues see the explicit edict for violence as an ultimate solution as inherent to incel ideology, increasing the likelihood for incels to be "amenable to broader extremist recruitment tactics" (p. 2). Zimmerman (2022) reiterates this position in a critical analysis of six months of exploration of incels.is content and the manifestos of the perpetrators of the 2014 and 2018 attacks. The author proposes that incels are moving beyond discourse in digital space and are now becoming a political movement with an intent to enact political change, indicated by calls for Marxist style redistribution of sexual access. O'Donnell and Shor (2022) concentrated analysis of incels to community activity in relation to the 2018 attack immediately after the event. Focusing attention upon 194 threads on incels.is that directly discussed or address the attack, the authors also found evidence of the call for political change, the demand for wider societal recognition, as well as pervasive misogyny and overwhelming support for enacted and potential violence.

The differing conclusions that have been drawn regarding incels by security research reflect a number of conceptual, methodological, and analytical issues. Terrorism, Berger (2018) reminds us, is an inherently political and subjective term. Classification of a new form of violence will always produce inconsistency when approached from differing perspectives, especially when ideology, or acts of violence are analysed post-hoc. Further, which definition of violent extremism one selects as a composite within a conceptual framework will directionally affect the conclusion. Resultantly, varying positions suggest a male supremacist collective (Kelly, DiBranco & DeCook, 2021; Roose & Cook, 2022), a "single issue terrorist group" (O'Donnell & Shor, 2020, p. 12) and a "trans-national terror network" (Witt, 2020, p. 667). For Cottee (2020), to satisfy his conceptualisation of violent extremism, violent acts must be a necessity for in-group defence, yet the instances of incel-associated violence are more restorative than protective, failing to meet his definitional criterion. Here, violence is conceptualised only in the physical, ignoring and obscuring symbolic violence perpetuated throughout incel forums (Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024), with this violence imagined as means to restore a sense of identity rather than to protect incels from a malevolent outsider. Conversely, Baele, Brace and Coan, and Zimmerman, Ryan and Duriesmith see an intent of threat neutralisation through the desire to hurt women as sufficient to label fantasised and actualised violent acts as defensive, with the latter study indicating political intent for change in the incel community's online discourse.

What constitutes 'political' is of great importance in understanding a violent entity's actions as politically driven or natured. For Cottee and Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, to be political the worldview must contain a coherent list of macro-level transformative demands, such as the jihadi desire for a caliphate or white supremacist edict of ethnic cleansing, which in their analysis of incels remains absent, suggesting a lack of 'politicality'. For others, such as DeCook and Kelly and O'Donnell and Shor, calls for legalising sexual violence and the removal of

women's voting rights, although acknowledged as spurious by the authors, illustrate explicit advocacy for transformative action, confirming such a politicality. While all authors acknowledge the inability to confirm comments and posts as a genuine reflection of the user, Baele Brace and Coan, Tomkinson Harper and Atwell, DeCook and Kelly, and O'Donnell and Shor have taken incels' violence as sufficient to interpret incendiary comments as serious – instructively informing their conclusions. Cottee comparatively remains cautious, instead depicting these digital incitements as cathartic expression, even proposing such expressions as instrumental in the *prevention* of increased prevalence of incel violence in society. For Zimmerman, Ryan and Duriesmith the misogyny and incitement of violence against women is unquestionably political and satisfies politicality under an institutionalised definition appropriated from the US state department defining terrorism as: "premeditated, politically motivated violence*"* (United States State Department in Zimmerman, Ryan and Duriesmith, 2018, p. 2). The violence of incels is easily accommodated by such a description, politically motivated through incitement of violence towards the political entity of woman. While this conclusion seems logical, the categorisation of a cohort of globally distributed men based only on digital discourse, and actions of one or two perpetrators of violence and their artefacts, without direct contact with the individuals involved, risks inaccurately labelling a potentially diverse group based on unverifiable data.

Assessing forum data at scale, as these studies have done, cannot sufficiently identify the extent to which all individuals in the incel community advocate for violence, particularly given the shitposting and trolling inherent to the incel sensibility (Daly & Nichols, 2023) spawned within Chan message board culture (Nagle, 2017). In their analysis of 770,000 posts, Baele and colleagues recognise that most extreme posts came from a relative minority of users, a trend that prevails in broader social media, known as super-posting (Fisher, 2023). This heterogeneity of engagement has been further supported by Jaki et al.'s (2019) quantitative analyse of discourse produced within 3,500 posts of incels.me. While demonstrating that just over half of forum users engage in some form of hate speech, the majority of all offensive content originated from around 10% of users. These results suggest a varying and disproportionate degree of active user engagement, a characteristic supported by a recent comprehensive analysis of manosphere digital space suggesting a small number of "'hyper' or 'super' participants" sustain the community and problematic ideology in part through their use of '*exolinking'*, in which various related digital platforms are connected through users posting hyperlinks (Brace, Baele & Ging, 2023, p. 17). This suggests the incel digital ecosystem to be of a heterogeneity that prevents big data analyses from providing a depth necessary to map the community's diversity, as only egregious and offensive contributions are considered, risking homogenisation of incels as one political, extreme, or terroristic mass. While incel is an identity that may predispose

towards mass violence, the identity *itself* does not guarantee this. Indeed, as recent research by Andersen (2024a, 2024b) that has engaged directly with incels has noted, there is a wide range of incel identities which drift in and out of the community and ideology. As only a small minority of incels go on to become physically violent actors, this implies that these acts are instead a form of misogynistic or misogyny-informed violence. While misogyny can predict violent extremist intentions (Rottweiler, Clemmow & Gill, 2024), with misogyny frequently the gateway, catalyst, or earmark of such violence (Diaz & Valji, 2019), it is a propensity and form of aggression not unique to or ubiquitous in incels (Gartenstein-Ross et al., 2023; Perliger, Stevens, & Leidig, 2023; Andersen 2024b).

The conceptualisation of violence itself is also problematic here. Security and terrorism scholars, understandably, yet reductively, view violence through the physical lens only. It has been widely recognised through extensive feminist research that violence comes in many forms; discursively, symbolically, and emotionally (Kelly, 1987; Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024). Incel forums are rife with rape fantasises via sexual redistribution, and vitriolic attacks on individual women and the wider gender class (Baele, Brace & Coan, 2021; Zimmerman, 2022). Misogyny itself is a form of violence; everyday terrorism women across the globe must endure as part of their daily lives (Pain, 2014; Gentry, 2022). Misogyny is the discursive and symbolic act with which men maintain gender hegemony and police women's behaviour, actions, and thought (Manne, 2017) within patriarchy, a sociopolitical system in which men are bestowed the authority to dominate (hooks, 2015). This is completely overlooked in these reductive analyses that focus only on the stochastic instances of physical violence performed by a handful of incel actors.

Associations between incels and physically violent extremism can lead to the stigmatisation of the group as a whole (Andersen 2024a), despite the majority appearing, according to individuals involved in treating incels, to be more accurately representative of "angry lonely boys" (Van Brunt & Taylor, 2021, p. xxx). Further, as the call for male supremacist ideology to be recognised as a form of violent extremism demonstrates, traditional models with which the above authors conceptualise incel ideology and action within lacks the efficacy to characterise these and non-physical violent acts (Leidig, 2021; Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024) and the structural complexity of the wider community. Brzuszkiewicz (2020) perceives the current understanding of terrorism as ill equipped to understand incels, offering a novel framework which conceptualises incel space as a "radical milieu" (p. 12) in which Rotter's (1954) external locus of control dominates, as incels perceive forces outside of their control, such as women and genes, as responsible for their perceived oppression. Not all incels will react in a physically, symbolically, or discursively violent manner, but the potentiality propagates within communicative proximity to incel digital space. Similarly, Lindsay (2022) understands the incel

blackpill ideology to construct a "digital counter public" (p. 210) in which the suggestion for individual resolve is proffered through a variety of options, including, but not exclusively, acts of retribution, explaining the instances of stochastic violence linked to the community. Nardone (2022) recognises that focus on a 'terrorist or not' dichotomy misdirects attention and resources away from the necessity to reduce attack likelihood. Basing categorisation on group affiliation or actor-typing misperceives the threat, as it is not all incels that adhere to violent extremism nor commit violent acts (Kelly, DiBranco & DeCook, 2021). Indeed, as Perliger, Stevens, and Leidig's (2023) analysis of the threat of the broader manosphere reveals, incels were recorded as using the *least* explicitly violent language compared to other groups, such as men going their own way. Analysing six years of posts across 33 different incel related platforms, Baele, Brace and Ging (2023) found significant variance in violent extremist language across incel digital space. While some forums increased in post frequency and intensity, some decreased, with a distinct lack of uniformity in extreme content that suggested a spectrum of adherence to extreme positions and ideals. While many users engage with forums, not all post, nor at the same frequency or intensity. Relatively small period(s) of a singular forum alone cannot reflect a diverse community that involves numerous websites and digital platforms interwoven through participant-generative linkage.

Critical feminist interrogation of incels as a security threat has effectively demonstrated the underlying misogynistic ideology that characterises the incel community, associated actors of violence, as well as others not obviously connected to the incel identity. Numerous scholars (e.g. DeCook & Kelly, 2022; Lindsay, 2022; Nardone, 2022; Roose & Cook, 2022; Tomkinson, Harper & Atwell, 2022) have demonstrated a prevalent anti-woman sentiment in the incel community, resulting in an array of violences towards this political and gendered group. Where they differ is in approaches to categorising and dealing with the problem. To securitise risks the neglection of the broader discussion regarding the patriarchally structural roots that are embedded in incel discourse (DeCook & Kelly, 2022), to not securitise misses an opportunity to access existing funding, intervention strategies, and mechanisms (Tomkinson, Harper & Atwell, 2022). It is important to note, though, that not all violent acts that have been associated with incel ideology have been enacted exclusively upon women. Certainly, there have been many acts of misogynistic violence specifically and deliberately targeting women, such as the 2018 Tallahassee shooting in which three women were killed and six injured. However, both the 2014 and 2018 Toronto attacks, as well as other mass violence associated with incel ideology, targeted both men and women (Hoffman, Ware & Shapiro, 2020; Bloom, 2022; Moskalenko et al., 2022a). Some of these actors explicitly associated with the incel ideology and the online community, some did not or predated its existence. This variance suggests that misogynistic terrorism may have an underlying root cause, male supremacist ideology, that while prevalent in

the predilections of some incels, is also present in non-incels (Liedig, 2021), as evidenced by studies demonstrating an overlap of incel sentiment with other supremacist groups (DeCook & Kelly, 2022; Roose & Cook, 2022). Male supremacist ideology exists behind and extends beyond misogyny to strategic restoration of male power (Roose & Cook, 2022), a "system that disproportionately privileges cis men and subordinates women, trans men, and nonbinary people - and its accompanying ideology of male superiority" (Carian, DiBranco & Ebin, 2022, no pagination). Physical violence is one manifestation of male supremacism, but this overlooks the broader male supremacist ideology embedded in incel discourse (Kelly, Rothermel, & Sugiura, 2024). Looking only at physical violence, understood as misogynistic terrorism or otherwise, neglects gendered structural factors security and terrorism research as a discipline is yet to fully embrace as a means with which to interpret the origins of violence (DeCook & Kelly, 2021; Nardone, 2022). Further, what exactly generates the progression to numerous forms of violent intent or action evident within the incel digital environment or enacted in the physical world, or from non-incel into the identity itself, have not been suitably addressed in this field of research. Such a progression potentially impacted by individual subjective experiences would remain undetectable through big data or fragmented forum analysis bound by disciplinary ontology that limits consideration of the formative role of gender within patriarchal social structure.

Encapsulating the theoretical conceptualisation behind much of the feminist critique of incels, Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook's (2021) concept of 'cisheteropatriarchy' demonstrates the same generalising ambiguity that the notion of patriarchy has found at the heart of its terminological critique since first emerging in social science discourse (Acker, 1989). Useful in conceptualising a structural mechanism to understand why incel violence and ideology is not novel but rather a repackaged extension of everyday gender inequality, the catch-all universality of (cishet)patriarchy does not consider the asymmetrical impact of patriarchy upon different racial, class, or cultural groups (Acker, 1989; Connell, 1995). While these critiques were originally developed to address varying groups of women, this can be applied to the differing experiences men encounter within the patriarchal system. The lived experiences of men within patriarchy vary considerably (hooks, 2000, 2004), with many experiencing marginalisation and subordination despite a relative beneficial dividend as a member of the dominant gender group (Connell, 1995). Further, although some men adopt an incel identity and adhere to pill social ontology, many men do not. The limitations of a structural theory positing a causal system of male social power as instructive to the incel identity alone cannot accommodate the differentiating factors that draw a portion of sexless men towards the identity and worldview. Cisheteropatriarchy alone cannot explain the existence of incels, individual agency governed by subjective psychic experience(s) within this system must also play an active role.

In summary, the confines of traditional terrorism and security studies are limited in their capacity to conceptualise the amorphous and nonuniform incel community. While specific acts of physical violence have been performed by individuals that believe in or can be associated with certain tenets of incel ideology, the identity itself does not guarantee violence, be it physical or otherwise. Utilisation of orthodox models based on group and actor-types homogenise the identity, mislabelling an entire community as a security threat. Security studies focusing on fragments of the incel digital ecosystem, perpetrators of violence, and their artefacts, address the extant problem with little relative consideration to the gendered structures, mechanisms, or processes by which men arrive at and subscribe to the pervasive anti-women perspectives inherent to incel ideology. The questions of how and why some men develop an incel identify, and some incels produce extreme performances of discursive, symbolic, and physical violence remain mostly unanswered. The concept of cisheteropatriarchy, while useful in countering narratives of exceptional violence and highlighting the presence and importance of gendered social structure, cannot account for the role of subjective agency and experience when faced with both unmet romantic and intimate desire and the pervasive discourse of incel ideology communicated through pill social ontology.

It is to research concerning individual lived experience that this review turns to next, critically exploring the growing body of evidence concerning adverse psychoaffective and psychopathological conditions recorded in the incel community. This body of research has emerged as a contrasting dialectic to the critical feminist position, framing the incel experience as inherently linked to poor mental health, with problematic conclusions seemingly suggesting mental health is causal in the production of incel violence.

2.2   Depressed and Alone: Incels' Mental Health

Attempting to understand the personal subjectivities of incels, and why some of these men may become radicalized or adopt extreme ideological tenets, has involved a psychological approach grounded in positivist ontology. Such studies have sought to approach the incel phenomenon beyond their forums and digital data through methodologies that seek to engage directly with the individual man external to the forums he may frequent.

After considerable engagement within incel forums and consultation with forum moderators, Speckhard and Ellenberg (2022) complied a 68-item online questionnaire issued to 272 incel respondents recruited from incels.co to investigate the psychoaffective and psychopathological composition of the community. The authors documented significantly increased levels of self-reported and formally diagnosed anxiety, depression, alcohol and substance misuse, and autism spectrum, bipolar, and post-traumatic stress disorders in the incel sample, compared to

prevalence rates in the general population. Results further evidenced perceptions of physical disadvantage based on subjective understanding of traditional masculine traits, indicating the presence of gender role strain, a state of psychological dysfunction resulting from structurally induced masculine expectations of physicality incels felt unable to perform (Pleck, 1995; Levant & Powell, 2017). The feelings of emasculation observed within the incel community often linked to toxic masculine violence also produced internal psychological challenges, as these men feel unable to live up to societal prescriptions of being a man. Investigation of incel forum use revealed that while a significant majority (93%) of respondents used these spaces as a coping mechanism, the prevalence of anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicidal ideation were significantly related to the belief that forum engagement produced these thoughts and feelings. Forums offered a support structure that requires strict adherence to gendered behaviour that directly and indirectly adversely affected the mental health of some users. This suggests both digital performances and the manner of forum engagement may not be fully representative of the individual behind these digital acts.

Utilising Speckhard and Ellenberg's dataset, Moskalenko et al. (2022a) compared the association of blackpill ideological adherence to individual radicalisation. While distribution of ideological adherence was positively skewed; the majority (70%) of the sample scoring above the midpoint on a nominal 5-point measurement scale, the opposite was true for level of radicalisation, with 79% of respondents below the midpoint of a purpose built 'Incel Radicalisation Scale' (IRS). Despite a normative distribution of ideological adoption across the group, this did not predicate violent tendencies or support for violent acts, with only a minority of the sample indicating a motivation towards the support of enacting of violence to defend/respond to the incel community's position (Moskalenko et al. 2022b). Radicalisation was significantly correlated with self-reported and officially diagnosed autism spectrum disorder, while persecutory experiences understood through lookist discrimination due to incel identity and anxiety significantly correlated with ideological adherence. The results of these surveys suggest particular mental health disorders and personal life experiences are vital in understanding a demonstrable heterogeneity of perspectives, positions, and actions within the incel community. Speckhard and Ellenberg also support this position as misogyny and feelings of anger were significantly associated with self-reported intensity of autism spectrum traits and use of forums, furthering an argument that certain neurological conditions may be relevant factors in considering the tendencies for some incels and not others to commit symbolic and discursive violence within these spaces and beyond.

Further investigation of the incel community through surveys have continued to demonstrate the prevalence of an array of mental health issues within the incel community. Costello et al. (2022) surveyed 151 self-identifying incels alongside 378 non-incels, employing a barrage of

psychometric tests to understand the mental wellbeing of incels compared to the general population. Akin to the relatively high rate of psychoaffective and psychopathological incidence highlighted previously, incels demonstrated elevated levels of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and decreased levels of life satisfaction compared to the non-incel control group. Further, incels displayed increased tendencies for interpersonal victimhood characterised by the need for external recognition, a lack of empathy, a moral elitism towards outgroups, and preoccupation for past experiences of victimisation. Finally, incels were more likely to exhibit higher levels of sociosexual desire. This sociosexual desire was not mediated by mental wellbeing, suggesting a directional relationship in which a perceived inability to achieve sexual and romantic goals leads to the experienced negative state of mental wellbeing. The authors conclude incels represent a new at-risk group hard to reach by traditional therapeutic means in need of mental health interventions.

In an initial literature review of incel research, Sparks, Zidenburg and Oliver (2022) suggest that a focus on violence and misogyny misses the personal negative experiences of incels, with the observed similarities of incel culture to other violent ideology achieved through an analysis of just incel forum data. Later survey of 67 incels by Sparks and colleagues (2023) recruited though online advertisement again revealed increased levels of anxiety and depression, as well as insecure attachment, low self-worth, social isolation, and reduced access to support networks. Incels employed negative coping strategies compared to non-incel men and were significantly more likely to experience increased sensitivity to rejection when dating. Interestingly, despite the incel ideology directly attributing their perceived victimhood to women and feminism, incels scored lower on externalisation of blame measures, highlighting again these individuals placed greater emphasis on personal failings than upon outgroups, contrary to studies that analyse forum data alone. Low self-esteem and reduced overall wellbeing have been found in further surveys of the incel community (Justin, Shepler & Kinel, 2022; Scaffidi Abbate, Rapacciuolo, & Miceli, 2024), with loneliness and hopelessness both characteristics observed elsewhere in forum analyses of personal subjectivities of the incel community (Maxwell et al., 2020; Moldrup & Jensen, 2022; Leroux & Boislard, 2023). The largest survey of the incel community conducted by Whittaker, Costello and Thomas (2024) in which incels completed a comprehensive paid online assessment measuring demographics, personality, mental health, and beliefs appears to confirm the cumulative findings of past work. Results confirmed high levels of depression, anxiety, autism spectrum disorder, and suicide, with only a five percent minority of incels justifying or supporting violence, individuals characterised by a presence of misogyny, perceptions of personal discrimination, poorer mental health, and displaced aggression. These examples of direct interaction with the incel population have provided more detailed insight into specific views and experiences of individuals separate to the potentially performative forums

they frequent. Focus on the adverse effects of both fora use and the day-to-day mental health of these sample populations imply that while misogyny and extreme viewpoints are present in the incel community, many incels concurrently and separately experience various mental health issues which may be directly or indirectly contributing to, or a consequence of, their actions in digital space.

Caution should however be taken when considering the results of these datasets as they share significant epistemological, conceptual, and methodological problems. First, the sample sizes completing surveys is relatively small, ranging from 67 to the largest only engaging with 564 participants, a fraction of the conservatively estimated population of just one incel community of 40,000 (Fowler, Green & Palombi, 2023). These men were most often recruited from one (or two) incel forum(s) for each survey, lacking capacity to represent and investigate the incel community not active in this specific space and at the time of recruitment. While forums risk homogenisation through losing meaning in big data analyses, small samples derived from a singular spatiotemporally static location also fail to capture an illustrative breadth of the community. Further questions arise around which type of incels are likely to be participating in these surveys. Whitaker et al. (2024) acknowledge "a small number of incels regularly generate content on such platforms, calling into question whether the results of secondary analysis represent the views of incels or a smaller group of particularly vocal ones" (p. 9). Yet the authors' form of engagement and recruitment outcomes call into question whether the results of their analysis represent the views of incels, or a smaller group of particularly research-friendly ones. The study recruited from incel forums renowned for their antipathy towards the research community, a community that has been documented elsewhere as seeking to confirm a victimhood status (Lucy, Heritage & Sugiura, forthcoming). Thus, of the (small number) of incels that have participated, these men are either (or both) unrepresentative of the wider incel community or those looking to confirm a particular narrative that this research advances. Further, the Whitaker study, along with other survey-based research of incels incentivise incels through payment, prize draws, or course credit (e.g. Speckhard et al., 2021; Sparks, Zidenberg & Olver, 2023). With this type of methodology there is risk of undue inducement for participation or retention (Różyńska, 2022), as well as moral connotations for paying/rewarding individuals associated with hateful activity. This can be mitigated through triangulating confirmation of participant's responses via e.g. interviews or open-text boxes, a feature absent from these studies (Lucy, Heritage & Sugiura, forthcoming).

Further problems arise when considering the conceptual validation of some of the metrics contained within these surveys. The IRS employed to measure extremist tendencies in Speckhard and Ellenberg's (2022) and Moskalenko et al.'s (2022a, 2022b) surveys comprise only four questions, and although this tool has been further validated by Hargreaves and

Mooney (2023), the use of such a small number of questions to assert radicalisation is problematic given the complex array of ideas and positions within incel ideology. Four questions alone lack the power to grasp the entirety of an individual's position towards violence, particularly given misogyny itself can be positioned as a form of symbolic violence, a measure not considered in the IRS, considering only political physical violence (Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024). This represents a familiar issue discussed above; violence is only considered in the physical realm. In the Whittaker report, they consider the "small number of incels who felt that violence was often justified against those who cause harm to the incel community" (p. 36), neglecting the broader scope of gendered violences performed by the incel community, taking a similar tone to security and terrorism scholars. This reliance on a reductive and literal understanding of violence as physical ignores generative harms of discursive rhetoric within forum performances. The report recognises the impact of emotional and psychological dysfunction in the incel sample but conversely does not consider how this type of dysfunction could be experienced by women and other men as targets of incel discourse.

The employment of the IRS as a measure with which to understand radicalisation becomes even more problematic when statistically correlated with officially diagnosed autism spectrum disorder (ASD). And while the authors are careful not to suggest ASD is causal in incel violence, the linkage of neurological conditions adds further stigma to an already marginalised section of society through an ableist narrative (Gheorge & Clement, 2023). Further, this association of mental health difficulties with radicalisation and subsequent violent action disregards figures that suggest the two thirds of lone-actor violence is committed by individuals without any formal adverse mental health diagnoses (Corner & Gill, 2014), with the connection of autism to incel violence risking the securitisation of neurodiversity and mental health (Bhui, James & Wessely, 2016; McKendrick & Finch, 2016). The initial survey of 272 incels constituting the data in Speckhard and Moskalenko's work in which the IRS was first issued involved collaboration with the creator and owner of several incel associated forums (Carian, DiBranco & Kelly, 2024), drawing questions of impartiality within the research process. The wording of questions included in the survey were confirmed through consultation with this man, limiting the capacity for the research to take an objective distanced tone towards the subject group. The nature of the questionnaire itself is likely to have elicited demand characteristics, and self-report and social desirability biases (Phillips & Clancy, 1972) as individual incels seek to distance from acts of violence, and the problematic aspects of the ideology on which the community is built upon. This produces no more an accurate representation than the performative discourse found in incel forums. Self-reported responses of psychological conditions, lacking any independent clinical verification, could be means to absolve or disassociate from the dangerous/misogynist incel stereotype, towards a victim narrative that admonishes personal responsibility (DeCook &

Kelly, 2022; Carian, DiBranco & Kelly, 2024; Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024). Survey data, especially accrued through research subject collaboration, in isolation as a data source becomes questionable as a valid means with which to interpret the overall psychoaffective constitution of the community or the propensity of its members to hold radical or extreme positions.

Further, the directional causality of the presence of many mental health conditions within the incel community is difficult to discern, with differing conclusions drawn regarding the role of forum engagement in wellbeing and mood. Studies note both the exacerbation of poor psychoaffective wellbeing as a perceived result of forum participation (Moskalenko et al., 2022b), as well as alleviation from such conditions as a result of the belonging and sense of community produced by these digital spaces (Speckhard & Ellenberg, 2022). These sentiments were often held concurrently by respondents (Moskalenko et al., 2022a; 2022b), with a varying degree of agreement regarding the supportive efficacy of incel forums between UK and US incel cohorts (Whittaker, Costello & Thomas, 2024). While direct engagement with incels, albeit through online survey tools, has highlighted the importance of the perceived and actual instance of poor mental health, general wellbeing, and neurological conditions, this only demonstrates the presence within a fraction of the accessible existing community, and further offers little to discern the directional relationship between incel identity and adverse subjective experiences, nor the extent these experiences are encountered across the wider incelosphere.

While forum data analyses generalise the community through potentially disproportionally visible artefacts of a section of the wider community, survey studies that take potentially politically motivated participant responses of a smaller sample of the community at face value may produce equally misrepresentative conclusions, demonstrating a converse methodological limitation. As with the exceptionalisation of incel violence in terrorism and security studies, a sole focus on the psychoaffective experiences and psychopathology of incels obscures the patriarchal forces in society that underlie both the incel worldview and evolutionary psychology that these ideological assumptions are built upon (Kelly, DiBranco & DeCook, 2021; DeCook & Kelly, 2022; Nardone, 2022; Carian, DiBranco and Kelly, 2024). The incel identity and violence are here, again, agendered, as is the associated mental health within the community. While masculine strain was considered by Speckhard and Ellenberg (2022), the vast majority of the positivist bloc of incel research ignores underlying male supremacist ideology embedded in patriarchy that produces a variety of discursive and symbolic violences, relegating incel violence to the political and physical realms only. A central feature and tenet of pill social ontology inherent to the incel identity is the repurposing of particular terminologies and concepts from evolutionary psychology to justify a biologically deterministic position regarding women (Bachaud & Johns, 2023). As these survey studies accept experiences of appearance-

based discrimination within the incel community, such uncritical framing of these perspectives outside of a broader gendered social context positions these experiences as objective 'facts'. This not only validates incels claims of victimhood (Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024) but fails to consider or contextualise these experiences within alternative gendered lenses involving politically acceptable presentations of masculine attractiveness (Connell, 1995; Srinivasan, 2021). The mental health of the community is decontextualised from gendered social structure, existing in a conceptual vacuum and seemingly connected to rejection by women, furthering incels' claims of victimhood. Although survey data has revealed subjective interpretations of gendered victimisation and elevated levels of victimhood in incels, this should not lead this research community to accept these claims at face value, nor conflate actual victimisation with subjective perceptions of victimhood. A focus solely on mental health as a factor affecting tendencies towards the incel identity or violence can obscure the misogyny and antifeminism in the incel community which is as important in conceptualising the identity and ideology as individual lived experience. It is clear, then, that while both emerging pillars of incel research offer degrees of merit, ontological limitations of each suggest a carefully laid out middle ground is needed.

2.3   Merging Ontologies, Mixing Methods, and Masculinity

Seemingly compartmentalised methodology arising from disciplinary ontological and epistemological constraints have thus resulted in two emerging poles of research direction. Analyses of forum content that considers the sociological and gendered relations operant in the incelosphere overlook or remain cautious of the validity of psychoaffective components of community members, while lacking capacity to incorporate the individual agency beyond forum performance. Conversely, positivist grounded surveys that contact incels solely focus on individual experiences in a conceptual vacuum, absent consideration of the structural components impacting the agency and lived reality of those they engage with.

The dominant academic feminist position on incels, generated largely through an epistemically aligned collaborative research group, suggests individual level psychological factors such as poor mental health should be approached with caution due to the potential to validate, condone, or justify the various forms of violence produced by some incels (Kelly, DiBranco & DeCook, 2021; Carian, DiBranco & Kelly, 2024; Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024). Although the positionality of these authors will understandably motivate attention towards the misogyny and gender-based violence of the incel community, the cautioning against a "focus on mental health [which] treats loneliness and depression as the root cause of incel violence, rather than misogyny and male entitlement" (Kelly, DiBranco & DeCook, 2021, p. 26) may obscure the intersection of mental health, patriarchy, and adoption of underlying pill social ontologies

responsible for subsequent violences. Overlooking the connection between incel performances and broader societal misogyny undoubtedly limits an accurate understanding of the incel community. But, equally, failing to consider the role of adverse mental health experiences resulting from men existing in patriarchy also prohibits a sufficient understanding of incels. This likely results from research focusing solely on the existing incel community and their discursive and physical acts, rather than seeking to understand how these men arrived at these identities and performances in the first place. While male supremacist ideology privileges men over women and other marginalised identities, the patriarchal system in which this ideology is operationalised in is not plain sailing; with numerous men existing in a position of privilege *and* marginalisation (hooks, 2004; Sharkey, 2022; Murray, 2024). Consideration of the ways in which men are negatively affected by patriarchy, and how this may contribute to incel performances of misogyny, violence, and adverse psychological experience is absent from the literature thus far discussed, framing incels as either beneficiaries and perpetrators of cisheteropatriarchy or mentally unwell victims.

This disconnect has produced a 'mental health or misogyny' polarisation in which the disciplinary positionality of critical gender and psychology researchers inhibit a necessary combined broader interrogation of both social structure and individual agency/experience. As psychology scholars label the gendered discourse of the incel community sexist, focusing more on the lived experience of the individual, the critical feminist position understands this rhetoric as misogyny - intentional and strategic deployment of discourse and action to police the behaviour of women to maintain gendered superiority (Manne, 2017). As the former focuses on the individual, broader societal forces and structures are overlooked, with the opposite true for the latter as the individual is subsumed into a patriarchal structure in which they are privileged, absent acknowledgement of the pernicious effects this structure may have upon them. Neither position offers a comprehensive account of how exactly social forces impact or guide the individual agency of men that choose to label themselves as incels, nor why only some sexless men exposed to these omnipresent forces are attracted to the incel identity, and how subjective agency and experience imparts upon this social choice. Focusing disproportionate attention on one aspect of an apparent dialectic relationship between structure and experience provides only half a story that requires simultaneous appreciation of the experiences and agency of the individual bound within observable gendered social dynamics of power. Undoubtedly patriarchal influences upon adolescent boys and young men impact their perception of self (hooks, 2004; Sharkey; 2022), and problematic internal interpretations of the gendered sense of self involve a personal psychoaffective process and response (APA, 2018). Yet absent investigation that considers both generative elements in combination, we are left with only juxtaposed pieces to explain the resulting extant incel community.

There are a small number of research outputs that have attempted to merge primary and secondary data collection methods, developing a more nuanced picture of the incel identity through direct interviews and engagement with forum/online discourse. In one of only a few published academic books dedicated to the investigation of incels, Lisa Sugiura (2021a) conducts an extensive four-year ethnographic study of multiple incel-associated digital spaces coupled with semi-structured interviews of seven self-identifying incels and three self-identifying ex-incels. This multimethod analysis of the incel community revealed the presence of confusion, pseudo-scientifically informed confirmation bias, and immature reasoning entwining an obscured catalytic vulnerability; subjective isolation and desperation of men struggling with masculine identity espousing gendered anger and hate. There is recognition that the incel community consists of many vulnerable and neurologically diverse individuals, and that the overarching blackpill ideology that apparently unifies incels may not be truly internalised by all that associate with the identity. Regehr (2022) conducted longform interviews with incels as part of a broader mixed qualitative methodology including video and forum analysis. While the incel ideology was outlined as one based on sexual entitlement, articulation of antifeminism, and hate fuelled anger, there was also recognition that a prolonged indoctrination process into the incel worldview involved predation on the vulnerable. The incel community fills a void in which these vulnerable boys and young men experience gendered social pain and depression whilst embracing targeted anger and violence towards women and society. Recent research by Andersen (2023, 2024a, 2024b) involved the combination of a digital ethnography and interviews, revealing a broad range of incel identities that drift in and out of discursively demarcated and policed arenas. These men negotiate complex gendered performances simultaneously rejecting, coveting, and embracing traditional masculinity and struggle between internalising responsibility and externalising blame. While many studies portray incels either as collective misogynists, violent extremists, or psychologically troubled, direct interactions with incels alongside forum and associated incel content analyses demonstrate a methodological efficacy that produces nuance and depth, absent from many previous research outputs opting for singular methodologies.

Interviews conducted in these mixed methods studies offer insight into extant incel identities, beginning to broaden the research community's understanding of a complex collective of masculine performances. Further research employing interview methodologies have revealed the intimate connection between incels and masculinity performed within patriarchy. Daly and Reed (2022) successfully recruited a sample population of 10 incels via social media and email, conducting open-ended interviews with participants to investigate perspectives regarding their life situation, personal experiences, and general attitudes. These responses were then thematically coded and analysed within Raewyn Connell's (1995) theory of masculinities. A

seminal architecture of social science literature (Lucy, 2024a), this structural theory of gender and power posits competing masculine performances as organised around an apex hegemonic presentation that dynamically delegitimises other masculine performances. Traits and praxes not authorised by adaptive local, regional, or national hegemonic forms are expelled as relative subordinate or marginalized inferiors. In this way particular material social practices of 'being a man' are constructed and maintained, ensuring the dominance of some men over others (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2018). Results revealed perceptions of masculine marginalisation based on a lack of possession of attributes and physical qualities representative of a hegemonic ideal, leading to negative emotions and self-perceptions which in turn motivated an adherence to blackpill ideology. Hegemonic masculinity was the mechanism for the marginalisation of these men unable to live up to ideals that placed them in an inferior gendered social position. The authors suggest incels serve as *a* "unique case study for hegemonic masculinity" (Daly & Reed, 2022, p. 15*)*, as an ideologically bound identity that ascribes to the hierarchical structure of some men above others. This positioning was based on physical attributes and sociosexual success, confirming the presence of a socially implemented, psychosocial gendered conditioning system from which incels experience adverse lived experiences and internal pressures. The pernicious effects of this system have been extensively highlighted by critical feminist studies of men, such as by the feminist scholar bell hooks (2004), illustrating the psychological damage inflicted by the patriarchal expectations placed on men. Masculine expectation demands a particular way of being, punishing all men regardless of their level of compliance with masculine norms. Through direct and immersive interviewing of incels, Daly and Reed accessed life experiences confirming marginalisation through a concurrently critical and empathetic narrative, recognising nuanced existence of incels subject to a structure above and beyond their immediate control, as well as perpetrators of a multitude of violences

Capitalising on the data collected from the cultivation of a successful researcher-participant relationship with these men, Daly and Nichols (2023) addressed the veracity of the posts made by incels in forums to understand the extent to which the comments made reflected the true feelings of the individuals behind them. Thematic coding of the questions in interviews that concerned online activity revealed posts on incel forums represented a complex expression of truth and performance. Many posters did so for attention, noting the more extreme or controversial the post, the more interaction it received. Many users deliberately inflamed responses because of the arena they were in, declaring they would and do act differently in different circles or social settings. Many considered posts to be jokes and were not, or were not intended to be, taken seriously, serving to create deliberate boundaries between outsiders and the incel community. The hateful language serves as part of an internal lexicon designed for the

users to communicate, separating those belonging to the community and those that do not. Additional studies that examine incel digital discourse similarly demonstrate the ideology and language of the incel community serves to shape and define the subculture (Andersen, 2023; Heritage, 2023), suggesting while the language is indeed hateful, the degree to which it is specifically designed to primarily target outgroups rather than a biproduct of internal processes is debatable. Daly & Nichols demonstrated that a greater degree of accuracy and insight into the incel community can be achieved beyond analysis utilising segments of forums posts. Daly and Reed (2022) leave us with a poignant recommendation for future research, reminding us of the significance of direct interaction with incels, particularly when considering the pathway into the incel identity and community:

> It is important to understand the need for primary data collection. (...) [I]f academics and researchers aim to truly understand the factors that lead to inceldom and the community, then we must include incels in the process rather than relying on a snapshot of their online behavior or persona. Their behavior, like all human behavior, is a representation of a lifetime of experiences, emotions, and interactions that have led them to this community (p. 18).

In understanding the journey one takes into the well-researched ideological and performative incel space there is, then, a need to go beyond emerging disciplinary confines, bridging a structure and agency dialectic inherent to social constructivist and positivist ontologies. A careful line must be walked acknowledging individual experiences reported by incels, without producing a validating narrative for their claimed victimhood, or ignoring the influence of social structural on these experiences or subsequent agentic action. Nevertheless, both arms of research point to two clear avenues of investigation when seeking to understand how men arrive at an incel identity. The gendered structural components through which clear gendered codes and expectations are (re)produced within hierarchies of competing masculinities, and the individual's subjective experiences and navigation of these social dynamics warrant further investigation. To do so such efforts must employ a varied theoretical toolbox and combined methodologies, capturing and interpreting both the sociological and psychological - structural dynamics and individual lived experience - simultaneously interrogating the incel technoscape and individual perspectives of community members.

2.4   Summary

Accumulating research have sought to detail, categorise, and explain the incel phenomenon from several theoretical standpoints. Violence linked to the incel ideology motivated investigation of the community as a security threat. The confines of traditional terrorism and

security studies remain limited in their capacity to conceptualise the amorphous and nonuniform incel community. While there are indeed many forms of violences not aptly recognised by many security and terrorism scholars performed within incel forums, an incel identity exists beyond such violences. Dominant scholarship in this field fails to incorporate gendered structures and identities into analysis, omitting a fundamental component of the incel identity and the relationship between broader patriarchal structures and incel ideology. Critical feminist scholarship has effectively highlighted both the limitations of this field, and the importance of cisheteropatriarchy in incel and wider gender-based violence. Yet this structural observation is unable to theorise how the lived experience and agency of these men impacts the formation of an incel identify, beyond privilege and male supremacist ideology embedded in patriarchal structures.

Psychological research grounded in positivist ontology attempts to attend to this issue of subjective experience yet fails, again, to consider the impact of gendered social structure. These studies are littered with epistemological, conceptual, and methodological flaws, which at the most problematic, seemingly platform and confirm incel victimhood ideology. Violence again is conceptualised in the physical realm only, failing to consider the multitude of emotional, discursive, and symbolic harms generated by the community within their gendered online performances. Collusion with incels brings into question the validity of findings accrued through survey-deployed testing of psychoaffective wellbeing and psychopathological condition, taking materially rewarded responses at face value. Limited sample sizes, problematic instruments detecting radicalisation and the association of such extremity with endogenous psychopathological conditions further debilitate this field's veracity.

A subsequent polarisation has emerged in the field of incel research; positivists focus on the mental health of incels, and gendered social constructivists look to patriarchal structures and male supremacist ideology as explanatory scaffolding. Each has a degree of merit, but the current situation has produced a dialectic with each field bound by ontology inhibiting engagement with the other. While psychologists recognise misogyny in their samples, they fail to extend this analysis to broader social structures of patriarchy and gender identity. Equally, while critical feminists recognise mental health as a factor, little research within this field has meaningfully engaged with the issue, resting instead on conceptualisations of male privilege and supremacy as not to excuse or confirm incel victimhood. A middle ground, then, seems both lacking and necessary.

Both thematic analysis of incel digital performances within forum discourse and distanced tick box surveys have their limitations. Neither can convincingly claim to have captured the incel community due to performance issues, be it in policed homosocial space or surveys that permit

social desirability biases to go unchecked. There is a risk of a homogenising misrepresentation of the incel community through data derived from just these performative and policed space(s), especially when attention is given to the most extreme and controversial content, missing contradictions, vulnerability, and complexities of the broader community. Surveys indeed discern the current psychological wellbeing of an incel but are unable to illustrate the causal direction of identity and adverse experience. There is a relative lack of comprehensive research regarding the nature of the journey into inceldom, achieved through application of methodologies that investigate the wider incel technoscape and immersive engagement with the individuals that comprise the community. Of the limited number of studies attempting this, nuance emerges, recognising a complex interplay of masculine vulnerability, pervasive structural narratives permitting male privilege, and bidirectionally generated adverse mental health. Further research employing qualitative methodologies that capture deeper, meaningful responses from incel men reveal the influence of masculine social structures and the psychological impact these hierarchies have upon the individual.

Formative experiences and influences are crucial to understanding the pathway into pill social ontology and an incel identity, suggesting a need for research that accesses the men directly producing richer, expansive qualitative data exploring individual experience across a lifespan rather than just a current performative moment. Depth of understanding of incel digital space, the social dynamics of the incel identity, and the personal experiences of men that populate forums in which these dynamics operate can arise from adaptive and prolonged immersion within the broader interconnected digital space and detailed interrogation of the men comprising the incel subculture.

This produces two key aims of this research; conceptualise the collective of incel digital arenas in unison and relativity to each other and theorise the process by which men assume an incel identity. The specific steps, or objectives, that will be undertaken to achieve these aims are the theoretical incorporation of social structure, and individual experience and agency, providing a full, connected picture of how men realise themselves as an incel. Further, this must be achieved without justifying or condoning the violence incels claim results from adverse personal experience and reponse. While adverse subjective experience may be integral to the identity, the individual man always lies between these inputs and subsequent violent action.

It is through these aims and objectives this thesis takes instructive direction, informing three core research questions:

> **RQ1:** *Are there any structural and content features of the digital spaces housing incel communities and related ideology that impact upon men who adopt an incel identity and engage with the incel community?*

RQ2: *How does social structure impact men who adopt an incel identity and engage with the incel community?*

RQ3: *How do resulting individual experiences and responses lead men to adopt an incel identity and engage with the incel community?*

These questions will be answered by adopting a feminist critical realist position that enables the reconciliation of objective and subjective understandings of reality inherent to ontology and theory born from positivism and social constructivism, proffering a framework understanding patriarchy to be pertinent structure with which to approach the gendered incel phenomenon. Researcher identity and positionality will become crucial in looking at these men through a critically empathetic reflexive lens. Rather than understanding men only to be privileged, the challenges and adverse impacts of men in patriarchal structures will be centred, whilst still cognisant of the risks of platforming or confirming incels' claims of victimhood. Critical realism allows for multiple 'useful' theories to be collaboratively utilised to determine the generative mechanisms causal in the adoption of an incel identity. The following chapter explores this adopted theoretical framework.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

So far multiple issues have been identified in current incel literature. First, psychological and sociological polarised research positions seemingly produce an 'either or' mental health vs. misogyny experience-structure dialectic. Second, research methods mainly rely on thematic analysis of snapshots of fragments of incel digital discourse or primary, yet distanced and problematic, data collection survey tools. This inhibits deeper interrogation of the incel identity, with research primarily focused on the extant incel community. To overcome these limitations, this research connects sociological structure, individual experience, and agency through a multifaceted theoretical framework, and longitudinal and immersive methodologies exploring the breath of the incel environment and direct engagement with incels via long-form interviews.

This chapter grounds the ontological position and theoretical framework that lay the foundations for the accomplishment of these endeavours. Adopting a feminist critical realist position enables the application of a multitude of theories based on utility in providing a means with which to explain a limited observation of an objective real world. Social phenomena exist despite our imperfect capacity to observe them through our subjective interpretations of these limited observations, with differing perspectives providing valid insights into the universal reality (Bashkar 1979; Archer, 1995). Critical feminism, fully compatible with the critical realist perspective, can guide *which* theories we choose, ensuring we remain within the confines of this subjective gendered interpretation and consequential observation of the objective real. This leads to the development of a theoretical toolbox drawing theories that conceptualise and mediate social structure, individual experience, and agency.

Connell's (1995) theory of gender, and subsequent developments (Connell, 2000, 2009, 2012a; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2018) frames social structure through material and discursive social practice in which bodies as objects and agents configure the social world. The beliefs and ideas that individuals hold regarding acceptable and desirable masculine social practice and identity are theorised through Pleck's (1995) traditional male ideology, encompassing enduring traits characterised by antifemininity, absence of weakness, success, and the propensity for violence. Finally, Archer's (2007) theory of reflexivity is employed to bridge social structure, individual experience, and subsequent social action. Reflexivity involves deliberative rumination and self-reflective assessment within the context of social experience and structure leading to various 'reflexivities'; deliberate and conscious responses that lead to associated prosocial, static, or regressive social acts. Together these theories build a comprehensive theoretical scaffolding with which to interrogate the journey

towards and into an incel identity. We first start this chapter by elaborating upon the basis for this theoretical approach before moving on to address ontological and theoretical foundations.

3.1   Rationale

Critical analysis of incel research has demonstrated juxtaposed disciplinary positions which prevent the mediation of individual/psychological experience and social structure. Methodologically, big data scrapes of incel digital environments obscure the meaning(s) of performances and the function of the source forums (Moskalenko et al, 2022a). Thematic analyses of fractions of incel digital space provide only spatiotemporally static snapshots (Ging & Murphy, 2023), again absent any deeper meaning and contextualisation within the everyday lived experiences and motivations of the men that produce the content. Critical feminist scholars have rightfully identified the absence of gendered social structures and ideology in the conceptualisation of the incel identity and subsequent violence, problematically understood only in the physical realm (DeCook & Kelly, 2022; Perliger, Stevens, & Leidig, 2023), yet such structural theory alone fails to offer insight into the lived experiences and agency of incels. Conversely, positivist research emerging from the field of psychology falls short of the conceptual, epistemological, and methodological rigor necessary to capture lived experience within the context of a gendered, lived experience (Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024). Further, 'objective' positions emerging from the latter field seemingly platform victimhood narratives of incels through sex role essentialism inherent to evolutionary psychology (Carian, DiBranco & Kelly, 2024).

Concurrently there is a relative lack of focus on the journey into inceldom (Puhrmann & Schlaerth, 2023), prohibiting the understanding of how the incel man comes to exist beyond extant products of male supremacism, and mental health dysfunction. Resulting polarisation necessitates attempts to combine these positions to account for lived experience and subsequent agency situated within, impacted by, and impacting upon social structure. In seeking to discover any impactive social structures and common experiences and responses that lead to an incel identify, theoretical scaffolding must retain appreciation and inclusion of social dynamics, while also accounting for the lived experience and subjective agency of men that identify as incels,

The integration of critical realism and feminism as an underlying ontological position informing a subsequent toolbox of sociological and psychological theories will achieve this. By understanding there is a reality beyond human experience (Baskar, 1979), and that we are limited in our capacity to observe this by subjective and methodological positions (Danermark, Ekström & Karlsson, 2019), the structure-individual dialectic evident in previous incel research

can be overcome. Through careful application of complimentary theories spanning and mediating structure and agency, the individual, his psychic experiences, and responses can be interpreted within broader social structures that impact and afford performance. The following section lays the foundations of such a feminist critical realist ontology.

3.2   Feminist Critical Realism

Critical realism is a meta-theory assuming an ontology in which the world can be differentiated into three domains; the real, the actual, and the empirical (Bashkar 1978; Archer, 1995). As Parr (2013, p. 195) explains:

> The empirical is constituted only by that which is experienced by individuals; the actual is constituted by events which may or may not be experienced; while the real is constituted by those mechanisms or causal powers that generate the series of events that constitute the actual and experiences.

The nature of reality, the real, cannot be reduced to our knowledge of reality (Fletcher, 2017), as Bhaskar (1979) posits humans who observe reality can only do so through observation of the domain of real, indirectly through specific methodological or subjective positions. While there exists an objective reality, observations are always linked to the observer; to the domain of the empirical relative to our position from which we discern reality and interpret the world. The actual occurs whether observed or not, and the empirical observation employed to understand the actual is limited by these subjective ontological groundings and methodological persuasions. Every scientist who observes and conceptualises the world 'sees' reality from a different perspective, leading to different explanations of the mechanisms constituting the real. The aim of critical realism is to reconcile an objective and a subjective understanding of reality.

This tripartite stratification of reality enables us to "examine the interplay between structure and agency across time" (Archer, 1995, p. 195). This is crucial for understanding the interaction between socially manifested individual experiences and broader structural conditions. Critical realism is interested in 'generative mechanisms'; behind-the-scenes movements and processes that makes things happen in our world. Predictions about generative mechanisms, the actual, emerge in part from observation, but conclusions about them are only achieved through analytical approaches (Blom & Morén, 2011); theories that bring us closer to reality (Fletcher, 2017).

All things possess an inherent structure facilitating it with temperaments and capacities; abilities to behave, act or work in a particular fashion. It is the socially produced relationships or "lattice work" (Parr, 2013, p. 195) between individuals and groups which constitute the

structure of the social world and the facilitation of human action (Baskar, 1979; Danermark, Ekström & Karlsson, 2019). Structures are not existential due to any tangible materiality, but rather their causal power as mechanisms (Matthews, 2009). These outcomes are not uniform but historically and geographically contingent (Sayer, 2000), existing external to our ability to observe them, although we might.

Social phenomena exist irrespective of our capacity to observe them and our subjective interpretation of these limited observations. Reality, then, is both objectively real and socially constructed. Crucially, for critical realists, it is possible to distinguish between useful and 'unuseful' ways of seeing the world based on practical utility (Sayer, 2000). As Parr (2013) notes: "although a social practice is concept dependent and socially constituted, the social world is not identical to the concepts on which it is dependent" (p. 196). We as social scientists can, and should, discern how appropriate a way of seeing the world is for our purposes of understanding the element(s) of the objective real at the centre of study. Critical realism accepts epistemic relativism; that beliefs are constructed, ephemeral, and error prone, and provide the theoretical basis in order that we may judge, based on "intrinsic merits", between competing ways of seeing the world (Lopez & Potter, 2001, p. 9).

Critical realism offers an "alternative and distinctive view of causation" (Parr, 2013, p. 196); individual agency and context are inherent to the causal process of social phenomenon and, with context, afforded analytic significance. Different perspectives can provide valid insights into the same reality. Causal mechanisms interact in complex ways, with causation not just about regular patterns but underlying mechanisms within open and complex social systems. Social reality ultimately involves both structure and human agency and requires theories that can accommodate this level of analysis.

Just because we have a limited subjective position does not mean the world exists only through this limited lens. Thus, there is a real world we can access through social scientific endeavours, and some knowledge or theories will bring us closer to this real than others. The selection and employment of theories that help us get closer to objective reality, that identify actual causal mechanisms of structure and agency leading to social phenomena, will ultimately dictate how we analyse and conceptualise the social world through an acknowledged limited lens of subjective observation.

The synthesis of critical feminism and critical realism offers a powerful ontological framework that combines the emancipatory goals of feminist theory with the stratified understanding of reality proposed by critical realism, understood herein as 'feminist critical realism' (FCR). Feminism works as a liberating framework with which to conceptualise, interpret, and critique gender relations (Harding, 1987; Stanley & Wise, 1993), exploring how gender is socially

constructed and how this relates to power and social systems. There are many feminisms (Peterson, 1992), from a feminist critical realist perspective many means with which to observe the gendered real. Feminism seeks to confront the status quo of male hegemony across all societal institutions and the inequitable balance of power distributed across the two sexes, ending sexist oppression and creating a world of genuine equality (hooks, 2000, 2004). Identifying problematic situations because of some type of target population identity, e.g. sex, race, or gender identity, feminist research analyses how the creation of these groups is institutionalised by our society in various manners to produce hierarchical and disproportionate levels of privilege, discrimination, or subjugation (Harding, 1987). Feminism is a significant force within the social sciences, an academic power structure shaping language, discourse, and investigation through a gendered lens of oppression, examining patriarchal structure (Beechey, 1979), material practice (Connell, 1995), and misogyny (Manne, 2017). Contemporary feminisms that seek to approach gender equality beyond confrontation of the patriarchal man become useful in the current endeavour to understand the journey towards a misogynistic masculine incel identity.

Surpassing the emerging denunciatory 'folk devil' (Cohen, 2002; Andersen, 2024a) label incels have been attached to through journalistic and some academic discourse, Sharkey (2022) employs a useful affirmative feminist framework, viewing incels as boys unable to grow up. Rather than a coherent objective with correspondingly consistent and unified beliefs, incels reflect immature, incoherent responses to the feminist construct of transformative futures. Drawing from affirmative feminist boys studies (Laurie et al., 2021), Sharkey does not vilify the community, instead these individuals are seen beyond their problematic extant masculine performances, as a boy not yet formed into the oppressive gendered adult man; as 'bad objects' influenced by informative personal experiences and structural narratives that sculpt and create emergent gendered identities. Indeed, the majority of violent incel acts have been carried out by men in their early twenties, the average age of the community reported by studies ascertaining demographics (Moskalenko et al., 2022a; Whittaker, Costello & Thomas, 2024). It is then reasonable to assume these men first encounter incel content during adolescence, as heterosex and a gendered sense of self inherently tied to successful sexual performance become prevalent (Pascoe, 2011) and instructive in seeking information related to (un)successful sexual experience (Sparks, Maryn & Zidenburg, 2023).

Sharkey understands the social production of these men through fluctuating experiences and meanings of adolescence, as boys promised the good life of 'marriage and mortgages', indicators of transitional masculine worth. Incorporating Berlant's (2011) 'cruel optimism' – the consequence of a desire ultimately determinantal to development – heteronormative coding of sexual reproduction is linked to maturity (Halberstam, 2011). Failure to engage in heterosex is

failure to become a man (Kimmel, 2008, 2015), with the individual's longing for this confirmatory act prohibitive in the development of their adult masculine self. Thus, the frustrated virgin remains in boyhood, unable to realise his supposedly rightful adult potential, manifest in various inconsistent permutations of incoherent incel identity.

Careful not to ignore the discursive and physical violence emerging from the community, this approach demonstrates a theoretical grounding in which critical feminist engagement can approach a problematic community or identity without producing a narrative that discounts generative personal vulnerabilities arising from socially prescribed gendered codes and requisites. By considering incels as bad objects, Sharkey permits an analysis beyond misogyny and violence, as boys in possible distress excluded from the discursive identity-producing mechanism of the promised but unrealised good life intimately bound to adult masculine identity construction. Although incels are men and adolescent boys that exist within a patriarchal social structure to which they are relative beneficiaries, this does not mean they are solely an oppressor or necessarily powerful. As bell hooks (2004, p. 66) reminds us, "the first act of violence that patriarchy demands of males is not violence towards women. Instead, patriarchy demands of all males that they engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation", and if we are to understand the journey that the boy has taken into the reprehensible incel man, we must consider the inputs that produce his problematic transformation through a critical *and* empathetic lens. Utilising affective feminist studies enables consideration of the pervasive effects of patriarchy in identify formation concurrent to a privileged status, employing a form of gendered critical empathy through a compassionate feminist framework towards problematic subjects.

Applying *this* feminism into a critical realist framework allows a critical gendered empathy that looks beyond the extant incel man to the (in)formative experiences and structures that push and pull toward an incel identity. Situated within a critical realist ontological position permits the application of useful theories (Sayer, 2000) that explain the operant gendered, social, and psychic processes that lead there. This licenses the development of a 'FCR toolbox'; an ensemble of varying useful ways of seeing the world, based on practical utility, to explain the empirically observed actual. Theories that help us to understand the lived experiences of incels as individual agents, the gendered context within which these take place, and how these are informed by and impart upon social structure, can and should be placed into the toolbox. Provided these theories remain within the boundaries of feminist thought, that is, do not exceed feminist principles in which men hold privileged social, pollical, and institutional positions of power producing unequal gender relations, they may be incorporated into the analysis of the journey into an incel identity. Explanations hold merit and gain a place in the toolbox through

their ability to conceptualise or mediate structure and agency, elucidating the generative mechanisms contextualising the development of a subsequent gendered incel identity.

The previous limitations of critical feminist research centred upon patriarchy and male supremacist ideology (e.g. Kelly, DiBranco & DeCook, 2021; DeCook & Kelly, 2022), cautious of the validity of psychoaffective components of incel community members, are overcome by adoption of additional theories that consider these experiences within gendered and social frameworks. Theories that contextualise individual agency and experience become useful in the explanation of the journey to inceldom, provided they do not validate claims of incel victimhood and discrimination (e.g.: Costello et al., 2022; Moskalenko et al., 2022b; Whitaker, Costello & Thomas, 2024). To ensure neither discounting, nor uncritically accepting these claims outside of gendered social structure and individual agency, such theories must be able to frame experience and response beyond positivist tick box categories of adverse mental health, contextualised within structure and gendered agency. The following section outlines the contents of the FCR toolbox this thesis utilises in subsequent analysis of the (in)formative social structures and psychological experiences and responses impacting the adoption of an incel identity.

3.3   The FCR Toolbox

3.3.1   Gender and Masculinities

The first theory incorporated into the FCR toolbox is Raewyn Connell's (1995) theory of gender. Usurping previous understandings of masculinity or femininity as fixed to biological sex as an indicative behavioural average, Connell understands gender as a set of performative and ordering social practices. Masculinity and femininity are configurations of social practice, gender projects which "constantly refer to bodies and what bodies do" (Connell, 2000, p. 27). Masculinity is not fixed or singular, but a dynamic variety of social performances, *masculinities* in constellation and contestation in which "a specific masculinity is constituted in relation to other masculinities and to the structure of gender relations as a whole" (Connell, 1995, p. 154). Numerous masculinities can be performed, and a man may perform many different masculinities according to his social position of power. Power relations are crucial to this understanding of gender. Masculinity exists *only* in relation to femininity, as a dominant entity ensuring the subordination of femininities and the further subjugation of some masculinities to an apex hegemonic configuration. Again, not a fixed state or set of traits, hegemonic masculinities exist as dynamic configurations holding a position of cultural dominance at any particular time or place, "embodying materially and/or discursively culturally supported

"superior" gender qualities in relation to the embodiment or symbolization of "inferior" gender qualities" (Messerschmidt, 2020, p. 24). Hegemonic masculinities are not necessarily performed by the majority of men, nor do they remain spatiotemporally static or reified as a particular set of personality attributes or character type, instead constantly reforming, adapting, and absorbing new praxes to ensure a sustained political legitimacy. It is through this relative superior positioning to femininity and other non-hegemonic masculinities that unequal gender relations are maintained. This competitive hierarchy of masculinities results in the legitimisation of local, regional, or global configurations of specific performative masculine action above other competing presentations, which become relationally subordinate to, marginalised by, or complicity supportive of the prevailing hegemonic configuration of traits and praxes (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2018).

Despite repeated calls (e.g. Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012, 2018) to ensure hegemonic masculinity is employed to conceptualise specific masculine performances that legitimise unequal gender relations through relative superior positioning to femininity and alternative masculine performances, the concept has been frequently misused (Messerschmidt, 2018). Often conflating dominant or dominating *non-hegemonic* masculinities with hegemonic configurations, a fixed character type or set of, often toxic, traits have frequently been exampled as hegemonic masculinity, absent any evidence of legitimation via relativity to femininity or other masculinities (see Schippers, 2007; Beasley, 2008; Lucy, 2024a). While dominant and dominating masculinities respectively derive power from their "common appearance and reverence, acting as popular or common ways to 'be a man' at a particular time or place", or via "physical or discursive exercise of action over others, controlling people or events" (Lucy, 2024a, p. 135), hegemonic masculinities extend beyond popular, common, or controlling traits. A man may demonstrate traits authorised by hegemonic masculinity at a particular time or place, such as aggression, physical strength, or sexual prowess, but in absence of relative positioning to other masculine or feminine praxes, such characteristics alone represent dominant masculine performances. The most popular or common way to perform masculinity can be considered a dominant performance granted authority by hegemonic masculinity as a mechanism of social ordering that permits and legitimises the behaviours and traits therein (Messerschmidt, 2018).

Subordinate and complicit masculine performances interact within the internal dynamism of dominant and hegemonic masculine performances through relative positioning (Connell, 1995, Messerschmidt, 2018). *Subordinate* masculinity refers to configurations of actions suppressed by or expelled from prevailing hegemonic configurations. For example, homosexuality or effeminate praxes such as emotionality or vulnerability are expelled from the hegemonic configuration of action as inauthentic expressions of acceptable masculinity. This manifests

through material practice; discursive or physical acts of violence that delegitimise these masculine performances (Connell, 1995; Pascoe, 2011; Bhana & Mayeza, 2016). *Complicit* masculinities reap rewards produced by hegemonic masculinities without embodying associated performances, indirectly supporting the hegemonic form through absence of challenge. A man may be a cooperative and affectionate husband, non-violent or passive in his communication as a father or partner and fulfil an equitable amount of social labour within the family unit, yet failure to overtly challenge hegemonic configurations of masculinity produces a silent complicity. While hegemonic, subordinate, and complicit masculinities all relate to internal gender relations, *marginalised* masculinity refers to performances of masculinity intersecting external structures such as class or race. A marginalised masculine performance may perform the configuration of actions necessary for preservation of hegemony, e.g., a professional athlete of colour - dominant, competitive etc - but race identity becomes inhibitory. The man may gain authority from the dominant group, but this authority does not extend to other men of colour within society which remain marginalised. Outside of this specific sphere of social relations he remains marginalised based on his race's relative positioning to a white hegemonic ideal. The marginalised individual will be championed but his societal status has little impact on the wider marginalised group.

In further work developing her original theory, Connell spends time conceptualising how masculine identities are generated through 'body reflexive practices'. In *The Men and the Boys*, Connell (2000) demonstrates how masculinity is embodied through specific material social practices in which the body is both an object and agent of social practice. Sport is exampled as a complex social process where bodies are trained, regulated, and assessed according to specific masculine ideals. The practice of football combines intense physical contact, emotional management, and strategic thinking in ways that replicate forms of masculine embodiment: controlling space, developing physical capital, and navigating hierarchical social structure through competence. Resultingly, these sport related social practices extend beyond the field, affecting how young men realise their bodies and interpersonal relationships. Success in sport can convert into social status or power, and physical capital accrued through training translates into masculine 'currency' utilised in other social spheres. Further, the hierarchies that result can lead to exclusions in other spheres, as those unable or unmotivated to take part find their masculine performances subordinated.

A further body reflexive practice emerging in post pubescent adolescence and extending into adulthood is heterosex (Kimmel, 2008, Pascoe, 2011). As Connell (1995) notes heterosexuality is the relative superior to homosexuality, a subordinated praxis. Heterosexuality becomes 'compulsory' as means with which to perform dominant masculinity, enforced through the hegemonic configuration in which heterosexuality is positioned as a relative superior

orientation. Heterosex becomes the bodily reflexive practice through which heterosexuality is realised, a performance intimately connected to the 'relations of cathexis' through which masculinity is confirmed (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 2008; Stombler et al., 2010). Masculine cathexis, the emotional energy tied to a gendered object, moulds praxes connected to men's heterosexual desire, shaping unequal gender relations. Masculine identity becomes inherently moulded by patterns of emotional and sexual attachment beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life. Patterns of cathexis shape hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995); celebrated, authorised, and legitimate forms of masculinity promote specific ways of feeling and communicating desire, emphasizing heterosexuality and sexual conquest (Messerschmidt, 2018). It then becomes more about the 'doing' of heterosexuality via heterosex than the relation to the women involved (Kimmel, 2008). Bodies become the "vehicles through which we express gendered selves; they are also the matter through which social norms are made concrete" (Pascoe, 2011, p. 12). For the adolescent boy or man, doing becomes being; the act carries a confirmatory power, realised and negotiated through the body in material practice of intercourse or sex acts (Connell, 2012a). Masculine heterosexuality becomes as much about the meaning associated through the act or orientation than the acts or orientation themselves. Men relate to their own bodies and the bodies of others through socially constructed patterns of desire and attachment. The school, family, media, and peer groups all shape how men learn to experience and express desire and form emotional connection. Men are encouraged to develop an objectifying relationship to sexuality, demonstrating performative mastery in which sexual partners are viewed as conquests rather than subjects. (Connell, 1995, 2000; Kimmel, 2008; Holz Ivory, Gibson & Ivory, 2009; Pascoe, 2011; Orenstein, 2020; Lawson, 2023). This confers a requirement for women to provide feminine coded goods of affection, intimacy, and sexual access (Manne. 2017; Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019). Participating in heterosex, then, is a body reflexive practice confirming masculinity to one's self and others, through objectifying relations and relationships. Sex and intimacy are tools with which the man becomes through doing.

Connell (1995, 2009) reveals that psychological harm can arise from an inability to meet the demands of (hetero)sexual prowess, achieved through the confirmatory and meaning-generative body reflexive practices discussed above. Failure to engage in these material practices can produce anxiety and shame, as well as causing the individual to experience discursive and physical peer policing behaviours, centred around association to a homosexuality identity (Kimmel, 2008; Pascoe, 2011, Orenstein, 2020; Power, 2022). Thus, while affording men considerable privilege relative to women in the broader sphere of gender relations, masculine praxes can also take tolls on men both performing, or failing to perform, the necessary material practices required by apex configurations of action ordering and producing these relations.

Connell's theory of gender provides a useful gendered theoretical framework to conceptualise social structure producing and impacting the experiences of men who engage with the incel community and internalise an incel identity. The internal political dynamics of multiple, competing masculinities proffers a suitable lens to interpret the lived realties of men within their social worlds, building, or failing to build, masculine identity through performative and ordering social and material practices and experiences. Hegemonic and relative inferior masculine presentations conferred through body reflexive practice, such as physical (dis)ability and heterosex provide further scaffolding to understand how men can construct varied gendered identities. These practices can take a toll however, and Connell's theory (1995) and later work (2000, 2009, 2012) casts light on the internalised dynamic struggles men face under the pressure or failure to meet prescribed hegemonic and dominant masculine normativity.

While hegemonic masculinity refers to practices that promote and enable the dominant social position of some men over others, 'traditional masculinity ideology' (TMI) refers to the cultural beliefs, individually held, regarding the norms and scripts for men's perceived gender roles that sustain these social practices (Levant & Richmond, 2016). TMI reflects a "a set of descriptive, prescriptive, and proscriptive cognitions" (APA, 2018, p. 2) of what men and boys 'are' and should be. Where Connell's theory offers a sociological analysis of the configurations of social practice that produce the conditions and legitimacy for unequal gender relations, TMI concerns the individually held beliefs of the individual men that inhabit and perform within this social framework (Pleck, 1995; Levant & Powell, 2017).

In line with Connell, Joseph Pleck's (1995) gender role strain paradigm views gender roles as socially constructed, protecting the patriarchal social order. Traditional gender roles are delineated into masculinity as aggressive and dominant, and femininity as relatively submissive and nurturing, with deviance punished and conformity revered (Levant & Richmond, 2016). Pleck demonstrated gender roles arose from society, rather than any essentialist origin, with 'gender ideologies' the "beliefs about the importance of men and women adhering to culturally defined standards for gendered behaviour" (Levant & Powell, 2017, p. 18). Particular enduring ensembles of these beliefs that hold problematic connotations were labelled as Traditional Masculine Ideology. TMI is a set of beliefs about masculinity that entail antifemininity, success and prowess, strength/absence of weakness, and risk taking and violence (David & Brannon, 1976; Levant & Richmond, 2016).

TMI overlaps and compliments Connell's model, sharing underlying suppositions regarding patriarchy; where hegemonic masculinity relates to praxes promoting the social dominance of men to women, TMI relates to the subjectively held *beliefs* surrounding men's gender roles that buttress said praxes (Levant & Powell, 2017). TMI becomes complimentary in analysing the

individual perspectives of men regarding the requisites of their masculine selves, disseminated by a hegemonic social structure. Endorsement or TMI has been shown to be associated with younger, single men (Levant & Richmond, 2016), and becomes salient to these men through social reinforcement, punishment, and observational learning, motivating and restricting boys and men to adhere to dominant male gender role norms, by adopting and avoiding particular behaviours (Levant, 2011). Adherence to or support of TMI results in numerous adverse physical, psychological, and emotional experiences. The lasting and pervasive nature of TMI upon boys and men led the APA (2018) to produce a detailed report offering guidelines in how to approach and treat those affected. The report notes TMI can lead to Inhibited emotional expression, limit help-seeking behaviours such as therapy, create barriers to intimate relationships, generate internal conflicts about identity and self-worth, and outward expressions of aggression, misogyny, or sexual harassment.

TMI becomes a useful concept to compliment Connell's theory of gender, as a means with which to characterise the beliefs men hold regarding the right way to be a man. Yet these beliefs, an individual experience, result from the subject. While hegemonic social structuring informs the acceptability of social practice and constructs uneven gender relations between men and women and among men, the individual is not a passive vehicle in this process. Indeed, the limitations of previous research observed speaks directly to the juxtaposing of social structure and the individual, with both positions failing to effectively incorporate agency. To further conceptualise the generative mechanisms that lead to an incel identity, the individual psychological experiences and subsequent social action leading to the identity must be factored within a theory mediating subjective experience and action within social structure.

3.3.2   Reflexivity: Bridging the Structure-Agency Gap

Critical feminist research astutely critiques the omission of the gendered social structure in which incels perform, yet by focusing on structure alone overlooks the individual experience and agency of these men in this social structure. Conversely, positivist research addresses the individual and his lived experiences, but within a positional and theoretical vacuum, neglecting the importance of the social structure and relations within which these experiences are generated and the agency of the individual man. To overcome this juxtaposition, Margaret S. Archer's (2007) theory of reflexivity offers the vehicle to bridge this divide.

In *Making Our Way through the World: Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility*, Archer provides a theoretical framework to understand how individuals engage with and form social structures around them, and how these engagements influence their capacity for social mobility. Insisting on the ontological priority of agency, Archer outlines 'morphogenesis', the process by which

social structures transform over time. Initially structures influence actions through provision of resources, possibilities, and constraints. Individuals retain a degree of autonomy within the limits imposed by social structures, with actions influenced by identities, priorities, and assessment of the social world. These actions can either transform; morphogenesis, or preserve existing social structures - morpho*stasis*. Crucial here is the relationship between social structure, individual agency, and subsequent social action. Such analysis accounts for human reflexivity as a mediating mechanism, "relational realism" (Donati & Archer, 2015, p. 34) between structure and agency, rather than treating it as epiphenomenal to social forces. Understanding humans as relational subjects explains how social structures emerge from relations while also constraining future relations, offering a more effective and nuanced means to address contemporary social problematics than either individualistic or collectivist approaches (Archer, 2007, 2012).

Structure imparts upon the agent who in turn imparts upon structure by subsequent action. The process of deliberation regarding the social world, feelings towards social experiences, and the priorities or goals the individual holds Archer terms reflexivity. This agentic procedure occurs via "internal conversations" (Archer, 2007, p. 2); self-reflective rumination that the individual undergoes to determine subsequent action in response to the impacts of the experiences produced by and within social structure. This is a conscious and active process of interpreting the world and one's position in it. Such reflexive assessment of the social world and one's relative position leads to subsequent action embodied within the social world. Archer (2007, p. i) refers to this as "social mobility", using data from in-depth interviews and life histories to example numerous individuals from a variety of social backgrounds that alter or retain their social position through this process of rumination and action. Some reflexive actions can challenge existing social structures. In this case, when individuals reflect on their social position and engage in actions that contest structural restraints, this contributes to social change. For example, some women who have fought continuously against gender-based inequalities in the workplace or sociosexual sphere, are now able to access numerous previously inaccessible occupations and have secured legal protection against gender-based violence such as marital rape. Conversely, individuals may engage in reflexive processes leading to the reinforcement of existing inequalities which may further entrench their constrained position in the social hierarchy. This occurs when the subject internalises the constraints of their social position failing to recognise or act upon or engage in opportunities for change. For example, a working-class man may internalise class-based identity via an animosity to the middle and upper classes, prohibiting the motivation to engage in educational and economic activities that may improve social positioning through the acquisition of wealth or a white-collar occupation.

Archer outlines several reflexive orientations, categorising distinct methods by which individuals process and respond to their social environment. Autonomous reflexivity is a prosocial, upwardly mobile response through proactive rumination and self-directed social action. This involves a high degree of reflexivity by individuals who believe they can shape their future through their own action. This is associated with strategic life planning, decision making, and performed by achievement-oriented individuals. Communicative reflexivity involves the engagement in dialogue or communion with external sources, usually other people, as a means with which to reflect on their social position. Social interactions develop an understanding of the self and help to inform the decision-making process. For these individuals the internal conversations characteristic of deliberative rumination requires "completion and confirmation" (Archer, 2007, p. 93). These conversations take place with people who are deemed to be similar to the individual. Engagement in external confirmation leads to "contextual continuity" (p. 39), in which individuals maintain their existing social position and network rather than engaging in behaviours and opportunities that may disrupt, overcome, or surpass their position and established relationships, a form of voluntary social immobility.

Finally, fractured reflexivity occurs when an Individual is unable to integrate self-reflection into a coherent life strategy. Rather than the self-contained, reflexive rumination and strategic internal conversations of autonomous reflexivity, or the contextually confirmed deliberations associated with communicative reflexivity, fractured reflexivity is characterised by disjointed, distressing internal dialogues that fail to result in meaningful social action. This often occurs when individuals face disruptions to their expected life course. Unable to mobilise internal conversations to forge a coherent personal project in the face of structural adversity results in a state of reflexive fragmentation, limiting the capacity of reflexivity to produce meaningful social action. Depending on the circumstance, this may be temporary and permanent and results from personal disorientation or social displacement. Personal disorientation is characterised by a deep sense of disconnection between the products of internal conversations and an ability to develop meaningful strategies of social action. Internal conversations become sources of distress rather than clarity, often leading to cycles of anxiety and self-doubt. Personal disorientation can cause and result from fractured reflexivity. That is, when individuals are unable to successfully process and respond to social circumstances, personal coherence and agency further deteriorates, creating a self-reinforcing cycle. Disorientation leads to fragmented internal conversations, which in turn intensify the experience of disorientation. Social displacement involves a disconnection between individuals and social contexts, often resulting from disrupted reflexive processes and fractured internal conversations. The individual experiences a misalignment between their position in society and their capacity to meaningfully engage with social structures, a loss of social anchoring that inhibits the ability to navigate their

social environment effectively. When social contexts change or are perceived to change individuals unable to adapt to changing social circumstances experience social displacement. Fractured reflexivity intensifies distress rather than leading to purposeful action, leading to social volatility and immobility.

This reflexive process is not static or permanent; various reflexivities may be enacted in different contexts or at different times. Adoption of different reflexivities lead to differing social outcomes. Autonomous reflexivities lead to upward social mobility or progression, communicative reflexivity produces immobility, and fractured reflexivity creates downward, or volatile mobility. Archer (2012) suggests these reflexivities result from a 'morphogenetic' modernity. Contemporary society is characterised by rapid change involving contextual discontinuity in which significant shifts in social norms and environment occur, disrupting the continuity of preestablished social structures. This may also involve the weakening of traditional social guidelines as well as a growing importance placed upon personal agency. For example, the feminist assault on patriarchy has led to significant change in social norms regarding the role of men in material provision (Power, 2022), and assumption of the right to women's bodies as care providers (Manne, 2017). One must actively figure out how to proceed rather than following predetermined paths, a reflexive 'imperative'; the requisite necessity to engage in internal conversation about one's circumstances, options, and potential courses of action.

In later work, Donati & Archer (2015) expand the reflexive paradigm to consider external conversations with others, further means for the subject to emerge through their social relations while simultaneously maintaining their personal identity and agency. Communicative reflexivity involves such conversations, as the individual seeks external sources to guide their internal deliberations. External conversations can produce relational 'goods' and 'evils'. Relational *goods* are emergent properties arising from genuine social relations and cannot be reduced to individual characteristics or manufactured, which may include trust, solidarity, or reciprocity. These goods enhance human flourishing and social cohesion, for example genuine friendships produce relational goods like emotional support, shared understanding, and personal growth, irreducible to individual benefits. Conversely, relational evils are negative emergent properties such as alienation or discrimination. For example, social media interactions that replace genuine human connection and create relational evils of alienation and superficiality, despite appearing to increase connectivity. When groups develop patterns of discrimination against others based on characteristics like race or gender, this creates relational evils that damage social cohesion and individual dignity. Donati and Archer highlight relational 'steering' - deliberate manipulation or control of social relationships by powerful institutions - particularly through technological and bureaucratic means, replacing authentic emergent social relations with artificially engineered interactions. Social media algorithms determining content exposure

is a form of relational steering, shaping social connections and knowledge based on commercial interests rather than authentic human needs and choices.

Through Archer's theory of reflexivity social structure and agency are mediated. Experience becomes a process and consequence of the impacts of social structure. The resulting social experience of this structure informs how the individual contextualises and establishes a position in the social world. Reflexive deliberation through internal conversations allows the individual to consider how they feel and how they should react. These reflexive processes can result in proactive and prosocial behaviours, or static or regressive social actions that prohibit mobility or perpetuate social immobility. Further, reflexivity explains why people from the same background may make different life choices, such as some sexless men adopting an incel identity while others do not. Social structure is understood as impactive upon the individual but not dictative. It is the agency of the individual which drives the subsequent experience and response to the social world, informing future social action which may overcome, challenge, or reproduce social adversity and existing social structures. Reflexivity can mediate the social structure of gender in which unequal relations are produced and legitimised, and the psychological experience of the individual through an agentic process of self-reflective rumination and external conversation in response to perceived and actual material practices experienced within and through social structure.

3.4   Summary – Bringing it Altogether

Current incel research has thus far been unable to bridge the gap between observed lived experience, individual agency, and performative misogyny and antifeminism embedded in male supremacist ideology. Each pillar emerges from ontologies that seem to prevent consideration of both elements of the incel identity in relative unison. Critical feminism remains cautious in accepting claims of poor mental health for risk or confirming and platforming the community's victimhood narratives. Conversely positivist psychology research frames these adverse lived experiences in positional vacuums; failing to consider the broader gender structures in which these men perform and experience. Both adverse individual experience and structurally informed misogyny are crucial to understanding the incel identity, but due to observation and interaction with the extant community in their present condition it becomes difficult to effectively marry these two factors. Research applies limited methodologies to observation of spatiotemporally static fragments of the extant incel community and digital space, absent efforts directed towards conceptualisation of how individual men experiencing adverse affect, espousing misogyny, and reinforcing unequal gender relations came to perform these identities.

From a critical realist perspective, it is the utility of theories with 'intrinsic merit' explaining the social world which can offer insight into objective reality, recognising restricted perspective due to ontological and methodological subjectivity. Structure and agency are crucial in understanding the generative mechanisms guiding and producing the social world. Accordingly, this ontological position grants the ability to select theories that can interpret and mediate both structure and agency; the social and the individual, offering an ontological bridge between ways of seeing incels that have so far remained in tightly bordered theoretical and ontological positivist and social constructivist camps.

The incel identity is, at its heart, gendered. The homosocial nature of a group attached to pseudo-scientific, sexist, and essentialist ideology denigrating and Othering women impels a critical feminist approach to understanding how these men came to be. Providing a theoretical boundary, we can select theories that enable connection of the social to the individual; the structure of patriarchy and the individual lived experiences and responses of men within which generate a gendered incel identity. Connell's sociological theory of gender as social practice offers a foundational utility on several levels. Social structure can be understood as produced by and producing masculine performances through embodied material and discursive practice. Men can experience power and pressure through performance; benefitting from, subordinated to, or marginalized by dominant and hegemonic configurations of practice that produce unequal gender ordering. Masculine identity inherently requires performance, including, but not limited to, material and body reflexive practices, conferring, conveying, and confirming being through doing. These practices are often reliant on others, be it peers, or women as bodies with which the cathexis attached to heterosex is realised. The understanding of gender, men, and masculinities through these lenses offer a solid basis with which to consider the social structures and experiences that impact men that develop incel identities. Associated to gendered social practice there is personal and subjective belief. Synergistically and reciprocally connected, how one thinks about their masculine identity affects how one performs or at least thinks they should. Understanding subjective beliefs surrounding being a man, through traditional male ideology, offers a complimentary and useful theoretical addition with which to conceptualise the ideas and beliefs that men hold in relation to the ideal masculine self.

Finally, to mediate the social structure of gender, the beliefs and lived experiences that result, and the social responses that lead to an incel identity, Archer's theory of reflexivity has been employed to place the individual in social structure and social structure in the individual. Through deliberative internal conversations in which the agentic individual engages in conscious mulling over of social experiences, the relative contextualisation of these events, how these events make us feel, and future social action are produced. individuals produce varying reflexivities that lead to prosocial, static, or regressive social acts. Gendered social

structure informs individual beliefs and reflexive internal conversations that ultimately lead to social action. Through the addition of the theory of reflexivity individual experience and action both become contextualised within a gendered social structure and assigned an agentic component, removing adverse affect from the positivist vacuum.

As discussed at the start of this chapter, a limitation of previous research concerns the application of fragmented or distanced methodologies; either embracing only spatiotemporally static moments of incel performative discourse, or through self-report and -affirming quantitative survey methodologies. The next chapter outlines the methods of this thesis that overcome these limitations. A feminist critical realist epistemology entailing critical empathy and reflexive positionality first grounds this methodological structure. A two-tier sequential qualitative methodology is then outlined, both longitudinally immersed across a broad number of sites within incel digital space and directly interacting with current and former incels through semi-structured, asynchronous interviews. This configuration captures the structure and content of incel digital space and impact of social structure, individual experience, and subsequent agentic responses of current and former incel men, both in performative spaces and as embodied subjects removed from these policed and demarcated arenas.

Chapter 4   Methodology

There is an established need to overcome the limitations of many of the previous studies of specific fragments of incel forums or distanced surveys, while addressing the identified gap in academic literature surrounding the journey into the community and adoption of an incel identity. Here this is met by employing a two-stage sequential qualitative methodological design informed by a feminist critical realist epistemology.

This chapter first outlines this epistemological position, grounded in feminist theory that recognises the primacy of the position and reflexivity of the researcher in the development of knowledge. The position of a feminist man is explored here, drawing on standpoint theory to suggest that while there are indeed limitations of holding a privileged and entitled position in conflict research, it also can, in ways, offer strengths. Adopting a critically empathetic and reflexive position, this chapter demarcates the necessity, risks, and safeguards these positions offer and require producing an effective critical analysis of a complex gendered research population and space. Next, the two stages of methodology are explored in turn, considering specific ethical considerations of each arm, the design employed to generate data, the data collection procedures, and subsequent data analyses. This addresses the nature and content of incel digital space and offers a theoretically informed cumulative causal analysis of the social structures and psychological experiences and responses of men that hold an incel identity.

4.1   Epistemology

As Sandra Harding (1987, p. 3) notes, "an epistemology is a theory of knowledge". Following from a critical realist position, the epistemological position of this thesis states knowledge is neither limited to what can be empirically known, nor completely constructed through and by human experience. There is an objective real, we are just limited in how we can analyse and conceptualise it. Limited capacity to observe this world dictates we must select methods and positions most useful to acquiring knowledge explaining behind-the-scenes generative mechanisms (Blom & Morén, 2011) underlying the social phenomenon at the heart of the research. Recall, critical realism accepts epistemic relativism; that beliefs are constructed, ephemeral, and error prone, and provides a theoretical basis in order that we may judge and select, based on "intrinsic merits" (Lopez & Potter, 2001, p. 9), between competing ways of knowing the world. Adopting feminism as a grounding within critical realist ontology instils the useful belief that positivist social science has historically promoted specific cultural, institutional, and gendered interests (Harding, 2004). Indeed, knowledge produced by the dominant class; cisgendered heterosexual white men – a class to which this researcher belongs

– lacks relative capacity to effectively recognise and interrogate power structures as effectively as those from marginalised and oppressed identities (Hartsock, 1983). Therefore, to generate knowledge, here, a particular epistemological standpoint must be constructed that recognises and mitigates the potential to overlook power structures to which the researcher may belong and benefit from. This is especially pertinent given overlap with identifiers of the research subjects.

However, while the feminist standpoint produces "a morally and scientifically preferable grounding for [women's] interpretations and explanations of nature and social life" (Harding, 1986, p. 25), a feminist *man*'s standpoint may produce a morally and scientifically preferable position from which to interrogate men under patriarchy. Indeed, this identity can become a relative positional strength. While a cisgender heterosexual white man may not be able to easily recognise and interpret less overt and sensational forms of everyday misogyny and sexism, he can recognise and interpret social practices and discourses emanating from hegemonic ordering and policing of men's behaviour, and the responses that can result.

That said, all researchers investigating incels, methodologically speaking, must recognise their personal responsibility to approach their work reflexively, as not to risk uncritically confirming and platforming the views of incels through a failure to recognise their own biases (Kelly, Rothermel, & Sugiura, 2023). As a cisgender heterosexual white man, inherent subjectivities may make it harder to recognise the entitlement and misogyny in incel's claims (Berger, 2015; Carian, DiBranco, & Kelly, 2024). This is particularly true when sharing gender, sexual orientation, and to some degree, race identifiers with the target population. Thus, the positional strength that arises from experiencing patriarchy through the same gendered lens, affording an empathetic interpretation, must remain critical of the research group as a harmful body. Further, this position must also remain reflexive, as to not overlook, obscure, or platform problematic elements of the incel identity and community. These issues of critical empathy and reflexive positionality are explored next.

4.1.1   Critical empathy

Empathy concerns the cognitive and emotional reaction to the affective experiences of another person (Reiss, 2017). Some argue that empathy is a social epistemic practice; "the act of understanding and appreciating someone's cognitive and emotional experience [...] aimed at the construction, communication, and critique of knowledge" (Jaber, Southerland & Dake, 2018, p. 13). In approaching overtly distasteful hate filled and fuelled communities, analysing identities or ideologies that may contain complex juxtapositions of individual adversity and vulnerability within reprehensible discourse and performance requires a delicate composition

of critique and understanding (de Coning, 2023). Critical empathy is an epistemic position that requires the researcher to recognize the "essential humanity" (Fleckenstein, 2007, p. 708), within subjects with which we hold stark ideological disagreement, allowing for nuanced perspective that permits "fuller recognition of [the subject] and ourselves as having a capacity to suffer and inflict suffering" (Leake, 2014, p. 178). Such a position requires the recognition of shared human experience within appropriately maintained boundaries, considering the research subject's perspectives and experiences grounded by the awareness of contextual, social, and structural conditions of power and privilege. Such capacity for empathy with individuals we hold deep, often emotively charged contempt for empowers researchers to move beyond binaries of perpetrator and victim, of misogyny or mental health, to recognise "there are few pure victims or oppressors, and that each one of us derives varying amounts of penalty and privilege from the multiple systems of oppression that frame our lives" (Hill Collins, 1993, p. 26). By oversimplifying victim/offender dichotomies, the casual relationship between the two is oft overlooked or obfuscated (Reingle Gonzalez, 2014, 2020; Berg & Mulford, 2020; Lucy, 2024b).

Much of the research that posits incels as gendered misogynists, extremists, or terrorists, downplays the interdependency of individual experience for fear of validating, exceptionalising, or pathologizing the incel position. Conversely, focusing only on subjective experience omits and decontextualises the social structure from within which incel sentiment originates. Critical empathy can assist in bridging this binary conceptualisation, grappling with tensions and complex contradictions of the incel identity, traversing the complex relationship between individual subjective suffering and vulnerability in those espousing and identifying with structurally informed hateful action and thought. Bloom (2016) understands this form of empathy as 'cognitive', as opposed to more problematic emotional empathy. While emotional empathy may result in the projection of feelings onto the research subject, producing a sympathy that can lead to researcher bias, cognitive empathy involves a detached observation, appreciating the situation without necessarily condoning, obscuring, or supporting other aspects external to the individual lived experience. Applying a critically empathetic position to research of the journey into the incel identity requires looking beyond, behind, and between the unpleasant outputs of the community and ideology for deeper, often hidden meanings (Fleckenstein, 2007; de Coning, 2023), connecting the social and psychological mechanisms and processes operant in identity construction. To maintain necessary researcher distance, that is, not to become sympathetic to the research subject in such a way as to subsequently endorse or validate problematic discourse or ideology, reflexivity serves as useful and necessary regulatory methodological practice.

4.1.2   Reflexive Positionality

Foucault (1969) reminds us that all positions are partial and perverse, that is, subjective reality is constructed by the individual in and by their own fragmented and personal perspective(s). In the research setting, this holds for both the participant and the researcher. When examining the products of a community or individuals within it, it is imperative the researcher remains acutely aware of their own subjectivities and how these will consciously and unconsciously direct gaze towards and away from artefacts and sentiment (Copp & Kleinman,1993). Both a benefit and potential caveat to the research process, the subjectivity of the researcher must be carefully understood, reviewed, and critiqued, especially when addressing sensitive, emotive, and controversial data or research subjects (Dean, 2017).

In a reflective and reflexive article discussing the author's experience of interviewing incels, Daly (2022) recognises both the difficulties in interviewing incels and the benefits of engaging directly with the community. As an Asian woman Daly struggled with her position as a researcher due to the gendered and racialised nature of incel rhetoric directed specifically at her demographic, often drawing her towards the most hateful and misogynistic material. This suggests there is something specific to our own individual identity guiding the co-productive direction of qualitative research (McCorkel & Myers, 2003; Barrett, Kajamaa & Johnston, 2020). Further, the author experienced desensitisation to misogynistic discourse over time, highlighted by additional members of her research team who would highlight these comments, overlooked by Daly in coding exercises. This reflexive article reminds us that as researchers we are responsible for "crafting the incel narrative" (Daly, 2022, no pagination) among the research community, implying our own positions and sensibilities can be instrumental in how this cumulative narrative evolves. Considering a significant body of research casts incels as misogynists, potential extremists and terrorists, or vulnerable men with mental health struggles, the manner in which the incel community is framed becomes imperative. as subjective researcher identities may indeed have unconsciously helped to forge these emerging positions.

Reflexivity requires a continual identity project reciprocated within the broader research endeavour, "engaging with and articulating the place of the researcher and the context of the research" (Barrett, Kajamaa & Johnston, 2020, p. 9). As discussed above, this researcher's gender, sexuality, class, and race have directed the tone, focus, and position of the research, holding multiple identities that are in many ways similar to those associated with incels: heterosexual, cisgender, Caucasian and a man. As a man it is less likely the widespread misogyny will be as attractingly visible compared to women researchers, that is, the misogyny is not any less distasteful but is not aimed at this researcher's identity. Even more so, the less overt and sensational forms of everyday misogyny and sexism would not be as obvious.

Conversely, a feminist man identity offers a strength that feminist women who have produced work consistently focusing on victimhood, misogyny, and male supremacist ideology may not possess. While misogyny and privilege may not be as visible, this researcher can speak to the pernicious effects that patriarchy and masculine social practice, as Connell (1995, 2000) and Pleck (1995) have shown, can inflict upon men and boys. As hooks (2000, 2004) notes, feminism is for everybody, calling for vulnerable and expressive men to join her in acknowledging that it is patriarchy responsible for the oppression of women and men. This position is firmly held and implemented throughout this research.

This is not to say this research is in opposition to hitherto feminist work, rather it is complimentary, and a bridge to psychological research that sits in a positional wilderness, agendering misogyny and obscuring discursive and symbolic acts of violence (Lucy, Heritage & Sugiura, forthcoming). This research serves as allyship to the existing body of critical feminist research; approaching the research subject from a man's perspective directed towards androcentric issues concerning internally directed violence, experiences of gendered discrimination, and the development of masculine identity.

That said, there remains requisite to provide checks and balances in order that emotions and positions do not obscure or overemphasise elements of the research (Copp & Kleinman, 1993; Dean, 2017). Reflexivity became a counterbalancing bedfellow to the critical empathy at the heart of this investigation. As this thesis seeks to explain the social structures and psychological experiences and responses that lead to the construction of an incel identity, consideration of the adverse experiences many incels reported required tempered and critical consideration. This was embedded within recognition that it is the gendered subjective composition of the researcher that directed the research and guided the selection of useful theories in the final analysis.

This was achieved through regular discussion with a cisgender woman researcher who questioned and challenged choices and directions data collection took, and intermittent discussion with a cisgender women supervisor also prompting reflexive considerations along the research journey. Further, periods of one-to one counselling during the research process involved at times discussing the implications of being a man in incel spaces, often researching alone and how this impacted my own choices, perspectives, and data selection. Finally, a reflexive log was undertaken throughout the research process which allowed for reflection on choices and perspectives, allowing a chronological record of decisions and perspectives (Jamieson, Govaart & Pownall, 2023).

The methodological framework of this thesis is grounded by a feminist critical realist, empathetic, and reflexive position. The incel technoscape and its members are approached as

bad objects, possessing generative power to illuminate important subjective experiences of masculinity, identity, and maturation through the sentiments, experiences, and perspectives of those that have taken a particular radical view of the sociosexual sphere. Critical reflexive empathy applied to incel digital space and self-identifying individuals revealed androcentric interpretations of the gendered world beyond the reprehensible discourse and detestable performances, visible and instructive in a significant majority of existing research. Data collection and analysis was monitored through a reflective and reflexive investigative approach, ensuring the research remained grounded within theoretical scaffolding and free of any unintentional bias.
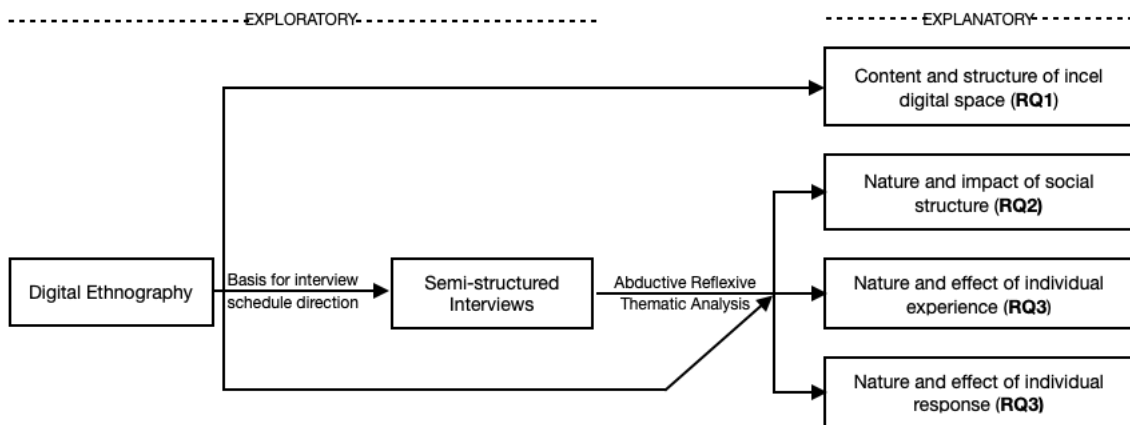

Figure 1   Model of two-part sequential methodology.

Data collection itself consisted of a two-part sequential methodological framework (see Figure 1). First, a multimodal exploratory digital ethnography of the incel technoscape enabled mapping of the structure and role of the environment, answering RQ1, and provided the basis for interview schedule content. Following asynchronous interviews with self-identifying current and ex-incels, the products of an abductive reflexive thematic analysis (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2019) of these interactions were complimented by data collected during the ethnography to produce three hybrid results and discussion chapters. The first outlines the impact and nature of social structure, answering RQ2. The next speaks to the nature and effects of individual experience, and the last the nature and effect of social action, collectively answering RQ3. Together these three chapters cumulatively theorise the journey to an incel identity. The reminder of this chapter outlines the employed methodologies.

4.2   Methodology

4.2.1   Stage 1: Digital Ethnography

4.2.1.1   Rationale

To understand the structure and role of the incel technoscape, qualitative approaches that capture the sentiment and meaning of these various digital spaces must extend beyond thematic analysis of spatiotemporally restricted quantities of data and location. As with other online communities, the incel technoscape contains a significant array of social practices and processes related to identity and group construction (Blommaert, 2017; Andersen, 2023). Ethnography provides an appropriate methodology to investigate this arena, as the researcher embeds within the data to discover the micro, meso, and macro relationships, signifiers, and group dynamics that give a particular subculture its parameters and form (Varis & Wang, 2011; Hine, 2015; Pink et al., 2016). Big-data collection of incel forums has provided insight into the extreme and radical nature of the comments, posts, and memes visible in these spaces. An immersive ethnography of these and other unexamined sites, grounded in relationally acquired small data, can illustrate the deeper meaning of these textual and semiotic artefacts in the context of the norms and structure provided to the group, and role in identity formation (Hymes, 1974; Forberg & Schilt, 2023).

The way the products of online groups/environments are encountered and analysed is a co-produced endeavour (Beaulieu, 2010), applying traditional qualitative social methods to the digital sphere (Marres, 2017). As a flexible and immersive approach, digital ethnography is an "iterative-inductive" (O'Reilly, 2009, p. 3) form of data collection; reactively evolving through the research journey, adapting to novel data or websites that become relevant as the dynamics and complexity of the community is better understood (Varis, 2015; Pink et al., 2016; Small & McCroy Calarco, 2022). Digital ethnography as a research method can produce a fluid understanding of the incel world as it emerges. Rather than focusing one site or forum, a lengthy data collection period directed by the observed discursive and memetic communicative repertoires unfolding across numerous arenas provided unique real time perspectives of generative engagement, and how this (in)forms the maintenance of these spaces and identities of those involved. This enabled an exploratory and explanatory means to access and engage with the incel technoscape in total, both as an object itself and a means with which to contextualise an aspect of the journey one takes in choosing to identify as an incel through discourse, ideology, and structures found within.

4.2.1.2   Ethics

As with other forms of qualitative data collection, the ethical ramifications of approaching the incel community through digitally ethnographic means should be considered, irrespective of the absence of direct interaction with participants operating in it. Prevention of harm and privacy remain central when engaging with any community as a research site. For Hine (2000), existence of a community, virtual or otherwise, is sufficient to warrant a potential for harm, especially through infringement of privacy. It has been argued that online content should not be collected without prior permission, with the act akin to electronic eavesdropping (Marx, 1998; Wilson & Atkinson, 2005). The posting of digital content in public profiles for the assumed consumption by peers does not necessarily mean an individual would be happy to have this content collected and analysed in an academic manner (Eysenbach & Till, 2001). However, seeking informed consent can be a practically difficult endeavour (King, 1998). Further, absent any clear request to not conduct academic research upon forum/website content, it can be assumed that the location is public (Langford, 1996). Accordingly, and in line with the Association of Internet Researchers ethics committee, "the greater the acknowledged publicity of the venue, the less obligation there may be to protect individual privacy, confidentiality, right to informed consent, etc." (Ess & AoIR, 2002, p. 5).

While there is then some ambiguity in determining if online material should be regarded as public, it is reasonable to determine the extent to which the data is intended for public consumption through access capacity and the context of the medium in which the data is located (Snee, 2013). For example, closed chatrooms can be considered private, whereas readily accessible forums public (Ess & AoIR, 2002). Social media sites stipulate in their terms of service that all content produced by users can and may be reproduced (e.g. Facebook, 2023). Streaming sites such as YouTube are publicly facing, housing material for public consumption. Privacy features allow material to be categorised as only viewable by particular people (YouTube, 2022a), thus any YouTube channel/video that is publicly available can reasonably be assumed as public. This is also true of incel specific forums and wikis. Although there is indeed a requirement to create an account before actively producing or engaging with existing content (Incels.is, 2017), the capacity to view such material requires no such account. As with YouTube this arrangement implies the material is public. Indeed, incels seek to actively promote their community and ideology, with any attention shone upon incel forums an important mechanism in potential recruitment of non-incels (Bengtsson Meuller, 2024). Further, numerous academic studies have utilised forum data, and while forum members heavily criticise the conclusions of many of these studies, they seemingly take little issue with the use of the data itself, with forum moderators continuing to allow public access despite accruing academic use of such material.

Together, it was reasonably assumed this data can be considered publicly accessible and as such ethically acceptable to collect and analyse.

A further measure to prevent the infringement of privacy is anonymity. In line with the British Sociological Association, all identifiable features within data acquired from digital spaces, such as names, personal details, and identifying information (e.g. user handles) have been removed from the thesis (BSA, 2002). A further degree of complexity arose when considering the inclusion of comments and posts obtained from these digital sites. Direct quotation represents an intrinsic component of qualitative research, evoking depth and meaning of verifiable and representative sentiments and feelings of those investigated (Markham, 2012). Yet using verbatim quotes from online data can be traced back to the original source using search engines, revealing potentially identifying information (Sugiura, Wiles & Pope, 2017). To mitigate the possibility of any breach of anonymity, all quotes taken directly from forums and websites have been modified to avoid the possibility of identifying the creator whilst ensuring the meaning of the original comment is retained.

4.2.1.3   Design

The purpose of this stage of data collection was to explore the incel technoscape to understand the content and structure of the incel digital environment, answering RQ1. This ethnography also aimed to uncover initial evidence of an individual's lived experience, both informing the nature of interview questions in the second stage of data collection and contributing to later analysis. The ethnography served to both map the collective of incel arenas and produce data that supported findings of interview data analysis. To achieve this, the data collection initially followed a structured digital ethnography procedure. Kozinets' (2019) 'netnography' is a specific form of digital ethnography primarily concerned with social media content and platforms, containing a road map of 13 optional operations categorised into four steps related to data collection: "initiation, investigation, immersion, [and] interaction," (p. 25). Initiation requires the systematic planning of approach to the data, locating suitable data sites guided by the project's research questions. Investigation entails the search for and subsequent selection and capture of multimodal data points. Immersion and interaction require active, reflective, and reflexive engagement and curation of the data and locations in real time, recording the path taken through the digital environment through 'reconnoitering', and production of immersion logs.

Reconnoitering involves the detailing of initial systematic engagement and any subsequent adaptive diversions into novel digital locations and data points. The process of data selection is informed by specific capacities of acquisition relevant to differing media sites, selecting suitable, poignant, and representative data from each space. The aim is to look for "deep data" (Kozinets, 2019, p. 287), digital products that directly address and provide insight regarding

research question(s). Data collection is precise, offering a variety of methods of capture suitable to the media in question, be it written, visual, or videographic. Yet the process affords a degree of flexibility through iterative reflective and reflexive interaction with the data encountered developed through immersion logs, akin to traditional field notes. These logs act as a key form of analysis concurrent to the process of collection, requiring the researcher to interact with the data as it is collected to reflect upon and detail the reasons behind the choice of data specifically selected from an infinite array, evaluating the experience of interaction with the data, developing "emotionality, empathy and self awareness" (p. 28). Guiding theories are incorporated into these immersive reflections, alongside practical accounting of the process and pathway through the data sites, resulting in a co-produced sampling of the digital space. Through the process of reconnoitering and reflective immersion logs grounded in existing theory relevant to and addressing the research questions and subject matter, netnography provided a primary scaffolding for the collection and analysis of data encountered within the incel digital technoscape.

Shortly after initial engagement with the data, it became apparent that it would be necessary to adapt the netnographic method into a broader, adaptive design, reflecting the fluid nature of field ethnographies, both analogue and digital (Ward, 1999; Hine, 2000; Pink et al., 2016: Small & McCroy Calarco, 2022). This diversion resulted from two issues: the evident breadth of the incel technoscape extending beyond incel specific forums or websites, and the decision not to engage with creators of digital content. First, when engaging with incel specific websites, it was immediately evident not only did the incel technoscape permeate into non-incel specific, broader, mainstream digital space (e.g. YouTube), but the community draws from and engages with forms of digital content aside social media platforms (e.g. online academic articles). As Kozinets ethnographic scaffolding relates specifically to social media, it was necessary to adapt the design to these additional sites to accommodate these spaces. This was achieved by expanding the procedure to more fluid and semi-structured movement through both mainstream webspace and non-social media platforms and webpages, allowing the data to lead the research (O'Reilly, 2009; Velghe, 2011; Hine, 2015) whilst retaining elements of the structured format of data selection and capture. The reconnoitering procedure was retained and employed for these spaces, with the immersion aspect of the netnographic process also retained to either produce novel and specific immersion logs for these additional sites, or the analysis of these spaces assimilated into logs of sites from which the link was located.

Traditional ethnographic investigation most often incorporates researcher participation as a core means of data collection as a tool to understand meaning and practice (Hine, 2008; Varis, 2016). Kozinets (2010, 2019) supports this position, incorporating active interaction with media producers into the data collection process, stating that the absence of such engagement

prevents thorough appreciation of the internal cultural dynamics and relationships that characterises the subject group. However, the incel community presented a specific circumstance that led to the decision not to engage with the creators of accessed content during the ethnography. First, the incel identity and ideology seemingly emerged and developed solely online, that is, the community exists only in digital space. Indeed, transnational fluid networks are emerging as the dominant form of community, reconfiguring around personal networks as 'digital tribes' often initiated and maintained only through online means (Rheingold, 1993; Castells, 2001). These networks do not require visible presence or active production of material within the arenas in which the community congregates, with many valid community members existing as lurkers. The disproportionate production of hateful content on certain incel forums by a minority of members (Jaki et al., 2019) suggests a small number of incels sustain the community (Brace, Baele & Ging, 2023) yet is frequented by many more. As the largest incel forums require moderator authorised membership to enable posting and comments, many remain outside of this membership while holding an incel identity evidenced by the lurker counter located upon certain incel forums' homepages (e.g. Incels.is). Further, from a pragmatic perspective, obtaining informed consent to engage within such policed arenas is often challenging as forum moderators may prohibit researcher entry into the space (Sugiura, Wiles & Pope, 2017), and presence within these forums as an outsider can lead to unrepresentative interactions (Beaulieu, 2004; Hine, 2005; Murthy 2008). Lurking in incel digital space can, then, be considered a representative and methodologically beneficial form of community participation. Assuming the identity of a lurker within the community represents a valid member position, mitigating observer bias and enables reflection on the impact of exposure to incel related content without a means with which to discuss, dispute, or expand material encountered.

4.2.1.4   Procedure

Following approval from the researcher's institutional research and ethics committee (see Appendix A), data collection commenced on the 17th March 2022 spanning fourteen months, concluding on the 16th July 2023. In total nineteen digital sites were accessed for a total of 297.5 hours (see Appendix B), these were: www.incels.wiki (54 hrs), www.incels.is (106 hrs), www.incels.net (15 hrs), www.blackpill.club (11hrs), www.love-shy.net (12hrs), www.looksmax.org (11hrs), www.reddit.com (29hrs), www.youtube.com (46hrs), www.tiktok.com (6hrs), and www.facebook.com (6.5hrs). Data observed and collected consisted of wiki text entries, forum and message threads and comments, social media posts and comments, images, gifs, videos, academic publications, and news articles.

In line with netnography's systematic approach, each site was initially approached with a specific method of exploration, however as mentioned due to the content and nature of each site, certain adaptive modifications evolved the ethnography into a semi-structured format as immersion directed investigation across, between, and within digital sites. The direction of travel throughout each site is detailed below.

Incels.wiki

Total number of pages visited: 93 (*see* Appendix C)

As an open-source online reference for information pertaining to the incel ideology and community, this site was selected to commence the ethnography. Key incel terms obtained from previous linguistic analyses (Jaki et al., 2019) and glossaries from incel studies (e.g. Sugiura, 2021a) informed initial terms entered into the search function of this site. Given the extensive content of 'The Scientific Blackpill' wiki entry and its centrality to the incel ideology (Burton, 2022), particular attention was given to this page, with 30 additional hours given to following hyperlinks to pages containing research papers to verify and interpret the data used to support ideological and theoretical claims made. Three articles form the 19 different subsections of this extensive page were selected. The first, middle and last article of each section were chosen, totalling 57 papers in total. Many pages contained 'endolinks' (Brace, Baele & Ging, 2023); hyperlinks directing to additional terms or pages within the site, such as a link to the page 'looksmatch' (the concept of partnering with someone of equal attractiveness), situated within the 'Becky' (a category of woman within the incel hierarchy of attractiveness) page. This resulted in snowball sampling of much of the content encountered in this site. Review of wiki pages detailing various self-moderated incel forums indicated Incels.is should be the first forum to visit and dedicate a significant portion of time within. Additionally, Incels.net, Blackpill.club, Love-shy.net, and Looksmax.org were also selected as forums deserving investigation. Particular attention was given to poems uploaded to the site created by self-identifying incels, and 'incelebrities'; incels with social media and streaming platform popularity within the wider community. The latter of these two areas informed the structured sampling of incel-related YouTube and TikTok channels and videos detailed below.

incels.is

Total number of threads[11] visited: 343 (see Appendix D)

As the largest self-moderated incel forum, Incels.is was chosen to commence exploration of the incel digital community. The 'Must Read' section of the website containing threads selected by the forum's moderators was collated, recording each thread's title, moderator-designated theme, views, and number of comments. The top 50 most viewed threads were systematically examined, limited to the first two pages of comments, averaging 60 - 100 unique comments, as threads demonstrated a consistent tendency to tail off into repetitive hyperbolic hate speech, adding little novelty or depth to the data. A further 14 threads were viewed resulting from connection to themes encountered within these initial 50. The footer of each Must Read thread's page listed recommended threads, at least one of these was selected and viewed based on a clear relation to the original thread and a comment count above 20. Select comments from these threads were collated into 30 themed Word documents. Between October and December 2022 five threads containing a minimum of 30 comments were randomly selected from the 'Inceldom Discussion' section of the website each weekday between 1- 5pm GMT. Relevant content that built upon the data selected from the Must Read section of the site was saved into individual Word documents.

Incels.net (now defunct)

Total number of threads accessed: 31 (see Appendix E)

As a relatively smaller UK centred incel forum, this site offered a comparative analysis of the differences between a UK incel cohort and Incels.is which the users of this forum explicitly distance themselves from. As with Incels.is, the page containing threads pinned by moderators were accessed and viewed, along with daily discussion threads across a 28-day period. These were significantly smaller in number than Incels.is given a comparatively reduced user base of users. Salient content from each thread was collected and saved into singular Word documents.

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[11] A 'thread' is a subsection of a website headed by a user-generated comment/statement which is subsequently commented upon by other members of the website in a conversational manner.

Blackpill.club (now incels.in)

Total number of threads viewed: 30 (see Appendix F)

A relatively new yet ideologically extreme self-moderated incel forum, this site was signposted through immersion within Incels.is as many users relocated due to a perceived dilution of the ideological sentiment within this space (Johnson, 2023). From this forum, each thread exceeding 1,000 views was selected representing the most popular and engaged with discussions as of November 2022. Each thread/comment was viewed, collected and collated into one singular Word document over a one-month period.

Love-shy.net

Total number of threads viewed: 102 (see Appendix G)

With a user base below 1,000 (Love-shy.net, 2022), this forum received a comparatively smaller degree of attention than incels.is as fewer threads were added each month with equally lower numbers of comments posted in response. Resultingly the sites 'Open Forum', the subforum with the largest number of threads, views, and comments was selected to view. Between April and November on the final day of each month all threads produced that month were viewed in full. As with Incels.is, Incels.net, and Blackpill.club, representative passages were selected, collated into a singular Word document.

Looksmax.org

Total number of threads viewed: 46 (see Appendix H)

As a site named after a key incel term, originally derived from redpill ideological discourse, this site was examined to understand the connection to the incel community and understand ideological overlap. These threads were selected and viewed over a two-month period. Unlike other forums, the selection of threads involved a relatively unstructured approach. Commencing with an 'About' thread which outlined 'maxxing' culture, further threads were selected through a snowball sampling method in which two or three additional pages were selected from the 'Similar Results' footer links section at the bottom of the page. On each day the site was visited, an initial thread would be randomly selected form the 'Best of the Best' section containing moderator-selected threads and the aforementioned process repeated. All comments/pages of each thread were viewed.

Reddit.com

Number of threads viewed: 67 (see Appendix I)

Despite the removal of incel community subreddits[12] in 2017 and 2019, there remains three incel adjacent Reddit pages publicly available. 'r/virgin' concerns both men and women who remain virgins despite wishing to lose their virginity, whilst explicitly prohibiting the use of incel ideology and explicit expression of an incel identity. 'r/IncelTears' concerns individuals highlighting, discussing, and criticising threads, posts, and comments produced by incels. 'r/IncelExit' is self-described as a space for incels looking to leave their community and ideology, in which these individuals engage with non-incel users to discuss dating, sex, and the incel culture and ideology. Using each subreddit's 'Top rated' search function, the top 25 threads were viewed from r/IncelTears and r/IncelExit. Only five threads were viewed from r/virgin due to a limited number of threads demonstrably associated with inceldom. Thematically representative comments and passages, and images were collected from each subreddit and collated into two respective Word documents.

Youtube.com

Number of videos viewed: 94 (see Appendix J)

Based on the list of prominent incel online personalities obtained from Incels.is, four incel associated channels were selected: 'WheatWaffles' HeedandSucceed', 'FACEandLMS', and 'Incel TV'. Initially the top ten highest viewed videos were selected from each channel and viewed in full. The differing nature and availability of each channel dictated further selection of video content. Further videos viewed were selected according to view count and in proportion to the subscription base and video total of each channel. An additional 24 videos were viewed from the WheatWaffles channel, 15 from FACEandLMS, and five from Incel TV before this channel was removed. HeedandSucceed's channel became unavailable after only viewing nine videos but has since been reinstated. A further eleven miscellaneous videos were viewed through exolinks encountered in various incel forum comments. Representative passages were selected and manually transcribed from each video and collated into documents corresponding to each channel.

Facebook.com

Number of groups visited: 3 (see Appendix K)

Facebook was viewed in the initial stages of the ethnography using the search terms 'incel' and blackpill'. Three groups[13] were identified and selected: 'Incels', Incels United', and 'Femcels &

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[12] A subreddit is a collection of threads associated with a particular category, theme, or topic.
[13] Groups are Facebook pages in which numerous users create a shared space to post and comment on topics related to the group's theme.

Incels Unite'. Each group was approached through the 'Apply to Join' function of the site using a purpose-built account clearly indicating researcher status. Forum moderators accepted these applications to all groups. After joining each site, 20 minutes was given to viewing each group's feed[14] on the final day of each month between August 2022 and Jan 2023. As memetic discourse was a fundamental communication of these forums, representative images and memes were collated across all three groups and collated into one Word document.

Tiktok.com

Number of videos viewed: 45 (see Appendix L)

Guided by the incelebrity index located within Incels.is, and interaction with the YouTube channels of these figures, TikTok was explored to discover if similarly themed channels also offered incel-related content. Using the search terms 'incel', 'blackpill', and 'black pill', all videos returned in the search were viewed over a one-week period. Representative Image captures and transcribed quotations were collated into two respective Word documents.

4.2.1.5 Data analysis

Analysis of the ethnography centred primarily around cumulative immersion logs produced as the data was encountered. Immersion logs served as real time analysis as the content, function, and structure of the environment were contextualised within existing theory, as well as forming new theory as the data revealed novel information addressing the research questions (Kozinets, 2019). In total 39 immersion logs were produced, considering the microenvironments, relationships, and products within specific sites/channels/forums, as well observations of the structure and role of each site within the incel digital technoscape and any association to other sites/forums. Subjective researcher observations contributed to this process, as "the inscription of the experience of researcher participation" (Kozinets, 2010, p. 113). This was informed by the "subtexts, pretexts, contingencies, conditions and personal emotions" (p. 114) of engagement with the data, building an interpretation surpassing descriptive accounts, producing deeper meanings beyond what was immediately visible (Kozinets, 2019). This process of continual and iterative data analysis served as a reflexive monitoring function throughout the data process, as consideration of why the threads/pages chosen and the data selected from within were included in these immersion documents. This involved reflective consideration of researcher identity and how this related to both the research questions and data observed.

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[14] A feed is the collective contribution of all member's posts to a group chronologically ordered and updated in real time.

From these 39 immersion logs two further analytical processes were conducted. First, reflections within each immersion log regarding each site's identifiable structure and content features, including connection or relationship to other locations observed, were collated into the first 'higher order' immersion log, a document, entitled 'The Incel Network'. This threaded the individual structural and content components of each space into a larger, conceptual whole. This document formed the initial theoretical mapping of the incel technoscape, directly answering RQ1 and addressing the project's first aim of conceptualising the nature of incel digital space. A diagrammatic structural illustration (see Appendix M) of the conceptualised Incel Network provided a visual representation with which to understand the composition and relationship of the constituent sites and components within this incel structure.

Together, this written and visual scaffolding theorised the incel technoscape into three clusters of incel arenas: *Outer Periphery, Inner Periphery,* and *Performative Core* digital space. Spread across the web these sites comprise either stand-alone spaces (e.g. Incels.is) or embedded within larger sites (WheatWaffles YouTube channel). These groupings formed the basis for the first discussion chapter of this thesis, The Incel Network. This chapter outlines the content and structure of sites that example each group of arenas in a descriptive fashion to understand the ideological and identity generative and performative content of these spaces. These sites are positioned in relativity to other sites within each of the three groups listed above, as well as each group to the other. For example, YouTube and TikTok are used as examples of and discussed within the Outer Periphery grouping, and the Outer Periphery is discussed in relativity to the Inner Periphery and Performative Core. This provides a content and structure map of the digital spaces associated with incel identities and ideology.

Second, exemplary data points were selected from each location's captured exerts representing salient and recurring topics discovered and analysed within immersion logs. For example, the prominent topic of 'masculinity' noted in the immersion logs relating to Incels.net, Incels.is, and another specific to Connell's (1995) masculinities framework informed the selection of comments and images specifically involving perceptions of masculinity, gendered social experiences, and masculine practice(s). In all this led to eight further higher order immersion logs detailing the nature of each salient topic, and included representative exerts pertaining to each topic. These logs reflected repetitive and prominent topics relating to the social structure, and individual experiences and responses offered by men performing in these digital spaces. These were: *meaning of an incel identity, meaning of pill ideology, pre-incel experiences, what the incel identity provides, digital engagement, masculinity, mental health,* and *the journey. Each topic provided the basis with which to formulate the direction and content of semi-structured questions later posed to incel interview participants in the second stage of data collection, detailed below.*

4.2.2   Stage 2: Semi-structured Interviews

4.2.2.1   Rationale

Addressing the core aspects of the remaining research questions required direct engagement with incels as participants, capturing the impact of social structure to answer RQ2 and individual experiences and responses of men who adopt an incel identity, addressing RQ3. The heterogeneity of the incel community observed in previous research suggested this journey into inceldom involved both shared and idiosyncratic subjective experience (Jaki et al., 2019; Sugiura, 2021a; Daly & Reed. 2022). Longform semi-structured interviews are the most effective means with which to capture these varying perspectives and experiences of the individual, away from performative and policed digital space in a manner affording personal, detailed, and descriptive accounts. As a qualitative data collection tool, Interviews are an effective means of capturing deep, detailed meaning via first-hand accounts through a co-productive and adaptive discursive exchange with interviewees, establishing rapport as the interview progresses to reveal the significance and meaning of the individual's experiences and their lived reality (Weiss, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Smith and Elger (2012) note qualitative interviews' compatibility with a critical realist approach, affording the ability to gain insight into a multilayered social world. Similar to the interpretivist approach, meaning construction and communication can be ascertained from such endeavours, however social interaction is situated within *preexisting* structures and relations. Thus, while in an objective real, according to Elder-Vass (2010, p. 87-8) "human action may be affected by social causes without being fully determined by them". Interviews then become means with which to capture interviewee's meaning making, and the "social contexts, constraints and resources" (Smith & Elger, 2012, p. 6) that these interviewees operate within.

Direct contact with men that adopt or have adopted an incel identity provided the opportunity to see this process through the eyes of the individual that has undertaken it - telling their own story - extracted via questions informed by the eight topics structuring the higher order immersion logs produced in the digital ethnography analysis. While these topics were prominent in the digital artefacts of the incel community, the way these issues interact with and impact the individual, and inform their worldview, could not be understood from interrogation of digital space alone. The interview setting provided an effective means with which to delve deeper into personal experiences relating to childhood, mental health, masculinity etc., offering first-hand details absent from forum threads and posts.

4.2.2.2   Design

While there are numerous formats, settings, and styles in which interviews can be orchestrated (Hopf, 2004), the online location of the incel community and the anonymous character of performances guided the decision to conduct semi-structured, asynchronous interviews via email messaging functions. As research gravitates towards digital environments, communities, and products, in-depth qualitative email interviews have become widely recognised as an advantageous data collection method (O'Reilly, 2009; Gibson, 2010; James, 2016; Dahlin, 2021). Geographic constraints and time limitations are significantly reduced through digital channels that circumvent time zones and physical barriers of access to research participants (Opdenakker, 2006; Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014). Multiple interviews can be conducted concurrently, maximising use of researcher time and efficacy (Meho, 2006; East et al., 2008), incorporating transcription into the process of data collection (Dahlin, 2021) and allowing the interviewer to grapple with replies over time to construct subsequent adaptive responding questions. Opdenakker (2006) states the email interview format is effective when addressing hard to reach or closed groups or communities such as prison populations or cults (Bjerke, 2010; Kaufmann & Tzanetakis, 2020), lending itself well to a digital community who remain hostile to outsiders having participated in only a handful of research studies. Indeed, of these studies, digital messaging functions facilitating asynchronous interviews were the preferred format of participant engagement (see Sugiura, 2021a; Daly & Reed, 2022).

Email interviews provide a non-confrontational 'safe-space', increasing the likelihood interviewees prone to shyness or an inability or unwillingness to express themselves will open up, offering a digital partition between participant and researcher to more comfortably facilitate revelation of sensitive details, thoughts, and feelings about their personal lives (Selwyn & Stewart, 1998; Bowker & Tuffin, 2004; Opdenakker, 2006; East et al., 2008). This is especially pertinent within the incel community as many members discuss their experiences of persecution and discrimination (Moskalenko et al., 2022a; Sparks, Zidenburg & Olver, 2023). While sensitive personal experiences may be more easily disclosed in the digital setting of an anonymous forum, speaking extensively about such incidents face to face with another person can be more challenging (Miller & Slater, 2001). Offering a degree of distance from the researcher may increase an individual's desire to divulge details about such potentially difficult issues (Bampton & Cowton, 2002). Indeed, some individuals find it easier to provide emotional expression via distanced written formats than verbally (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014), extending so far as to produce a quasi-therapeutic effect (Minikel-Lacocque, 2019) through the empowerment this setting affords (Miller & Slater, 2001).

Asynchronous timings of exchanges extend the timeframes of the traditional face to face setting (Dahlin, 2021), allowing the researcher and interviewees to build rapport as the respondents accrue familiarity with the format, process, and interviewer, further heightening the likelihood that sensitive personal information will be shared. As the interviews are conducted without the requirement for an immediate reply, this gives the respondent adequate time to produce a more considered and thorough response, reflecting and reviewing to offer a greater level of detail and inclusion of specifics that may be overlooked in an immediate reply (Meho, 2006; Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014; Pell et al., 2020). The semi-structured nature of the process provides starting blocks to begin a conversation, allowing for flexibility guided by each response. Such a fluidity facilitates a spontaneous exploration of any point or experience provided by the participant, with resulting questions more reflexive than those within a rigid interview schedule as questions evolve and adapt to novel topics and directions that may emerge (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987).

Unlike surveys that have so far produced mostly quantitative data regarding the incel community (e.g. Speckhard & Ellenberg, 2022; Sparks, Zidenberg & Olver, 2023; Whitaker, Costello & Thomas, 2024), interviews provide an opportunity for participants to reflect at length in greater detail, guiding the narrative as they see fit based on the most pertinent feelings and information interviewee's feel compelled to offer (Patton, 2015). This qualitative source of data afforded opportunity to confer meaning and complexity behind the experiences of the individuals, within and away from the incel technoscape, and how these meaningful situations impact or inform the process of transition into the incel community. Here, interviews captured the presence and effect of subjective psychoaffective experiences recorded in surveys, but through detailed and discursive responses interpreted by a critically feminist positioned interviewer. This enabled illustration of both how these experiences manifest in relation to and through engagement with the incel technoscape, as well as via social structure and individual agency.

Understanding the role, structure, and meaning of incel digital space and the identity through the eyes of those producing and engaging with the material provided a level of analysis beyond the surfaces of forum comments and threads. This situated the incel technoscape within the previous and current lived experiences of users assimilating the digital spaces into their lives. A gendered researcher position ensured both a degree of critical empathy towards these men whilst remaining firmly within critical theoretical structures and lenses. Direct engagement with incels via asynchronous semi-structured email interviews provided a familiar digital venue for participants to divulge rich detailed information regarding (in)formative experiences and responses. This took place in an adaptive reflexive environment that modified lines of inquiry to suit the specific disposition and life history of the participant that emerges as the interview developed over time.

4.2.2.3   Ethics

There are, as with any research population, several ethical considerations in the recruitment of incels as interview participants, including informed consent, anonymity, and mitigation of both participant and researcher harm (Sanjari et al., 2014). Participant recruitment, particularly from a community associated with violence, required further stringent institutional approval which was sought and received (see Appendix N) following an intense period of scrutinization prior to recruitment. Informed consent was achieved through provision of necessary copies of a participation information document (see Appendix O) and consent form (see Appendix P) issued to each participant prior to recruitment confirmation. Each participation information sheet detailed the nature of the investigation, the format of the interview process, expected timeframe, the sensitive nature of the questions that will be posed, and participant and data privacy rights.

Anonymity is both a fundamental component of a research process involving personal information (Dougherty, 2021) and an inherent part of incel culture (Nagle, 2017; Ging 2019a). To ensure participant anonymity throughout data collection, analysis, and presentation, pseudonyms or online usernames were accepted as suitable participant denomination information within consent documentation, with all participants' data then fully anonymised from the point of collection, assigning alphanumeric labels (P1, P2, etc.) to each script and when later citing quotations. Throughout the digital ethnography, many observations indicated minors were highly active in incel forums and websites. This precipitated an active decision to interview only incels aged over 18 to avoid the added complexity and scrutinization of interviewing this demographic. To ensure only suitably aged participants were recruited, participation information clearly stipulated the age requirement, with the consent form subsequently explicitly requiring confirmation participants met this restriction.

Given the uncomfortable nature of some of the topics of questioning seeking to probe potentially traumatic past experiences, the information returned was considered as 'sensitive' (McCosker, Barnard & Gerber, 2001). Revelation of sensitive information which may elicit distress or discomfort to research participants required the consideration and placement of the wellbeing and safety of the interviewee in the interview process ahead of data acquisition, allaying the risk of harm (Lee,1993). To mitigate this risk, the participation information sheet explicitly stated the possibility that the interview process "may result in the recall of potentially sensitive and traumatic incidents or periods of your life which could cause adverse negative feelings and emotions to arise" (Participation Information, see Appendix O). Accordingly, all participants were further asked to consider the potential consequences upon their wellbeing if choosing to participate, informing potential interviewees of the right to terminate the process at

any time. A total of six UK and US mental health support services' contact information were provided in the participation information document, at the start and end of the interview process, and finally again within the debriefing document provided following interview completion (see Appendix Q). This ensured participants were fully aware of the risk prior to the interview and signposted to appropriate support throughout and following the interview journey.

McCosker, Barnard and Gerber (2001) note the importance of considering harm to all parties involved in the research process, including the researcher. The incel community's general association with violence (O'Donnell & Shor, 2022), and digital harassment such as online stalking, bullying, and doxing[15] (Ging, 2019a) confers the need to remain cautious when engaging directly with members of the community. This is further supported by previous researchers' experiences with this and similar online collectives (Sugiura, 2021b; Daly, 2022; Andersen & Sugiura, 2024). Resultingly, careful curation of the researcher's digital footprint was also carried out prior to the interview recruitment process to avoid any potential inclusion into the researcher's personal sphere during or after contact with the interviewees. This is in line with advice regarding other researchers' experiences of difficulty in maintaining academic distance following interviews with similarly problematic groups (e.g. Lavorgna & Sugiura, 2022). The debrief form made explicitly clear to all participants personal communication would no longer be possible following the end of the interview process. Setting clear boundaries as well as managing the developing relationship throughout the interview added researcher protection and preserved a professional and effective researcher-participant relationship.

4.2.2.4   Procedure

The recruitment of interview participants required direct engagement with several incel forums and websites which so far had only been visited as a non-participant observer. Knowledge of the community's online structure obtained during the digital ethnography provided locations of additional incel-specific forums suitable for recruitment alongside certain spaces within mainstream social media platforms. Despite many incel forums remaining hostile to outsiders, particularly researchers, it was (optimistically) decided to formally approach four incel forums; Incels.is, Incels.net, Love-shy.net, and Blackpill.club, as well as three incel Facebook groups, and two Reddit forums. As well as a recognised cost and time-efficient methodology to recruit otherwise difficult-to-reach populations (Weiner et al., 2017), this method of recruitment through social media and forums is congruent with the online nature of the incel community; existing and performing primarily in digital space.

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[15] To recall, doxing involves the online distribution or provision of personal contact and location information of an individual without prior consent.

The researcher's university email account was used as the sole means of communication with these sites and the subsequent interviewees recruited from within them. Recruitment was conducted in an opportunistic fashion based on available access to differing incel forums and associated social media groups. Interview recruitment and conduction took place between November 2023 and July 2024. Each of the four incel forums were formally approached through the site's account creation webpage. This involved creating a user profile within each forum and answering a question explaining a reason for requesting an account. For each the username 'PHDresearchUoS' was supplied, and it was communicated that the intent was to approach individuals with the forums and post threads explicitly seeking participant recruitment. It was initially hoped familiarity with the incel community, afforded through the digital ethnography leading to a degree of fluency and comprehension of the incel lexicon and ideology, would enhance the likelihood of penetrating these communities as a researcher. Unfortunately, however access was denied by site moderators to all forums bar Love-shy.net. For this forum, a thread was initiated on the 'Open Forum' section of the website indicating researcher status and the desire to speak to self-identifying incels willing to talk about their journey into inceldom. Users of Love-shy.net identified as suitable candidates during the digital ethnography were also contacted through direct messaging, now available as a member of the site. Regarding recruitment via wider social media platforms, any member of the subreddits and Facebook groups with an account publicly accessible was considered appropriate for initial approach for recruitment[16]. Previously established membership to three incel Facebook groups, 'Incels', 'Incels United', and 'Femcels and Incels Unite', provided opportunity to approach individual members through direct messaging. Similarly, one of the subreddits analysed through ethnographic investigation provided locations for opportunistic recruitment of former incels, with accounts active in r/IncelExit also approached through private messaging.

Participant recruitment was a challenging factor in data collection, a significant limitation of the research. As Lucy, Heritage and Sugiura (forthcoming) note, it is likely only a certain 'type' of incel who is willing to engage in research making generalisation unwise. Of the individuals contacted, only a fraction responded with positive interest (Love-shy: 10%; Reddit: 10%; Facebook: 8%), with many users wary of researcher authenticity, or suspicious of the true intent of the research. This resulted in many users refusing engagement despite provision of information regarding the process and university affiliated consent forms, and additional lengthy conversations explaining the process further to attenuate concerns. Some replies contained aggressive and accusatory hostility, including assumptive misgendering of the

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[16] See Digital Ethnography *Ethics* subsection.

researcher and accusations of law enforcement affiliation, mirroring similar difficulties in reaching this research population in recent grey literature (see Murphy, 2023).

Each identified potential participant was first sent a direct/private message introducing the researcher and research, asking if they would be willing to take part in interviews seeking to investigate the experiences and perspectives of incels (see Appendix R) Following confirmed interest, a participation information document and consent form were forwarded to each participant via direct message, with provision of the researcher's email supplied to return the completed form to, or directly to a given email account. Receipt of a correctly completed consent form initiated the interview. Seven current and two former incels were recruited in total across the three platforms:

Table 1   Interview participant demographics

P	Age	Ethnicity (self-defined)	Birthplace	Residence	Education	Occupation
1	40	Caucasian	USA	USA	Bachelors	Software developer
2	26	German-Silesian	Poland	Netherlands	Technical	Machine operator
3	39	White	USA	USA	Postgraduate	Did not disclose
4*	24	Asian/Caucasian	USA	USA	Bachelors	Mechanical engineer
5	49	Caucasian	Europe	Europe	Bachelors	Professional
6*	30s	Caucasian	Did not disclose	Ex-soviet	High school	Did not disclose
7	39	Filipino	Philippines	Saudi Arabia	College	Landlord
8	21	Filipino	Philippines	Philippines	College	Student
9	30	West Slavic	Poland	Poland	Postgraduate	PhD Student

* = former incel

Each participant was first sent six demographic questions regarding age, ethnicity, birth and residential locations, level of education, and occupation, followed by the initiating question of the interview: '*What does incel mean to you?*'. This question served as a systematic and structured foundation with which to commence the semi-structured journey. As expected, this question was answered in a variety of ways; from a distanced 'dictionary' definition to a detailed personal response. The form and content of each reply dictated the subsequent order and wording of questions put to each participant. These questions were structured around the eight topics produced during digital ethnography analysis: *meaning of an incel identity, meaning of pill ideology, pre-incel experiences, what the incel identity provides, digital engagement,*

masculinity, mental health, and *the journey*. Questions were issued in batches of between five and eight depending on the content of previous replies, constructed using differing tones and styles, and posed corresponding to the issues salient to the individual and the responses given previously given. Mishler (1986) conceptualises this method of interviewing as a discursive technique in which a fluid, responsive, and varied interview schedule produces an active and reactive setting in which the interviewer and interviewee co-produce meaning and content (Reissman, 2008).

Each batch of questions contained topics related to a specific aspect or issue raised in response to a preceding inquiry, as well as others commencing new lines of investigation related to pre-established directions of inquiry. For example, in response to the opening question, a participant immediately offered reflections on school life as part of their answer. This led to an initial focus on pre-incel childhood experiences, later evolving into discussions and interpretations of what it means to be a man as key to their framing and understanding of these disclosed experiences. This organically catalysed a new line of inquiry regarding perspectives of masculinity alongside further questions in response to the initial theme of childhood experiences. Conversely, another participant did not directly address interpretations of the masculine self unprompted, and so specific questioning that started a new line of inquiry on this theme were posed to focus on this area of questioning. In both examples the topic of perspectives of masculinity was addressed in a fluid and reflexive manner, sensitive to the direction and style of the interview conversation, adapting to the unfolding dynamic of each interaction. Conducting the interviews in this way ensured questions were not posed in an abrupt or interrogative manner, preventing the evaporation of any developing rapport essential to the revelation of sensitive and difficult topics (Spradley, 1979).

Receipt of email responses varied form one or two days to two weeks. As a result, interview durations varied from between three and 12 weeks. All data was transferred from each email and chronologically ordered within one anonymised Word document per participant. Interview durations were dictated by both the quality and content of responses and rapport established with the individual. As the interview process developed, several participants began to present a comfortable and relaxed demeanour which enabled the revisitation of earlier issues initially only touched upon in brief detail, particularly concerning negative social experiences. All interviews reached individual natural conclusions, indicated by data extraction reaching an internal saturation point. Scholars have argued that evidence of saturation requires thorough and transparent reporting (Bowen, 2008; Francis et al., 2010), recognising the individual context of the research will dictate how and when saturation is effectively reached (Saunders et al., 2018). Here, individual interview saturation was conceptualised as the point in which responses became repetitive, the length of a responses became notably briefer, and when participants

themselves began to refer to previous comments they had made. Theoretical saturation arose after eight participant interviews. In line with discussions on saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Legard et al., 2003; Saunders et al., 2018) one further interview was carried out to check this assumption, with this interview failing to produce any novel information prompting the researcher to assume a suitable degree of saturation had been reached. Following the cessation of each interview, participants were thanked, provided with a debrief form, and informed they would next be contacted to offer copies of any future publications their data had been included within.

4.2.2.5   Data analysis

The aim of capturing sentiments directly through interviews is to collectively understand the story of each individual, capturing the journey to an incel identity through unique subjective experience. Reflexive thematic analysis (RFA) offers means with which to capture meaning and depth of these personal experiences within a methodology that develops co-produced recurring themes across the group (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). Through subjective researcher familiarisation with the data, subsequent reflexive generation of initial meaning-laden codes are collected into themes, refined again through theme combination or expulsion. Through a process of self-reflection in which the researcher remains critically self-aware, a 'picture' of the data emerges through themes exhibiting meaning behind the latent responses of interviewees, driven by researcher positionality (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2023).

Braun and Clarke's RFA stems from the constructivist tradition, as "interpretative stories about the data" (2019, p. 594). Critical realist thematic analysis shares similarities with this approach but also some subtle and important differences. Qualitative research is important as a methodology, shared by both positions, and rejects the idea of coding reliability, maintaining researcher subjectivity but, in critical realism, within the realm of an ontological real. Themes are generated through the positionality of the researcher undertaking such a process, offering a limited observation of this real (Danermark, Ekström & Karlsson, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2019). Yet where Braun and Clarke draw form the irrealist tendencies of constructivism that produce interpretative stories, here we seek causal explanations. While both positions reject knowledge emerging from universal quantitative laws, this does not mean knowledge comes from stories, and further, does not prohibit casual interpretation of the world, just through limited, fallible lenses (Fryer, 2022). This leads to more theory-laden efforts in methodological processes, rather than just descriptive and data-led coding. Codes and themes can be structured by theoretical interpretations that suggest causal mechanisms of the lived experiences and social structures that these men affect and are affected by. This becomes an abductive process (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014), as both previous theory and novel 'surprises' within the data

contribute to the development of themes informed by the researcher's subjective application of theory and interpretation of the data.

Interview scripts were read between five to seven times until the researcher began to get a sense of the data, then producing brief Word document summaries of each script. Scripts were then re-read and descriptive codes attached to salient comments and passages using the 'New Comment' and highlight function of each document. Employing triangulation, previous data incorporated from the digital ethnography into higher order immersion logs was also re-read and coded in an identical fashion. A total of 172 different codes were produced. Through iterative reflexivity and theories structuring the theoretical framework, these codes were first refined using a process of combination and exclusion into 25 'refined codes', then grouped into six subthemes; *Boys Must Be Boys, Unpractised Practice, Fallout, Haven't been Doing So Good, Now It Makes Sense,* and *What's A Man to Do?*. These subthemes were finally grouped together under three main themes *Man Up, Man Down,* and *Deal(ing) With It,* with each representing one aspect of social structure, lived experience, and agency (see Figure 2, and Appendix S for coding and theme frames).
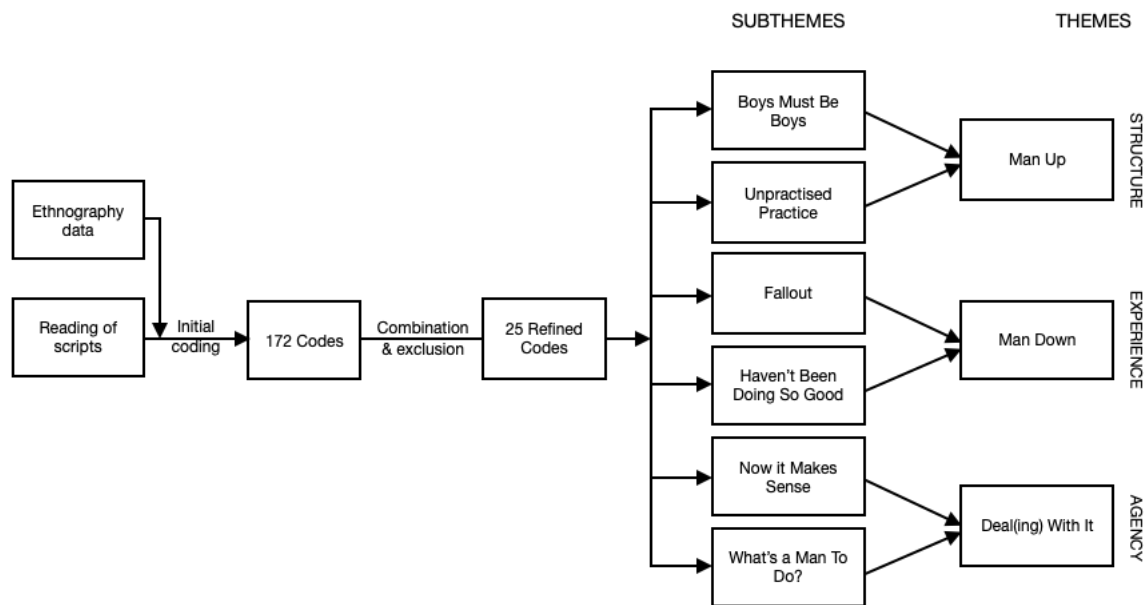
Figure 2   Thematic analysis procedure

Following chapter five, the descriptive overview of the structure and content of the Incel Network addressing RQ1, each of the three themes are presented and discussed in separate, dedicated chapters. These three chapters cumulatively develop the journey towards the incel identity, layering and connecting social structure, and individual experience and agency. Chapter six, *Man Up*, addresses RQ2; the impact of social structure upon the experiences of incels, operationalised through the subthemes *Boys Must be Boys* and *Unpractised Practice*. Through *Boys Must be Boys,* Connell's (1995, 2000, 2009) theory of gender is applied to discuss

the impact of a hierarchical structure of competing performances of masculine social practice informing how these men have experienced social events and experiences. As adolescents and young men, social policing by fleeting dominating hegemonic masculinities and compliant femininities sure up a hegemonic gender order in which being the wrong type of boy and men is materially and discursively disciplined. Through the subtheme *Unpractised Practiced* the sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality is explored, a cornerstone of hegemonic social ordering (Rich 1980; Connell, 1995) imparting a requirement to engage in the confirmatory body reflexive practice of heterosex, a practice these men are unable to achieve. This social structure influences how these men understand sex and intimacy as a need, and requirement for growth.

Next, *Man Down, addresses RQ3; the individual experiences of men who adopt an incel identity.* Two subthemes, *Fallout* and *Haven't Been Doing So Good,* detail the subjectively perceived consequences of failure to be the right boy or man, and participate in confirmatory heterosex. *Fallout* critically discusses a reflexive process in which the individual engages in an internal conversation with himself, assessing how these social (non) events make him feel, resulting in a variety of adverse affects. *Haven't Been Doing So Good* discusses the rigid ideas these men hold concerning the social position of what a man should be and do underlying many of these resulting negative feelings. Comparing himself to both internal beliefs, and the perceived and observable social practices of dominant masculinities in his local vicinity, leads to ruminative reflexive conclusions that he is not good enough.

Finally, *Deal(ing) With It*, addresses the remaining component of RQ3; the social responses and actions of these men, drawing together the main findings of the thesis by incorporating the previous two chapters and The Incel Network into a holistic discussion. This chapter speaks to further stages of the subjective reflexive process of the individual leading to the adoption and maintenance of an incel identity, considered through two subthemes, *Now It Makes Sense* and *What's a Man To Do?*. *Now It Makes Sense* outlines the process of communicative reflexivity these men engage. Experiencing perceived masculine inadequacy and adverse affect, external sources are sought to assist in personal conscious deliberation regarding the social context of these events and the subject's relative position that ultimately leads to future social action (Archer, 2007, 2012). This chapter utilises the findings of chapter five, contextualising the Incel Network within the agentic process of identity construction resulting from reflexive social action. Encountering the Incel Network embedded in popular and accessible social media platforms of the Outer Periphery and forums of the Performative Core, these men are exposed to alleviate pill and incel ideology that confirms and completes their internal conversation. The affirmative contextualisation of their social position as immutable, framed within a biologically determined, postfeminist sexual marketplace leads to the conscious deliberate decision to adopt an incel identity. *What's a Man To Do?* discusses the consequences of sustained

interaction within the Network, producing a fractured reflexivity. A distorted and disjointed internal conversation is produced through external conversations (Donati & Archer, 2015) within the Performative Core in which agency becomes paralysed by the internalisation of futility and defeatist nihilism, prohibiting the possibility of any meaningful or purposeful action to change their social position. These men are assuaged from engaging with proactive and prosocial remedies to their perceived situation leading to personal disorientation, a sense of disconnection between their ongoing problematic internal conversations and ability to develop meaningful strategies of social action. Of the men who go on to resign their identity, a proactive and prosocial *autonomous* reflexivity underlies social action leading to improvement of social position, and a conscious shedding of the incel identity. Before we cumulatively construct the journey to inceldom, the following chapter first maps the Incel Network.

Chapter 5   The Incel Network

Numerous scholarly definitions have sought to categorise the incel phenomenon, including a community (Sugiura, 2021a), a digital public (Lindsay, 2021), and a counterpublic (Ging & Siapera, 2019). While these definitions offer means with which to characterise the collective activities and actions of the men engaging in these social spaces, the overarching facilitative collective of social media platforms, websites, and forums in which these interactions take place has received less attention. Instead, fragments of the wider incel technoscape are examined in isolation, often limited to "the most controversial and sensational parts of the incelosphere" (Andersen, 2023, p. 18). Answering RQ1, this chapter draws on ethnographic data to present a descriptive illustration of the structure and content of the broad incel technoscape beyond single locations, analysed in unison and in relative position to each other. These arenas are situated across multimodal media platforms within mainstream and niche digital space, placed in comparative position to each other, an endeavour increasingly recognised as absent from incel research (Papadamou et al., 2020; Baele, Brace & Ging, 2023; Solea & Sugiura, 2023). The following offers a novel collective and relative academic overview of the incel technoscape.
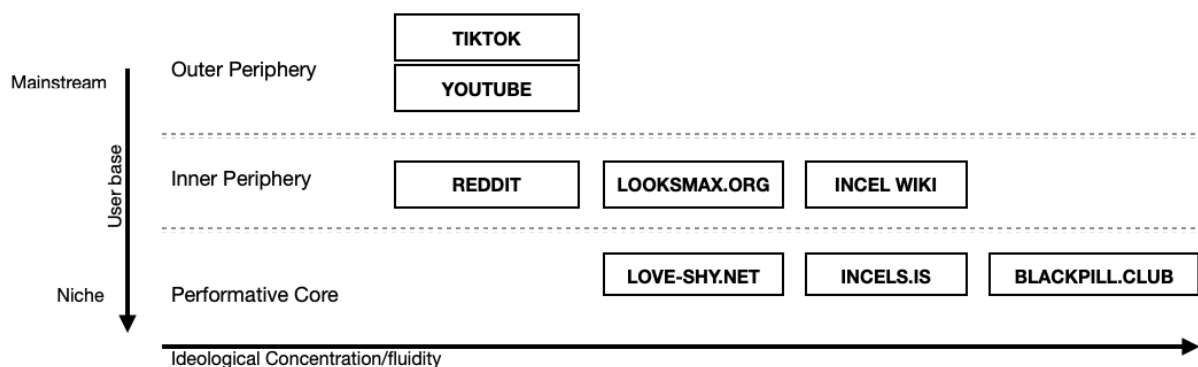
Figure 3   The Incel Network

The 'Incel Network' is a three-tiered arrangement of digital sites of ideological dissemination and identity performance (see figure 2). Each tier serves a particular function and exhibits unique characteristics that contribute to the broader Network. The first of these tiers, the Outer Periphery, contains mainstream social media platforms in which diluted pill ideology and incel terminology are embedded. The presentation of this content is housed in videos introducing fringe opinions regarding the modern dating arena. It is here pill ideology is first introduced, normalising extreme concepts of sexual markets and market value, biological determinism, and a postfeminist sentiment of empowered and privileged women through 'normiefication' (de Zeeuw et al., 2020). The second tier, the Inner Periphery, contains an amalgamation of sites predominantly serving as an ideological and historical repository of the incel community. Social

ontology expressed within facilitative spaces such as the Incel wiki and Looksmax.org holds pill ideology as a truism, viewing the social and romantic spheres through a neoliberal, biologically deterministic, and postfeminist lens, legitimising the indel identity. Antagonistic spaces within Reddit, a historical home of the incel community born form 4Chan rhetoric and sentiment, provide tangible out-group entities that demarcate the incel community's external boundaries. Together these sites exist outside of mainstream social media and provide historical and current venues within which pill ideology remain operant or residual. The final tier, the Performative Core, contains the 'controversial and sensational' incel forums so widely addressed in previous research. Here blackpill ideology dominates performances in facilitative spaces that afford and permit varying degrees of incel identity. These are the 'front of stage' (Goffman, 1959) digital social settings where incels perform their identities in homosocial, ideologically aligned spaces, presenting themselves in line with the heavily policed guidelines and boundaries of respective forums. The behaviours, communication mechanisms, and discursive apparatuses used to dilute pill social ontology in the Peripheries are (re)produced here unabated, in explicit, unregulated, and concentrated forms. These spaces vary from the more 'inclusive' space of Love-shy.net, through the heavily policed forum of Incels.is, to the 'ideological fundamentalist' space of Blackpill.club. Together these individual sites produce a Network spanning mainstream and niche space, affording the dissemination and normalisation of pill ideology, providing digital arenas for the performance of numerous incel identities.

5.1   The Outer Periphery

User generated digital social networks characteristic of Web 2.0 afford the capacity to circumvent the traditional boundaries of analogue and geographic socialisation (Pink et al., 2016), providing an unrestricted exchange of endless ideas and access to information. The internet plays a significant role in disseminating information to young people (Smith et al., 2014), including extreme or 'fringe' ideas (Benkler, Faris & Roberts, 2018) through multimodal communication (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). The fringe can be defined as "the outer, marginal or extreme part of an area, group or activity" (Solea & Sugiura, 2023, p. 316). Pill ideology may be characterised as existing in the fringe; an extreme and marginal social ontology regarding dating and intimacy professed by a minority of men interacting in a closed and niche community. Fringe norms, ideas, and beliefs existing outside of mainstream discourse penetrate socially dominant ways of thinking through a process of 'normiefication' (de Zeeuw et al., 2020), in which "previous niche ideas, theories, and discursive practices have greater reach outside of their native subcultural context, on mainstream platforms governed by other networked publics and rules of engagement" (Solea & Sugiura, 2023, p. 313). Mainstream social media platforms afford this capacity through the interconnected nature of site engagement, ensuring repeated

exposure to material and capacity for distribution through re-posting and sharing functions (Ribeiro et al., 2020; Fisher, 2023). This amplifies ideologies across platforms or groups and between users. As fringe ideas become a regular component of mainstream digital social arenas, these ideas build traction, legitimacy, and authority within the broad milieu of competing information and ideas communicated, exposing more users to these ideologies.

The Outer Periphery (OP) of the incel network contains multimodal media promoting pill ideology across mainstream social media platforms. Within these sites 'incelebrities' and men aligned with pill ideology proffer fringe pill ideology and incel terminology within seemingly innocuous content discussing dating and attraction. In the OP pill social ontology is communicated through normiefication, disseminating diluted fringe concepts of marketplace sexual dynamics, biological determinism, and postfeminist sentiment within the confines of these networked publics' rules of engagement. Through the promulgation of pill ideology bound within the discourse of certain YouTube channels and TikTok accounts, these fringe tenets reach a wide body of social media users desensitising those repeatedly exposed to normalised content, enabled by a variety of platform-specific functions, media, and modes of communication.

5.1.1   YouTube

YouTube, a popular video sharing platform, is one of the most used social media platforms by young people (Champion & Frank, 2021). The site allows users to create 'channels' containing self-generated video content accessible through the platform's search function, with users able to subscribe to channels and receive notification of new videos. While YouTube transformed accessibility to online videos, it has also increased exposure to inappropriate, fringe, and hateful rhetoric and ideas (Papadamou et al., 2020; Ribeiro et al., 2020). Amongst the variety of fringe content available there are number of channels that promote pill ideology, incorporating incel nomenclature into videos centred loosely around the themes of dating and attraction. Within these videos dissemination of the social ontology of pill ideology is strategically distanced from the incel community; omitting explicit use of the term 'incel', due to widespread prohibition of incel-related content across multiple social media platforms (Jaki et al., 2019; Stijelja & Mishara, 2023). Two main forms of content were encountered within YouTube: first-person vlogs[17] and dating and attraction channels.

First-person vlogs consist of short, self-recorded video testimonies produced by a specific sub-community of incels known as 'True Forced Loneliness', or 'TFLers'. TFL members are

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[17] A vlog, or video blog, is a type of blog that uses video as its medium.

predominantly African American and Hispanic men who, while not explicitly expressing an incel identity, provide affective and evocative monologue testimonies detailing the social and personal difficulties they experience as involuntarily celibate men. Channel curators regularly post five-to-twenty-minute videos discussing personal experiences of romantic isolation, the current state of their mental health, as well as broader conceptual topics such as dating dynamics, SMV, and women's purported lookist discrimination. TFLers attribute the perceived discrimination experienced in the dating sphere to women's 'nature', who become collectively homogenised under a postfeminist narrative encapsulated by four words "women are the choosers", framing women as an empowered, privileged, and dominant singularity. This Othering results from discursive techniques that reframe the individual actions of a singular woman in an anecdotal social situation as a collective through use of the term "women", amalgamating individual behaviour into a powerful, inaccessible mass.

With over 40,000[18] subscribers 'HeedandSucceed' is one of the most popular TFL channels and exemplifies the discursive practices of the wider group of vloggers. Videos entail emotive monologues frequently communicated through a stressed, hopeless, or frustrated tone, explicitly connecting incelibacy to poor mental wellbeing, a lack of material capital, and low SMV. Women's discriminatory partner selection is a frequent topic of discussion, evidenced by video titles such as "How women REALLY feel about undesirable men (the truth)" and "If you cant [sic] pull hoes it's not your fault (the truth)". The former video discusses women's 'nature', implying a fixed essentialism to women's behaviour, mirroring the biological determinism of pill social ontology. In the latter video contains an emotionally charged monologue placing blame for rejection at the feet of women's selectivity, using affectively charged discourse absolving himself, and by extension the viewer, of responsibility for incelibacy: "it's not your fault you're born unattractive to women [...] You're just a vile organism specifically as a man to women. You didn't ask for that. It's not your fault". Here women are implicitly assigned the responsibility for an absence of intimacy, framed as a collective; "women" rather than some/most/many women. This (re)produces the victimhood sentiment present throughout pill ideology (Rothermel, Kelly & Jasser, 2024), suggesting an unjust situation in which all women become a perpetrator and men experiencing their rejection the victims. This declaration of blame evokes emotional responses through the use of "vile", conjuring a perceived disgust in women repulsed by unattractive men. This sentiment conveys to viewers they are not alone in experiencing negative affect, evidenced by one viewer's comment on the video: "I feel the same way all the time (not just women…just life in general)". Here HeedandSucceed's emotive testimony provides a degree of parasocial

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[18] As of 1/10/22.

camaraderie to this viewer also experiencing rejection, as well as a confirmed target which he extends to include the wider social world.

TFLers provide relatable shared experience and subsequent reflections, exposing and familiarising those seeking information to understand or explain their own incelibacy with diluted pill social ontology, disseminated through discussion of women's biologically determined nature and evocative testimonies conveyed through a combination of discursive mechanisms. Through emotive, self-victimising language and anecdotal accounts of adverse sociosexual experience, viewers engaging with this content find a synthetic amity, sympathising with and relating to sentiments communicated by video creators.

The normiefication and subsequent normalisation of tenets of pill ideology also occurs across other YouTube channels that explicitly and deliberately promote such fringe social ontology as a legitimate means with which to understand the social world, employing a combination of affective discourse, anecdotal experience, and pseudoscientific data presentation. This content is produced by 'incelebrities'; members of the incel community who have reached prominence through social media presence and content production (Incels.wiki, 2022a). The three channels viewed, '*WheatWaffles*', '*INCELTV*', and '*FACEandLMS*'[19] share a similar format in which 10-30 minute long, self-produced videos discuss heterosexual dating and attraction explicitly through the lenses of red and blackpill social ontology. These channels explicitly embrace and promote pill ideology as credible scientific theory to explain supposed dating and attraction asymmetries.

Videos present pseudoscientific arguments to support blackpill ideology, offering 'evidence' through the cherry-picking of data from peer reviewed publications, dating application experiments, and anecdotal data, or "anecdata" (Burton, 2022, p. 689), from dating television programmes, vox pops[20], and personal experience. These videos present pill social ontology of a discriminatory 'lookist' dating market governed by the biologically determined preferences of women. While the style of each channel varies, content collectively reinforces sexual market dynamics and produces an implicit, homogenising, sexist narrative inherent to blackpill ideology, framing women as an entitled, privileged, collective mass, guided by biological impulses to seek out the genetically fittest men according to fixed physical characteristics.

WheatWaffles, a YouTube channel with over 150,000 subscribers, perfectly encapsulates the format, content, and mode of communication inherent to these channels. Channel content

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[19] LMS = looks, money, status.
[20] An opinion usually in video format represented by informal comments from members of the public.

normiefies elements of the incel identity and blackpill ideology, as videos disseminate fringe theoretical and discursive concepts underlying the incel identity into a popular mainstream social media arena, normalising the social ontology of a postfeminist, biologically determined sexual market.

On arriving at the channel's homepage[21] viewers are presented with audio commentary from a video entitled "100 Blackpill Beliefs in One Video" which plays within a thumbnail window. This commentary succinctly illustrates the channel's ideological and discursive position:

> One. Looks are the most important factor for man's dating success. Two. Women care about looks more than men. Three. This is because women are more selective in their mate choice. Their dating strategy can be compared to a single line fisherman trying to catch the highest quality fish.

Here pill social ontology is communicated in a diluted form, stressing the centrality of physical capital, informed through evolutionary psychology nomenclature of "mate choice", implying a deliberate and conscious act or strategy of a homogenised "women" collective exhibiting uniform, discriminatory 'selective' behaviour.

The channel's initial videos serve to demarcate the boundaries of dialectical-relational pill ideology, presenting the blue, red, and blackpills as competing ways of interpreting the dating sphere and heterosexual attraction. 'Bluepill ideas' are defined as the belief that the performance of certain social acts will achieve romantic intimacy, such as "being kind and having a good personality" or "with a long heart felt letter showing how much you care, show how much you love them, [...] make sure that you make your intentions clear, [...] send them clear letters cards uh flowers to their door". Redpill ideology is explicitly framed within the ideological tenets of ascetic and physical self-improvement: "keep going to the gym, [...], wear nice clothes, have a high attention to detail like hair, skincare". Both bluepill and redpill ideology are rejected as "myths" and "misconceptions", in videos such as "50 Bluepilled lies DEBUNKED in 1 video" wherein blackpill ideology is framed as the truth of dating and attraction, situating non-ideological tropes of dating into the conceptual housing of the bluepill, illustrated in Figure 4.

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[21] A homepage is the Channel's page within YouTube housing all video links and channel information.

Figure 4   Demarcation of tenets of pill ideology

Here a screengrab from the video illustrates the expulsion of tropes incompatible with blackpill ideological understanding of dating; "just be yourself", into the bluepill, framed as a "lie" juxtaposed against a blackpill "reality" of biologically determined physical appearance governing success in the dating sphere.

Despite a deliberate refrain from using the term incel due to demonetisation concerns, video titles such as "40 Differences in Treatment Between a Sub5, Normie & Chad" and "How To Calculate Your SMV (sexual market value)" indicate incel nomenclature is present channel discourse, as fringe ideas of sub5 (a deliberate malapropism for incel), Chad, and SMV are disseminated through videos. Within this content the author provides a combination of personal experience; "My Most Brutal Blackpilling Story – Why Dating Sucks for Average Guys", dating application anecdata; "Tinder Experiment Proves How Brutal it is For Average Guys", and misappropriated scientific research; "Data Supporting The Blackpill **Undeniable Facts**" to buttress the blackpill as a legitimate and scientifically supported social ontology. These modes of communication are used to support claims of women's discrimination in the dating sphere.
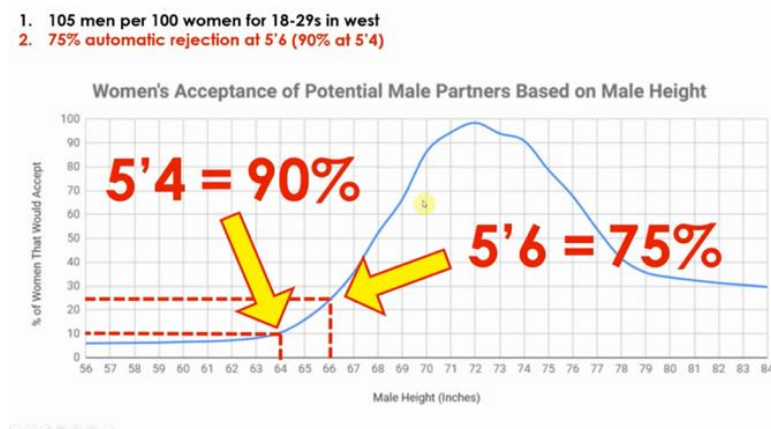
Figure 5   Employment of 'data' in YouTube videos

Figure 5 exemplifies the strategic employment of scientific data within these videos. In a discussion concerning the apparent importance of the height of men, a graph is offered

demonstrating the height preferences of women. The only context offered is "105 men per 100 women for 18-29s in west", indicating only an apparent geographic gender ratio, lacking any accompanying commentary to contextualise the methodology or design of the study. The graph is analysed to then produce author interpreted rejection rates, indicated by large red font, used to support claims that "a 5'6" man will have a 75% rejection rate based on his height alone". Absent any contextualisation, viewers are left with the author's assertions that generalise the height preference presented in the graph to all women. In this way isolated scientific research is used to confirm blackpill ideology, in this case women's universal preference for a specific parameter of an immutable physical trait.
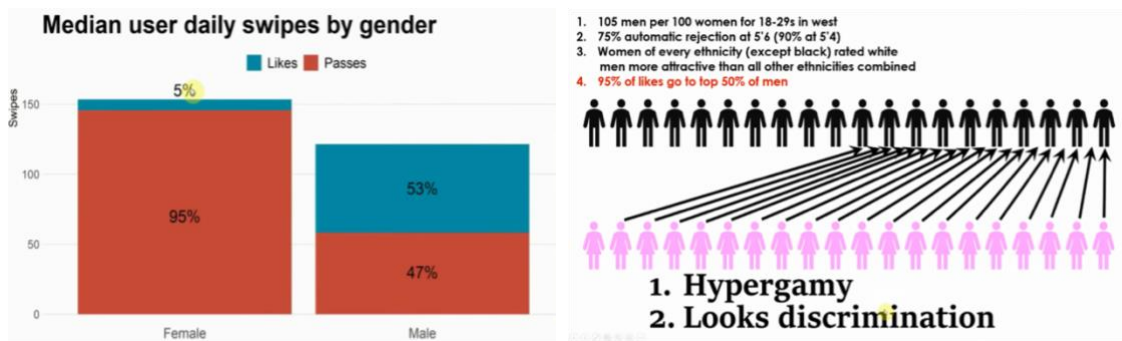
Figure 6   Dating application data used to support hypergamy

Figure 6 demonstrates the use of dating application anecdata to further blackpill ideology. Here swiping[22] outcomes within dating applications is offered, suggesting a significantly disproportionate rejection of potential partner profiles by women based on presentation of specific physical capitals. Again, data lacks contextualisation; "This study I found confirms this", absent detail of the study's origin or the dating application(s) analysed in the research. This data is then used by the author to employ a discursive rhetoric that normiefies the fringe pill ideology of women's looks based discrimination:

> A staggering 95 of tinder likes go to just the top 50 percent of men showing two things. Number one, hypergamy. It shows the vast majority of women even those of lesser attractiveness only have eyes for the top fifty percent and secondly it also shows the significant amount of looks discrimination [...] If you are not in the top 5% of men on dating apps, you may as well forget using them.

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[22] Swiping involves gesturing left or right with a finger swipe on a dating app to respectively reject or signify interest in a presented profile.

Hypergamy refers to the supposed strategic behaviour of women dating, marrying, or reproducing with men with the highest ultimate genetic fitness (Jaki et al., 2019). Derived from the term hypergyny, denoting women's tendency to marry into higher social strata (Blake & Brooks, 2022), pill ideology uses this discursive tool to present women's dating behaviour as collective, biologically driven discrimination, gravitating women to the best DNA characterised by fixed physical traits (Sugiura, 2021a). Here decontextualised dating application research is used to support claims of the apparent hypergamous discrimination of women. This is understood and communicated through a biologically determined lens absent any alternative gendered social or structural explanations, (re)producing and disseminating fringe pill social ontology of definitive and immutable biologically determined lookist discrimination in mainstream digital space.

Based on the apparent scientific credibility and authority of blackpill ideology 'proven' by data, video content proceeds to frame variance of physical features within pill social ontology's marketisation and commodification of the sociosexual sphere via the sexual marketplace (SMP) and market value (SMV). In the video "How To Calculate Yor SMV (sexual market value)" asking "What is SMV?", the dating sphere is explicitly understood as a market. Here the author provides a titular definition of the neoliberal pill ontology of commodified erotic capital valued within a marketplace dynamic. The video defines SMV as "market value, which is your overall score including all factors of attractiveness", proceeded by a step-by-step calculation guide through the assessment of physical traits including height, muscularity, head hair, penis size, jaw shape, and facial congruency. A pseudoscientific nominal score within pill ideology's decile system of attractiveness is then formulated based on the aggregate collation of these individual physical features (see Figure 7).

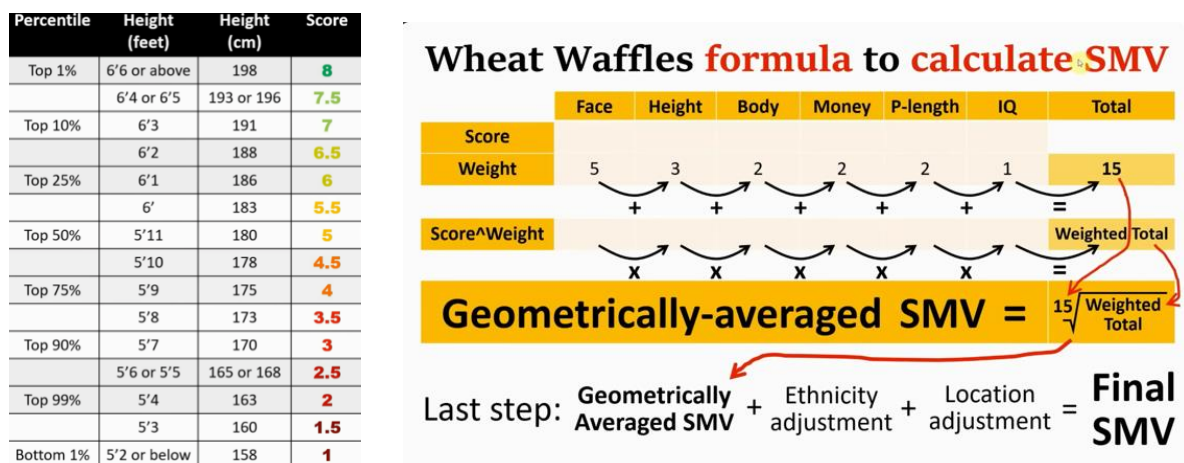| Percentile	Height (feet)	Height (cm)	Score
Top 1%	6'6 or above	198	8
	6'4 or 6'5	193 or 196	7.5
Top 10%	6'3	191	7
	6'2	188	6.5
Top 25%	6'1	186	6
	6'	183	5.5
Top 50%	5'11	180	5
	5'10	178	4.5
Top 75%	5'9	175	4
	5'8	173	3.5
Top 90%	5'7	170	3
	5'6 or 5'5	165 or 168	2.5
Top 99%	5'4	163	2
	5'3	160	1.5
Bottom 1%	5'2 or below	158	1

Figure 7   Nominal decile calculations of sexual market capitals

To support the veracity of the SMP and SMV, strategically edited video clips are offered including dating programmes in which men with traits indicative of low SMV are rejected by women who instead favour those with high levels of SMV (see Figure 8).
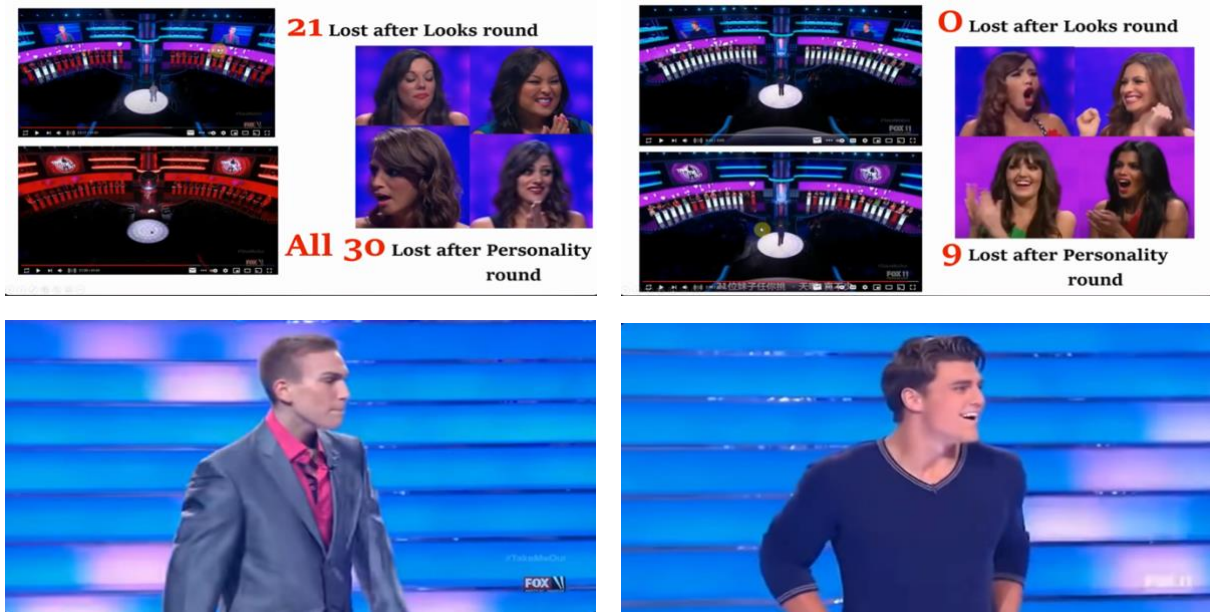

Figure 8   Media employed to infer women's uniform dating preferences

Through the combined demonstration of SMV within the SMP, and women's apparent uniform and ultimate strategic desire for fixed biological and genetic traits indicative of high market value, women are implicitly presented as an oppositional Other. The discriminatory preferences purportedly supported by the (mis)interpretation and (mis)representation of scientific research and anecdotal data construct women as a collective, privileged mass, exhibiting "unseen levels of delusion, hysteria, and entitlement in the dating market". Visual and discursive apparatus such as these portray women's behaviour as both conscious and oppressive, as a subjugating and adversarial force denying men romantic intimacy through biologically determined lookist discrimination, confined within the rigid parameters of pill dating market social ontology.

Akin to TFL videos, through the process of normiefication discursive and conceptual structures of pill ideology reach a broad general audience within mainstream digital space, evidenced by viewing figures of videos such as WheatWaffle's 'Tinder experiment' exceeding one million (YouTube, 2022b). This disproportionate viewership in which views exceed subscribers is achieved in part by the technological affordances of the platform, with the site's algorithms playing a significant role in exposing users to ideologically governed incel related content. Algorithms present ever more extreme or fringe content related to the theme of a particular video as this serves to increase screen time retention and subsequent exposure to advertising (Fisher, 2023). This can be considered a form of 'relational steering' (Donati & Archer, 2015), in which social media algorithms determining content exposure shape social connections and knowledge based on commercial interests instead of authentic human needs and choices.

Rather than offering balanced perspectives upon dating and attraction, tech companies push the most sensational and extreme versions of a subject (Fisher, 2023), leading unsuspecting users into echo chambers (Salojarvi et al., 2020) that promulgate niche and extreme ideological viewpoints of the social world.
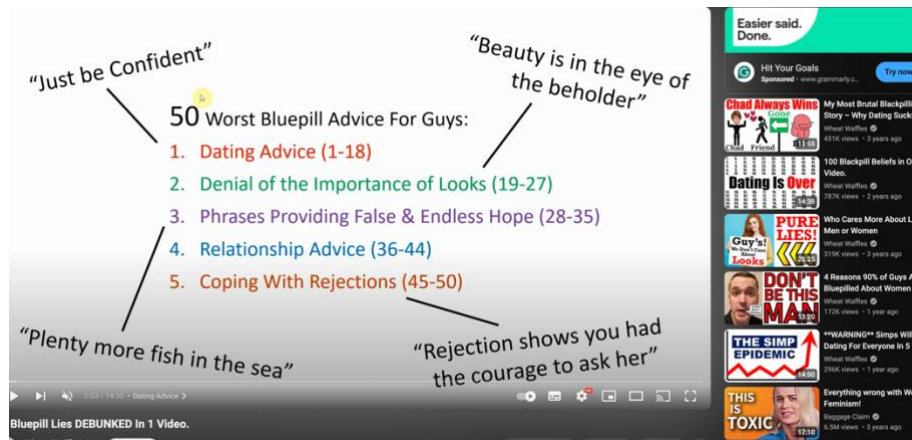

Figure 9   YouTube's recommendations of additional pill themed videos

According to Papadamou et al., (2020), users of YouTube have a 6.3% chance of exposure to an incel related video within five videos following exposure to a non-incel video, increasing to 9.4% after exposure to one incel related video and 11.4% after two repeated exposures. Platform functionality thus further facilitates the normiefication of pill ideology through the delivery of content to users who otherwise may not have actively sought the material. The 'Recommended' function of YouTube in which videos are suggested by the site's algorithm produces a 'filter bubble' in which thematically aligned content gradually intensifying in extremity is suggestively presented to the user (Hussein, Juneja, & Mitra, 2020; Fisher, 2023) Indeed, while viewing Wheat Waffles videos, the recommended section of the webpage proffered additional videos from this channel as well as other pill ideology centred videos (see Figure 9).

Repeated exposure through a variety of differing channels' thematically aligned content serves to normalise the fringe ideas found within. For men and adolescent boys seeking to understand the sociosexual world and their identity within it, these videos provide diluted, entry level reading of pill ideology and the incel identity. Through pseudoscientific engagement with (anec)data and the evocative responses generated from presentation of men seemingly rejected based on low SMV, these videos (re)produce and normalise the fringe blackpill ideological tenet of lookism, evoking emotive responses of resentment and anger in viewers. Individual action or choice is obscured by the provision of anecdotal social situations, past experiences, and (mis)presented research evidencing aggregate behaviour supposed to represent all women. Lookism is employed as a discursive tool to confer blame upon women for their supposed biologically determined discrimination as entitled, privileged actors in the SMP. In line with pill

ideology, this postfeminist understanding of women as the powerful dominant gender, holding and enacting advantages over men with low SMV, ensures women become a homogenised collective group. A second social media platform further normiefies diluted pill ideology, replicating the discursive and conceptual modes of communication found in YouTube videos in compact, scrollable media popular with young men and adolescent boys.

5.1.2   TikTok

TikTok is one of the fastest growing social media applications (Doyle, 2023) with more than two in three US teenagers engaging with the platform (Vogels, Gelles-Watnick & Massarat, 2022), providing similar media to YouTube in shorter videos no longer than three minutes in duration (Almonte, 2022). The 'for you'[23] function, unique to TikTok (TikTok, 2023), "offers a personalized short-form video stream tailored to the user's specific interests" (Taylor & Brisini, 2023, p. 1), algorithmically curated based on previous view history, and preferences indicated by 'liking' videos or sharing content. The content and style of videos from these channels exist as microcosms of those found within YouTube. Three channels, '*Wheat_waffles*', '*takeblackpill*', and '*face.and.lms*', offer heavily edited versions of video content found in longer YouTube videos, with the former two channels containing Wheat Waffles' YouTube channel content and the latter FACEandLMS'. TikTok channels containing blackpill ideology (re)produce identical normiefying and normalising functions of YouTube content, facilitating an identical means of disseminating diluted pill social ontology further into mainstream social media space.

Taketheblackpill, exemplifies both the format, content, and mode of communication of this collection of channels, as well as the platform's functionality in delivering content to viewers. The channel consists of a series of clipped 10-15 second videos of WheatWaffles' '*100 Blackpill beliefs in One Video*', in which the original fifteen-minute video is dissected into a series of nineteen shorter segments. Videos present information decontextualised from WheatWaffle's wider video catalogue, conferring standalone declarative statements that reproduce blackpill ideology social ontology in mainstream space.

Accordingly, videos elicit identical modes of communication to disseminate blackpill ideology; dating sphere discrimination is presented and explained using misrepresented, cherrypicked academic research, decontextualised clips from dating television programmes, and vox pops (see Figure 10) providing emotively charged evidence to support the veracity of blackpill ideology.

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[23] Akin to YouTube's recommended function which algorithmically suggests associated videos.

Figure 10   Vox pops and dating TV shows used in TikTok videos

This apparent discrimination, as in YouTube videos, serves to offer viewers understanding of their personal experiences of involuntary celibacy via a victimhood identity. The dating arena in which this purported discrimination occurs is again discursively framed within pill social ontology of the SMP, reducing men and women's value to erotic capital. Figure 11 demonstrates the presentation of SMV through genetically fixed phenotypical presentation of combined physical traits such muscularity and facial congruency; market value indicators of genetic fitness.
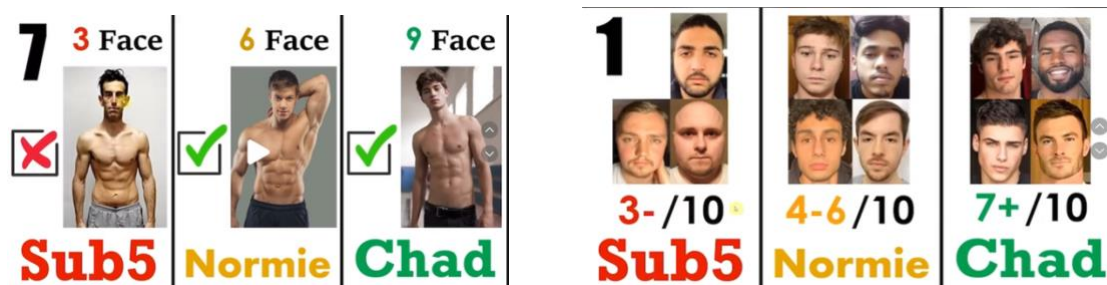
Figure 11   Market value indicated through facial congruency and muscularity

Discrimination faced by men is understood as the consequence of women's biologically hardwired homogenous partner selectivity, garnered as means with which to promote a biologically deterministic sociosexual ontology. Resulting claims of lookism discursively Other all women based on the choices of a small, apparently privileged, empowered, and entitled visible minority presented in dating show and vox pop anecdata, acting according to a uniform desire to invariably seek out the best genes.

WheatWaffle's original YouTube homepage video is clipped and repackaged in Takeblackpill's edited TikTok video: "Women are more selective in their mate choice. Their dating strategy can be compared to a single line fisherman trying to catch the highest quality fish". *The"'strategy" of "more selective" women seeking the "highest quality" "mate choice" presented here again speaks to the functionality of normiefication*. Repeated exposure to content is an inherent

mechanism of this process (de Zeeuw et al., 2020), as extreme ideas, concepts, or beliefs become familiar to the viewer over time normalising fringe content within mainstream space. TikTok's platform dynamics facilitate a differing format of exposure to YouTube, as video durations last in the span of seconds rather than the 10-30 minutes of YouTube videos disseminating pill ideology. Consequently, TikTok delivers fringe content reduced to short, affirmative, and authoritative sentences further reinforcing pill ideology tenets.
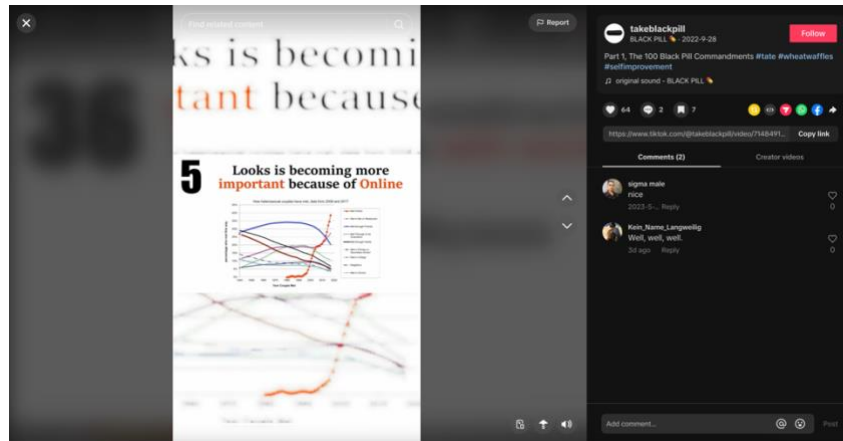
Figure 12   Use of data as ascetic backgrounds in videos

The strategic isolation of research used in YouTube videos intensifies here, as data is employed as an ascetic background, absent any specific reference to the research in the commentary. For example, in Figure 12 a graph is presented during an overlaid commentary that states "looks [sic] is becoming even more important for guys now because of the explosion of online dating apps", absent any explicit commentary on the diagram. This demonstrates another mode of pseudoscientific communication, in which the mere presence of fleeting diagrammatically represented data produces a sense of legitimacy despite any specific reference to, or contextualisation of, the presented data in relation to the claims made in the commentary.

Further, the like, share, auto scroll[24], and for you functions of the platform have been shown to produce an echo chamber effect (Doroshenko & Tu, 2022), in which thematically aligned content is consecutively presented to viewers in a continuous stream based on sharing and like preferences and themes of previously viewed videos. This self-perpetuates the further presentation of content as the platform's algorithm learns which content to suggest (Baker, Ging & Andreasen, 2024). Indeed, when activating the auto scroll function during observation of

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[24] A TikTok function which automatically plays the next video after the current one ends.

the five TikTok channels, thematically similar videos and further content from the currently viewed channel were algorithmically presented in succession.

TikTok platforms ideological content originally produced and delivered in long-form videos within YouTube channels, edited into fleeting, attention-grabbing derivatives that (re)produce the normiefication and normalisation of fringe pill social ontology. Through TikTok's platform format, content curation and exposure functions, the discursive apparatus of affective and pseudoscientific communication of information present in the origin material is further broadcast and amplified into mainstream space. TikTok replicates the same discursive dynamics of YouTube within a different, yet equally effective algorithmically governed digital arena, curating ideologically aligned content within a fleeting yet continuous stream of videos. This mode of communicative transmission introduces pill social ontology to a wider audience of young men and adolescent boys that may not have already encountered material elsewhere.

This selection of sites and channels is not exhaustive. YouTube and TikTok serve as examples of the platforms found within the OP of the Incel Network. Additional mainstream social media platforms such as X[25] or Facebook offer similar algorithmically governed mainstream space in which pill social ontology is disseminated. The examples provided here demonstrate the content and functions of the Outer Periphery rather than a comprehensive list of all platforms therein. The OP is embedded within mainstream social media platforms, providing 'entry level' exposure to diluted pill ideology and incel terminology. Despite attempts to prohibit the incel community from engaging in these spaces, the tenets of associated ideology are peppered across channels and groups concerned with dating and attraction. Incel terminology and ideology are normalised, essentialising women's dating behaviour via a homogenising narrative that casts these unjust and discriminatory choices as the result of a genetically governed marketplace affording value based on physical fixed traits. The popularity and accessibility of these platforms normiefy fringe ideas of the incel community in mainstream spaces, providing venues that expose those both likely and unlikely to actively search for such material to pill social ontology underlying the incel identity. An absolving narrative of the collective woman Other enacting lookist discrimination towards low SMV men within a rigidly governed marketplace, supported by pseudoscientific presentation of misinterpreted research and anecdata, presents an affectively charged means to interpret negative experiences of romantic rejection via undeserved victimhood.

The next tranche of the Incel Network, the Inner Periphery, facilitates and intensifies exposure to pill social ontology and incel discourse, uncritically accepting the incel identity and supporting

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[25] Formerly Twitter.

ideology. These sites exist between the Performative Core and Outer Periphery, bridging diluted mainstream locales and explicit ideologically entrenched performative echo chambers of incel forums.

5.2   The Inner Periphery

The inner periphery (IP) of the incel network consists of several differing digital sites, offering arenas that largely accept and embrace pill ideology and the incel identity or inadvertently shore up boundaries through overt opposition. The Incel wiki, a quasi-encyclopaedic store of constructs, terminology, and ideology links the Network through exolink signposting to other incel websites, further providing a repository necessary to familiarise with the incel identity and embrace pill social ontology. While no longer a site of incel community engagement, Reddit remains operant in disseminating terminology and providing 'incel adjacent' sites of digital engagement that inadvertently assist in the boundary construction of the incel community. One forum, Looksmax.org, is situated within the Inner Periphery in which men interact through redpill ideological tenets of self-improvement, understanding self-(e)valuation through perceived sexual market value. Together these sites exist outside of mainstream locales, peripheral and instrumental to the self-moderated incel forums of the Performative Core.

5.2.1   The incel wiki

The incel wiki lies at the centre of the IP, providing a bridge into the incel community and ideology through the provision of a purportedly objective community resource website. As a Wikipedia style encyclopaedia, this website offers extensive definitions of incel terminology, and pill ideological constructs and terms. The site contains 1,465 articles created by 121 users (Incels.wiki, 2022b) reflecting the disproportionate effort of super posters encountered in previous research of other incel digital spaces, acting as an ideological repository for the incel community. Site traffic arises predominantly from mainstream search engine results (75%) directing to specific incel terms or concepts (Roser, Chalker & Squirrel, 2023).

A significant portion of the website's content is dedicated to 'The Scientific Blackpill', a collection of 290 summarised academic research articles supporting partner choice discrimination based on physical and personality traits, placing emphasis on the importance of personal characteristics such as height, facial congruency, penis size, and skeletal frame in determining romantic success. The repository of research found within The Scientific Blackpill constructs an evidence base for the insurmountable limitations poor SMV places on a man in the SMP, producing a knowledge system that undergirds the veracity of the incel identity.

Figure 13   List or research entries in Scientific Blackpill Incel wiki page

Through an excessively citation laden entry (see Figure 13), The Scientific Blackpill produces an argument by exhaustion (Burton, 2022). The sheer quantity of the 290 supporting research studies offered prohibits any reasonable attempts to accurately dispute claims made, instead producing credibility through reference to an overwhelming degree of seemingly authoritative sources many lack the training to sufficiently interpret. Through the provision of academic research, the incel wiki illustrates the value hierarchy derived from the neoliberal sexual marketplace to site users through a scientific lens that presents an image of authority and accuracy.

As is the case with other wikis, a convincing, objective, and neutral tone initiates many entries, only to descend into a "a miasma of subjectivity, relativism, and factionalist rancor" (Lakeman, 2005, p. 147). Here, biased and affective discourse simultaneously collectivises all women before framing the collective as a strategically devious, selfish, and dangerous Other. Similar to OP content, the incel Wiki employs emotionally charged language to evoke affective responses to the discrimination experienced by men under lookism (Prazimo, 2024). For example, within the 'lookism' wiki entry an initial attempt to convey an objective and distanced definition is presented; "lookism is a synonym of cacophobia, but without a psychiatric context. Lookism

against people who have an extreme aesthetic appearance or are disfigured is sometimes called ableism or teratophobia". This quickly develops into affectively charged rancour producing a victimhood narrative; "incels are being forced to become vain to attract a partner in modern dating", simultaneously blaming this discrimination on a collective agency; "Women actually care a lot about men's looks. Women place a minimum threshold of attractiveness on potential mates". Women become a collective Other that "force" incels to "become vein", using scientific discourse of 'mates' needing 'minimum thresholds' suggesting a biological component to this need.

Numerous other entries contain content explicitly aligning with pill ideology, openly antagonising women and condemning the entire social world. For example, upon inputting women into the Wiki search function, users are directed to a page entitled 'Femoid'[26], a dehumanizing term used within the incel community to represent a woman. Indicating the ideological and discursive intensity within this site, the initial description reads:

> Femoids, also known as foids, are semi-humanoid creatures that only like Chads [...] The role of a femoid is to clean, cook and do housework for her man, who then uses her to have sex. In the social hierarchy they are below men.

The sexist and misogynistic content of this entry mirrors many of the diluted ideas found in the OP, presented here unabated. The uniformity of women is discursively reified through the use of femoid as a metaphoric and metonymic label, removing individual difference as all women collectively become an Othered non-human, robotic object misogynistically reduced to a domestic service provider.

As an ideological repository of the incel community, the incel wiki unsurprisingly contains many memetic devices employed by the incel community to demarcate in- and out-group boundaries (Burton, 2022) which further deride and Other women. Figure 14 demonstrates the memetic construction of out-group identities through the memetic provision of diagrammatic presentation of 'Chad', 'Stacy', and 'Becky'.

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[26] A portmanteau of female humanoid.
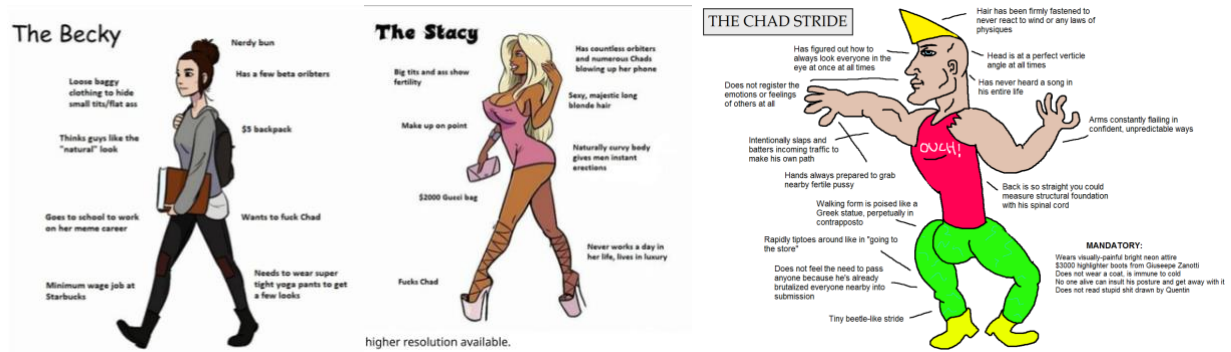
Figure 14   Memetic representation of Becky, Stacy, and Chad

Here each social actor purportedly experiencing different degrees of success in the SMP are characterised by the presence or dearth of hyperbolic hypersexualised characteristics of masculinity and femininity purported to indicate high market value; "big tits and ass; poised like a Greek statue" or low market value "nerdy bun; small tits/flat ass". This demarcation produces a gendered spectrum of political agency (Menzie, 2020; Fowler, 2022), via external boundaries that Other women and sexually successful men as discriminatory adversaries based on their appearance and behaviours (Furl, 2022; Andersen, 2023).

Further boundary demarcation is achieved via expulsion of redpill ideology through discursive and memetic mechanisms that present redpill ideology's neoliberal tenet of entrepreneurial self-improvement. Any belief that a position of low SMW can be improved (e.g. gymmaxxing) are discursively expelled through the term 'cope', defined as "a psychological strategy whereby someone rejects a harsh truth, and adopts a less disturbing belief instead". Self-improvement is considered a cope, whereby any attempt to improve is in fact a denial of blackpill 'truth' of the immutability of SMV. Gymmaxxing is explicitly defined as such a denial:

> A gymcel is an incel who copes by working out, thinking that a muscular body can compensate for an unattractive face. Gymcels will often spend many hours in the gym trying to improve their body in the hope of attracting women, but this usually doesn't play out.
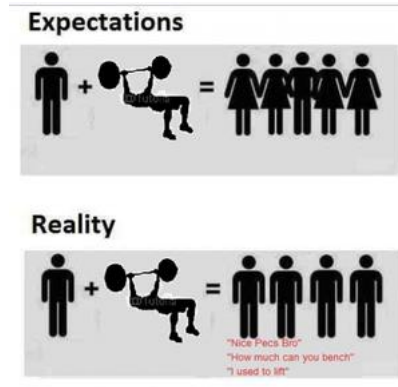
Figure 15   Incel wiki meme deriding redpill belief of gymaxxing

Here internal boundaries are produced and reinforced as blackpill ideology expels redpill beliefs. Figure 15 illustrates a meme within the gymcel wiki page summarising the demarcation of incel ideology. Here weight training is suggested to not produce the desired result of women's romantic attention. The redpill tenet of gymaxxing is undermined as a futile endeavour, reinforcing the blackpill ideological tenet of SMV immutability.

Figure 16   Incel wiki endolinks and exolinks

A final notable feature of the incel wiki is the endo and exolinking present throughout the site. Recall, endolinking concerns linking to other areas of the same website, whereas exolinking offers hyperlinks to other ideologically aligned platforms and websites (Brace, Baele & Ging, 2023). Figure 16 illustrates numerous endolink and exolink panes within pages of the Incel Wiki, linking to other manosphere and incel sites, forums such as Incels.is, and incelebrity YouTube channels and wiki pages. In this way the incel wiki not only serves as an ideological repository

for the incel community and pill ontology, but also as a network gateway both to Outer Periphery channels (e.g. YouTube) and the Performative Core of Incel forums discussed below.

The incel wiki acts as a digital home for pill ideology, offering self-identifying incels and non-incels an authoritative knowledge base with which to adopt the social ontology necessary in constructing an incel identity. The repetitive and resolute messaging throughout the terminological and conceptual entries found on the site creates an uncritical and unchallenged echo chamber in which men are offered a complete, absolving, and reductive means with which to build individual subjectivation, understand the social world, and interpret their own negative experiences. Existing members of the incel community engage in the (re)production of community and ideology boundaries, as a clear out-group of sexually successful men and all women are juxtaposed by an in-group of involuntary celibate men, framed as victims of unjust lookist discrimination supported by the 'science' of blackpill ideology. The incel wiki serves as an ideological signposting and education hub for potential members of the community, receiving traffic from mainstream search queries and exolinking to all regions of the Periphery and Performative Core of the Incel Network. Uncritical, biased entries claiming to objectively describe the incel identity and reality of the social world through the promotion of pill ideology provides definitions of the primary ideological constructs and terminology of the community, reinforcing both in group-out group boundaries and social ontology that defines the incel worldview.

Prior to the development of the Performative Core of the Incel Network, discussed below, Reddit served as a key arena for the formalisation of the incel community and ideology, before the removal of the incel community's subreddits by site moderators (Jaki et al., 2019; Van Valkenburgh, 2021). While no longer a locus of the incel community, Reddit continues to contribute to the Network via residual pill terminology and incel adjacent arenas.

5.2.2 Reddit

Reddit is a popular news aggregation and messaging platform upon which users post content or comments within thematically classified subreddits then 'voted' up or down by users, dictating the content's visibility to others (Tranchese & Sugiura, 2021). Prior to the migration of the incel community to incel specific forums, Reddit housed prominent incel subreddits (Cottee, 2020; Van Valkenburgh, 2021), with r/incels the most active of these spaces with 40,000 members (Hathaway, 2017; Hauser, 2017). These incel forums evolved from a convergence of the rhetoric and style of 4Chan message boards, and older incel forums such as loveshy.com, and 'pre-incel' involuntary celibate subreddits such as 'r/ForeverFucked' and 'r/ForeverUnwantedMen'.

Indeed, several scholars have noted the discursive and memetic symmetry of 4Chan culture and incel digital practice (Nagle, 2017; Ging, 2019a; Cottee, 2020), illustrating the inceptive influence and similarity of Chan board rhetoric within the incel community and pill ideology. Chan board's ethos centres around an ambivalent, shitposting, in-joke, and trolling sentiment; with deliberately inflammatory and provocative posts entwined within fascist, misogynistic, racist, and homophobic discourse (Nagle, 2017), prohibiting clear distinction between genuine and hyperbolic comments. The impersonal, ephemeral, and aleatory nature of anonymous and dissimulative posts within minimally governed discussion forums and comment spaces characterises a "deep vernacular web" (DVW), in which irony, irreverence, and hyperbole mask a vitriolic and combative identity politics of cyber-separationists distancing from mainstream internet socialisation (de Zeeuw et al., 2020; de Zee & Tuters, 2020, p. 215). It is both the DVW's apparatus of deliberate, unpredictable, and provocative anonymous posting and use of in-group nomenclature that characterises and informs the rhetoric of self-identifying incels' visible in forum threads and posts. For example, 'normie', a term used by incels to denote a 'bluepilled' average looking member of society, first originated in Chan boards denoting the ignorant, mis-, and uninformed outsider (Nagle, 2017).

Forums such as r/incels, and later r/braincels, reified the community and ideology in one location, perpetuating an "extremist sentiment" using "outrageous statements (...) intended to generate an escalatory spiral of reactions and responses" (Hoffman, Ware & Shapiro, 2020, p. 565). Although these communities were removed by website moderators between 2017 and 2019 (Hauser, 2017; Stijelja & Mishara, 2023), nomenclature of the deep vernacular web remains characteristic of subreddit activity, residually present across non-incel and incel 'adjacent' subreddits. Terminology appropriated from Chan boards such as normie, and pill and incel specific terms such as maxxing and Chad are still present throughout content of subreddits, (re)producing and maintaining the visibility of pill terminology.
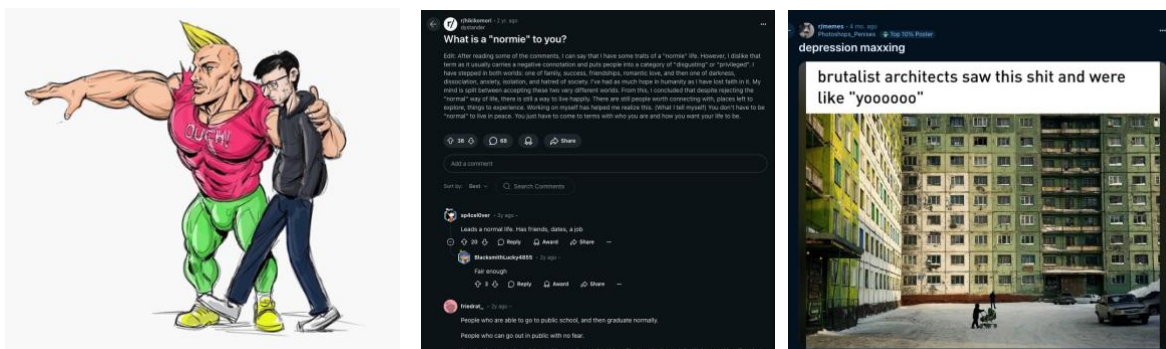
Figure 17   Use of incel and pill terminology and imagery in Reddit

Figure 16 illustrates several screenshots in which terminology or images related to pill ideology are present in general interest subreddits. Discussions of the definition of normie, maxxing used in a non-redpill ideology related manner, and Chad and Incel memes used in artwork flipping the meaning of Chad to a supportive man all employ terms and imagery originally emerging from pill and incel ideology. Despite strict prohibition of incel community congregation, this 'discursive spillover' (Roser, Chalker & Squirrell, 2023) maintains a presence of incel social ontology and terminology in non-incel space.

A handful of subreddits can be considered 'incel adjacent', that is, digital arenas interacting with the incel community specifically in a combative or adversarial manner. Two communities, 'r/IncelExit' and 'r/IncelTears', exemplify the process in which adjacent subreddits indirectly contribute to the incel network though their out-group position. r/IncelExit self describes as a forum for "people who got drawn into the Incel community but want support and help with a way out", offering a critically constructive forum in which pro incel rhetoric is prohibited and pill ideology is carefully deconstructed and challenged. Through compassionate, supportive, and tempered responses to claims made by incels looking for alternative means with which to understand dating and attraction, the incel social ontology of sex as a requisite to identity is challenged:

> *Incel:* To be honest I am positive that having sex 2-3 times with someone I consider attractive would solve literally all my problems. I would reaffirm myself as a real man and an attractive and normal member of society. I am super jealous of people around me and my Chad father who had sex three times by 16.

> *Response:* I suspect that you've got a cart-before-the-horse problem. So long as you're counting on sex to confirm that you're a "real man" and that relationships with women are something you're competing at, you're going to have a hard time finding a woman to sleep with you. We're people too, and we've got our own reasons for having sex. I think that probably the feeling that's most common across all women (because we're all different) is that we want to feel like we're desired on our own merits and not for other extrinsic reasons. All the reasons for wanting to have sex that you give in your post center around men - your validation as a man in comparison to your dad, to other peers.

Here the incel user is offered alternative cognitions by a subreddit member, challenging self-perceptions and the collectivising of women; "we're all different", humanising women and disarming the user's inward centred understanding of sex and women.

Despite this reframing however, the subreddit also fosters a narrative that places sex and relationships at the centre of incel identity alleviation. Women are burdened with the responsibility of elevating the discontent of incels looking to leave the community, as sex and intimacy framed by incels as essential to disengaging with the identity is indirectly confirmed by subreddit member's advice to achieve this end. Many threads centre around self-improvement to find a partner; "Yes You Need to be Able to Make Friends to Find a Girlfriend", in which one user suggests "if you don't have a social circle, you gotta make one. Not just to get laid, but because it's good for you". While the focus is on making friends, the inclusion of 'to get laid' signifies the importance of this act. Getting laid is framed as an end itself, an outcome relying on women in order to do so. Women here are implicitly assigned the role of provider of feminine coded goods, reinforcing pill ideology surrounding sex and intimacy. In another comment in replying to an incel's initiating friendships with older women at yoga, one users responds: "hanging out with old ladies is better than not doing anything, its social exercise….and people know people….you never know where each contact leads you" again the focus is on where it could lead. Women are indirectly, and perhaps inadvertently, framed as the saviours of these incel men, legitimised and reinforced through the r/IncelExit community's constructive criticism regarding prosocial self-improvement.

This well-meaning sentiment ultimately reinforces the sexist tropes that pill ideology is founded upon; women, as providers of sex and intimacy, will alleviate the negative personal experiences of these men provided one is able to present the socially prescribed presentation conducive to romantic intimacy. The subreddit effectively acts as an 'annex' to the incel community (Davis & Kettrey, 2024); a relative space inadvertently reinforcing the sexist pill tenet that frames women as the provider of feminine coded goods.
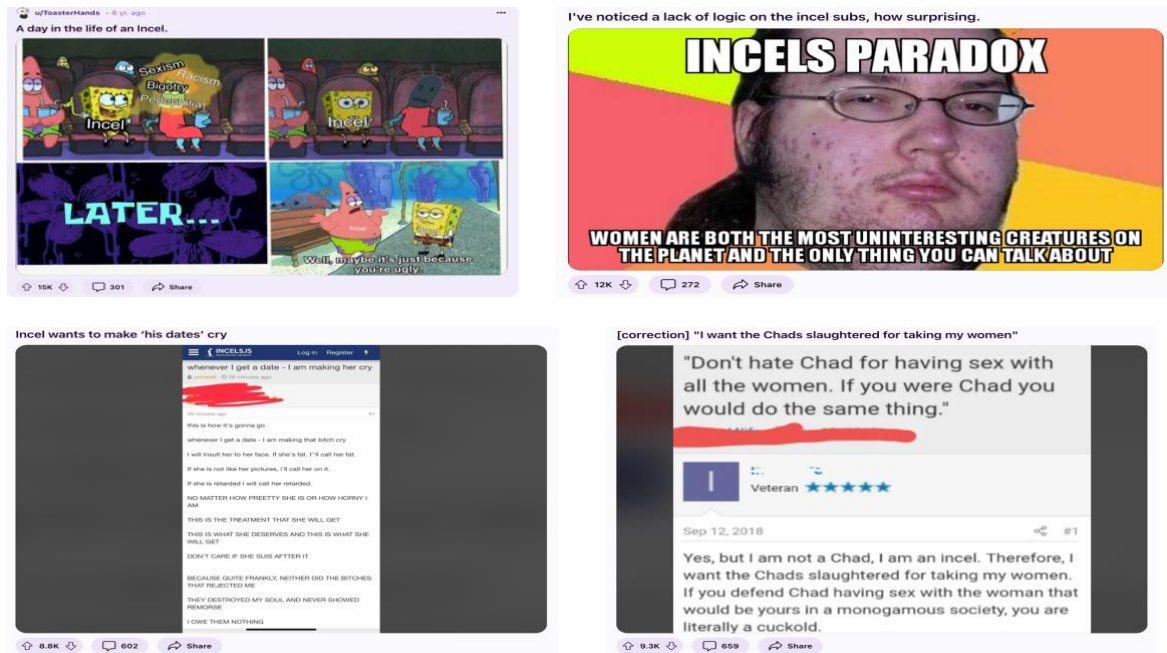
Figure 18   r/IncelTears memes and derision of incels.is posts

The second incel adjacent locale, r/IncelTears, is a "subreddit for posting screenshots of hateful, misogynist, racist, violent, and often bizarre content created by incels". Exemplified in Figure 18, subreddit activity involves overt antagonistic opposition of the incel identity and community, predominantly surveying the forum Incels.is for misogynistic, sexist, and racist content then posted to the community subreddit precipitating collective denigration by the subreddit's users.

The incel community situates itself in opposition to a dangerous woman Other, feminism and feminists, and an unfair, sexually successful, and discriminatory social world (Menzie, 2020; Czerwinsky, 2024), with these out-groups facilitating community and identity boundary construction (Johanssen, 2022a; Andersen, 2023). These outgroups, however, often remain in the imaginary; the perceived impact of women, feminism, and sexually active men are experienced anecdotally and vicariously at the individual level, absent any tangible out-group presence or visible organisation.

Through the derision of the incel community's digital locus, r/IncelTears provides an existential manifestation of the out-group enemy; 'proof' of the purported discrimination and derision claimed by incels. As a visible and antagonistic community directly engaging with the discourse produced in incel forums, the imagined Other(s) necessary for symbolic external boundary construction become tangible to the incel community.
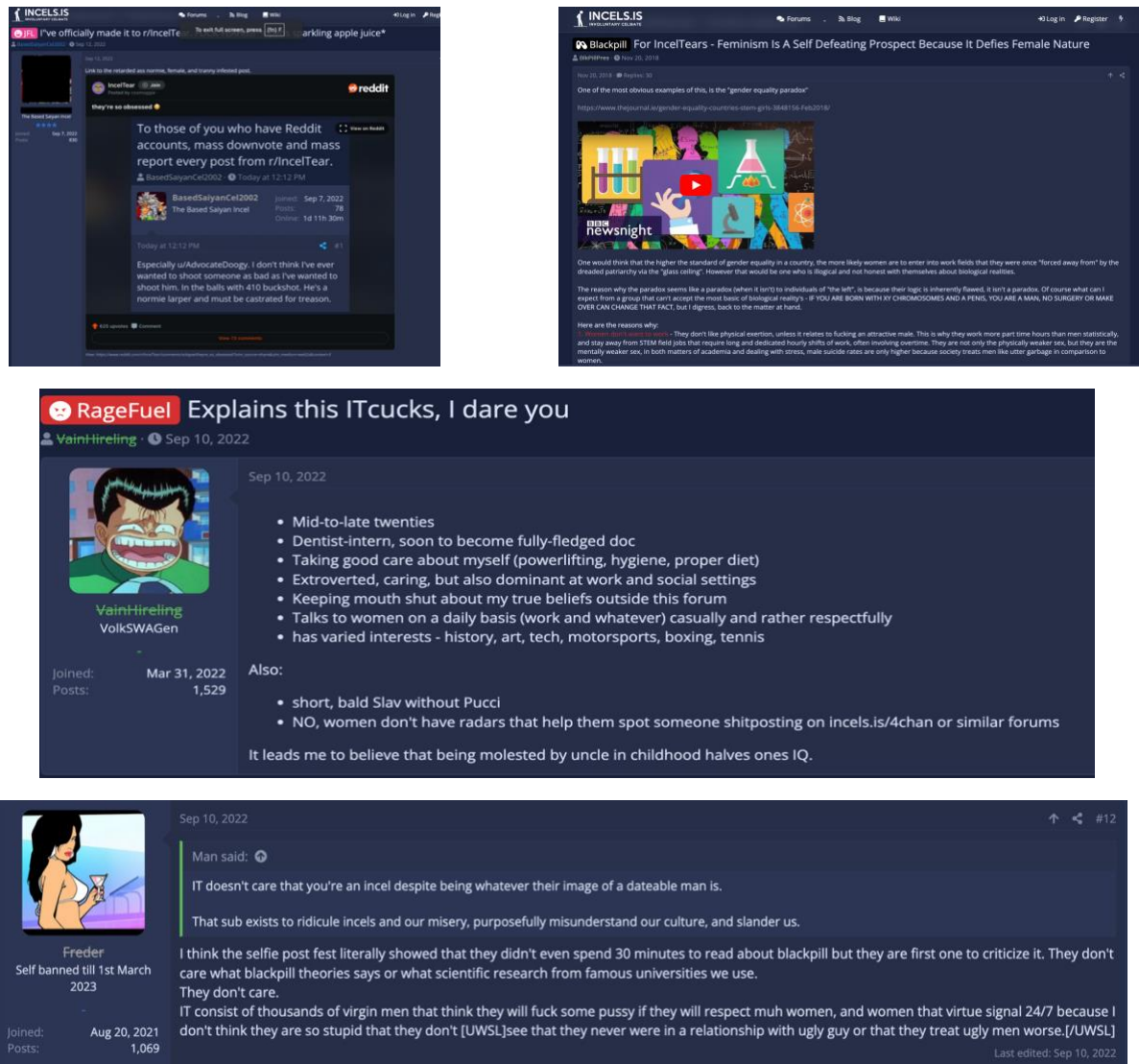
Figure 19   User of incels.is reacting to r/IncelTears

This is evident from the interest given to r/IncelTears within forums such as Incels.is. Figure 19 illustrates this combative engagement with the subreddit, with incels launching discursive attacks on its members, goading the community, and showcasing their own posts being discussed by the community.

Incels construct an external boundary via this derision and engagement, producing an existential enemy Other beyond the imaginary ideological constructs of Chad and Stacy, or collectivised women. This subreddit provides a digital site within the incel community's operational space of the internet, producing digital artefacts with which incel forum activity can centre discussions around, bonding over shared disdain for the content and its creator(s) while reinforcing community boundaries.

Although the incel community is unable to congress within Reddit, the terminology and ideology associated with the identity and social ontology persists across site discourse. Despite presenting differing manifestations of opposition to the incel community, both r/IncelExit and

r/IncelTears buttress the boundaries of the identity through relative positioning. r/IncelExit exists as an annex to the incel community and inadvertently reinforces underlying sexist tropes found in pill ideology, while r/IncelTears provides a visible, attackable digital manifestation of the out-group enemy, purportedly confirming a discriminatory social world. The final digital site of the IP is situated closest to the forums of the Performative Core, as a message board website identical in structure to the forums in which the incel community coalesce *en masse*. Here varying pill aligned incel and non-incel identities converge around biologically determined sexual marketplace value and neoliberal self-improvement.

5.2.3   Looxmax.org

Founded by the owner of the forum Incels.is in 2018 (Pelzer et al., 2021), Looksmax.org is a digital forum within the incel network dedicated to physical and ascetic improvement, providing "a community for men who wish to improve their looks and become more successful in life". Forum discourse is predicated upon redpill ideology of a postfeminist sexual marketplace governed by biologically determined preferences of women seeking men displaying ultimate genetic fitness. The site contains subforums discussing the improvement of one's erotic capital through 'maxxing'. This includes cosmetic enhancement (face- or surgerymaxxing), physical exercise (gymmaxxing), pharmaceutical enhancement (roidmaxxing), and, to a lesser extent, the accumulation of material (moneymaxxing) and social capital (statusmaxxing). Within thematically centred threads, users discuss use of steroids and pharmaceutical supplements, exercise regimes, diet and nutritional supplements, money making endeavours, career choices, and personal experiences of dating and their maxxing journeys.

The site demarcates membership through the prohibition of women while permitting a broad degree of ideological fluidity. Looksmax.org differs from forums found in the Performative Core of the Incel Network as the inclusivity of the site's user base permits various 'pilled' positions to congress and debate, accommodating different perspectives on the dating sphere. Red, black, and even blue pill ideology can coexist:

> *Original Poster:* It's amazing how you guys forget everything about the blackpill when you get a little attention from a foid and then you make threads about neurotypicality and how looks aren't everything.

> *User 1:* Looks do matter, but personality matters too. That's how normies get laid.

User 2: I agree with OP. One day a thread from people will be like "over if your sub 8"[27] then the next day when they get female attention "blackpill is wrong females care about personality muh personality bro".

User 1: Yea that's true, there's so many examples on this site. But it does matter. I'm not saying this because I've gotten female attention, I haven't, but because it's true. Only way normie guys get laid is because of personality and confidence, looks don't do all the work for them.

User 3: I think normies get laid by SMV maxxing tbh i see it as impossible for there to be a romantic/sexual attraction just based on personality.

User 2: Bluepill incoming, women also factor in other things for attraction. Even Chad needs to have a good personality or else he'll have difficulty getting the hottest women. Personality does matter when talking to them, but yes looks matter.

User 4: Yeah, dudes just go to the gym half assed, grow a stubble and dress nice. SMV maxing matters.

Here users highlight the ideological fluidity that occurs in this forum, as posters switch between the blackpill tenet of the immutability of looks and bluepill tenets of personality also having an impact on dating success. Also redpill beliefs of SMV maxxing to improve chances of dating success also compete. This discussion shows both instability of pill ideology which may be switched between, as well as the fluidity this forum permits. Men can retain incel identities, indicated by relative self-positioning to normies by user 1, and hold various positions. The original poster and user 2 retain a blackpill ideological stance critical of ideological fluidity, user 1 appears to entertain bluepill ideas while agreeing with the original poster and user 2, and users 3 and 4 support redpill maxxing. Here men negotiate varying positions within pill social ontology freely under a broader ideological umbrella. Such fluidity, however, is not always permitted, as other users who express bluepill ideas are heavily policed:

User 1: When the sexually active girl rejects Chad that night maybe all she wanted to do was dance, but she has been fucked before, and if it wasn't by Chad that means logically speaking it was someone less attractive than him because Chad is the top 5%. You have to be the good enough guy at the right moment, especially for hooking up.

User 2: Kys [kill yourself] you bluepilled nigger.

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[27] Below 8 on the decile scale of attractiveness

User 3: Bluepill at its finest.

User 4: Fuck you and your bluepilled text you fucking bluepilled midwit faggot.

User 5: Destroy this npc.28.

Here a poster both refers to a woman outside of the dehumanising metaphoric language associated with pills (foid etc.) and suggests that a women may have agency and specific preferences outside of the confines of here hardwired biological urges for Chad. The ensuing responses label this user as "bluepilled" alongside a barrage of insults, expelling this way of seeing the social world from outside of these user's ideological lens. This posts further demonstrates the Othering of women present throughout the site. By reinforcing anti-bluepill thinking, this also serves to prohibit the allocation of agency and choice to women, reinforcing the misogyny underlying pill social ontology. By denying the statement it denies women individuality, inferring women are all drawn towards Chad only.

Within Looksmax.org, the sexual market is accepted as fact, with users' subjectivation and personhood displayed through neoliberalism's "economization of the entire social field" (Foucault, 2008, p. 117): "bro, if you don't have a good nose, masculine forward growth, good orbitals, non-recessed chin, and soft hair Your SMV is capped at fucking 5/10". Here the body becomes a product based on ascetic presentation of physical capitals, as the features of this man are embedded within market value realised via the decile scale noted in the OP. Another comment demonstrates this internalisation of sexual marketplace dynamics: "It's just mad how these mid 20s and up 5/10 foids act towards 5/10 males. I guess they can get away with it since their SMV is much higher". Here, the poster frames men and women within the decile scale, indicating sexual market value and social interaction explicitly attached to ascetic worth. We can further observe marketplace tenets of the YouTube and TikTok videos of the Outer Periphery, discursively internalised in forum discourse interpreting the sociosexual world, understood in relation to physical appearance and success in the sexual marketplace.

The combination of pill ideology and terminology, valuation through marketplace dynamics, and the resulting misogyny as women are understood to be driven and privileged by these market dynamics define Looksmax.org. The following interaction between two posters summaries the nature of the conversation and perspective of this site:

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28 Non-Playable Character is a derogatory term taken from the gaming world used to insult someone as meaningless or irrelevant.

User 1: Beautiful women out there will want high status as well as looks - simply because there is infinite competition for these women and they already have access to looksmaxed millionaire 6'4 Chads in their inbox. Maxing out your looks to have more sex does work, but it will mostly result in average women at best. But if you are willing to really dumpster dive, you can have sex with low grade women with mental issues with just a few messages.

User 2: What do you mean? If you have high SMV you can get all kinds of girls, including high quality girls. If you really have high SMV you could easily find Instagram to get girls.

User 1: What I mean is that foids are literally just whores.

Women are framed as fickle and governed by looks and status. Individual agency and preference are not considered. While seeking clarification, user 2 confirms redpill ideological tenets of maxxing as means with which to both improve value via the sexual marketplace function and 'get' the objectified woman. In response user 1 confirms the underlying misogyny at the heart of his original statement using the derogatory foid label to summarise all women in an equally abhorrent manner.

Looksmax.org provides an ideologically concentrated digital space for those familiar with the marketplace dynamics and lookist discrimination to sympathetically interact with other men and expand and intensify their understanding of the social ontology underlying pill ideology. Looksmax.org (re)produces the same sexist and misogynistic sentiment diluted in the OP and reified in the incel wiki. Women become homogenised as a dangerous but coveted Other enacting looks based discrimination on men who understand themselves through market (e)valuation.

The Inner Periphery of the Incel Network predominantly serves as ideological and historical repository of the incel community. The incel wiki serves a signposting hub of the Network, a quasi-encyclopaedic ideological base of incel terminology and constructs. Exolinks extend in all directions; to Outer Periphery YouTube channels, and Performative Core incel forums. 4Chan provides a historical artefact of the deep vernacular web inherent to incel and wider pill discourse. This vernacular informs the arrested incel Reddit communities of the late 2010s and continues to normalise pill ideology and nomenclature within mainstream subreddits. Incel adjacent subreddits inadvertently buttress the boundaries of the communities through an annexe for incels to entertain de-identification from the incel community, and as a tangible antagonist reinforcing the community's perceptions of societal persecution. As a forum centred around redpill maxxing and sexual markets, Looksmax.org permits incels to perform and congress outside of the strict confines of immutability dictated by blackpill ideology. Here men

engage in self-improvement discourse, intertwined with misogyny and sexism that inevitably emerges from adoption of pill social ontology assuming a collective women Other governed by biological urges in a postfeminist sexual marketplace.

The final tier of the Incel Network, the Performative Core, intensifies and reifies the gradual ideological saturation developed in the Peripheries of the Network. Home to fringe incel forums here the incel community exists unabated, as this cluster of the Network eponymously requires and maintains elevated levels of ideological performativity, resulting in fantastical discursive and symbolic gendered violence, misogyny, and victimhood inherent to a performed incel identity.

5.3   The Performative Core

The Performative Core (PC) of the Incel Network contains the loci of the incel community. Following Reddit's prohibition, incels migrated to self-moderated forum websites (Jaki et al., 2019). By far the most studied incel digital spaces (Ging & Murphy, 2022; Hart & Huber, 2023), the PC consisted of four main forums; *Incels.is, Incels.net, Love-shy.net,* and *Blackpill.club*, with a varying degree and style of ideological performativity depending on the site. As Incels.net was permanently shut down in December 2022, the following focuses only upon the three remaining operational forums.

Dating, sex, and attraction dominate discourse, as community members develop and express identity through proclamation and valorisation of low SMV, indicative of authentic incel status (Thorburn, Powell & Chambers, 2022). The anonymous, ephemeral, and dissimulative character of the deep vernacular web (de Zee & Tuters, 2020) undergirds the discursive atmosphere of the PC, a result of the historic relationship between 4Chan, Reddit, and these arenas. All forums are entrenched in pill social ontology, resulting in the derision and dehumanisation of discriminatory, lookist women, collectively held responsible for the subjective pain and suffering encountered as a consequence of romantic rejection and isolation in a genetically governed sexual marketplace. Where the OP introduces diluted fringe ideology through normiefication, and the IP expands and normalises this ideology, the PC is the location in which the incel identity is performed within the confines of this extreme social ontology. The following provides an overview of the nature and content of each forum, demonstrating an ideological, structural, and discursive similarity despite notable differences in the way the forums are presented, governed, and used.

5.3.1   Incels.is

Incels.is remains the largest forum within the Network. This self-moderated message board website currently houses 26,403[29] members. Membership to the forum steadily increased during data collection which initially sat at 19,901,[30] indicating an average increase of 309 members per month over a 21-month period. As with all sites of the PC, the site's format and discursive atmosphere resembles the message boards of 4Chan and Reddit. Thematically categorised threads are housed within sub-forums including 'must read' content; identity related discussion boards concerning inceldom, gaming, anime and manga, and a general discussion board.

Threads contain dissimulative and inflammatory hyperbole, with many comments clearly designed to impart extreme and provocative statements under the guise of irreverent tolling or shitposting. For example, the comment "I met Queen Elizabeth in a Manchester pub. We later had sex with no protection in her bodyguard's Land Cruiser" is provocative, obviously untrue, and designed to evoke humour among other users. This irreverence however becomes extreme and problematic, using fantastical violence seemingly presented as hyperbole or shitposting via the addition of a disarming statement "I will rape the shit out of IT[31] foidsss (in video game)". Employing 'in video game' suggests a theoretical, alleviating the user of responsibility for a violent and misogynistic threat towards women.

Users frequently post detailed and evocative personal accounts of romantic and social rejection and isolation. This emotional narrative illustrating discrimination and persecution (re)produces a victimised identity, as these men understand encountered adversity within their incel identity; "what is even the point of living as an incel? UR ALREADY DEAD.. ur rotting away in ur isolated tomb completely alone", externalising responsibility; "reject males will always be hated, vilified, pigeonholed and blamed".

Forum discourse contains a postfeminist sentiment that places women as the beneficiaries of a reconfigured social strata; "we live in a gynocentric world and society that hates men", affording women privilege and power, particularly in the dating and intimacy arena; "if you were a women of your looksmatch[32] in a western country you'd have many more social opportunities and mate

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[29] As of 27/7/24.
[30] Recorded 1/4/22.
[31] The acronym incels use to describe *r/IncelTears*.
[32] A person perceived as matching in level of attractiveness, usually indicated through equal scores on the decile scale.

choices/chances". This frequently leads to homogenising attacks aimed at these purported beneficiaries:

> Women have been ruthless in terms of lying about their advantages in the west and putting men down. The gaslighting is honestly enraging. The fact the mainstream is so overtly biased in favor of women and against men is a big problem.

Women are subsequently framed as the enemy and deindividualized; "You love women? The same people who would put their shoe on your face if you were laid on the pavement?". This extends to dehumanising misogyny in which women are objectified; "once had a darkie but fit curry toilet show me the new high school I was attending for 11th grade. I would've fucked the ever loving shit out of her tiny body", and understood as non-humans "FOIDS are CRUEL, and deserve death"; "I loathe the most privileged group of people in history. Foids. Have. Everything".

Replicating the discursive strategies employed in the Peripheries of the Network, Incels.is uses pseudoscientific and affective manipulative persuasion to support the blackpill tenet of lookism, informing their interpretation of a sexual marketplace social structure and the behaviours therein.
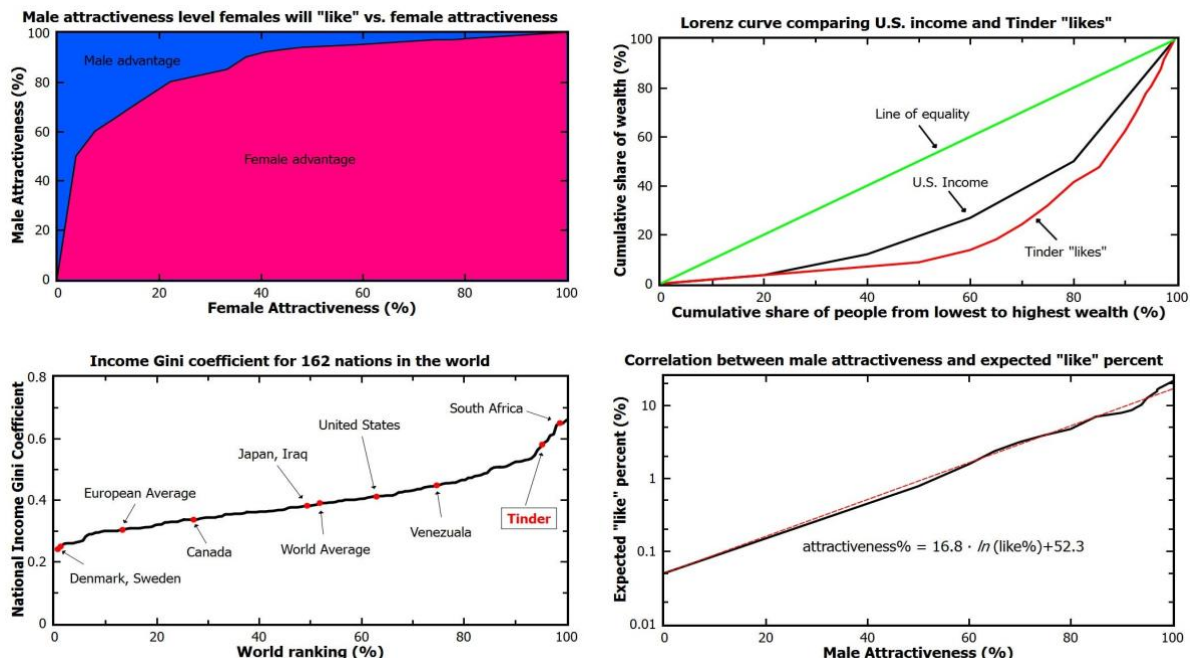
Figure 20   Anecdata posted to Incels.is

Figure 20 highlights images from one post that exemplifies the use of anecdata to support purported discrimination in the dating market linked to biologically determined physical capital. The use of graphs presents an authoritative tone with which to confirm the ideological tenets of

sexual marketplace immutability governed by physical attractiveness. These graphs are captioned with emotive statement such as "if you aren't in the top 20% at least then good luck!" and "it's well and truly over". Further posts indicate user's own 'experiments' in which they purportedly confirm lookist discrimination: "[Tinder Experiment] 5'7 incel gets more than 40 cute matches in Asia in 1 day"; "My HIV Chad Got 35 + Matches In a Night + a hot GirlFriend (PICS/PROOF)"; "Blackpill Tinder experiment in the UK: Latino/Med vs Muslim vs Mulatto". Here users curate various fake dating profiles and record results seemingly confirming women's preferences for specific presentations of physical capital which they equate to lookist discrimination.

The discursive pseudoscientific apparatuses used to communicate diluted pill social ontology in the OP are (re)produced here unabated in explicit and concentrated forms, becoming an intrinsic characteristic of forum communication. This produces what Rothermel (2024) understands as 'Evidence Based Misogyny', a

> Discursive strategy to refer to and misinterpret knowledge in the form of statistics, studies, news items and pop-culture and mimic accepted methods of knowledge presentation to support [...] essentialising, polarising views about gender relations in society (p.1).

From the Outer Periphery to the Performative Core of the Incel Network, anecdata, pseudoscience, and misinterpreted theory are used to buttress misogynistic social ontology embedded into the incel identity and pill ideology.

The forum enforces strict community boundaries through ideological and terminological policing (Eastman & Haedicke, 2024), undertaken by active moderators overseeing membership applications and all content posted to the site. Purely symbolic, these boundaries contrast the incel community against women and sexually successful men to "enforce, maintain, normalize, or rationalize social boundaries" (Lamont & Molnar 2002, p. 186) of the incel community, producing a coherent identity and self-perception (Andersen, 2023; Tietjen & Tirkkonen, 2023).

Incels.is' rules & FAQs section implements additional mechanical boundaries, expressly stipulating the prohibition of all women, the LGBTQI+ community, and non-incels, employing a vetting process of new member applications conducted by existing moderators. This ensures only men who express ideological uniformity with the site can contribute to site discourse. Bluepill ideas, previous experiences of sex and romantic relationships, praise of women, and positive expressions of self are all strictly disallowed; "...do not post bluepilled content of any kind", producing an ideologically governed and policed discourse that permits only threads and comments that (re)produce incel ideology.

Through this policing forum discussions centre around criticism of women as a collective group within strict out-group dehumanising depictions, removing the humanity and individualism of 'foid' women and sexually successful 'Chad' or 'normie' men. Ideological performativity is enforced through removal of comments and banning of users (Kelly, 2021) that challenge the veracity of the ideology or offer proactive, self-improvement support to other users:

> Platitudes such as "Just be yourself bro", "Man up bro", "Just hit the gym and learn to lift bro", "Work hard, get a job and eventually a woman will come to you bro, etc, etc are all examples of blue pill thinking that don't belong here.

This policing of what is said, and more importantly what is not said, facilitates an "ongoing production, performance, and validation of values, codes, and norms through discourse" (Gal, Shifman, & Kampf 2016, p. 1699), governing forum dynamics and ensuring at a minimum performative conformity to pill ideology. Resultantly, the self-victimising, self-deprecating misogynistic incel identity is (re)produced within this forum through maintenance of a salient group identity, policing intragroup discursive practices based on strict ideological alignment reifying the dangerous women Other, a gynocentric sexual marketplace, and the incel identity (Di Scotti et al 2023; Schlaerth et al., 2024). As the largest incel forum, Incels.is represents the dominant arena of the PC, the remaining forums within the PC each produce their own degree of ideological performativity, resulting in overlapping yet distinct arenas.

5.3.2   Love-shy.net

Love-shy.net predates the advent of the other forums in the PC, emerging as a reactive consequence of expulsion of many men from an initial supportive and inclusive involuntary celibate community who assigned an anti-woman and misogynist causation to their inceldom (Byerly, 2020). Following multiple moderator transitions, the ideological grounding of this forum shifted numerous times as the incel community developed digital publics within Reddit, and later in self-governed incel forums such as Incels.is. shifting Love-shy.net's member composition.

Love-shy.net contains a much smaller membership base of 837[33], with an observed maximum of 100 users active at one time. Based on discussions in the forum, there is a broad age range of users, with comments indicating many members to be middle aged and older and residing primarily in the UK and USA. Unlike Incels.is, in Love-shy.net adoption and expression of pill ideology is not enforced, nor a requisite to join or participate in discussion. Resultantly, the

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[33] As of 27/7/24.

forum offers a significantly less policed discursive space, indicated by one user's comment "this forum may not be perfect, but at least it's more flexible in giving us freedom of speech" and another's comparative reference to Incels.is: "it's incredibly easy to get banned on that forum".

This relaxed oversight allows men to discuss experiences and perspectives associated with their incel identity outside of any specific pill social ontology, focusing instead on personal capacity:

> However I know for me specifically the major mental hurdle in dating is I'm just super desperate, and it shows whenever I'm into a girl. People don't want to date someone who seems to be deficient, like an empty cup, they want to be with people who bring excitement and value into their lives, a full cup if it were.

While some users understand their value through sexual market value; "My poor looks define my SMV", others make no mention of incel terminology or ideological structure, instead reflecting on past adverse experience and the state of their mental health:

> I have painful memories previous memories of my school life to this very day, and I hated almost every aspect of it. The psychological trauma resulting from this terrible experience has caused me to have low self-esteem and self-concept. This has then affected my ability to do things like forming an intimate relationship with a woman.

Indeed, the majority of discourse is directed inward towards the users themselves. Exemplar thread titles include "Are you close with anyone?" and "How many relationships have you had with women?", focusing on personal experience, absence, and achievement in relation to current circumstance. Users frequently offer emotive accounts of past and current circumstances:

> I was kind, patient, i loved people. But it was all a waste of time. They hurt me while I was not paying attention. Everything was just a big lie. Even when they were saying shit to me I stayed calm. I only knew sufferance and humiliation, so I gave up and accepted my situation.

Yet rather than developing an entitled narrative fostered through the social ontology of a discriminatory and rigid sexual marketplace, these men demonstrate *dis*entitlement:

> I am often surprised when people treat me with respect (compliment me, reimburse me money I gave them, treat me nicely, invite me to places, and sometimes befriend me). It's gotten to the point where I almost WANT to be judged.

Instead of feeling entitled many men here internalise failure and an expectation of rejection, 'wanting to be judged'.

Further, rather than building identity through market value, self-worth is discussed through a lens of dominant masculinity; popular and authorised arrays of masculine praxes indicative of the 'right' way to be a man (Messerschmidt, 2018). These men internalise blame through gendered self-deprecation, governed by cultural preservation of a gendered ideal they are unable to achieve: "I feel by not having those things (wife, or even a girlfriend, as well as kids) delegitimises me in many ways, both as a grown up, but also as a man". Here this user's understanding of self is intrinsically linked to an intimate partner and family, praxes indicative of dominant presentations of heterosexual masculinity (Connell, 1995; Messerschmidt, 2018). Unable to embody these characteristics, this man feels delegitimised, lacking confirmatory masculine social practice dependent on the provision of feminine coded goods (Manne, 2017; Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019).

The forum does still however contain the misogyny and sexism characteristic of Incels.is and wider pill social ontology. Women are again homogenised and derided; "today's women simply expect more than they deserve. Society has convinced them that they are owed something by virtue of having a vagina and as such, most men will never find a woman that are their equal". Some men also adopt a victimhood mentality; "there's no point in trying to play catch up, this is just who I am", combining this victim status with denigration of women: "no one will ever give me a chance. People make fun of me for being a virgin! No girls talk to me, they are all the same!". In line with the wider Incel Network, evolutionary biology is employed as means with which to purported preference for certain men; "women peak when they reach sexual maturity and they only seem to evolve out of necessity, but even then they still chase Chad into their golden years", incel terminology; "foids are lucky non-Chads even say a word to them at work", and wider gynocentric ideology are present in many comments; "sometimes I wish I was born a women so I could have their advantages in life. Besides dating being easier and you don't even have to do the approaching women life is just easier in general". Thus while the forum focuses mainly on internalised feelings and experiences of failure, the underlying tenets of pill ideology and the misogynistic incel identity permeate site discourse, albeit in a relative minority of users compared to Incels.is.

The comparative lack of strict moderator oversight and ideological adherence within Love-shy.net characterises the variation in performativity of this site of the PC. This plurality of views results in an 'ideologically inclusive' space absent any overt discursive policing. While the espousal of pill linked ideology and terminology is both permitted and present, this exists within a discursively broad incel community. Rather than maintaining and (re)producing boundaries of

the incel identity associated with pill ideology, Love-shy.net's range of incel identities participating in ideologically free space resembles more a complex therapeutic space. Discourse is dominated by conciliatory, supportive, and sympathetic discussions of personal and lived experiences of users, outnumbering derisive and combative diatribe towards the dangerous women Other. However, the ideological inclusivity of the forum's discursive structure facilitates a significant degree of identity diversity, allowing members to selectively and strategically employ pill social ontology and incel terminology depending on the nature of the discussion. While most discourse encountered omits explicit pill ideology and incel terminology, the presence of the social ontology of biologically determined sexual market value and action, and the homogenising and misogynistic labelling of all women as a collective Other remain as constant minority elements of site content. One final site completes the PC of the Incel Network, demanding a conversely confined performance of the incel identity within the most intensely policed and ideologically constrained performative arena.

5.3.3 Blackpill.club

If Love-shy.net represents an ideological 'free' space to perform incel identities, Blackpill.club represents the PC's ideologically constrained fundamentalist locale. Founded by a former banned member of Incels.is, Blackpill.club emerged as a reactive response of a subsection of the forum's community to a perceived dilution of ideological thought, membership age, and the incel identity. The site contains a current user base of 2,428[34], an increase of 1,247 since the start of data collection[35] - an average increase of 66 users per month. Site discourse is dominated by a minority of members, mirroring other incel forums (Jaki et al., 20219; Ging, Brace & Coan, 2023) and mainstream social media platforms, (Fisher, 2023). These users contribute a significant majority of forum content, an observation supported by Johnson's (2023) analysis of the 90th percentile of posts within Blackpill.club noting that only eight users were responsible for over 10,000 posts.

Unlike Love-shy.net, this forum employs explicit incel and pill terminology and requires unwavering blackpill ideological alignment as paramount to membership, with identity placing second to or emerging from the ideology. As one user notes: "blackpill told me the truth about foids and I spent a whole year of doomerism, before realizing that doomerism is not profound and deep, so I decided to be incel instead". Here the 'doomerism' identity is replaced with incel as a consequence of engagement with, and adoption of blackpill ideology, rather than the

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[34] As of 27/7/24.
[35] 2/11/24.

identity drawing the man to the ideology. Ideological dogmatism unsurprisingly invokes postfeminist sentiment of a gynocentric society of privileged, entitled, and empowered women:

> Foids standards are very high, that's true. But their standards will only increase, not decrease in this world. They demand men must have dick, height, status. They want to post porn videos while they suck your balls, so they can get OnlyFans36 money.

Value is inherently understood through a biologically governed, marketized sexual arena predicated upon physical capital that dictates romantic success:

> BOTTOMLINE: The truth is your SMV is shown in plain sight to all. Women and Chads have been fucking MORE than ever before. If women aren't approaching you or doing things to show you they are interested in you, YOU'RE UGLY.

The blackpill is understood by users as a scientifically informed, liberating, and explanatory truth device with which members understand their social world. Users frame their internalisation of blackpill ideology as a moment of clarification: "finding the blackpill was a blessing to me, suddenly everything began to make sense", as "the blackpill finally allowed me to put into words what I've been experiencing and feeling for so long". Other users find confirmatory validity; "I officially took the Blackpill and called myself an incel [...] I finally accepted the truth". Many users hail the apparent factual veracity as integral to blackpill ideology's worth; "I like the blackpill interpretation [of the social world], where it is heavily factually based, with facts that can be verified and referenced".

Indeed, the use of science to shore up the blackpill is frequent within forum discussions, with the reliance on academic publications to assert authoritative scientific credibility common throughout the Incel Network intensified in Blackpill.club forum discourse. Evolutionary psychology and biology research are held as irrefutable proof of the veracity of blackpill ideology, buttressing claims of strategic and conscious lookist discriminatory partner selection by a collectivised women Other. Threads such as "Female biologist writes scientifically peer reviewed book confirming the Blackpill" misinterpret scientific discourse and misunderstand analysis of women's collective intimate behaviour in order to allege blackpill ideology credibility. Such threads are interlaced with essentialising anecdotal declarations exhibiting pseudoscientific evolutionary theory such as "female mate choice is motivated by an occult sense for 'good genes'". These threads and comments invariably descend into diatribe,

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[36] OnlyFans is a platform that allows people to pay for content created by other users through a monthly membership. The content can be photos, videos, or live streams and is renowned for pornographic content.

demonstrated by one user's representative response to the post: "I would say foids prefer to reproduce with dumb men than intelligent men. For some reason intelligence turns off foids more than anything". Here the original intent of providing supposed scientific credibility to the blackpill mutates into evidence-based misogyny (Rothermel, 2024), characteristic of the ideological fundamentalism of this forum.

Blackpill.club's founding principle of entrenched ideological positioning is reinforced through scrupulous moderator oversight, ensuring discursive uniformity throughout the site despite conceptual discussions taking place. For example, disagreements between users' perceptions of the comparative market value of specific physical features such as height, race, or facial congruency indeed take place; "it's height frame then face"; "face is everything"; "how come there are hundreds of tall average looking normies walking round with girls on their arm?". Yet these debates take place within the fixed fatalistic blackpill ideological parameters of a futile marketplace, in which absence of the necessary quantity of attribute(s) affording market value invariably and irrefutably leads to discrimination, rejection, and inceldom.

Any suggestion of maxxing, permitted in ideological inclusive spaces such as Love-shy.net or Looksmax.org, is strictly forbidden, with users receiving moderator warnings and eventual bans for repeated discursive transgressions that stray from the tight confines of community boundaries. Strict policing of Blackpill.club produces an internal symbolic boundary within the wider incel community, as community membership can only be successfully enacted through devout, almost religious, adoption of blackpill ideology. Love-shy.net's ideological inclusivity and resulting performative fluidity is contrasted by Blackpill.club's 'ideological fundamentalism', in which blackpill ideology is unquestionably accepted as a proven and immutable social reality, producing an ideologically entrenched arena within the wider incel community.

Peels & Kindermann (2022) define fundamentalist belief through three criteria; a belief system existing inside a wider belief structure, reactivity to social or cultural developments, and emotive attachment to the belief. Blackpill.club users demonstrate such fundamentalist belief, existing within a broader Incel Network as a reactive response to the perceived subcultural shift of Incels.is. The emotional attachment to this belief is illustrated by one user's comments: "meeting this girl has crushed me and she's been one of the biggest contributors to why I will stay blackpilled". The language of being 'crushed' demonstrates an evocative and affective impetus for his adopted belief system. He performs his 'blackpilled' identity within a reactionary purpose-built space, a result of subcultural shifts within other forums housing broader and inclusive variations of pill ideology and multiple incel identities. While members of other forums of the PC experience a degree of ideological fluidity, fundamentalist ideological performativity

prevents any such deviation, limiting member's ability to traverse the rigid boundaries of blackpill ideology when engaging here. Fundamentalist ideological performativity within Blackpill.club expands the divisive symbolic boundaries of the wider incel community, as members distance themselves from other incels and Network arenas through derision of non-blackpilled incels.

Users apply the blackpill lens to all social spheres, extending beyond romantic intimacy into platonic and homosocial relationships. Occupational success, friend and family relationships, and institutional engagements (such as school, healthcare etc.) are purportedly governed by a biologically determined hierarchy of physical appearance:

> People won't socialize with you because they don't want your looks. It's not coming
> from you it's from them (because you're ugly). So you think you don't care about others
> but in reality you don't care about people who treat you like shit which is normal but
> everyone treats you like shit which is not.

Here the user expands the identity of perpetrators of lookist discrimination to 'everyone', using blackpill ideological constructs to interpret negative experience received in platonic social interactions.

Through ideological fundamentalism that extends blackpill ideology towards the entire social sphere and the forum's membership away from the broader incel community, Blackpill.club represents the apex of ideological performativity within the PC. The out-group necessary for group cohesion and symbolic boundary construction is redefined to represent all non-blackpill aligned members of society, reducing the forum's community identity to a relatively small number of ideological devout users expressing unwavering fatalistic allegiance to blackpill ideology. Ideological performativity is achieved through strict site policing that enforces and (re)produces this recalibrated boundary, requiring users to reject all other means of interpreting the social world and their circumstance and embrace a fatalistic defeatism across romantic and platonic spheres of their lives. This subsection of the incel community represents the terminus of the incel network, as internal discursive performativity characterises an ideological fundamentalism applying an irrefutable biologically deterministic, postfeminist, and neoliberal social ontology to the entirety of social life. These men devoutly embrace the rigid blackpill worldview as means to explain and alleviate the effects of a discriminatory, lookist society they feel unjustly persecuted by, illuminated by an emancipatory ideology they remain unwaveringly wedded to.

The Performative Core of the Incel Network houses the arenas in which incel identities are constructed and performed with each forum differing in the degree of ideological adherence.

While Love-shy.net offers ideological inclusivity in which men perform identities outside of explicit pill social ontology, strict curation of Incels.is and Blackpill.club's membership and content ensures ideological uniformity. All arenas afford and produce misogyny and tenets of pill social ontology, whether explicitly stated and recognised or not. Women are Othered due to their selective choices and the subsequent rejection that these men perceive. Pseudoscience diluted in the Outer Periphery and misappropriated scientific research and theory undergirding the incel wiki are commonplace in the Performative Core as means with which to shore up ideological positioning. This evidenced based misogyny provides credibility to the underlying ideology affording identity.

Incel forums serve as a 'front stage' (Goffman,1959) for incel men to perform their identity, a digital social setting in which an identity can be displayed and viewed by others. The dissimulative and hyperbolic history of the preceding digital spaces of 4Chan and Reddit, and policed forum oversight, could suggest a potential difficulty in assuring this sentiment is genuine and not part of the incel performance. Yet, as the Network has demonstrated at every level, the misogyny that arises from the homogenisation of women as a collectivised, biologically driven, discriminatory Other is not optional but rather embedded into the structures and concepts that produce the incel identity itself.

5.4   Summary

To answer RQ1 this chapter has provided a compositional and comparative overview of the major digital arenas that (re)produce pill ideology and permit the performance of incel identities, detailing specific and common content and structural features in relation to the broader Network to which they each belong. This is the first endeavour to document the incel technoscape beyond singular locations, a novel contribution to the field of incel research.

The Incel Network consists of three distinct tiers of digital space. The Outer Periphery embeds within mainstream social media platforms via video channels that proffer diluted pill ideology and incel terminology outside of the explicit discursive label of incel. TFL channels provide emotive first-person accounts of rejection and emotional suffering framed within the context of women's choosiness, a group conveyed as a collective, acting via their 'nature', a biologically deterministic perspective inherent to pill ideology. Through emotive, self-victimising language and anecdotal accounts of adverse sociosexual experience, viewers can find a synthetic amity, sympathising with sentiments communicated by video creators. Additional content of these platforms overtly promote blackpill ideology as a credible scientific means with which to understand the dating world. Through the employment of pseudoscientific analyses, misappropriation and misunderstanding of research data, and personal, emotive anecdata,

these channels normiefy fringe pill ideology. Here the seeds of misogyny are sewn as women are cast as a homogenous, discriminative, and dangerous Other, guided by biology to select only the fittest men. Incel terminology and ideology are normalised, essentialising women's dating behaviour via a narrative that casts these unjust and persecutory choices as the result of a genetically governed marketplace affording value based on specific and rigid physical capital. This results in an absolving discourse presenting an affectively charged means with which to interpret rejection via undeserved victimhood.

The Inner Periphery expands and entrenches these narratives in arenas holding pill ideology as a truism. The incel wiki's content serves as an ideological and conceptual repository for the purported 'science' undergirding blackpill ideology, communicating major theoretical constructs to those looking for more information. The site provides a structural gateway to numerous arenas within the Network, signposting to Performative Core forums, Outer Periphery YouTube channels, and other incel websites. Reddit sits in the Inner Periphery as both a historical artefact of the incel community and the deep vernacular web underpinning incel discourse in forums, as well as a home for incel adjacent subreddits that contribute to the boundary construction of the incel community. In attempting to exit men from the incel community, one subreddit inadvertently reinforces sexist tropes of women's centrality to men's needs. A further oppositional and antagonistic arena provides the incel community with a tangible enemy out-group and confirmation of perceived societal persecution. Structurally similar to the forums of the Performative Core, Looksmax.org offers a venue for men to perform pill aligned identities, but through the tenet of self-improvement enshrined into redpill neoliberal conceptualisation of the sexual marketplace and sexual market value. Here incels and non incels espouse competing ideologies under the banner of maxxing and acquisition of sex and intimacy but remain criticised by members who sure up the boundaries of red and blackpill ideologies dominating the forum. Resultantly, the same narrative present in the Outer Periphery in which women are cast as a homogenous, biologically governed Other emerges inevitably within misogynous dehumanising metaphor and metonym.

The Performative Core is where the Network reaches apex, through arenas that permit, promote, and police the performance of incel identities. Each forum serves as the front of stage for incel performances, digital social settings where men demonstrate their identity through adherence to pill ideology, antifeminism, self-denigration, and misogyny. Incels.is remains the largest of the three forums still active, where men espouse vitriolic diatribe through outwardly hostile sexist and misogynistic discursive violence, embracing a victim identity embedded in pill ideology. Through strict discursive policing bluepill thought is prohibited and blackpill ideology is shored up through familiar pseudoscience, misinterpretation, and anecdata inherent to the Network and pill ideology. Love-shy.net offers a comparatively inclusive space in which

discourse is not policed and incels are free to understand their position how they see fit, with many reflecting inwardly on personal failures and deficiencies, leading to disentitlement. This inclusivity also ensures pill driven incel identities space to espouse misogyny, market self-(e)valuation and victimhood. Blackpill.club eponymously remains loyal to ideology underpinning the incel identity, producing a fundamentalist space in which ideology comes before identity, extending outside of the romantic sphere to all aspects of social life. The misogynistic Othering through discursive violence is taken as given, as is victimhood and the ideology's scientific credibility through mishandling of theory and data.

Together these exemplary sites produce a complex web of ideological dissemination and performative space in which men can understand their own lived experience, discover others in similar situations, and adopt and perform identities resulting in victimhood and discursive and symbolic misogyny. Yet, while such websites provide the knowledge and arenas for the development of an incel identity, it is not these spaces alone that ultimately produce the incel man. As the following three chapters will show, it is the accumulation of a gendered social structure, resulting individual experiences, and idiosyncratic responses to these events that gravitate men towards the Incel Network. The following chapter, Man Up, discusses the first of these additional components, addressing the social structures impacting the experiences of men who engage with the incel community.

Chapter 6   Man Up

"I read somewhere that patriarchy abuses boys until they become men and I think it's absolutely true"

Aside encountering and choosing to engage within the Incel Network, there are a number of social and psychological experiences common to men that choose to adopt an incel identity prior to this decision. These will be discussed over the next three chapters, cumulatively developing the journey to an incel identity through social structure, and individual experience and agency. Addressing RQ2, this chapter specifically focuses on the impact of gendered social structure upon these men. Drawing predominantly on interview data and supported by corroborating findings of the digital ethnography of the Incel Network, Man Up reflects an overarching theme concerning the demands and impact of the social practice of masculinity within the gendered world, and how the failure to perform authorised praxes and traits leads to specific and subjective adverse social experiences.

The first subtheme of this chapter, *Boys Must Be Boys*, explores incel men's lived experiences of gendered discrimination resulting from failure to exhibit and perform authorised masculine social practice during the formative years of adolescence and young adulthood. Connell's (1995) understanding of gender as a way of structuring social practice is employed to interpret these experiences, resulting from a failure to display localised performances of masculinity. The impact of a hierarchical structure of competing performances of masculine social practice explains gendered experiences of discrimination; not doing masculinity as authorised through hegemonic prescription. This theme encompasses experiences of subordination through policing of effeminateness and other non-dominant masculine characteristics, and marginalisation as a result of disability and race. Such adverse social experiences are enforced both homosocially, and by girls and women who perform compliant femininities. Such behaviour is punished through discursive and physical acts of denigration, aggression, and violence, maintaining a localised gender ordering in which unauthorised masculine behaviour is socially expelled.

The second subtheme, *Unpractised Practice*, explores the perceived or actual inability to engage in body reflexive practices inherent to performance and confirmation of masculinity (Connell, 2000). The material male body, and the embodied practices possible through it, acts as a referent for the configuration of social performances that produce masculinity. As a core tenet of the model of gender as social practice, cathexis, the emotional energy attached to an object through desire, generates a need to engage in romantic, intimate, and sexually embodied

acts to confer and confirm the masculine self (Connell, 1995, 2012a). This theme encompasses the perceived impact of external sources communicating this need for sexual and intimate social practice, through media, peers, and subjective observations of the social world. These men feel unable to embody or perform the requisites necessary to engage in these intimate practices, resulting in the perception of an unconfirmed and invalid masculine self.

The policing of practices through prescription of the right way to be a man has a significant impact on these men's lived experience. Informed by peers of their insufficiencies via discursive and physical acts of enforcement, and unable to perform body reflexive practices of heterosex and intimacy, collectively produces social (in)experience that prohibits normative social integration through rejection, exclusion, and isolation. The remainder of this chapter explores each subtheme in detail before concludingly discussing the impact of gendered social structure upon these men.

6.1   Boys Must Be Boys

Masculinity is a way of understanding and ordering social practice. Day to day masculine behaviours and interactions are structured through and in relation to other masculinities (and femininities), and the social structure of gender through material embodied practices (Connell, 1995). How men, and boys, ultimately perform is tied to material social practices that order and produce social structure. Hegemonic masculinities legitimise and maintain the unequal distribution of gender relations within this social structure (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The positioning of particular social practices over others creates the patriarchal hierarchy in which particular traits and characteristics are authorised and revered. Primarily ensuring the dominance of men over women, this process expels and subordinates any behaviours inconducive to any spatiotemporal hegemonic bloc authorising and maintaining this imbalance. Masculine performances which do not exhibit the praxes or characteristics legitimised by hegemonic masculinities are subject to discursive and physical material social practises that police, enforce, and maintain the hegemonic gender social structure at any time or place (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2018).

Fundamental to the lived experience of incels is the policing and enforcing of masculine social practice. These men at various points throughout their lives have exhibited traits or characteristics proscribed by hegemonic ordering of masculine social practice, leading to material and social policing practices by other men and boys, or women and girls. The most salient examples of the regulating of such behaviours concerned the persecution of performances deemed effeminate or gay through acts of physical violence. As one former incel recalls:

> When I was in high school, I became the victim of a violent hate crime while walking home from a friend's house. I was "gay". I wasn't. But I was considered effeminate. I went to school the next day with a swollen mouth. I looked like a Francis Bacon painting. It wasn't a good vibe. I was mistreated by both the boys and girls. More than once I heard from girls that "I wasn't a real man" and dating me was considered a joke. I wasn't treated any better after being beaten (P6).

Heterosexuality and homophobia remain enduring components of adult and adolescent dominant and hegemonic masculinities (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Pascoe, 2011). Boys and men then become vulnerable to peer victimisation when not eliciting heteronormativity (Rosen & Nofziger, 2019). Connell (1995) notes how material practices that enforce hegemonic masculinities subordinate gay and effeminate men to straight men. In this man's account, both discursive and physical violence served as material acts punishing the adolescent performance of effeminateness expelled from normative masculinity. Considered "gay", this boy was reprimanded physically by other boys performing fleeting, hegemonic dominating masculinities; "exercising power and control" (Messerschmidt, 2018, p. 125) over P6 for failing to exhibit authorised heteronormative masculine traits. This relative placing of their aggressive and violent physicality to P6's effeminate performance in that moment generated a fleeting hegemonic masculinity by the perpetrators of this hate crime. Girls portrayed compliant femininities as they buttress hegemonic social ordering by discursively illegitimising his effeminate masculine performance. In a reflective moment this man explicitly links his treatment to the material practices used to enforce hegemonic masculine social ordering:

> If a boy like myself didn't perform masculinity properly, there were harsh consequences in the form of violent social policing. Or in simpler terms, if they thought you were queer, you were getting assaulted and degraded (P6).

Noting the performative nature of masculinity this man acknowledges the existence of a proper way to be masculine, with harsh consequences emerging through the presentation of queer masculinity. This can be considered an instance of the enforcement of compulsory heterosexuality. While heterosexuality remains an enduring component of hegemonic masculinities, it extends beyond a simple sexual orientation or a series of practices and desires, to a societal structure itself (Rich, 1980). Heterosexuality becomes a political institution with which to ensure the "male right of physical, economic and emotional access" (Ibid, p. 50). Thus, any masculinity performing outside bounds of heteronormative practice, politically legitimised through hegemonic masculinities, becomes a target, a threat to the sociopolitical power and dominance of heterosexuality. Within patriarchal social structuring men and boys who do not exhibit heteronormativity become a risk to the gender order and are subsequently psychically

and verbally subdued into conformity (Connell, 1995; Epstein, O'Flynn & Telford, 2003; Pascoe, 2011). Indeed, this man at the time was unsure of his gender identity; "while I definitely identify as a man now, back then I really didn't feel like one, if anything I felt kind of like a girl and I was frequently mistaken for one. I just was what I was". It was the enforcement of compulsory heterosexuality which led to subsequent adverse social consequence; "being like this did make me the main target for bullies", ultimately leading to the material social practice of exclusion; "and I was bullied out of school twice".

Other incels recall similar experiences of the policing of proscribed masculine performance by peers:

> Throughout my younger days, I was made fun of for being nerdy, thin, and effeminate. I had dealt with bullying throughout my middle school and high school years (P4).

> I was bullied incessantly when I was in high school. Students thought I was too quiet, too shy and too uninteresting (Love-Shy.net user).

Again, material social practices of bullying and exclusion due to unauthorised masculine praxes; effeminateness, shyness, nerdiness, and thinness, subordinate these men's adolescent masculine selves. The dissemination of the 'right' way to be masculine occurs through and within these policing practices. Connell (1995, 2000) notes violence and exclusion are key material social practices in the maintenance of a hegemonic gender order. In adolescence, bullying becomes a key material practice through which this social process occurs, reinforcing a specific masculine normativity. Schools, a major institutional site of masculinity construction (Connell, 1995, Pascoe, 2011), and peers become primary locations and agents of gender socialisation in and through which this type of material and discursive practice takes place (Horton, 2019). Defined as "unwanted physical or emotional mistreatment that is intended to inflict harm on a person" (Rosen & Nofziger, 2019, p. 298), bullying can have significant short and long term physical and mental health effects on those that experience it (Lereya et al., 2015; Arseneault, 2017; Wagner 2017). Bullying signifies an embodied and gendered dominating communication of an imbalance of power (Gini & Pozzoli, 2006; Messerschmidt, 2020). This gendered material and discursive social practice was frequently experienced by incels:

> I was always the guy who was bullied for some reason (Incels.net user).

> I got bullied by Chads too, don't you worry about that, I got punched a few times, they would pull out my chair, they would hide my work, spit one me, call me names, etc. (Incels.is user).

I was bullied for my looks daily, they started calling me a zombie which pretty much became my nickname (P3).

Through material physical and discursive social practices, recipients learn they are not good enough, failing to perform as required of normative adolescent masculinity. The policing of masculinity described here serves a dual function of expelling or delegitimising particular masculine presentations, and through this dominating material practice further reinforces acceptable masculine performances, including the aggressive and violent acts policing involves. These material social practices both exhibit and reinforce masculinity.

Such experiences were not limited to homosocial interactions, as these men noted the instance and consequential impact of gender socialisation through social policing emerging from women and girls. Hegemonic masculinity is not only enforced and legitimised by men. Women and girls can maintain and support hegemonic masculinity through the endorsement of particular masculine traits as superior to others through compliant feminine performances, or the performance of masculinities themselves (Halberstam, 1998; Levant & Richmond, 2016; Messerschmidt, 2018). Women and girls can engage in material and discursive social practices that discredit or delegitimise masculine performances that challenge or contradict hegemonic masculinities, exhibiting a relative compliant relationship (Connell 1995, Messerschmidt, 2020).

As the P6 noted, he was mistreated by "boys *and* girls" (emphasis added). Cognisant of the impact girls and women can have in reinforcing masculine normativity, this mistreatment had a significant effect on his wellbeing:

> More than once I heard from girls that "I wasn't a real man [...] I felt absolutely dehumanized by these girls and later women and they treated me as such [...] I think it's critically important and necessary that people understand that women frequently do plenty of harm in regards to enforcing patriarchal expectations (P6).

This type of treatment was echoed by other men interviewed:

> Women treated me very differently just because of how I appeared differently superficially [...] being laughed at by everyone almost daily. Girls and guys always called me weird or autistic [...] never having friends, or anyone to talk to (P7).

Users of the forums of the Performative Core recall the treatment they received was elicited by both sexes in the school arena: "I was always bullied during my youth at school, not accepted by my peers ever both male or female. This led to extreme shyness and isolation" (Incels.net user). One incel recalls his physical size precipitating discursive policing from heterosocial peers; "I've always been bigger than just about everyone I encounter in school and woman were

the primary ones to mock me because of it" (Incels.is user). These experiences traversed material and discursive social practice:

> I was beat up on several occasions and laughed at for being weak. They circled around us and a girl pushed me toward the center [...] one female student called me a "goddamn freak." [...] a group of attractive girls would regularly sing an "ugly" song: "U-G-L-Y, everybody testify, you're ugly! (P1).

> Staceys would physically hurt me, tell me I would die alone, call me a freak, spastic (Incels.is user).

Here girls and women also contribute to the hegemonic policing of gender through material and discursive social practices, delegitimising these men's adolescent and adult gender presentations. These women and girls exhibited compliant femininities, policing the masculine performances exhibited by these boys and men incompatible with the dominant masculine presentations of their local arenas.

For these men homosocial and heterosocial bullying became key sites of social practice imparted upon them. Through material and discursive enforcement of acceptable masculinity of individuals that failed to exhibit prescribed and authorised masculine praxes, these men become Othered. This left these boys in isolation from social groups: "I was excluded from things" (P4); "I was regularly picked last for sports team" (P1), unable to develop a masculine identity through doing, absent the means in which to enact meaningful relational social practice.

Beyond subordination, other masculine performances are marginalised as unauthorised bodies based on characteristics external to the gender order, such as race, age, or class (Connell, 1995). Marginalisation is a performance unauthorised relative to the hegemonic masculinity of a dominant group, that is, one is marginalised by what they are not compared to the hegemonic norm. One such attribute that produces a marginalised masculinity is that of disability (Scott, 2014), as, "disability highlights difference" (Thomson, 1997, p. 24). Experience of marginalisation was offered by one incel with a physical disability, recalling the discrimination he would face as a consequence of Tardive dyskinesia[37] (TD):

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[37] Tardive dyskinesia is a condition in which the face or body make sudden, irregular movements which cannot be controlled.

> Because of my disability people are rude, incriminating, and just plain cruel towards
> me [...] because of my TD people are constantly making fun of me, mocking me, judging
> me, and treating like I am not a person, like trash (P8).

This had a profound emotional effect on the way he saw himself and resulted again in material practices of exclusion:

> When they see me they look at me with hate, repulsion, and disgust, and I saw those in
> their eyes [and] all of my self-esteem just died, I feel like I should kill myself because I
> am ashamed [..] People avoided me, no one wants to be near with me, and so I
> experience social isolation (P8).

Competence is an integral component of many hegemonic and non-hegemonic dominant masculinities (Connell, 1983; Messerschmidt, 2018). Competence is achieved normatively through a physically able body. Consequently, hegemonic masculinities confer the superiority of a body that is strong, able, and physically dominant. This idealised form serves as a reference point against which all other bodies are measured and evaluated. Despite this body remaining largely a fiction, with most men's actual bodies deviating from this benchmark in various ways (Connell, 2000), it remains a standard with which men are held to and marginalised against. The physically disabled body becomes unauthorised, marginalised in relativity to the hegemonic able body, considered incapable of bodily strength, aggression, and competence through autonomy (Manderson & Peake, 2005). Material practices that ensure men exhibiting these characteristics also involve exclusion. P8 is marginalised by hegemonic masculinity's proscription of disability relative to the legitimised able-bodied ideal. He subsequently experiences discursive policing through mockery and treatment as a non-person Other (Scott, 2014) as well as social isolation, resultantly internalising shame due to falling short of the standards imposed in the social structuring of authorised masculine performance.

One incel identified as a person of colour in a white dominant country. His account of the adverse experiences of adolescence intertwined racism within familiar material practices discussed above; "lots of bullying, racism, discrimination, mocking, [...] violence, bad memories etc with not much friends & allies" (P2). As a person of colour in a white dominant country (USA), his racial identity automatically marginalises him to the white normativity proffered and legitimised by regional hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Thus, entwined in his social practice was the deauthorisation of his racial identity inherent to his masculine performance. Indeed, a significant number of incels identify as people of colour (Speckhard et al., 2021), with many recognising their race as significant barrier to romantic intimacy (Gheorghe, 2022). While only a minority in the group interviewed here were a marginalised racial identity, it is important to recognise that race plays

a significant role in the incel identity relative to the local and regional hegemonic norms of the countries these men reside within. This speaks to the need to further stratify the incel community relative to these geographic constraints. While the online community may traverse earlier geographical limitations of hegemonic masculinities (Ging, 2019a), the lived experiences of many men are inherently bound to dominant and hegemonic masculinities in their immediate local or regional vicinities.

The documented maintenance policing of masculine hierarchy through discursive and physical material social practices precipitate subjectively experienced yet socially impactive consequences. These men's recounted experiences during their formative adolescence, in which they began to construct masculine identity, were inhibited and shaped by the social enforcement and legitimisation of hegemonic praxes through material practices that punitively prohibited unauthorised ways of being.

Heterosexuality, extending beyond mere sexual orientation is a political institution affording men the right to physical, emotional and economic privileges. Any man, or boy, straying from heteronormativity is subsequently punished. Physical and discursive material practices enacted by homosocial peers performing authorised masculine behaviour of violence and aggression, maintain and confirm allegiance to the masculine order. Through nonconformity and unauthorised performance of the proscribed traits and characteristics that challenge this sociopolitical structure, these men, as boys, experienced rejection and social exclusion. This social ordering continues outside of heterosexuality and into other performances not conducive to being an authorised man. The wrong frame, be it too thin or too fat receives social punishment. Too shy, too quiet, or too nerdy, these performances ill-fitting with the prescribed way to perform are also met with material social practices punishing proscribed masculinity. Other experiences centred around the marginalisation of unauthorised masculine presentations. Bodies that reflect incompetence through physical disability and those of men of colour receive equal punishment. Incapable of bodily strength, aggression, or assumed competence through autonomy, or failing to mirror the race of the dominant hegemonic group, discursive and material social practices ostracise these men also.

In the school and adolescent social world these material social practices manifest as bullying, a word perhaps impotent in its ability to describe a complex gendered and embodied social ordering practice. Bullying was central to these men's experiences, perceived as an agendered phenomenon; as while the products of this material practice ensured the policing of the right way to do and be a particular gender, the perpetrators emerged from both homosocial and heterosocial peer groups. Yet each gender exhibits a particular form of practice. While boys and men shore up the internal gender order via punishment of incorrect performance through

physical violence, aggression, and mockery, girls and women reinforce this gender order through compliant discursive delegitimization of those failing to meet prescribed standards of masculinity they buy into. These material social practices are integral to the maintenance of a hegemonic masculine order through which they experience subordination and marginalisation. Punishments are "stylized acts" (Butler, 1990, p. 191), contributing to the maintenance and reinforcement of hegemonic masculine values carried out by both sexes. The social structure that results impacts how these men understand themselves, through their place in the social order based upon the material social practices enacted on them as a result of their own masculine identity projects.

The next theme of this chapter encompasses cathexis toward and (in)experience of specific body reflexive practices conducive to masculine identity generation. As the 'wrong' boys and men, the failure to engage in heterosex and intimacy prohibits engagement in the behaviours so widely communicated and instilled as integral to masculine confirmation.

6.2   Unpractised Practice

Bodies are involved explicitly and intimately in social practices that produce, confer, and confirm masculinity (Connell, 2000, 2012). Bodies are both "objects of social practice and agents in social practice" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 851). Bodily acts link to social structures, as bodies engage with social and cultural factors to form the social world (Connell, 1995). The body is involved in material social practices as an object in action and as an agent producing social outcomes within the social structures in which these practices occur (Connell, 2000, 2009). The doing of masculinity through specific configurations of embodied bodily social action produces both individual identities and gendered relations (Connell, 1995).

Central to this theory of gender relations is the relative positioning of people and groups organised thorough the reproductive arena. Masculinities and femininities are projects of the configurations of social practice associated with such reproduction; sex and the associated embodied interactions attached (Connell, 1995). The performance of these practices or the reverence of these acts can confirm the masculine self while maintaining uneven gender relations; both individual lives and a social world result. The material social practices that involve the body as object and agent are 'body reflexive practices', embodied acts that relate to and create the social by their action and purpose (Connell, 2000; 2009). These practices are not internal to the induvial, involving social institutions and interaction.

We can conceptualise homosocial bullying as one such body reflexive practice. It involves both a physical act with the body; punching, kicking etc., and produces social conditions; the

unequal distribution of gendered power between two bodies. Bullying occurs within and through the social institution of schooling (Rosen & Nofziger, 2019), and in contemporary digital networks (Craig et al., 2020). This is a gendered act (Horton, 2019), a display of masculine coded physicality that produces and reinforces a masculine social ordering. Boys' bodies serve as the object through which the material social practice of physical violence is expressed (Connell, 2000; Pascoe, 2011), and as agent of social practice in reinforcing acceptable masculine praxes shoring up the hegemonic gender order.

Heterosexuality is another body reflexive practice buttressing, as discussed above, a sociopolitical institution used to confer material, emotional, and economic benefits to men (Rich, 1980). Heterosex as a material social practice becomes tied to physical dominance, prowess, and aggression (Kimmel, 2008; Pascoe, 2011; Orenstein, 2020). Heterosex, then, and associated intimacy, become body reflexive practices bestowing both power and masculine identity through the doing of sexual intercourse and associated acts, symbolically maintaining the gender order.

The performance of heterosex, through which heterosexuality is realised, is intimately tied to the relations of cathexis (Connell, 1995). Cathexis is the conceptual framing of attachment of emotional energy to an object (Freud,1905). In the context of the social structure of gender, desire becomes an emotional attachment to the object affording sex, an impetus for the social practices that lead to this fulfilment of a gendered act. Relations of cathexis are normatively structured through the heterosexual couple; heterosexual desire is the standard bearer dominant in society and reinforced through the hegemonic dominance of heterosexuality over homosexuality. In this way heterosexuality becomes a dominant sociopolitical institution in which men's sexual dominance, aggression, and prowess confer masculine status to the individual man and shore up the institution as a structure enforcing uneven gender relations (Rich, 1980; Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 2008; Pascoe, 2011).

Masculine identity becomes inherently moulded by patterns of emotional and sexual attachment beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life (Connell, 1995; Pascoe, 2011). Hegemonic masculinities shape patterns of cathexis (Connell, 2000); celebrated, authorised, and legitimate forms of masculinity promoting specific ways of feeling and communicating desire, emphasizing heterosexuality and sexual conquest. Bodily activity becomes a key indicator of masculinity in adolescence and early adulthood through the societal reverence of boys and young men with heterosexual partners (Stombler et al., 2010), with sex imagined as conquest (Kimmel, 2008), explicitly linking heterosexuality to masculinity (Messerschmidt, 2018). Heterosex and heterosexual intimacy become the body reflexive

practices through which desire is realised, and masculinity is "negotiated, defined, and enacted" (Connell, 2012a, p. 1678).

Incels are acutely aware of the importance of heterosex through society's promotion of sex. One former incel recognised the influence of media:

> I think there's still a big, societal push for a man to get laid a lot, thanks to Hollywood and contemporary media. I think "toxic masculinity" exists but is not nearly as pervasive as people say it is, but this would definitely fall under that umbrella (P4).

This man understands the institutionalisation of heterosex as 'toxic' masculinity, a pervasive set of undesirable traits or praxes, recognising the modes of media communicating the need for men to engage in the material social practice of heterosex. Toxic masculinity, not to be confused with hegemonic masculinity, is the colloquial understanding of a harmful and problematic way to display the masculine self (Whitehead, 2019). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) reject this as a useful concept as it conflates undesirable traits with hegemonic masculinity, the political legitimisation of particular traits as superior to others and femininity. Here P4 uses toxic masculinity to reflexively refer to a problematic regional dominant masculinity communicated through media, in which heterosex is portrayed as an integral and necessary component of acceptable Western "Hollywood" masculinity. The "push" for this man emerges from the media and film industry reproducing dominant masculine normativity of sexual prowess (Lawson, 2023); "getting laid a lot". A current incel spent time communicating the multitude of ways in which the importance of heterosex was communicated to him, commencing in youth:

> The most grave transition of adolescence for me was in hearing about how much I needed sex. As my sexuality matured, I heard more and more about how important getting sex was. I was told that around age fifteen, and I would think, "Damn, I need to get myself a girlfriend!"

> In an English class, we learned about Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, whose teachings another student summarized as doing everything we do for the ulterior motive of having sex. A student on the bus joked if I didn't masturbate, the buildup of tension would cause me to "explode". During an Internet conversation with another student about sex, she told me, "You're really missing out".

> We are reminded by society day and night about how badly we need sex. Men who die virgins are mocked as if they were destined to an eternity in Hell (P1).

This man details both local interactions and regional communication reiterating the importance and need for sex. From an early age he internalised this "*need* to get a girlfriend" (emphasis added), moulding patterns of emotional and sexual attachment (Connell, 1995; Pascoe, 2011). This array of social interaction reinforcing the importance of sex and intimacy demonstrates the prevalence and normalcy of heterosex as a social practice, and the impact this can have upon the framing of women as an object necessary for this process. The "need" for a partner was instrumental in "getting" the heterosex desired, the body reflexive material social practice necessary to confirm heterosexuality. Concluding, he recognises the explicit connection of heterosexuality to masculinity, as men who are unable to perform heterosex are ridiculed, equated to ultimate sin; "destined for an eternity in hell". To this man the failure to participate in heterosex produces a perceived egregious social shame, as the pollical institution of heterosexuality, conferred through material social practice, buttresses itself through denigration of those failing to participate.

Another incel recalls the discursive communication of the importance of heterosexuality to masculinity by a relative:

> I remember my grandmother once telling me that I'm a boy (rather than a man) because I don't have a wife. No, that remark didn't bother me too much. But it's possible that some people around me don't see me as a "real man" [...] I suspect that many women want a man who has a proven track record with other women (P5).

Here his grandmother's remark directly associates masculine maturity to heterosexuality. Absence of wife is absence of manliness. While this man believes this comment did not affect him, he nevertheless goes on to confirm that his grandmother's belief is likely shared by other women. This demonstrates a subjective awareness of the importance he thinks others place on the previous performance of heterosex in confirming masculinity. Unpractised practice prohibits the material social act(s) from producing the configuration of action necessary to generate a masculine self in the eyes of others.

Consequently, the societal discourses that emerge from the reified sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality and the importance of and need for the material social practice of heterosex influences the way incels understand sex and intimacy. Most striking is the awareness of the importance of heterosex and intimacy to existential masculine identity. Three succinct comments from interviewees and users of the Incel Network sum up this overt awareness of heterosex as generative and confirmatory:

> A man doesn't "become a man" within society until he's had sex (Incels.net user).

Everyone knows one thing: the most important driving force in life is women (Incels.is
user).

I want to grow as a person. And for that, I have to stick my dick into somebody's vagina
(P5).

These comments reflect the cathexis for heterosex as a body reflexive material social practice confirming the masculine self. Heterosex is integral to these men's understanding of self. The first statement speaks explicitly to the social practice of masculinity achieved through and by the body as an object and an agent. To exude masculinity, to be man, this man must have sex. He does not exist in society until he has done so. This further speaks to the generative social practice of masculinity as a configuration of action; doing masculinity brings this man into society while his masculinity constructs society through the material practice of heterosex. Outside of sex he is outside of society and society is outside of him.

For the Incels.is user, women are a driving force, an object to which the emotional energy of desire is attached. Without a woman there is no motivation. For this man it is more about the "women" object than the relationship with any one person. Women become the object of desire and the generative force of self, the provider of goods (Manne, 2017) to complete the man, the force needed to move forward and exist. Without the object of women, he is incomplete. This, he surmises, is a universal truism, indicating the extent the institutionalisation of heterosexuality permeates societal discourse.

The final comment reifies the generative force of heterosex. For this incel, sex is a requisite for growth. Intensifying the objectifying relationship to heterosex and sexuality reflected in the previous comments, here it is not even women as object but simply the vagina, any vagina, necessary for his self to develop. It is more about the 'doing' of heterosexuality via heterosex than the relation to the women involved. As Pascoe (2011, p. 12) notes, bodies become the "vehicles through which we express gendered selves". While one can express through their own body, an object and agent of social practice, the additional body necessary for heterosex also becomes a vehicle, an object, and an agent for the body reflexive social practice necessary for P5 to perform gender; to do, be, and "grow". This total disregard for the counterpart necessary in engaging in confirmatory body reflexive practice was reflected in a further comment by an Incels.net user; "women always say ''I need to feel attracted to date him'' which is true -- but other women could give unattractive men help by giving him some status". While seemingly appearing to recognise the autonomy and connection of the women in the body reflexive practice of intimacy, he immediately disregards this right and necessity, as women become the vehicle necessary to deliver masculine worth. The needs and wants of women come second to

the confirmation of "status" afforded through the material social practices associated with heterosexual intimacy that these women can, and apparently should, provide.

The need for sex was seen as more important for men than women, reflecting the explicit connection of heterosex to masculinity:

> I believe that incel has a bigger psychological damage on men, than it does on women. Men see themselves as losers, if they can't attract any women. People around them would also see these men as losers, if they knew (P5).

For this man, the unpractised practice has more of an impact for men than women. Reflecting the cathexis of desire emotionally attached to the heterosex object, an object necessary to confer masculinity, unfulfilled desire will purportedly have greater ramifications, as the institution of heterosexuality punishes the unpractised through self and external deprecation. The need to attract women extends beyond simple desire towards the material social practice which the outcome of the connection can afford. Given the explicit attachment of heterosexuality to masculinity (Messerschmidt, 2018), the inability to attract a heterosexual partner, indicative of heterosexuality, makes this man a loser, failing to confirm and confer masculinity through the doing of heterosexuality.

This sentiment is echoed by users of the Incel Network, connecting the social material practice of engaging in an intimate relationship with masculinity; "people judge a man's strength of character based on whether or not he can attract a lady" (Incels.net user), with another recounting the social policing resulting from such failure "I myself use [sic] to get made fun of for my inability to find a partner both in High School and later in the real World" (Love-shy.net user). Finding a partner is a precursor to the formative body reflexive practices of intimacy and sex that subsequently develop. Failure to attract a partner reflects failure to participate in the practice and institution of heterosexuality that confirms masculinity.

Engaging in the material social practices that confirm heterosexuality were perceived as common, with absence leading to adverse experience:

> Incels suffer because of their situation. They want to get romance, sex, physical intimacy, relationship - but they can't. That's bound to create some distress. And what's particularly distressing, is the feeling that these desired goals (love, sex) are things that most people seem to achieve [...] sex and romance don't seem to be some rare occurrences, like becoming a millionaire or something. Sex and romance are widespread. Many people can get it. Most people can get it (P5).

Heterosexuality vis a vis heterosex and associated love is viewed here as an unremarkable occurrence frequently performed by others. This speaks to the centrality of heterosexuality as an institution within the social structure of gender. Heterosexuality as a sociopolitical institution must present itself as normative and frequent to remain hegemonic (Connell, 1995; Messerschmidt, 2018). As noted above there is an observed societal narrative which these men feel imparts the importance of heterosex as a material social practice confirming the masculine self, and an essential element of growth and drive. The perception of the commonality of heterosex via the institutionalisation of heterosexuality creates its social dominance and hegemony among these men, becoming a requisite for the fulfilment of gendered desire, a frequently produced activity, and a dominant social practice. Consequently, the failure to be part of heterosexuality as an agent of social practice leads to anguish perpetuated by the perception of the ubiquity of heterosex and romance, demonstrating the hegemonic normativity of heterosexuality, and resultant distress when unable to engage in confirmatory body reflexive material social practice.

6.3   Summary

Gender is both a material social practice and a way of ordering the social world, producing social structure. It is this social structure that impacted and impacts men that choose or have chosen to adopt an incel identity. Certain socially performed and communicated traits and praxes shore up the social structure imbuing uneven gender relations, maintaining the dominance of men over women and some men over others. The right way to be a man is socially enforced and achieved thorough the doing and undoing of particular masculine material social practices that ensure a particular hegemonic configuration of action remains dominant, the solution that legitimises patriarchal social structure.

When seeking to generate a masculine self in adolescence, these men's failure to be the right boy; the inability to produce the goods demanded by peers (re)producing the formative social world around them, produces adverse social experiences. It is the initial presentation of unauthorised masculine praxes that start some men's journey to an incel identity. Punitive social practices performed by both sexes maintaining and adhering to the hegemonic order police boys that fail to live up to prescribed masculinity. Effeminateness, nerdiness, introversion, and extremes of physicality are met with discursive and physical violence and exclusion, key material social practices necessary to enforce the hegemonic order.

Bullying as a body reflexive material social practice allows some to perform masculinity through these acts, while others experience subjugation to these dominant and dominating performances of masculinity. The social structure that results explicitly impacts how these men

in their bullied adolescence experienced their gendered selves as not good enough boys, policed positions of subordination and marginalisation. It is these formative and informative adolescent and early adult experiences; the impact of gendered social structure, that produce relative subjugated masculine positions which, as we will see in following chapters, both produce adverse psychological experience and predispose to the forgiving and absolving narratives embedded within the Incel Network's ideology and discourse.

Heterosex, the desire for it, and the emotional and physical intimacy that surrounds sex as a body reflexive material social practice become integral to the heterosexual adolescent and young man. These years of formative gender identity are tied to doing sex and subsequently being a man. Heterosex becomes intimately tied to the psychic energy of desire, a gendered attachment of emotion to the object of sex through the bodies that facilitate heterosex. Women, and their bodies, become passive vehicles in conferring and confirming heterosexuality and the masculine self. Heterosexuality becomes the standard bearer within gendered social structure, a sociopolitical institution through which unequal gender relations are relayed and produced, with heterosex the body reflexive practice that produces and relays this material social world. To engage in heterosex is to at once produce the masculine self and invoke the body as an object and agent of social practice, producing unequal gender relations through the shoring of the sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality.

The absence of heterosex, then, a body reflexive practice *unpractised*, situated with the sociopolitical normativity of heterosexuality, inhibits the confirmatory power imbued by the physical act. With heterosexuality explicitly tied to masculinity, to not do heterosex is to not be a man. The patterns of emotional and sexual attachment commencing in early childhood that generate desire for heterosex continue into adult life as adolescent and young men seek sex and intimacy. Heterosex becomes a discursively communicated need, with women's bodies the proxy.

The absence of heterosex lies at the heart of the incel identity. Incels unable to engage in heterosex lack the body reflexive practice to meet their desire and confirm the masculine self. The generative and definitional power of social practice unpractised prevents these men from doing that which is required to be. For many incels the woman becomes second to the act; heterosex is as much about the confirmatory, status-wielding power that results as it is the bodily practice that sates desire. The focus remains on the perceived damage and distress the absence of heterosex has on the masculine self, women subsequently become a vehicle to afford status and relieve the suffering. Through practice unpractised, these men lay outside of the sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality, unable to engage the body as an agent of social

practice perpetuating the dominance of heterosexuality within and through the social structure from which the pressure to act emerges and imparts upon them.

Sustaining the reflexive epistemological praxis of this thesis, these conclusions are by no means to condone or justify the subsequent discursive, symbolic, and physical acts of violence emerging form the incel community, some even noted in comments recalling lived experiences of masculine subordination, marginalisation, and unpractised practice. What results from and entails the incel identity can never be justified by previous (in)experience. Nor is it to suggest that sex is a need that these men are owed or require, which would be to reproduce the discursive strategies embedded within the sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality that proffers heterosex as normative, necessary, and confirmatory. However, to understand how the man arrives at the incel identity, we must document and connect the generative mechanisms within this journey that contribute to the destination. The impacts of gendered social structure imparted through the material social practices regulating the hegemonic masculine order, and those conferring and confirming the masculine self via body reflexive practices of heterosex and physical intimacy are but one part of this journey.

These generative mechanisms create a foundation from which psychological experiences and individual responsive propensity to seek alleviative and explanatory remedies found in the Incel Network result. The following chapter, Man Down, cumulatively builds upon this chapter's foundation, addressing RQ3 through discussion of the subsequent individual experiences directly resulting from impacts of the gendered social structure. Through adherence to beliefs affording the right way to be a man, and a reflexive comparative assessment of failure to be these men and/or acquire heterosex, men who have adopted an incel identity experience numerous adverse affects and perceptions regarding their purported failed gendered selves.

Chapter 7   Man Down

"I feel by not having those things (wife, or even a girlfriend, as well as kids) de-legitimizes me in many ways, not just as a grown up, but also as a man"

Gendered social structure constructed through material and discursive practice produces subjective psychological experience and perspectives. The social affects the individual. Addressing RQ3 this chapter cumulatively builds upon the last, discussing the individual experiences and perspectives of incels resulting from impacts of the gendered social structure. Utilising interview data and supported by findings of the ethnography of the Incel Network, Man Down reflects an overarching theme encompassing the subjective perceptions of the social practice of masculinities upon men experiencing subordination and marginalisation, and an inability to perform the bodily reflexive practice of heterosex within the sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality. Further, it will discuss the beliefs of these men regarding desirable masculinity and their reflexive rumination of a perceived relative discordance between their masculine self and these dominant ideals.

The first subtheme of the chapter, *Fallout,* explores the psychoaffective[38] consequences that result from the impact of the material and discursive social practices of bullying enacted through physical violence, exclusion, and social policing of subordinate or marginalised performances of masculinity. A variety of internally experienced and internalised emotions and feelings are encountered, including low self-esteem, loneliness, hopelessness, and worthlessness. These feelings reflect the impact of failing to present the praxes and characteristics of dominant masculinities of their peer groups, policed by various dominating masculine and compliant feminine peers. Similar feelings emerge from the perceived and experiential inability to engage in heterosex. These subjective emotions include inadequacy, envy, disgust, and hate. Such reactions involve a reflexive internal gendered conversation (Archer, 2007; Messerschmidt, 2016), in which structural gendered discursive and material interactions produce adverse affect in response to deliberation upon these experiences, demonstrating the psychological impact of the social structure of gender upon these men.

The second subtheme, *Haven't Been Doing So Good*, explores the subjectively held perceptions of incels regarding acceptable masculine performances; the beliefs or ideology of masculinity that result from social structure. Using Pleck's (1995) theoretical construct of traditional masculine ideology (TMI) complimenting Connell's (1995) theory of the social practice of

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[38] The emotional aspects of an individual's psychological makeup.

masculinities, this theme highlights the traits and characteristics these men hold in regard to desirable masculinity. The enduring ideals of anti-femininity, physicality, success, and (potentiality for) violence present throughout Western hegemonic configurations are traits embedded in the beliefs inherent to TMI. Through their understanding of what men should or should not be, these men revere dominant masculinities as the preferred presentation, further positioning their own masculine selves as lacking and discordant with these dominant presentations. This contextual positioning is a further component of the reflexive process (Archer, 2007, 2012), through which individual agency of the subject considers the consequences of the gendered social structure and assesses their relative place within it. These men compare themselves to dominant masculinities emerging from social structure, feeling they lack the traits and characteristics observed.

Such individual psychic experiences result from the policing of these men's masculine performances, failure to exude the dominant masculinities of their peers, and a reflexively manifested discrepancy between self and the ideological and observed masculine ideal. Building upon the impacts of social structure, these individual experiences discussed below characterise the initial stage of the reflexive agency mediating social structure and the act of engaging with the Incel Network and adopting an incel identity.

7.1 Fallout

Failing to perform the right masculine praxes is costly. Gender is a very specific form of social embodiment that impacts upon the body and the mind, consequences of the social practices that result from participation in the social world (Connell, 2000). There are several consequences that emerge from performing gender in a manner incongruent with revered and authorised traits, with these rejected performances often punitively policed by non-hegemonic dominant and fleeting hegemonic dominating masculinities (Messerschmidt, 2018, 2020). These are localised to the immediate school and peer settings in which they take place, social events and interactions placing the bullied into positions of subordination and marginalisation. Bullying has a significant degree of mental health effects on victims (Rosen & Nofziger, 2019), including anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Lereya et al., 2015). The bullied boy may go on to produce an internalised gendered subordination, feeling weak, small, or inadequate, a reflexive response characterised by a lack of masculine self-esteem (Messerschmidt, 2016, 2020), as well as a number of other gendered adverse psychological experiences. This reflexivity involves a conscious process in which we "consider ourselves in relation to the particular social context and circumstances we experience" (Messerschmidt, 2020, p. 25). While this process of reflexivity ultimately leads to responsive

social action (Archer, 2007), a theme discussed in the following chapter, the concept is first introduced here to frame the psychological experiences that result from these encountered circumstances as part of dynamic rumination. Through the reflexive process, "conscious deliberations that take place through 'internal conversation'" (Archer, 2007, p. 3) lead to the processing of events and interactions facilitated by and experienced within the social structure, producing adverse affects such as low self-esteem, hopelessness, and inadequacy. In this case, it is the events of subordination and marginalisation afforded by a gendered social structure in local environments which act as the impetus for the generation of feelings that are subsequently considered and acted upon. Resultingly these men, as boys enduring the social policing documented in chapter six, describe several adverse affective experiences. One of the most detailed descriptions of these adverse psychological experiences was offered by P8, the incel diagnosed with tardive dyskinesia discussed in the previous chapter. In enduring the discursive and material practices of mockery and exclusion by peers, he offered insight into how this made him feel:

> People avoided me, no one wants to be near with me, and so I experience social isolation and due to that I feel like I am useless, that I don't belong here, I am worthless and have no purpose except to suffer from humiliation and alienation. [...] When people all the time just look at you with disgust and repulsion, and shoved and push you away like you are not supposed to be here you would have no motivation, the will to live, the dreams, the inspiration, the tomorrow, they are gone, you would want to end yourself, you have no home, no hope, no life. So I feel like I am not a person anymore, in my mind I do not live in planet earth. I feel like Georg Samsa, an inconvenient bug that gets mistreated and isolated by everybody, and when people show cruelty to me they do not feel bad about it because I am just a vermin, just like Samsa's family isolated and mistreated him in Metamorphosis. When I die, I feel like no one would grieve me (P8).

The effects of the verbal abuse this man encountered had a profound impact on his sense of self-esteem, self-worth, and motivation. This account reflects an internalised reflexive self-marginalisation as he was "pushed and shoved away", by his peers. These social events and interactions led to feelings of being a "non-person", outside of the bounds of human interaction and connection. He uses the analogy of Kafka's (1915) *The Metamorphosis* to describe the dehumanisation, alienation, and disablement that Georg's bug represents; "an inconvenient bug that gets mistreated and isolated by everybody". The psychological experience of the marginalisation this man experiences is so impactful that he extends his reflection to suggest suicidal ideation; "you would want to end yourself", describing a sense of both hopelessness and worthlessness. The psychological experiences he describes are attached explicitly to the

material and discursive social practices and events resulting from the policing of masculinities. Failing to display the competence attached to hegemonic configurations of masculinity that relatively culturally marginalises the disabled body (Manderson & Peake, 2005; Scott, 2014), he feels a variety of adverse affective experiences. These feelings are the result of an internal conversation in which he mulls over the social experiences and events involving discursive and material social practices that led to his perceived isolation and exclusion from peer groups.

Other incels spoke openly about the adverse affective experiences they encountered as a result of the material and discursive social practices enacted through bullying:

> It made me less and less interested, willing etc. in/to any human to human relations, actions etc, more hostile, cautious, distrustful, disgusted etc. toward others (P2).

> I did have extremely low self-esteem at that time (P6).

> It would usually make me feel like there was something detestable about me, and then my anxiety and sadness levels would spike (P4).

> Experiences like these (bullying) left me without any feeling of dignity in approaching a woman [...] my libido decreases, the effects sometimes being long-term. It is as if my brain were monitoring what was happening and forcing me to feel a certain way for weeks, months, or years afterward (P1).

The adverse affective experiences these men offer range from a lack of motivation and willingness to engage in prosocial interaction, disgust, anxiety, sadness, low self-esteem, and a lack of self-worth through absence of dignity. Each of these men explicitly connect these feelings to the bullying they encountered, either by various dominating masculinities performed by homosocial peers, or compliant femininities of girls and women supporting and reinforcing the hegemonic relative inferior positioning of the traits these men produced.

P2, to recall, encountered "lots of bullying, racism, discrimination, mocking, [...] violence". The marginalisation achieved through racism and the material social practices of bullying and violence led to distrust and disgust in peers, psychological experiences he relates to the impacts of the gendered social structure of masculinities. This connection reflects an agency in which rumination takes place, associating the social events and interactions experienced within social structure to the feelings that resulted.

P6 experienced subordination due to the performance of effeminateness policed through fleeting dominating hegemonic masculinities of the boys that assaulted him, embodying violence and aggression. This led to a reflexive process of internalised subordination, producing a lack of masculine self-esteem, a psychological experience noted in other bullied adolescents

(see Messerschmidt, 2020). The policing described so vividly in chapter six was an exemplary instance of the bullying he endured as a result of social structure, consequently leading to an internal conversation that produced adverse self-concept positioned within the context of his masculine self.

P4 developed feelings of self-loathing as this man designated himself "detestable", precipitating anxiety and sadness. These psychological experiences resulted directly from the "bullying throughout my middle school and high school years" he encountered, a consequence of the policing of masculine social practices. This led to an internal conversation; "I think I internalized a lot of this", an "internal narrative that I had built up in my head because of bullying and anxiety". Again, the agency of processing of the social led to individual feelings centred specifically around the social events and interactions that he had endured, a core component of the reflexive process (Archer, 2007),

P1 offered a deeper reflexive account of the adverse experiences which emerged from the material; "a girl pushed me toward the center", and discursive; "one female student called me a goddamn freak" social policing practices performed by girls in the school environment. Not only did he experience a loss of self-worth, but also a deeper sense that his brain would "force" him to feel a certain way for a prolonged period of time. Here P1 consciously distanced himself from the reflexivity taking place internally, as if his conscious thought stream offered in the interview response is separate from his brain. Nevertheless, it is the whole agentic self that engages in this reflexive process (Archer, 2007), with this response evidencing the internal conversation that led to these feelings directly contextualised within the adverse social circumstances he previously experienced.

These men each experienced different but aligning adverse affects, resulting from rumination upon the physical and discursive acts characterised by the bullying each encountered in homosocial and heterosocial exchanges intrinsically tied to and producing gendered social structure. The construction and performance of masculinities are embedded in structural practice, and while this process is socially located and experienced, the resulting rumination upon the circumstances and context leads to real and adverse psychic experience. The displays of masculine coded aggression, berating, and violence embedded in the bullying discussed in chapter six precipitates a subjective process of reflexivity, which in the first instance involves an internalised conversation assessing how this person feels about these events and interactions (Archer, 2007, 2012; Messerschmidt, 2016). These experiences serve as a further generative mechanism of an incel identity; as fuel underlying and catalysing problematic reflexivities discussed in the next chapter leading to engagement with the Incel Network and adoption of an incel identity.

Aside psychological experiences of the material and discursive practices manifest in bullying and exclusion, incels also offered a degree of insight into the adverse affect that emerges from unpractised practice. As already discussed, heterosex is a both a body reflexive practice in which masculinity is negotiated, defined, and enacted (Connell, 2000, 2012), and a social practice buttressing the institution of heterosexuality, a symbolic and sociopolitical institution within the social structure of unequal gender relations (Rich, 1980; Connell, 1995; Pascoe, 2011). To *do* heterosex, is to *be* heterosexual, performing a legitimate, revered, and authorised social practice. In chapter six the importance of heterosex was both visible to incels, in societal and institutional discourse, and held individually as a key generative act affording status and masculine identity. Unsurprisingly, given the subjectively held importance and socially instructive pertinence of heterosex, the inability to engage in this body reflexive practice also produces adverse affective experiences through reflexive rumination. While incels in chapter six spoke of the impression others would have of their sexlessness, a former incel, having now rejected the identity and ideology but remanning a virgin, demonstrated the reflexive process in relation to the social circumstance of sexlessness:

> I always felt like a loser for wanting a girlfriend but never getting one [...] It's mostly inadequacy and emasculation that drives me nuts about being a virgin (P4).

Still yet unable to engage in desired heterosex this man offers an account of the previous internal conversation he had with himself; always feeling like a "loser", a ruminative result of the social circumstance of not engaging in the social practice of having a girlfriend within the sociopolitical context and structure of heterosexuality. Crucially, it was not just the lack, but the want that conferred this self-subordination. The cathexis of desire generates his reflexive internal dissonance, in which the attachment to a girlfriend as an object of social practice remains unmet. The incongruence with that which has been internalised as necessary for masculine confirmation, and the failure in "getting" this produces an adverse psychological experience.

Even as a former incel he still experiences the adverse affective experiences of inadequacy and emasculation, demonstrating both the continual process of reflexivity and the perpetual influence of heterosex as the masculine self evolves. Emerging from the explicit social context of the connection of masculinity to heterosexuality (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2018), and by extension participation in the body reflexive practice that produces the subsequent heterosexual masculine self, adverse psychological experience persists, demonstrating the pervasive effect of the institutionalisation of heterosexuality. For the doers, heterosex confers identity and normative status, for the sexless the sociopolitical institution can instil subjective adverse self-perceptions through the reflexive rumination that

takes place in mulling over the how this absence makes the agent feel. As well as internal adverse psychological experiences, this incel also spoke of the pervasive emotional experiences in relation to others participating in heterosexuality:

> I've in the past felt extreme envy for people who have relationships and sex, and I still feel that way from time to time (P4).

Both as a former and current incel, this man experienced envy directed at those who able to perform the body reflexive practice he had reflexively internalised as necessary to alleviate the emasculation he experienced. The social practice of heterosexual relationships themselves served as a proxy for the act of heterosex, an experience seemingly not tied explicitly to his incel identity, but his wider masculine self. While the absence of heterosex is a contributory generative mechanism to the incel identity, it is through the agency of ruminative attachment of this social practice to gender vis à vis masculinity that is crucial. While the body remains the object and agent of social practice, it is the "conscious mental capacity in reflexivity" (Messerschmidt 2020, p. 25) which creates the link between heterosex and masculinity, and the subsequent negative affect when this practice remains unpractised.

Beyond self-emasculation and envy, the perception of infantilisation was offered by another incel who described not being treated equally to his heterosexually active peers:

> I sometimes sense that people who know me don't treat me like an adult and that's mainly because I don't have a family. I sense that mostly in situations where families with children, and even couples, seem to get attention and respect, while I'm just ignored (P5).

For this man it is the demonstration of participation in the institution of heterosexuality through the development of a family, a consequence of heterosex and heterosexual relations, that he reflexively ruminates as necessary to be seen as a mature masculine body. Failing to exhibit this evidence through the social practices ultimately resulting from heterosex; 'a family', he subsequently perceives emasculation; not being treated as an 'adult' despite being a man in his forties. It is not only self-emasculation that arises from the rumination upon social experiences and events, but also perceived external emasculation via the dominant sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality. For P5, while active participants are awarded "respect and attention", those inactive are ignored, producing reflexive perceptions of immaturity and exclusion.

In addition to reflexive interpretations of a loss of self-worth through erosion of dignity, and of being forced to feel adverse affect from the heterosocial policing he experienced in the schooling sphere both discussed above, P1 offered a further ruminative account of the psychological experiences encountered resulting from sexlessness:

When I see couples showing affection, I am somehow forced to feel pain. No matter how sympathetic I try to be for the loving couple, something instantly sets me in a distressed mood as if my brain is monitoring and telling me this is something I ought to hate every time it happens. I have noticed that if a woman appears near the center of a photograph, and her boyfriend is positioned intrusively in front or on the side (as if to emphasize that she's "taken"), I feel more disgust than if they are positioned equally in the center. [...] I have nightmares in which I feel tormented at the thought of never having sex. The uninhibited psychological horror of the nightmares causes me to scream and bang my head on the floor or against the wall (P1).

Again, he distances his conscious self from his cognitive processes; disconnecting social experiences from the subjective feelings that result as a consequence of an internal conversation producing the social actions he goes on to document. Yet immediately after this discursive act of separation he confirms the agency in his reflexivity as he feels more disgust when women are central in a photo of a heterosexual couple. This is eventually followed by the connection of further adverse affect explicitly attached to the unpractised body reflexive practice of heterosex. These recurring ruminations while elicited when asleep are still able to be remembered, suggesting a conscious state at least to some degree, and resulting feelings of "uninhibited psychological horror", an intense reflection upon the feelings that result from his perceptions of the inability to engage in the sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality via heterosex.

For these men gendered social structure has resulted in instances of adverse psychological experience as a result of the receipt of material social practices of bullying and exclusion, and the internalisation of the centrality of heterosex as a confirmatory body reflexive practice. As the first stage of a complex subjective reflexive rumination upon social circumstance and social context (Archer, 2007, 2012), these individual experiences characterise a generative mechanism instructing the eventual responses and social actions that lead to an incel identity. These experiences range from internalised self-subordination and eroded masculine self-worth, feelings of hopelessness and disgust, to adverse experiences arising from the perceived treatment and observation of others relative to the normativity of heterosexual practice. The impact of structure upon action begins to be mediated by the agent, effectively and inextricably linking the individual and his adverse psychological experience to the social. In addition to experiences resulting from impacts of the gendered social structure, these men demonstrate subjective perspectives and beliefs regarding the right way to be a man, and a reflexive self-comparison to these beliefs and observed masculinities contextualised within social circumstance and structure.

7.2   Haven't Been Doing So Good

Hegemonic masculinities provide a framework for social practice, a politically legitimising function to ensure uneven gender relations, both between men and women and among men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2018). These leads to particular social actions, through bodily and discursive practices producing the gendered social structure (Connell, 2000, 2009). The bodies that perform these functions also hold psychic beliefs that undergird these actions, derived from authoritative transmission within a hegemonic gender order. These beliefs can be considered gender ideologies (Levant & Richmond, 2016); ways of understanding what it means to 'be a man', the traits, characteristics, and praxes that define masculinity. While transmitted through hegemonic masculinities, it is the subjective beliefs regarding the importance of traits and characteristics imbued most often through dominant masculinities that correlate to these ideologies. That is, dominant masculinities; the common or popular way to be a man (Messerschmidt, 2018) instruct the beliefs held by men about what it means to be man. An enduring ideology, particularly in the USA (Levant & Powell, 2017), is known as traditional masculine ideology (TMI). TMI comprises four general traits first suggested by David and Brannon (1976): antifemininity, respect via success, absence of weakness through presentation of strength, and acceptance of risk through violence if necessary. When we consider the social practices that confer masculine hegemony, while dynamic and present in various configurations locally, regionally, and globally, as praxes of legitimisation antifemininity, strength, force, and competence remain enduring components imbued in hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1983; 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2018; Messerschmidt & Bridges, 2024). Thus, the cultural beliefs and expectations infused in TMI reflect the qualities legitimised by hegemonic masculinities, affording dominant masculinities their commonality and popularity.

TMI becomes a useful theoretical construct with which to conceptualise the views of incels regarding their beliefs surrounding what a man is and should be. Indeed, incels reflect a consistent understanding of what constitutes acceptable masculinity, aligning with dominant masculine presentations in their immediate and wider social environments. Incels offered combinations of the underlying characteristics of TMI regarding their beliefs of what a man 'is', confirmed through desirability to women. For example, one incel remarked:

> A guy who pretends to be exciting by having tattooes, a beard, riding motorcycles,
> looking dangerous, being tall, looks like he can fight, etc. Most women will instantly be
> all over a guy like that (P7).

For P7, a man who engages in risky behaviour; "riding a motorcycle", has the potential for violence "looking dangerous"; "looks like he can fight", and presents an absence of weakness through the appearance of strength; "being tall" all covey what a man should be, confirmed by attractiveness to women. Here, being the right man means, fundamentally, conveying heterosexuality, the dominant masculinity of his region, the Philippines. These beliefs align succinctly with traditional masculine ideology, suggesting this man has a very specific belief structure concerning what a man should be, emerging from the visibility of dominant masculinities in which these characteristics are present. Another incels when asked about masculinity frames his understanding of manliness in relation to heterosexuality desirability:

> Being ugly, non-rich without a car, home, steady job etc makes a guy totally
> unattractive for women (P2).

Again, heterosexual attraction is the benchmark for masculinity understood through success, another tenet of TMI (Levant & Powell, 2017). Success is a proxy of competence, integral to hegemonic masculinities which frame failure and incompetence in relative inferiority. For P2 wealth accrued through a steady job competently held and material possessions such as a house and car convey the success necessary to attract a woman, central to his understanding of being a guy. He goes on to elaborate in further detail what 'good men' exude:

> Good men must be honest, faithful, loyal, fight for what he believes, defend loved ones,
> vindicative, revanchist, working smarter than harder, masculine etc. and never let
> others use, cheat, betray him, take advantage of him etc and if they do just punish
> them and make a revenge (P2).

P2's elaboration demonstrates the potential for violence, to "fight" and dispense "punishment" and "revenge", conveys an overt competence though "working smarter", and absence of weakness as the man ensures he is never taken advantage of or cheated. Traditional masculine ideology exudes from his conceptualisation of a man.

P9 offered similar reflections regarding what it means to be a man:

> To be man means to provide, means to be manly in a way that a man can be. Be
> stereotypically manly, which means don't give up, don't feel sorry for yourself, don't
> vent in public groups on the Internet etc. Facing your fears (P9).

Success and competence operationalised through provision and never giving up, and the absence of weakness though the prohibition of vulnerability and discursive expression of struggle are all central to his understanding of being manly. These familiar traits characteristic

of TMI arise from his perceptions of dominant masculinities; common or stereotypical masculine performances.

Former incels also offered aligned perceptions of what it means to be a man. P6 indicated his understanding of masculinity prior to being an incel while growing up:

> Back then what a man was "supposed to" be was pretty clear to me back then. I had a caricature in my mind, something like a G.I. Joe action figure in a business suit (P6).

He understands the right way to be a man through the embodiment of strength and success. This imaginary man is visible in dominant masculinities that exhibit strength and size; "G.I. Joe", and engagement with the dominant institutions of the globalized neoliberal order (Connell & Wood, 2005); "in a business suit". Underlying this caricature is two key beliefs implanted in TMI: success and the absence of weakness (David & Brannon, 1976). Interestingly when another former incel reflects upon his understanding of masculinity following identity resignation, the response echoes this sentiment:

> I believe that masculinity encompasses being comfortable with oneself, having a respect for work and for others, and by having a strong sense of protecting and providing for others (P4).

Traditional masculine ideology remains despite the resignation of the identity. This former incel's reflection repackages the absence of weakness and success in a softer yet similar discourse; "protecting and providing". G.I Joe becomes the protector, and the business suit the provider. TMI is present in these two men prior to and following engagement with the incel community and ideology, suggesting that beliefs around what a man should be are not necessarily produced by the identity or ideology (although as we shall see in the following chapter, they are indeed inflamed). The beliefs surrounding what a man should be are something these men held and continue to hold, emerging from dominant masculinities through which these traits are exuded and authorised by hegemonic pollical legitimation of such praxes. These recurring beliefs regarding what a man is or should be reflect enduring traits inherent to TMI and present in dominant masculine presentations. The belief that men should radiate strength, or rather the absence of weakness, success, and the propensity for violence demonstrate the internalisation of gender ideologies, subjectively held, yet shared ideas around which social practices are desirable and acceptable when performing gender.

So far, beliefs regarding what a man should be have been given by these men in the abstract, a way of understanding masculinity in the theoretical sense. These perspectives become crucial to understanding the journey to an incel identity through the deliberative and contextualising reflexive process that occurs in relation to these beliefs. Social structure provides scaffolding

for the masculine self through the reverence and legitimatisation of certain masculine social practices, and the subsequent and relative policing of unauthorised masculine social practices. Structure produces both resulting adverse social and psychological experiences, and individual beliefs regarding what men should and by extension should not be. This provides the "specific social events, interactions, structures, and discourses" (Messerschmidt, 2020, p. 25), prompting a reflexive process in which the agency of assessing feelings and priorities *relative* to these circumstances ultimately leads to consequential social action (Archer, 2007). One crucial part of the individual reflexive process occurring in men that go on to identify as incels is a conscious relative positioning of the self to dominant masculinities, performances in which traits these men understood as indicative of what a man is are socially practiced. It is not just the social structure, and the resulting material and discursive social practices enacted on these men responsible for subsequent agentic action, but the internal conversation*s* they have in relation to the constructs producing and affording the social structure.

These conversations involve comparative positioning of self to the dominant masculinities scaffolding social structure. A user of the Performative Core demonstrates one such internal conversation through his reflection on the perceived demands of masculine social practice:

> To be socially (and sexually) acceptable as cis hetero guys, we have to present ourselves to others fitting into a narrow set of traits, like never showing weakness, being hyperagents (a.k.a. being confident) in most situations, having looks that are barely under our performative control (having reached certain height, good physiognomy, not being bald, having a correct frame... except, to some extent, having an athletic physique if your genes aren't against you), etc. (Incels.is user).

This incel provides a reflective account of the pressures he feels the social structure of gender places upon him and other men to be men. These span the social and the sexual domains and require strength, competence, and varying specifics of physical capitals inherent to dominant masculinities. This is a reflexive process in which he assesses the social structure and perceived experiences that result from the performance of these attributes, demonstrating the process of deliberative agency in which the individual ruminates about social structure. While he may blame the social structure via the pressures required to be socially and sexually acceptable, he is the one holding the belief and thus reinforcing the structure; his agency is integral in this process.

These agentic ruminations also take place in explicit relation to local dominant masculinities in which the self is comparatively positioned against men exhibiting traits indicative of masculine success:

> I saw that men who were more stereotypically masculine (read: muscular, deeper-voiced, dominant) had no problems dating in high school, but thin, awkward nerds like me could not get anything. I've seen this happen a few times even outside of school (P4).

The reflection on his observations represents a reflexive process; an internal conversation that is had in which he ruminates on the interactions in which "stereotypically masculine" men are able to successfully engage in heterosexuality via "dating" in relation to his own failure; "not getting anything". This comparative success and failure are understood through the social structure of gender, in which specific traits; "muscular", and social practices; "dominant", are the cause for success, and other traits; "thin", and social practices; "awkward", confer failure. A user of another forum of the Incel Network echoes this reflexive agency:

> I first realized no matter how generous or chivalrous I was most women only saw me as a friend or a made fun of me especially when I showed interest. [...] Then after being put down and sidelined for the rest of high school I dropped out, when I started university I had the same story only this time it was explicitly clear that I didn't match up to woman's desires. The guys there were massive, had basic douche bag personalities but were somehow getting women (it was because they were Chads!). Meanwhile I got friend zoned, used and abused by my love interests as an emotional tampon for my whole life (Blackpill.club user).

While somewhat crude in his reflexive process; embedded in incel terminology as required by the ideological fundamentalism of Blackpill.club, this rumination extends across two schooling environments, assessing events, interactions, and structures that affected his specific circumstance. The internal conversation through which this takes places is signified by "I first realized"; an individual, internal process. Multiple levels of agentic inspection occur in which he frames his masculine experiences within the social structure of gender. The men of his college exhibiting dominant masculinities were "getting women", whereas he remained unable to find such intimacy, instead feeling "used and abused". This conscious reflexive process leads him to conclude this was due to not matching up to women's wants; the traits he understands the successful men as possessing. Through this rumination his agency engages with the social structure and circumstances that have resulted, defining his immediate concerns of being "put down and sidelined" and "friend zoned" in relation to what he prioritises: heterosexual intimacy.

Another incel engages in a reflexive assessment of his own masculine worth positioned in relation to what matters most to him:

As for me, I don't really have anything going for me. I don't pass the test in any department that women generally find important. I don't have looks, I don't have money, I don't have any remarkable achievements. [...] My incel is mostly due to me being an ugly bald guy, who has little to offer to any woman of my age (P5).

Attracting a woman is the key priority in this reflexive rumination. These reflections represent an internal conversation in which the man has decided he lacks the necessary traits women want, traits common in dominant masculinities of his regional arena, the USA. The social circumstance of the absence of intimacy is the context within which he attributes failure through absence of success, wealth, and physical capital. P5 concludes by engaging in hooks' (2004, p. 66) "psychic self-mutilation", as he reductively considers himself comparatively to a particular social context, and circumstances he has been unable to experience, via a self-depreciating reflexive assessment of his physical undesirability inherent to his masculine status supposedly perceived by women.

The conscious mulling over of the social context and circumstances within which experiences and events take place is an integral part of the agency involved in developing an incel identity. This reflexive process involves the consideration of the social structures in which these events take place, particularly regarding gender and sexuality. Perceptions of what a man should be emerge from the practices embedded in social structure. These men indicate their understanding of masculinity through exhibition of traditional masculine ideology; theoretical beliefs depicting the material social practices of dominant masculine performances in local and regional settings. Reflexive contextual comparison undertaken by these men place what a man should be and what a man should get in relative positioning to the agents' perceived masculine self. Invariably there is a disconnect between the two, as these men lack the strength, competence, and social dominance to 'pass the test' to participate in heterosexuality through dating and girlfriends. Such comparisons are made both in the theoretical or in direct comparison with heterosexually successful dominant masculinities in local settings. This involves an internal conversation, a personal reflection on perceived events, interactions, and failings as the individual ruminates on the resulting feelings (Archer, 2007) that emerge from the perceived difference between the man they think they should be, and the man they think they are.

7.3   Summary

One of the main objectives of this thesis is to bridge the gap between structure and the individual, between the influence and impact of the social and the psychological experiences and processes of the individual operant in the journey towards an incel identity. This chapter

has theorised the psychological experiences of these man as part of an individual conscious process involving agency in reponse to resultant events and ideals, mediating social structure and the individual.

The gendered social structure in which these men construct, perform, and encounter masculinities involves material and discursive social practices that produce social experience (Connell, 1995, 2000). Men, as boys, failing to exhibit the traits and praxes of dominant local and regional masculinities are policed by various dominating masculinities of homosocial peers and compliant femininities of their heterosocial counterparts. These social acts born form social structure led to individual lived experiences producing subjective adverse affect. Social subordination and marginalisation through the material social practices of bullying, and the perceived failure to perform the body reflexive practice of heterosex lead to feelings including hopelessness, worthlessness, inadequacy, envy, and disgust. These feelings are directed both inwardly, and externally towards others. As subordinate and marginalised men, internalised feelings lead to self-denigration, while the observation of others engaging in heterosexuality produces feelings of envy and hate, as these men perceive themselves as excluded from the sociopolitical institution these people are engaging in. Incels ruminate upon these socially generated experiences and how such material practices impact their sense of self. The adverse psychological experiences produced are the first part of a process of reflexivity, deliberative rumination mulling over how social experiences make them feel through an internal conversation. This is a conscious and individual endeavour driven by the agency of the individual mediating social structure and eventual responses.

Social structure further impacts the way men understand what it means to be masculine. While hegemonic masculinities structure social practice, legitimising unequal gender relations (Messerschmidt, 2018), the gendered agents within this social structure retain individual ideas and beliefs about what it means to be man, afforded by this hegemonic social ordering. Men that adopt an incel identity exude a traditional masculine ideology, a set of beliefs that place strength, success, and the propensity for and willingness to engage in violence as central to the ideal masculine self (Pleck, 1995). These beliefs serve as a standard with which each man subjectively assesses himself. This also involves an internal conversation; a reflexive, deliberative rumination comparing the man they are to the man they think they should be. This agentic mulling over occurs in relation to local masculinities and internalised priorities. The boys and men of local education environments are used as benchmarks with which incels compare and contrast themselves. The prioritisation of perceived attractiveness to women, the proxy necessary for participation in the sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality, serves as a further comparative again understood through regional dominant masculine traits. This conscious reflexive process is a key component of the development of an incel identity as these

men understand how they feel in relation to the social structure in which they reside. Feelings of insufficiency arise directly from consciously observed, contextualised, and processed material and discursive practices that produce the gendered social structure.

Critical feminist research of incels primarily focuses on patriarchal structure that affords male supremacist ideology, while positivist psychology 'objectively' observes psychological adversity within the community and problematically links these experiences to essentialist sex role narratives within evolutionary psychology. Understanding psychological experiences within the context of a gendered social structure, and as a component of an agentic experience and deliberation, connects the individual to the structure. Rather than social structure alone framed as responsible for adoption of an incel identity, or adverse psychological feelings these men encounter decontextualised from this conceptual scaffolding, conscious rumination within an internal conversation each man carries out contextualises the impact of social structure through an active subjective process. Reflexivity as an agentic process mediates the impact of patriarchal structuring of masculine social practice and the consequential lived experiences through the conscious individual actor. Internal conversations are generative mechanisms; initial reflexive ruminations that lead to psychological experience and responses contextualised by and in gendered social structure.

The final discussion chapter cumulatively draws together the journey to an incel identity, evidencing and discussing latter stages of reflexivity that lead men to choose to adopt the identity and remain a participant of the community. These men employ external sources residing in the Incel Network which confirm and complete their internal conversations. Embedded and explicit pill ideology contextualises social position within the confines of a biologically determined, postfeminist sexual marketplace. The immutability of the perceived truth this ideology professes result in these men choosing to become an incel in a responsive morphostatic social act resulting from this reflexive process. Electing to sustain this identity leads these men to develop a fractured reflexivity intensifying distress and prohibiting purposeful or meaningful courses of alleviate social action.

Chapter 8   Deal(ing) With It

"Discovering the blackpill finally allowed me to put into words what I've been experiencing and feeling all along"

So far, to answer RQ1 this thesis has documented the structure and content of a three tier Incel Network, addressed RQ2 by illustrating and analysing the impacts of the gendered social structure, and discussed individual experiences and perspectives produced through initial stages of conscious, deliberative reflexivity, answering the first aspect of RQ3. The Incel Network consists of a complex web of ideological dissemination and performative space in which men can understand their own lived experience, discover others in similar situations, and adopt and perform identities resulting in discursive misogyny and symbolic violence. Gendered social structure produces lived experience of subordination and marginalisation, as various dominating masculinities and compliant femininities police the behaviour of men failing to elicit authorised traits and praxes through material and discursive social practice. These experiences lead to an initial reflexive deliberation, self-reflection in response to bullying, isolation, and perceived sexual exclusion. These men also hold specific beliefs regarding what it means to be a man; masculine ideology, reflecting strength, success, and the propensity for violence. These dominant masculine traits and lived experiences are the social events and contexts over which these men ruminate. through internal conversations leading to feelings of inadequacy, hopelessness, and worthlessness.

Deal(ing) With It cumulatively and conclusively builds upon these elements, discussing the responses to these experiences and beliefs produced through a further reflexive process leading to the adoption of incel identities, and participation in the incel community. Using data from both interviews and ethnographic findings, this chapter explores the latter stages of agentic action that can produce, maintain, and overcome the incel identity through communicative, fragmented, or autonomous reflexivities. These reflexivities answer the final aspect of RQ3; the responses of men that adopt an incel identity and engage within the community, drawing the findings together to meet the second aim of this research, conceptualising the process through which men assume an incel identity.

The first subtheme, *Now It Makes Sense,* explores how these men complete and confirm initial internal conversations having produced adverse affect and comparative masculine inadequacy. Prioritising sex and intimacy, the material social practices conducive to participation in the sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality, these men search for others that may provide advice regarding their perceived position of masculine inadequacy and sexlessness. In doing so

they encounter the Incel Network. The Outer Periphery provides initial entry into the Network through videos and comment that discuss heterosexual attraction and dating. This leads men to venture deeper into the Network, engaging with now extinct and extant forums of the Performative Core. The Network allows the completion of the reflexive internal conversation (Archer, 2007, 2012), as the Network confirms a rigid biologically determined sexual marketplace. In a position of immutability these men choose to adopt an incel identity, a conscious and deliberative process, preserving the existing gender social structure through the espousal of misogyny and the reinforcement of a hierarchy of masculine performances.

The second theme, *What's a Man To Do?,* explores the effects of the immobile social position that emerges through an incel identity and engagement in the Network. Unable to quell individual subjective cathexis towards heterosex as they embrace nihilistic futility, these men develop fractured reflexivities; disjointed, distressing internal dialogues that inhibit alleviate social actions (Archer, 2007). This inability to forge a coherent personal project leads to an array of antisocial and destructive behaviours, and generation and exacerbation of poor mental health. Conversely, men that shed the incel identity demonstrate both positive communicative and autonomous reflexivities and external conversations producing relational goods (Archer, 2007; Donati & Archer, 2015), prosocial self-directed action that leads to situational mobility as these men seek therapy, develop new friend groups, and reflect positively on their masculine self. The incel identity is thus developed through an initial communicate reflexive agency, maintained by a subsequently developed fractured reflexivity, and overcome by the conscious shift to an autonomous reflexivity.

8.1   Now It Makes Sense

Reflexivity involves an internal conversation in which we "mull over specific social events and interactions, we consider how such circumstances make us feel, we prioritize what matters most, and then we plan and decide how to respond" (Messerschmidt, 2018). This conscious process of self-reflection mediates structure and agency, as reflexivity drives future social action producing social structures. These dialogues can be both productive and destructive, leading to social regression, stasis, or mobility. This is an intimate, individual, and subjective process in which lived social experiences provide the basis from which we each derive our own relative and contextual position in the social world (Archer, 2007, 2012). As already documented, the social experiences of masculine subordination and marginalisation have produced a range of adverse affective experiences in the men that were subject to the material and discursive social practices of their peers. This led to the beginning of the internal conversation, as these men contextualised the absence of heterosex, observed dominant

masculinities, and the bullying form homosocial and heterosocial peers as the basis with which to evaluate how these circumstances felt. The conversation at this stage however remains incomplete; the absence of heterosex, a key priority, remains unfulfilled and the individual must further determine the course of social action he must take in dealing with both this absence, the adverse affect experienced, and his perceived masculine failure. To complete this self-reflection these men engage in communicative reflexivity.

Communicative reflexivity involves the seeking of others to validate and complete the reflexive thought processes. Through such engagement the induvial completes self-reflection through thought and talk. The individual seeks out people in similar situations to their own, leading to a reliance on external confirmation. Through this engagement and subsequent reliance on external sources, a contextual continuity arises in which the individual maintains the links to these external sources and the position it provides, rather than pursuing alternative opportunities or behaviours that may disrupt these now valued connections (Archer, 2007, 2012). When Archer first conceptualised reflexivity, Web 2.0 was in infancy. The user-generated content and interactions that characterise this stage of the internet was only first starting to develop into the hyper connected mode of communication and information that exists today (Fisher, 2023). It is reasonable to assert, then, that the 'others' involved in communicative reflexivity can be either digital or embodied in the real world. Indeed, Donati and Archer (2015) note the power of social media as a replacement mechanism for transmission of norms and values that would have been communicated through "real relationality" (p. 83), spoken word and interpersonal social interaction. These contemporary mechanisms can produce a 'steering' effect, guiding individuals towards and shaping social connections and knowledge based on algorithms and commercial interests rather than authentic human needs and choices. These digital others may not even need to exhibit direct communication with a person; it may be a one-sided conversation in which the individual views discourse embedded in a video or comment without any reciprocity. Through this process it is possible to engage in thought and talk necessary for the internal deliberation without necessarily being in a social or conversational environment, a capacity these men perceive as untenable due to their perceived isolation and exclusion.

Beyond the discussions in chapters six and seven regarding the importance of heterosex to these men, the priority of sex and intimacy was evident when incels were asked what drew them to various sites of the Network. As one former incel observed:

> If you are a young person who wants to have an active sex life, you will naturally seek out information on courtship (P4).

To these men "an active sex life" is central to their priorities. The institutionalisation of heterosexuality, and perception of heterosex as generative leads to the realisation that sex is what young people do. Heterosex and heterosexuality become the material social practices that are prioritised by these men, fuelled by an absence relative to the perceived success of dominant boys and young men in the local school and college settings. Heterosex, as already discussed, also confers masculinity as a material bodily practice (Pascoe, 2011; Connell, 2012a), motivating prioritisation beyond simply wanting to have sex and a matter of gendered identity. This prioritisation becomes integral to the reflexive process as the internal conversation focuses on absence and the feelings that arise from this circumstance. This is confirmed by another former incel who despite shedding the identify remained focused on heterosex; "even men with happy wives but no kids, that has to be a better lot in life than being single. I want sex so bad" (P6). It is social experience absent of this contextual driving force that had both produced feelings of negative affect; "I've in the past felt extreme envy for people who have relationships and sex" (P4) and motivated these men to seek out external sources of confirmation, to reflect upon why they were not able to engage in heterosex and how they may remedy this.

These reflexive ruminations remain unfinished. Men absent of heterosex, and perceiving inadequacy relative to observed and imagined dominant masculinities in local and regional settings, look for external sources of confirmation to contextualise their social situation. This is characteristic of communicative reflexivity (Archer, 2007). Rather than engage in prosocial self-directed action to remedy the adverse feelings and reflections initially generated from social events and experiences, these men look for outside help. Perceiving a lack of available peers to engage with and existing within contemporary culture normalising digital networks and online communication as an embedded form of socialisation (Kennedy & Lynch, 2016; Pink et al., 2016), the internet becomes the 'others' integral to these men's communicative reflexivity. The discourse that will result in an analogue embodied conversation can now be acquired in one-sided interactions with online content; videos, comments, and text of websites all offer an 'opinion' that would have previously been gained through speaking to trusted others. As these men perceive a lack of trusted others to turn to turn to, various digital others are employed who can confirm and complete their initial reflexive ruminations:

> I started to feel increasingly isolated and desperate. So I tried to look for help online (P5).

> I just wanted someone to talk to, someone to validate how I felt, my views, just tell me I'm normal (P4).

Laden with adverse affect produced by the internal conversations that resulted from social events of masculine subordination and marginalisation, and the unpractised confirmatory practice of heterosex, these men seek contextual information to understand their circumstance. It is the combination of adverse psychological experience produced by initial self-reflection on social events and the prioritisation of the performance of heterosexuality that leads to the Incel Network.

As discussed in chapter five, the Network consists of three tiers of digital arena, each with distinct content and structure. The Outer Periphery (OP) contains social media platforms that dilute pill and incel ideology and terminology. The presentation of this content is housed in videos introducing fringe opinions regarding the modern dating arena, normalising extreme concepts of sexual markets and market value, biological determinism, and a postfeminist sentiment of empowered and privileged women. The Inner Periphery deepens this understanding through wikis and forums dedicated to ascetic self-improvement, as well as platforms which historically hosted the incel community now migrated to forums of the Performative Core (PC). This final tier entrenches blackpill ideology in performative spaces affording and permitting varying degrees of incel identity espousing victimhood and misogyny.

The OP was where many of the men interviewed first began to encounter the Network, primarily within YouTube. This is perhaps due to the age of many participants as TikTok, and other sites of the Outer Periphery such as Facebook, have only recently begun to house diluted incel content relative to YouTube's long-standing history of proffering pill and incel ideology (see Papadamou et al., 2020; Solea & Sugiura, 2023). One incel found his others with which to complete his internal conversation via the True Forced loneliness (TFL) YouTube channels described in chapter five:

> I came across on [sic] the incel community on YOUTUBE. I watched videos of guys of age 27, 30s, 40s, and 50s who are still virgins, and after watching those I kinda feel better about myself knowing that I am not alone and I am not the one who suffer from this. True Forced Loneliness- that's what they call it (P8).

Here it was engagement with the OP that first gave this man the external confirmation to enable rumination upon his own position within the social context of the absence of heterosex. This internal conversation led to a conscious self-reflection upon his social position and similarity. He felt better about himself and part of a wider group of others in a similar position to himself. Through this communicative reflexivity he began to understand the context of his social situation. A former incel recalls the impact of the OP relative to the impact of the PC upon his journey into inceldom:

YouTube funnelled me down a really dark pipeline. It happened very slowly. Bitter anonymous losers posting online is one thing, but these were high production videos with "experts" who seemed, at least to me at the time, to know what they were talking about (P6).

The OP provided informed others, offering external confirmation through their expertise embedded within high quality videos. While he also recognises the power of the PC containing "Bitter anonymous losers", the Outer Periphery is where he first began to reflexively funnel towards then incel identity which he now sees as a dark place. While he distances himself from the active process he took in this process, as an agent consuming and deliberating on the experts in these videos, we can see here the power of the other as an external confirmatory source in the incel's communicative reflexivity in the journey to the identity.

Unable to complete self-reflective internal conversations autonomously, the OP provides the external source of information to contextualise social position, building on the previous adverse affect already present:

YouTube comments concerning dating or romance had convinced me that women will never want me It naturally fed into my internal narrative that I had built up in my head because of bullying and anxiety [...] I already had issues with dating already and self-esteem, and then the idea that I am inherently undesirable as a man fed into what problems I already had (P4).

The social structure resulting in material and discursive social practices led to the bullying this incel experienced in his local school and peer group settings; "made fun of for being nerdy, thin, and effeminate" (P4). His initial ruminative reponse to these events led to psychological experiences as he built up an internal reflexive narrative, which provided the baseline for the confirmatory power of the digital others in the OP to complete this narrative.

Within the OP, these men are exposed to content that proffers the ideological tenets of incel ideology. The process of communicative reflexivity provides a confirmatory narrative that intensifies the gendered insecurities these men develop through the reverence of dominant masculine traits:

I'd see generalizations which strongly align with red or black pill. Things such as "only tall/attractive men can date otherwise you get nothing" (P4).

The immutability of the sociosexual sphere, in which biologically determined traits such as height determine heterosexual success, reinforce the initial reflexive rumination noted in chapter seven, perceiving a comparative lack of necessary characteristics conducive to the

dominant masculinities of men engaging in heterosex. The transmission of this ideology leads to further adverse affect as these men have their perceived inadequacy confirmed:

> Just go on YT [YouTube] shorts or TikTok and look for videos were women speak about their height preferences in men - it's totally brutal (P9).

OP content provides a problematic narrative reaffirming rather than challenging the social structures that led to the initial reflexive adverse affect these men experience through deliberative rumination of their social interactions. In this sample of men YouTube, and to a lesser degree TikTok, were significant contributors to the communicative reflexive process these men pursued in contextualising their social experiences and events. The relational steering (Donati and Archer, 2015) of videos to users by YouTube, through which specific extreme content is algorithmically targeted at users (Papadamou et al., 2020) was also noted: "they started to pop up on my feed by themselves" (P9). YouTube continues to proffer toxic "masculinist, anti-feminist and other extremist content", with exposure to content rapidly increasing once an initial video has been viewed, particularity among users the platform understands to be young and adolescent men (Baker, Ging, & Andreasen, 2024, p. 3). Users of the platform have a 6.3% chance of exposure to an Incel-related video by YouTube within five videos of an initial non-incel video, increasing to 9.4% when the first video is incel related (Papadamou et al., 2020). More recent research of TikTok videos and YouTube's analogous 'shorts' found accounts indicative of young and adolescent men were fed toxic and manosphere content at a considerably higher rate after looking at just one video involving content emblematic of pill and incel ideology (Baker, Ging, & Andreasen, 2024). It is not just the active seeking of external confirmation by these men that draws them to pill and incel ideology within the OP but also the mechanics of the social media platforms where this material is located. YouTube and TikTok feed young and adolescent men engaging in a digital communicative reflexive process opinions that confirm the gendered insecurities and anxieties they have established resulting from initial ruminations regarding masculine inadequacies. Authentic emergent social relations, real relationality, in which young and adolescent men can develop healthy schemas relating to romantic interpersonal interactions are replaced with artificially engineered streams of one-way discourse. The OP proffers reductive ideologies diluting misogynistic and self-denigrating rhetoric, exacerbating a loss of social integration inherent both to these men's lived experiences and the developed world at large (Donati & Archer, 2015)

Initial engagement with the Incel Network can lead from engagement with the OP to the forums found within the PC; "it started with social media and over time developed to the other sites/platforms" (P2), where men deliberating on their sexlessness and perceived masculine

inadequacy are further exposed to pill and incel ideology. One former incel notes his engagement with the PC did not require active engagement but mere presence as a lurker:

> I'm not sure if I posted but I definitely lurked a lot. I'm trying to remember the feeling, it was weird. I remember some incels described these posts on those subs as "addicting" and yeah, it kind of was (P6).

Even without active engagement, exposure to these forums and the ideology within is sufficient to provide the external confirmation inherent to communicative reflexivity. It is the continuous contact with ideology embedded in the Network that leads to deliberative ruminations around sexlessness which pervade the internal conversations of these men:

> The constant exposure made me feel like it was true. I think we humans believe that things which "many people say" are, in fact, reality. It quite often is the case that the majority is more correct than individual judgement, but not always, and modern social media tends to distort this sense of majority in one's life. If you consume nothing but content about how, say, American eels are not endangered, when they are actually endangered, you will slowly begin to doubt whether eels are threatened (P4).

The repetitive presentation of pill and incel ideology distorts these men's social situation. Beyond the algorithms driving the presentation of incel and pill ideology in the OP, the heavily policed echo chambers of the PC prohibit alternative or competing ways of seeing the social context of lived experiences. The ruminative internal conversation is then influenced by these "addictive" and repetitive experiences, providing a purported social context that reaffirms their initial self-reflections concerning perceived masculine inadequacy and inability to engage in heterosex:

> From my point of view, all of the "hard truths" on that sub seemed to confirm all of my biggest fears and insecurities in regards to girls, dating and my value (or lack of thereof) as a partner (P6).

Speaking of subreddits formerly housing the incel community - akin to the forums of the extant Performative Core - this former incel explicitly described the confirmatory power of incel digital spaces. The fears and insecurities this man had accrued in reflexive rumination of both his inability to engage in heterosex through girls and dating, and his own related masculine value, were reinforced through the rigid ideology that stratifies men based on specific physical capitals (Menzie, 2020).

The ideology embedded across the Incel Network serves as the confirmative tool with which these men then decide to take action through the adoption of an incel identity and engagement with the community:

> I tried to find help on the web and found a web site devoted to the incel problem. That was probably the very first incel site. I immediately recognized that the term incel described me well. I have visited various incel sites and forums ever since (P5).

Through this man's recognition of the utility of the confirmatory narrative embedded in the initial website he visited he was able to discern an identity from the information provided. From this internal rumination he then proceeds to engage in further social action, becoming an active member of the incel community though his future and sustained visitation of incel sites and forums. This process is not caused by social structure, nor is it a decontextualised and inevitable consequence of lived experience. Rather it is a conscious decision of an agent making an imperative decision concerning how to react to his perceived social situation, contextualised by an external confirmatory source that completes his internal conversation leading to future social action (Archer, 2007, 2012). The incel identity is generated explicitly through pill ideology contextualising social experiences of sexlessness and material social practices of the gendered social structure:

> I never had many friends growing up and never had anyone express romantic feelings towards me in my entire life. [...] When I was maybe 20 or so years old I started reading about things like hypergamy and other blackpilled concepts like the psychology behind human attraction. You all know the drill. Everything started falling into place. That lifelong rejection and social isolation I've been experiencing finally made some semblance of sense. That's when I officially took the Blackpill and called myself an incel (Blackpill.club user).

For this man, blackpill ideology provides context for social experience of rejection, isolation, and a lack of opportunity to engage in heterosex, completing the internal conversation, as everything falls into place. He continues: "the black pill was the missing piece of a jigsaw that I was trying to solve all these years" (Blackpill.club user). This internal dialogue regarding subjective social events is contextualised through a rigid social ontology that permeates the Incel Network. Feelings of inadequacy that arise due to the failure to engage in heterosex or perceived isolation as a result of the material social practices operant in the gendered social structure are processed through the lens of the blackpill. This external ideological structure is the "missing piece" of the reflexive process, giving these men the components to make sense of social experience. This user's previous social experiences are consciously and deliberatively framed through pill ideology, used as a confirmatory tool to support the reflexive process that

ultimately leads to conscious action of the agent. For this man the 'official taking' of the blackpill is a decided process; a definitive social act leading to several further social actions such as visitation and contribution to a forum within the PC of the Network.

Through the internal conversation that leads to the social act of adopting an incel identity, the missing piece embeds misogyny and antifeminism. These men understand the ideologically contextualised social world not through patriarchal gendered social structure of material and discursive social practices that subordinate women to men, and some men over others, but through pill social ontology of postfeminist markets and biological determinism:

> Your SMV is shown in plain sight. Women and Chads have been fucking MORE than ever before. If women aren't approaching you or doing things I mentioned above, YOU'RE UGLY (Incels.is user).

> In this feminist society foids were indoctrinated to chain you to misery and pain' draining you till you're not useful for them anymore and then replace you with somebody else (Blackpill.club user).

> It's not women's fault that seeing a chad evokes their primal instincts and often turns out their rational thinking. It's not misogynistic to state the truth (P8).

The social act of an incel identity precipitates continuous agency to engage in discursive performances observed both in the PC and by some interviewees. These acts result from the internal conversation which have informed these men's decision to identify as an incel. Attraction, or lack thereof, is framed through market value. Rather than the material social practices of gender relations that revere and legitimise some masculine traits and characteristics over others, women become enemies, beneficiaries of a feminist society in which incel men are the victims. Resultantly, misogyny and antifeminism ensue.

Romantic rejection and social isolation are understood to be the result of a rigid sociosexual hierarchy in which these women, discursively dehumanised as foids, enact lookist discrimination only seeking out specific physical capitals in ideologically constructed men:

> Masculine features like height, wide shoulders, big frame and masculine faces, deep voice are the real Chad genetic alpha male qualities, which are being selected against by foids in the West, because women have been given agency and can select for the men they want, which isn't natural (Blackpill.club).

As Archer (2007) notes, reflexive assessments and social actions can either transform through morphogenesis or morphostatically preserve existing social structure. Here, and in the three exerts above, discourse serves to morphostatically preserve the existing structure of uneven

gender relations through the derision of women as inferior and some men as superior to others. Instead of challenging the structure producing the initial social experiences and events that these men have endured, blackpill ideology as a reflexive tool of external confirmation morphostatically pedestals the very material and embodied social practices placed in hierarchical superiority to incels' subordinated masculine performances. The traits and characteristics of the dominant masculinities observed in their schooling environments are reified in the Chad ideological construct, understood not through a sociological process of reverence and relative legitimacy but biologically determined genetics.

Choosing to adopt an incel identity internalises a hierarchical superiority (Thorburn, Powell & Chambers, (2022), a reverence of the very traits these men originally placed themselves in relative inferiority to during initial stages of reflexivity evoking adverse psychological experiences of inadequacy and worthlessness. Rather than engaging in autonomous self-directed, prosocial, and proactive social acts that produce socially mobile behaviours to overcome these feelings, through communicative reflexivity within the Incel Network these affects and perspectives are reified. Looking back on his time identifying as an incel, one man notes his adherence and reverence to dominant masculine traits:

> I was way more concerned with conforming to cis-hetero-masculinity. By that time I wanted to be the caricature. I wanted to be the square-jawed, thick-wristed, 6-pack having alpha bro. I remember googling, in futility, 'exercises for increasing the size of wrists' (P4).

Rather than challenging the social structure that affords the dominance of some masculine characteristics over others, as an incel, an agent lacking these traits, he engaged in a conscious social act to acquire the very masculine characteristics of the dominant masculinities he originally felt subordinate to. His individual and conscious reflexive process resulting in the adoption of an incel identity led to the reinforcement of existing structural inequalities further entrenching his constrained position in the social hierarchy, an act of gendered morphostasis.

Commencing with experiences of subordination and marginalisation produced by and in the gendered social structure, a multifaceted process of conscious deliberative reflexivity leads to an incel identity. External sources of confirmation complete internal conversations precipitated by evaluation of adverse social events and the prioritisation of sex and intimacy, leading to the decision to identify as an incel and engage in the incel community. This is a communicative reflexive process (Archer, 2007, 2012), as the individual man engages in a conscious excursion into digital space to seek help and advice regarding his perceived masculine inadequacies, and absence of desired and confirmatory heterosex. Rather than encountering opinion that challenges the underlying material and discursive practices that structure the social

environment and experiences these men have encountered, the Incel Network reinforces these tropes. The individual gendered agent ruminates on these narratives choosing to become an incel. Resultingly future social acts are predicated upon this identity and the requirements of the spaces in which the community interact, and the ideology with which internal conversations were completed.

Reflexivity is a fluid and dynamic process, our internal conversations are relative, ongoing, and fluctuate (Archer, 2007, 2012). As we shall see in the next theme, while this initial process of communicative reflexivity leads to the incel identity and community, continued participation is unsustainable as external conversations in the Network lead to relational evils (Donati & Archer, 2015). This leads some men to develop a fractured reflexivity as they are unable to alleviate underlying desires that ultimately led them to the identity in the first place, prohibited from engaging in effective social practices and by the demands of the identity itself. Autonomous reflexivities of former incels demonstrate that this identify is indeed a deliberate choice that can be consciously shed through self-directed, pro social, and proactive social acts.

8.2   What's A Man To Do?

The incel identity results from conscious deliberative self-reflection of social experiences and events. The negative affect that results, the prioritisation of sex and intimacy, and the communicative reflexive engagement with digital sources of confirmatory and completing narratives leads these men to choose to adopt an incel identity. This identity is not a static experience; the man behind the label follows a trajectory predicated on his choice to identify this way, engaging in the communities Performative Core, digesting and espousing the associated ideology. This dynamic journey is also a process of reflexivity, as the individual continues to understand himself through his sexlessness, failed masculine self, and the immutable biologically determined gynocentric sexual marketplace proffered by blackpill ideology. As this ideology is internalised the futility of an existence in which there is no observable recourse, a failed man at the bottom of the hierarchy forever unable to engage in heterosex and intimacy, produces a fractured reflexivity.

Fractured reflexivity results from an inability to assimilate self-reflections into a coherent life strategy. Through incoherent deliberation a distressed and disjointed dialogue emerges as it becomes impossible to plan a clear course of alleviative social action. This inability to mobilise a proactive and prosocial internal conversation necessary to forge a coherent personal project in the face of adversity results in a state of reflexive fragmentation. Such fragmentation can arise when the individual experiences personal disorientation. Personal disorientation is the experience of a profound disconnect between the internal ruminative conversation and the

ability to produce meaningful paths of action in the social world, creating volatility and a paralysis of agency. The individual's ruminative deliberations lead to distress rather than clarity, caught in maladaptive cycles or manifest as anxiety and self-doubt. These adverse ruminations inhibit the agent's capacity to embark upon meaningful prosocial endeavours that may alleviate an adverse social experience or position. It is the distressing internal dialogue that prevents such action from taking place as the individual regresses or remains socially immobile (Archer, 2007, 2012).

Choosing to adopt an incel identity through a communicative reflexive process, the nihilistic ethos embedded in blackpill ideology (Cottee, 2020; Rothermel, Kelly & Jasser, 2022) impacts men engaging with the community. As self-identifying incels begin to internalise the immutability of biological determinism, a gynocentric society, and their place at the foot of the sexual hierarchy, their reflexivity leads to self-destructive behaviours. Unable to reconcile internal conversations that suggest a futility, some incels engage in regressive social acts that worsen their position:

> When there's no hope for tomorrow, when there's no hope for anything, it's can be perceived a as a lot off your shoulders. A person can just stay in bed all day because why not? A person can drink themselves to death because why not? I would say that point was when I was also at my most dangerous in terms of mental health. I was trying to get as close to death as possible by mixing sleeping pills with hard alcohol. I remember my blood going absolutely ice cold and being barely able to feel my body or stand or walk. I liked the feeling of being so close to death (P6).

Reflecting on his actions when holding an incel identity, this former incel recalls reclusiveness, self-destructive substance abuse, and adverse mental health. This man experienced a notable disconnect between his internal rumination and the ability to make meaningful change in his life. The incel identity had lifted a weight from upon his shoulders, however this alleviation removed the impetus and drive to make reflexive decisions that could lead to positive social change in his life. Instead, he engaged in extreme and regressive behaviours that not only prevented him from achieving prosocial action but produced social immobility, remaining "in bed all day" and behaviour that brought him "close to death". This disconnect between his internal dialogue and ability to make meaningful change also prevented prosocial interaction with support services: "I had no interest in mental health or therapy during those time. I didn't believe anything would change or help me" (P6), a common sentiment within the incel community (Speckhard et al., 2021; Van Brunt & Talyor, 2021). Another incel demonstrated how his internal conversation specifically prevented motivation to engage with such support relative to community membership:

Such forms are a safe haven away from mental health therapists, who limit our freedom of speech. Anything our therapists interpret as "a threat to ourselves or others" can be used as a basis for involuntary hospitalization (P1).

This incels' engagement with the community through the PC is placed in specific relation; "as a safe haven" to mental health support services, which through his conscious rumination is perceived as a risk to his freedom. This disjointed reflexivity severs this man's thought processes away from social support structures, the very institutions that could help him to discuss and reflect upon his social experiences and resulting adverse affect, leading to potential prosocial behaviour. Archer (2007) notes fractured reflexivity can exacerbate distress. Consequent to this incel's disjointed internal conversation that deters the engagement with prosocial activity, his internal ruminations indeed produce such distress:

> When I meditate upon my sadness, I think of my visual snow. My visual field becomes overlayed by a sort of television static. The static appears disorderly and so disrupts my appreciation of any beauty in my surroundings. I therefore feel I have less to lose in bringing any actual disorder into the world. I hallucinate spots of light and blue patches of color, especially while angry. I have had bouts of rage my whole life, and feel as if something is egging me on and making me angry without my consent (P1).

When reflecting on the internal feelings produced by deliberative rumination on his position; "my sadness", this man provides rich detail of the distress that emerges, invoking hallucinations, motivation for "disorder", and bouts of rage. Again, as with previous accounts from this incel, he detaches from the conscious process he engages in. Yet his reflections demonstrate a clear inability to effectively process and enact positive socialisation to deal with his lived experiences; "no amount of self-improvement is a magical cure for Inceldom" (P1), detaching from his own agency through personal disorientation (2007), leading to internal volatility and social immobility.

Other incels demonstrate the social immobility characteristic of personal disorientation resulting from a fractured reflexivity: "I'm far too avoidant and anxious to a pathological extent to actually change and start socializing" (Incels.is user), as their disjointed internal rumination prevents prosocial action; *"it's probably best to just avoid people in general, most normies can't be trusted"* (Incels.net user). These incels demonstrate a sense of disconnection between the products of their internal conversations and any ability to develop meaningful strategies of social action. The incel identity becomes a generative and escalatory identity that intensifies: "at a certain point it's like falling down a tall flight of stairs, the momentum starts and there's no stopping the descent" (P6), facilitating the capacity to engage in disjointed internal deliberations: "inceldom as part of my miserable identity enables me to analyze and question

the reasons for my suffering and sorrowful existence" (P8). It is the communicative reflexive confirmatory power of pill ideology discussed above providing the vehicle through which the indoctrinated emerge at this fractured reflexivity. This is put succinctly by one PC user: "I'm blackpilled so it's over for me" (Incels.net user). The term "over" is a core tenet of incel ideology, denoting a terminal and futile state inherent to the immutability of low sexual market value (Sugiura, 2021). The expression of "it's over" is the exemplary declaration of personal disorientation, producing a fractured reflexivity preventing any meaningful or purposeful courses of social engagement or action.

Another former incel offered reflection on how the incel identity and associated ideology produces fractured reflexivity:

> These generalizations have a tendency to give a simple, quick answer which allows one to evade responsibility for either coping with being single or from even trying. They're ultimately unproductive at best. [...] It's a never-ending, vicious cycle, where by saying you can't get laid, you won't. You won't work on yourself or be more attractive [...] There's a deep hopelessness that it both teaches and enflames. Incel rhetoric only damages the male mind (P4).

Pill ideology offers a reductive and nihilistic response to sexlessness and perceived masculine inadequacy. The "quick answer" offers a confirmatory power in the initial stages of the communicative reflexive process, resulting in men choosing an incel identity. Hopelessness emerges from the internal conversation, taught and exacerbated by incel ideology. This distress results in a fractured reflexivity, a sustained deliberative rumination leading man to conclude they will never "get laid", failing to engage in prosocial action to overcome their perceived situation. This personal disorientation prevents planning of meaningful paths in the social world that would attempt to remedy this unwanted situation, such as to "work on yourself or be more attractive". Several incels demonstrated this fractured reflexivity within the PC, as they fester in the inability to overcome their perceived social situation and engage in regressive self-reflection entrenching social immobility:

> How can anyone expect us to feel good when we've endured a lifetime of rejection and solitude?. My depression has had a stranglehold on me ever since I was in my teens, I'm incapable of feeling anything but despair (Incels.net user).

> Unfortunately I am that fat autistic loser with no money and a bad personality. So women have many, many reasons to hate me (Blackpill.club user).

> There's no point in trying to play catch up, this is just who I am (Love-Shy.net user).

I feel so bad, so depressed and hopeless, I don't see a point in anything anymore
(Incels.is user).

Across the PC incels remain in a socially immobile position, ruminating upon their perceived social standing in a regressive manner which suggests their fate is outside of control. Yet, these men all exhibit a conscious agency, deeming it impossible to overcome perceived limitations, detaching deliberative self-reflections from any meaningful effective prosocial action. Such prevalence of problematic ruminations of personal circumstance disconnecting engagement in meaningful social action suggests fractured reflexivity is a fundamental characteristic of the incel identity. After initial stages of communicative reflexivity led to the adoption of an incel identity, the conscious choice to remain an incel and engage in the community is sustained by self-denigrating internal conversations which disconnect from meaningful paths of action in the social world. These men paralyse their own agency, leading to social immobility and regression.

Fractured reflexivity sustains initial adverse affect generated from social experience as well as generating and exacerbating poor mental health within narratives that imbue nihilism and futility. Indeed, problematic mental health experiences are a widely documented feature of the extant community (e.g.: Speckhard et al., 2021; Costello et al., 2022; Whitaker, Costello & Thomas, 2024), yet such experiences are often framed in an ideological vacuum, absent consideration of the wider structural and ideological mechanisms operant in generating these conditions. Such a lack of critical interrogation leads to this research problematically platforming the narratives of incels which claim mental health is responsible for or even justifies their violent behaviours (Carian, DiBranco & Kelly, 2024; Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024). When we consider the confirmatory power of pill ideology in communicative reflexive processes of men who choose to identify as incel, and the fractured reflexivity inherent to men who sustain the incel identity, it becomes possible to frame the identity and ideology as causal in producing adverse mental health.

Poor mental health first materialises in initial reflexive rumination of experiences of subordination, marginalisation, and masculine inadequacy, and through perceived inability to engage in the confirmatory sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality via heterosex. These feelings are then validated in the Incel Network, as these men engage in communicative reflexivity to seek external confirmation and completion of their nascent internal conversation. They are told it is both not your fault, and you are right to feel this way (Maryn et al., 2024). In choosing to adopt an incel identity these men complete their internal conversation, understanding their position as fixed and the feelings they experience as valid, unjust, and an inevitable part of a futile existence as an unlovable man. Sustaining the incel identity requires festering in a position of futile nihilism taught and enflamed by incel rhetoric (Cottee, 2020;

Rothermel, Kelly & Jasser, 2022). The explicit fixed nature of their situation, a belief they choose to internalise as part of an identity means prosocial action is pointless, impossible, or a risk. Resultantly the very institutions designed to support individuals seeking to remedy adverse mental health afflictions are specifically cast as inhibitory to the incel identity (Speckhard & Ellenberg, 2022). The disconnect between incels' sustained deliberative rumination contextualising their social position as immutable, and prosocial action as impossible or futile, intensifies distress and fertilises adverse mental health. This is key to understanding the nature and cause of mental health so oft overlooked in incel research. Indeed, incels themselves have signified participation in the incel community is perceived to increase their adverse mental health experiences (Moskalenko et al., 2002b). Thus, while poor mental health is seen by many incels as externally imbued; caused by a social situation they are unable to control vis á vis a woman's discriminatory choice of partner, it is in fact their own agency through problematic reflexivities that ultimately generates, sustains, and exacerbates poor mental health experiences so widely documented.

Feminist scholars suggest the authenticity of incel claims to poor mental health are unverifiable and caution against taking these admissions at face value due to confirming incel narratives (Kelly, DiBranco & DeCook, 2021), but in doing so prohibit consideration of individual experience. Conversely, positivist psychology frames these experiences as central to the incel identity (Speckhard et al., 2021; Costello et al., 2022; Whitaker, Costello & Thomas, 2024) but does so outside of structural context (Carian, DiBranco & Kelly, 2024; Kelly, Rothermel & Sugiura, 2024). Both positions offer value yet neither comprehensively consider the synergy of structure and agency. Here, through the theorisation of poor mental health as a product of structure *and* agency, we consider the agent in the social structure, developing the critical feminist position, whilst still cognisant of subjective adverse affect, but from a critical position. This recognises first that the gendered social structure not only affords male supremacist ideology to the extant incel but is operant in the production of subordinating and marginalising experiences these men encounter in formative years. But, ultimately, the sustainment of these feelings, and the generation and exacerbation of further adverse mental health involves the conscious agency of the individual man adopting the identity and remaining active in the community.

Meeting a key objective of this research, this position prohibits the platforming of incel narrative by directly challenging the purely structural nature of their claims, appeasing just critical feminist analysis, recognising these men are not passengers in a victimisation process, but in fact self-victimise and generate and sustain their own adverse position. Further, the importance of mental health is still retained, particularly in the initial reflexive responses to the material social practices these individuals experience as the wrong type of boys and men. Mental health

is a necessary consideration of the incel experience just not in the manner the community claims it should be.

Having resigned the identity, two former incels were able to offer considerable reflections on the comparative reflexivity and subsequent social action they engaged in, demonstrating both the importance of agency in the incel identity and the importance of prosocial reflexivities overcoming the feelings and experiences documented by incels. Autonomous reflexivity involves taking a proactive, self-directed approach to social experiences and events. The mulling over of challenging life events can indeed lead to similar adverse affect documented in chapter seven, but it is a conscious prioritisation and decision to embark on self-directed proactive behaviour that results in positive change and social mobility. This entails a high degree of reflexivity by individuals who believe they are able to shape their future through their own action. This is associated with strategic life planning, decision making, and execution of social action that leads to a modified feeling and position (Archer, 2007, 2012).

Starting with P4, it was an initial interaction with a female friend that catalysed an alternative reflexive process to the one currently sustaining his indel identity:

> I specifically remember talking to a female friend of mine over a year ago about my dating struggles and my wants. It was something about calling myself a "up and coming high-value male" or something along those lines. She pulled me aside and asked, very openly and kindly, whether I was reading incel material. I told her that I was, and that I needed to get out of it. I did some reflecting afterwards and realized that a lot of it was just misogynistic rhetoric wrapped up in faux-scientific claims (P4).

Through an initial external conversation with a friend P4 engaged in real relationality; direct interpersonal engagement that produce positive social outcomes; relational 'goods' (Donati & Archer, 2015) This particular social good, offered by his female friend, provided shared understanding and a degree of emotional support. Rather than engaging in the incel Network in which relational 'evils' such as alienation and discrimination are generated through the interaction within forums, here P4 through this real relationality sparked the impetus to begin to reassess his position. Through an internal conversation he "did some reflecting", ruminating upon the nature of the ideological material which had first provided the confirmatory value utilised in earlier communicative reflexivity, reaching an alternative conclusion. In consciously rejecting the tenets embedded in pill ideology, he began to embark on a proactive and affirming internal conversation:

> I began to really sit down and improve my mental hygiene. It became a matter of self-affirmation, forgiving myself, and training myself to be patient for my lovelife. It stopped

being such a pity party, and it stopped focusing on how women were "ruining" my life. I love it (P4).

Rather than internalising a narrative that proffered a futile position of immutability and worthlessness, this man chose, through conscious agency, to modify himself. The social experiences of sexlessness he had previously contextualised within the rigid ideological framework of the Network were rewritten. Reprioritisation led to removing his focus on women's actions, and the need for heterosex, becoming "patient". P4 further revaluated heterosex:

I have seen it claimed that vaginal sex penetration is a cure-all for mental health problems such as depression. While I do think it's scientifically true that sex does generally benefit mental health and one's self-image, especially for men, I don't think it's a literal cure in any sense, and its benefits are ephemeral (P4).

Within the Incel Network heterosex was considered a panacea, a "cure-all for mental health". Through his conscious rumination within an autonomous internal conversation, he began to see sex differently, recognising both the connection between heterosex and masculinity, as well as the value of the act. Such reformulated mulling over of social situations and the recontextualization of these acts led to self-directed prosocial behaviours:

I've spent many, many hours learning social skills, hangout ideas, plans to boost confidence, learning about mental health conditions, and human psychological needs. I've been avoiding social media for this, and instead sticking to qualified people like my loved ones, psychologists, and advice columns from happily married people (P4).

This man details a wide array of self-directed activities that sought to produce an upward social mobility. Leaving the realms of digital media, within which the Outer Periphery of the Network is embedded, he actively sought the generation of socialisation while engaging proactively in learning. This decision to actively seek out new opportunities and information to better his lived experienced and social position reflects strategic life planning, a core component of autonomous reflexivity (Archer, 2007). Away from the Network and identity this man engaged in independent decision making, becoming achievement orientated and leading to direct action. Reflecting the dynamic nature of the reflexive process, concurrently he embarked on communicative reflexivity through engagement with family, therapists, and those engaging in heterosexuality. These sources of confirmatory narratives led to the completion of an alternative internal conversation regarding himself, his social position, and the context of social actors. In relation to the social contextualisation of women, he goes on to reflect upon the positive communicative reflexivity with his therapist:

Regarding therapy, my regular therapist (who is a man) and I have discussed this quite often, and I said that I wanted to stop generalizing women and have more healthy coping mechanisms for being single while having an insane sex drive and very much wanting to be a father. The methods he has suggested have been solid so far. I've journaled and also validated my wants in a very empowering way (P4).

Rather than the conscious decision to reject support services, engagement with a therapist enabled a process of communicative reflexivity in which he modified evaluations regarding social actors and the social context of singlehood. The desired material social practices of heterosex and fatherhood embedded in masculinity remain, but through this communicative reflexivity he is able to engage in prosocial action such as journalling and empowering validation. Throughout this detailed self-reflection P4 offers several examples of autonomous reflexivity and positive communicative reflexivity. Through the self-directed and conscious choice to resign the incel identity he was able to produce proactive and prosocial action. Positive communicative reflexivity led to the re-evaluation and re contextualisation of social events and actors in a manner that contributed to these prosocial actions. Both through positive external conversations, and his own independent achievement-oriented internal rumination, P4 has demonstrated the key role agency plays in relation to social structure and resulting experience. As an autonomous reflexive the incel identity became a historic component of a maladaptive past now overcome.

Finally, P6, another former incel also some self-reflection upon his transition away from the incel identity. Akin to P4, this man also employed a combination of autonomous and positive communicative reflexivity resulting in the adoption of an alternative identity:

I decided to do some deep research into Feminism and I subscribed to women's subreddits so I could spend my free time learning about women's lived experiences. [...] After reading as much as I did, especially in regards to personal anecdotes from who knows how many women on Reddit, I had a better understanding of their lived experience. Maybe it's cliche but the truth is that I started listening to women. Actually listening. And after that being much more considerate. I learned a lot about the horrible ways so many women and girls are treated both in the past and the present and I didn't like it. That treatment is offensive to me. In the battle between my misogyny and my sense of decency, the sense of decency won. I want women and girls to have decent lives. [...] After all that, I decided to identify as a Feminist (P6).

Employing a positive communicative reflexivity, P6 chose the very antithesis of the incel identity; feminism, as the external source to complete his internal conversation. Through these digital others, P6 used the very same digital sites he had previously encountered the incel community

upon to garner alternative ways of contextualising the social world. This led to a self-directed autonomous rumination, generating "understanding" and "decency" as oppositional to the misogyny inherent to the identity and community he was once part of. This conscious choice to expose himself to these sources of context produced an agency leading to a feminist identity. This new identity resulted in proactive and prosocial behaviour leading to an improved social position:

> I'm better now, I have friends and a community I regularly interact with. It's made me healthier, before it was just me and it was just me for a long time (P6).

No longer social isolated and completing internal conversations through problematic pill ideology leading to distressing, disjointed fractured reflexivities, P6 developed community and an elevated perception of health. Through real relationality relational goods such as friendship soon developed, rather than the relational evils of alienation (Donati & Archer, 2015) he had experienced while identifying as an incel. The dynamic communicative and autonomous reflexivities of this man, leading to the resignation of an incel identity and adoption of an alternative, antithetical "healthier" self demonstrates that feminism, really is, for everyone.

Maintenance of an established incel identity requires sustained participation in the Performative Core of the Incel Network. Here pill ideology is a mandatory requisite of performance, policed by numerous symbolic and mechanical practices (Kelly, 2021; Andersen, 2023). Incels dynamically continue the ongoing process of reflexivity, as agents in the social world choosing to accept the nihilistic futility of the incel identity and supporting blackpill ideology, prohibiting any meaningful social action to alleviate the remaining frustrations of absence of heterosex. While the incel community may provide bonding sites and community (Eastman & Haedicke, 2024), heterosex is considered an impossibility. This 'dead-end identity' leaves these men festering in adverse affect, produced by both this absence and social experiences as men unable to participate in dominant masculine practices, contextualised within a rigid biologically determined sexual market hierarchy. Subsequently a personal disorientation develops, producing fractured reflexivities through a breakdown in the individual's ability to coherently deliberate on these social circumstance**s**, paralysed by the conscious decision to internalise pill ideology instilling nihilism and futility. This manifests through a disjointed and distressed internal dialogue leading to a disconnection between the incel's internal conversation and his ability to forge meaningful paths of social action. The explicit prohibition of engagement with mental health support results in the generation and exacerbation of poor mental health, exacerbating previous adverse affect generated by experiences informed by gendered social structure. The conscious choice to remain an incel and engage in the community inhibits the ability to engage in proactive social acts informed by

autonomous and positive communicative reflexivities. Those men that employ self-directed agency to engage in such reflexivities resign the incel identity through prosocial and proactive achievement orientated action, further demonstrating that while social structure is indeed a factor in the incel identity, it is the agent in this social structure that ultimately produces the incel man, his victimhood, and associated adverse mental health.

8.3   Summary

The incel identity is a consciously chosen and maintained action, resulting from the consequences of social structure and interplay of individual experience and agency mediated by reflexivity. The gendered social world provides a foundation of experience and belief through material and discursive social practices that police acceptable masculine performances and instil the centrality of heterosex as a body reflexive practice. The absence of heterosex and presence of challenging social experiences initiates an internal process of reflexivity, in which the subjective agent interprets these events and (non) interactions leading to initial adverse psychological experience. These are facilitated through beliefs regarding what a man should be, and do, in relative comparison to these men's reflections upon their own masculine selves. Further negative affect results. Seeking to complete these internal conversations in order to produce a contextualised response to their unwanted predicament, some men engage in a process of communicative reflexivity, in which external sources confirm and complete the individuals' decision to act. As these men perceive themselves outside of embodied circles of socialisation, they turn to digital others within the internet's inexhaustive collection of ideas and access to information. Enter the Incel Network.

Embedded within popular and accessible algorithmically driven social media platforms, pill and incel ideology offer those seeking advice on dating and attraction diluted and reductive tropes suggesting a rigid, biologically determined, marketplace. Such external sources contextualise the social events these men have experienced, delineating why some men achieve heterosex while others remain involuntarily celibate. This ideology reinforces the beliefs and ideas held around what it means to be man, reifying masculine inadequacy and validating adverse affect. The sense making function of diluted pill ideology within social media platforms, explicit and concentrated in forums of the Network's Performative Core, confirms and completes the internal conversation, leading those repeatedly listening to this narrative to choose to identify as an incel. The individual agency of men engaging in communicative reflexivity that involves the Incel Network serves as the final generative mechanism leading to an incel identity. While adverse individual experiences produced in and by the gendered social structure and perceived inabilities to meet requisites of dominant masculinities lay the foundations of the journey, it is

conscious, problematic, ruminative deliberation within the Incel Network that arrives these men at their incel identity.

Rather than challenging the existing social structure which delineates and polices acceptable masculine performance, and the sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality conferring the masculine self through active participation, the incel identity morphostatically preserves existing inequalities. Dehumanising women as genetically driven inferiors while revering the traits of dominant masculinities, reified within blackpill ideological constructs, reinforces the very social structure producing unwanted material and social practices experienced in adolescence.

As these men retain and perform their incel identity, the dynamic continuous process of subjective reflexivity continues. Wedded to the ideology that informed their earlier communicative reflexive process, incels consciously adopt a futile nihilism, as a man unable to engage in heterosex and intimacy. As a dead-end identity these men develop disjointed and distressing internal conversations as they ruminate over an impossible situation, desiring heterosex but producing an internal conversation that asserts an eternal and definitive inability to acquire it. This fractured reflexivity develops through personal disorientation, as subjective deliberative rumination disconnects from the ability to engage in meaningful social action.

The adverse affect experienced as a result of rejection, bullying, and social isolation is not only validated by their new identity, but also expanded and exacerbated as they choose to internalise the fixed nature of the social situation contextualised by pill ideology. Mental health support becomes an anathema to these men, a pointless and risky endeavour. Poor mental health, then, is only an integral part of the incel experience insofar as the conscious choice to adopt a futile nihilism not only produces a distressing internal conversation that evokes such adverse affect, but also actively maintains this problematic psychic state through derision of alleviate therapeutic remedies.

Poor mental health is no more an inevitable consequence of the incel's lived experience as the violence and misogyny these men elicit. While the gendered social structure may indeed produce oppressive experience leading to ruminative adverse affect, it is the agent's choice to wallow in this situation, selecting an identity and ideology that exacerbates and maintains this affective state that ultimately produces the mental health documented in psychological survey research. This poor mental health is gendered and ideologically produced, not an abstract positivist social fact nor the result of a biologically determined rigid sexual marketplace in which these men irrevocably place bottom. Adverse affect and the antiwoman vitriol incels produce are both the result of a conscious choice to adopt a dead-end identity that prohibits any

meaningful and purposeful course of remedial social action through the perpetuation of a fractured reflexive state.

Those that do leave the community do so through prosocial, self-directed shedding of the incel identity, and real relationality involving external conversations that elicit relational goods. Through a dynamic process of positive communicative and autonomous reflexivity, some men choose to embark on achievement-oriented activities, reassessing their social contexts and the actors therein, consciously choosing to engage in therapy, self-improvement, and self-affirmation.

The incel identity, then, is a journey of structure, experience and agency; socially generated circumstance and individual choice and action. Unwanted adolescent social experiences do indeed result from social structure but are not unique to these men, and it is the agent's choice to engage in a reflexive process that adopts male supremacist ideology as means with which to contextualise their lived experiences and feelings, damaging their mental health. Poor psychological wellbeing is a red herring in the incel identity, an identity that is the cause of many adverse psychic experiences rather than the consequence of discriminatory women unwilling to provide sex and intimacy. The incel identity is not an inevitability of sexlessness but the result of an internal conversation that actively digests pills that teach and enflame hopelessness, entitlement, and misogyny.

Concluding, the final chapter draws together the main points of the thesis, detailing how the key aims and objectives have been met and research questions answered. Limitations of the research are considered and recommendations and implications for policy and the scholarly field are offered, before reiterating the originality and significance of this work.

Chapter 9   Conclusion

The incel identity and surrounding community has received significant attention from various academic disciplines seeking to better understand the ideology and people that comprise the subculture. Significant gaps remain in this research, as lenses focus on the mental health of extant actors, the community's ideology, and the resulting acts of symbolic, discursive, and physical violence. Much of this research employs spatiotemporally static analyses of a fraction of notorious incel forums or distanced survey studies, providing a fragmented understanding of aspects of the incel community. Further, an emerging 'mental health vs misogyny' trend in incel research has resulted from compartmentalised ontological disciplines, leading to an observable and widening schism. Critical feminist research effectively questions the lack of social structure in the application of terrorism and security lenes considering incel violence, highlighting the role and importance of cisheteropatriarchy propagating privilege, entitlement, and violence in men. However, this focus upon structure obscures the individuals in the incel community, as agency is seemingly framed as epiphenomenal to social forces. This prohibits precision in analysing the individuality of these men as well as how this social structure may negatively affects these actors. Conversely, psychological research, grounded in a positivist ontology, takes the individual and his lived experiences as central to their investigations, documenting the adverse lived experiences and affects of these men. This is problematically enacted outside of any positionality, often littered with conceptual and methodological flaws. Violence is only understood in the physical, and incels' feelings and experiences decontextualised from the social structure in which they exist and are produced. Each camp positions itself on one side of a social-individual divide. The experience and agency of the individual in a patriarchal social structure, and the social structure's influence on the individual's experience and agency are respectively overlooked. It is from these limitations that this thesis formed a basis for investigation.

The overarching aims of this research were to conceptualise the nature of incel digital space and understand the process through which men assume an incel identity. The digital spaces in which these identities and associated ideology exist needed to be understood in unison and relative position to each other. This would provide a contextual basis for these arenas as a component of the journey to inceldom and broaden understanding of how each arena influences and facilitates the incel community and associated ideology. Accordingly, RQ1 sought to identify the structural and content features of the digital spaces housing incel communities and related ideology. This was achieved through the development of an incel

Network, the result of an immersive and extensive digital ethnography of 10 arenas associated with or housing incel ideology and identity performance.

The Incel Network is a board array of digital sites distinguishable by the content and structure of each arena. Three clusters were identified, each performing a different but related function. The Outer Periphery is characterised by mainstream social media platforms containing diluted pill and incel ideology and terminology embedded into content addressing heterosexual dating and attraction. These arenas provide entry level exposure to tenets of a biologically determined postfeminist sexual marketplace which dictates heterosexual success. As women are understood as governed by genetic impulses, they become homogenised and Othered as discriminatory and prejudiced. The fringe ideas of pill ideology further instil a rigid hierarchy of masculinity in which specific immutable physical capitals indicate market worth. An absolving narrative takes root as men understand their lot as outside of their control. The Inner Periphery of the Network predominantly exists as an ideological and historical repository of the incel community, also housing forums containing ideology associated with but not exclusive to incels. Edging closer to the Core of the Network, this tranche comprises an incel wiki that develops boundaries of the community through a quasi-encyclopaedic ideological base of incel terminology and constructs, signposting to other arenas of the Network. Reddit, a former site of incel community forums hosts remnants and annexes of the incel community. Pill ideology remains prevalent across the site and antagonistic subreddits buttress community boundaries through an oppositional stance and reproduction of tenets and behaviours of the incel community. The forum Looksmax.org exists closest to the next tranche of the Network, reinforcing and concentrating red and blackpill ideology within an arena dedicated to self-improvement. While incels frequent this space, sexual market value improvement presides over biologically determined immutability. Finally, the Performative Core of the Network hosts the notorious arenas so frequently studied. Each forum elicits a varying degree of ideological alignment, policed through self-moderation. While Love-Shy.net offers a relaxed arena in which introspection over masculine inadequacy is centralised, Incels.is heavily polices discourse and identity through requisite compliance to antifeminism, futile victimhood, and discursive and symbolic violence. Finally, Blackpill.club encapsulates the incel's digital identity apex and terminus, a devout ideological fundamentalist arena dedicated to the reverence, propagation, and maintenance of blackpill ideology.

This novel descriptive scaffolding of numerus arenas of incel space is the first to look at the broader community in unison and relativity and directly answers RQ1. Rather than focus on one element of the incel technoscape, the Incel Network maps the content and structure of multiple incel digital spaces, differentiating between social media platforms embedding diluted ideology, assistive sites that offer historical and ideological support to the incel community, and

arenas in which men become and be an incel. The Incel Network is a unique and original contribution in itself, as well as a component utilised in addressing the second aim of this research, understanding the journey to and into an incel identity.

To understand the journey into the extant incel identity and participation in the community so often analysed, the structure-experience dialectic required bridging to consider how both society and the individual each and together produce the incel man. Heeding critical feminist caution, it was paramount this was undertaken without condoning or platforming narratives of victimhood and violence. Taking a feminist critical realist ontological position allowed this endeavour to focus on the specific generative mechanisms operant in the journey to an incel identity. Such an understanding recognised the importance of both structure and agency in producing observable social phenomena, employing theories of social structure and the individual to determine the underlying generative mechanisms producing an incel. This self-depreciating, antifeminist, and misogynistic group of men precipitated a critically gendered lens, adopting theories conceptualising gendered inequalities produced by and maintained in social structure, individual perspectives of gender performance, and social theory placing individual reflexivity as the mediating factor between social structure and agency. These choices surpassed the limitations of compartmentalised directions of study that have placed either social structure or individual experience at the heart of investigation, failing to provide a complete picture of the incel identity. Social structure, individual experience, and agency have been considered together, contextualising experiences and actions of men within their social environment, recognising that patriarchal structure alone is not the sole cause of the incel identity, although it indeed facilitates it.

Analysis of semi-structured asynchronous interviews with current and former incels were combined with findings from the digital ethnography to produce a novel cumulative conceptualisation of the journey to an incel identity. This original contribution to the field has merged gendered social structure, subjective experience, and subsequent reflexive agency. Answering RQ2 this thesis has shown how social structure impacts men who adopt an incel identity, and met RQ3 through the demonstration of how resulting individual experiences and responses lead men to adopt an incel identity and engage with the incel community.

First, a gendered social structure in which bodies serve as objects and agents of material and discursive practice produces a hierarchical ordering of traits and characteristics. In adolescence some men unable to meet the benchmarks of the dominant masculine performances within their environments and are socially policed by various dominating masculinities and compliant femininities reinforcing a hegemonic gender order through bullying. The psychical, discursive, and symbolic acts encompassed in this social regulation

informed these boys they are not good enough. These men further hold a charged emotional energy towards heterosex as a mechanism of growth and meaning. In generating nascent masculine selves the sociopolitical institution of heterosexuality instils the need for confirmatory heterosex as the mechanism to exhibit institutional participation and confirm a normative gendered identity. Unable to participate in this body reflexive practice they are unable to confirm their masculine worth and self.

These social events and (non) experiences impact the individual. Through an initial reflexive process the individual engages in deliberative rumination; an internal conversation of self-reflection upon social events and absence of heterosex, their contextual meaning to social standing, and feelings that result. Perceptions of low self-esteem, hopelessness, and worthlessness arise as these individuals reflect upon the treatment they received, a failure to find intimacy, and the isolation and exclusion that resulted. Holding specific ideas and beliefs around the constitution of a man through characteristics of strength, competence via success, and propensity for violence, these men further reflect upon their perceived discordance with these ideals. These traits are reflected in dominant masculinities observed within their localised social environments and imagined through the assumed desires of the women they are unable to attract. Together these deliberations sustain adverse affect, generating feelings of inadequacy, envy, disgust and shame.

The social experiences and events endured in formative years of masculine development, and resulting beliefs and reflexive contextual comparisons that produce poor mental health lay the foundations for the social action leading toward an incel identity. Seeking to clarify and confirm their position within the social world, these men seek external sources of information and advice. Through the normative contemporary practice of digital engagement, these men encounter the Incel Network. The Network offers contextual confirmation first in the Outer Periphery through dating and attraction videos and users commenting in these spaces. Incel ideology and terminology embedded in this content provides a social context via the biologically determined postfeminist sexual marketplace fundamental to pill social ontology, and a social position as an incel within this purported social world. The Performative Core furthers this narrative in ideologically policed and concentrated echo chambers. The individual completes his internal conversation through deliberative rumination that instils both a social world disseminated through pill ideology and the incel identity performed in the Core's forums. Pill ideology allows everything to fall into place, the world now makes sense and appropriate social action of consciously deciding to identify as an incel and partake in the community results.

Pill ideology and sustaining the incel identity dictates regressive social practice. The social world is absolute, governed by dehumanised discriminatory women, the gatekeepers to

heterosex these men continue to crave but can never acquire. The futile nihilism that pill ideology and the incel identity breeds leads to a disjointed distressing internal conversation. Male supremacist pill ideology both positions the incel man as superior to women through possession of the truth of the social world relative to inferior genetically governed women, while simultaneously dictating progressive social mobility is impossible and strictly disallowed. The incel man consciously choosing to remain in this identity develops a distressing fractured rumination in which he cannot change his position in the social world, remaining a superior truth knower yet unable to attain what he covets most. Subsequent poor mental health develops as a consequence. Rather than through the victimisation by women he chooses to believe he has experienced, this adverse affect is generated and maintained by an inability to enact any meaningful or purposeful remedy to shift social standing. This analysis contextualises and genders the cause of the incel's continued mental health problems, offering novel insight beyond dominant positivist readings. Rather than condoning the victimhood narrative incels profess, this conceptualisation bridges elements of masculine social structure and individual agency as synergistically responsible for the production and maintenance of poor wellbeing, not the absence of sex itself, or women's alleged discrimination. The importance of agency in both the incel identity and poor mental health is confirmed by men who have consciously and deliberately resigned the incel identity through prosocial and proactive autonomous reflexivity. Self-directed self-reflection and subsequent social action increase these men's self-worth, affirmation, and modify perspectives of women, feminism, and heterosex, leading to the shedding of the incel self and improved mental health.

While much focus has been paced on the existing incel, little effort has been placed into understanding the generative process leading to the identity, an issue this research has explicitly addressed. The consequences of not knowing the intricacies of this journey means the community has continued to increase, with little preventative or counternarrative strategies in place to mitigate this trend beyond problematic extremism and terrorism counter prevention strategies. Instead, mitigating the incel identity and community, and challenging an ideology spanning mainstream and niche online space requires a comprehensive multifaceted strategy, collaboratively permeating educational, therapeutic, and digital spheres. Significant effort must be placed into the inclusion of expansive sex and social education curricula that address issues of masculinity, gender relations, and sex at the secondary level and continue into higher education (Ging et al., 2024; Orenstein, 2020). Enhanced sex education programmes incorporating aspects of deradicalisation and domestic abuse perpetrator intervention programs offer skeletons to structure tailored frameworks proffering healthier gendered thought and action (Kelly, DiBranco, & DeCook 2021).

It is unrealistic to expect unregulated, hegemonic tech companies to self-regulate, particularly given much of the extreme and fringe content within which incel ideology is embedded generates revenue via adverts attached to videos and social media feeds (Fisher, 2023). This media will not disappear, we must, then, engage with consumers of this content through open and inclusive dialogue. Such pernicious social media content must be directly challenged in spaces that permit the boys that encounter this material to have their views heard without immediate scorn or reprimand. These views must be carefully, thoughtfully, and tactfully deconstructed rather than authoritatively dismissed. This needs to take place within educational environments, in which adolescent boys, and girls, can develop greater understandings of gendered realities and perspectives of each other through reciprocal dialogue, as well as reflect on perceived gender expectations (Council of Europe, 2020; Stahl, Keddie & Adams, 2022).

It is men that must take the lead in these initiatives as it is masculinity at the heart of this issue. Men must teach boys how to be, and not to be, men. Connell maintains that a transformatory, progressive and positive masculine hegemony is possible, in which traits and praxes currently legitimised by many local, regional, and national hegemonic masculinities are expelled in favour of cooperative, supportive and egalitarian comparatives (Connell, 1995, 2012b; Messerschmidt & Bridges 2024). Localised, classroom-situated hegemonic masculinities that legitimise gender equality, anti-misogyny, and inclusion must delegitimise the hegemonic, dominating, and dominant masculinities boys encounter in the digital realm. Alternative models of masculinity must be promoted within both educational and therapeutic settings, such as the positive psychology positive masculinity framework (PPPM). PPPM retains desirable, prosocial elements of masculinity such as self-reliance whilst concurrently encouraging emotional reflectivity, promoting a broader model of masculinity (Hay et al., 2019; McDermott et al., 2019).

Lastly, therapeutic settings need to offer male friendly spaces (Sparks & Papandreu, 2023), such as Men's Sheds, in which men provide and receive peer support through discussion of personal and emotional issues in supportive, non-judgmental environments (Fildes et al., 2010). Holistic online resource packages that build confidence and social skillsets, addressing individual needs and problematic masculine and misogynistic ideology within complementary therapeutic modalities offer potential to reduce community expansion and endorsement (Broyd et al., 2022; Justin, Kepler & Kinel, 2022; Utterback, 2024). Despite their noted problems, emerging user generated digital counter-narrative movements such as r/IncelExit are also showing promise (Osuna, 2023; Thorburn, 2023).

While much novelty has been generated here, this research was not without limitations. The dynamic and unstable nature of the incel community means the Network is always shifting,

evidenced by the termination of Incels.net and domain change of Blackpill.club. While this research offers more than a snapshot, the Network must be monitored continuously to document the evolution of the community. Further, the most extreme and vocal incels could not be accessed for interview due to forum gatekeeping. This makes the case for covert research in which researchers navigate these spaces to befriend these users and persuade these men to engage in direct research. Only speaking to seven current and two former incels means this research is limited in generalisability, calling for further and continuous direct interaction with the incel community to broaden our understanding of the gendered journey these men take. Finally, many incels are minors, a point noted during the ethnography in which users document recent school experiences. This calls for research authorised to approach and engage with boys in order to understand the dynamic reflexive processes in real time, rather than through recollective interviews as was the case here.

Despite these limitations this research has contributed significantly to a small but rapidly expanding body of literature concerning the incel community. For the first time incel digital space has been mapped in unison and relativity, providing the foundations for further development of this scaffolding as the dynamic Incel Network evolves. As one of a minority of studies to speak directly to current and former incels, this investigation has merged the social impacts, experiences, and subjective responses that men enact which all contribute to adopting an incel identity. This bridging of social structure, individual experience, and agency is relatively absent in the incel academic canon, an absence this research has remedied generating new and significant findings particularly regarding incels and mental health. As we now understand the constituent parts of the process of adopting an incel identity, we hold the knowledge to develop tailored preventative and counternarrative strategies necessary to disincline more adolescent and young men from engaging with the Incel Network and undertaking problematic reflexive processes that lead to the adoption of an incel identity.

Appendix A   Ethnography ethics application

APPLICATION FORM FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

SECTION 1: About you and your research

1.   **Name(s):** Stuart Lucy

2.   **Current Position:** PGR

3.   **Contact Details: s.lucy@soton.ac.uk**

    Faculty / School / Department: Faculty of Social Sciences, Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology

    University Email: SSPC.StudentOffice@soton.ac.uk

    Phone *(staff members only, university phone number*)**:**   023 8059 3232

4.   **Is your research being conducted as part of an education qualification?**

    Yes   ☒   **No**   ☐

5.   **If Yes, please give the name of your supervisor:**

   Dr Anita Lavorgna

6.   **Title of your research project/study** *(include SMA in the title)***:**

    YouTube, 4Chan and Incels. Investigating the mechanism and process of indoctrination and radicalisation *radicalization of misogynistic terrorists to inform the formation of a preventative counter-narrative strategy. (Provisional)*

7.   **Briefly describe the rationale, aims, design and research questions of your research**

    Rationale:

    Recent instances of mass violence connected to homosocial online communities identifying as involuntary celibates (incels) raises concern regarding the safety of the general public. As online communities' activity and behaviour seeps into the offline world

in the form of targeted gendered violence, research into these communities is paramount in order to offer preventative and counter-narrative strategies to combat the rise of this novel and unique threat.

Aims

The aim of this research is to understand the incel philosophy and self-identifying individuals in order to conceptualise their particular worldview and the potential external influences that lead to such ideological adoption and self-identification. This research will provide a multidimensional, intersectional, multidisciplinary analysis of incel philosophy and incels to consider and develop interventions that can be implemented to counteract the impacts of and influences upon said individuals.

Design

This research will employ a multimethod framework, commencing with an ethnographic investigation of digital spaces and social media sites in which incel discourse, ideology and self-identifying individuals are present, followed by further stages of direct interview and survey of human participants. This application concerns the immediate initial phase.

Questions

What is the content and structure of online incel digital space?

SECTION 2: About your data (Type and selection of data)

8.   Describe the data you wish to analyse (i.e. data sample)

Ethnographic data will be collected primarily from active incel forums and websites including but not limited to incels.net, incels.wiki, Reddit, 4Chan and YouTube as well as social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Data items will consist of site 'about' info, forum and site threads and enclosed comments, videos and attached comments, blogs, tweets and posts.

Sample size is difficult to quantify given the widespread use of these spaces. A Conservative estimate would envisage 50,000+ data items and 1,000+ data subjects. All usernames/monikers of data subjects will be anonymised to 'user' to prevent identification of data subjects. Titles of videos will be omitted and all content of threads included in the

research will be curated to prevent reverse search identification (Mannheimer & Hull, 2017).

9. **Please describe how you are going to obtain the data you wish to analyse.**

Identify the source from where you will be obtaining the data. Provide detailed information (see guidance at the end of form).

I will be accessing www.incels.net, www.incels.wiki, www.4Chan.org, www.reddit.com, www.twitter.com, www.YouTube.com, www.facebook.com, www.instagram.com as well as any publicly accessible web or blog sites that become relevant as consequence of engagement with the above within a potential research period of three years. All data is publicly available. All sites apart from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram do not require enrolment or explicit, detectable interaction with data producers thus data will be accessed and collected as a non-participant observer. For Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, the creation of a user account will be required to view and collect data similarly conducted in a non-participatory observational manner absent of direct interaction with data producers.

For incels.net I may obtain data from the homepage, all available forums, enclosed threads and attached comments, as well as the 'members' tab which details current and recent activity of registered users and guests. I may obtain written textual data from all sections of incels.wiki. From 4chan.org I may obtain data from any thread and associated comments related to or explicitly mentioning 'incel/incels'. From YouTube I may obtain videographic data from any video related to or explicitly mentioning incel/incels and the comments attached to any particular video. For Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, I may obtain data from any post, comment, meme, picture or video related to or explicitly mentioning incel/incels.

10. **Please explain how the selection is performed.**

All data will be selected manually. The methodology of this stage of the research is a digital ethnography, or 'Netnography' (Kozinets, 2019), that is, a non-participatory observational and thematic analysis. This mode of qualitative methodology seeks to understand an online culture (in this case incels) through identification of particular

symbols, norms, values and beliefs to produce a textual narrative based on identified themes and codes that inform understanding of the culture itself and how the culture impacts on the individuals that are part of it (Brewer, 2000; Kozinets, 2015). For incel specific sites (www.incels.net and www.incels.wiki) an immersive non-participatory observation and thematic analysis will be utilised to explore the spaces without any set direction to immerse myself within the data pool. Researcher notes will be taken throughout this process and particular data items retrieved and collated based on emerging codes and themes. For non-incel specific sites and social media platforms, the terms 'incel/incels' will be used as search terms alongside any arising terminology relevant to incels discovered through exploration of www.incels.net and www.incels.wiki.

I am not active nor known on any of the platforms that will be accessed except YouTube. For this site I will access data as a guest, as is also the case with www.incels.net, www.incels.wiki, www.4Chan.org and www.reddit.com. For Facebook, Twitter and Instagram a pseudonymous username will be utilised, differing with each account, to access and retrieve data.

11.   What are the terms and conditions around the use of the data?

For www.incels.net, www.incels.wiki, www.4Chan.org, www.reddit.com and www.YouTube.com, no prior registration is required and content is in the public domain of access and reuse. For Facebook, Twitter and Instagram registration is required and will be done so as stated above. I will comply with all terms and conditions of each site. Data controllers of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, Reddit and YouTube have given explicit permission for public content reuse. incels.net and incels.wiki do not state explicitly that content may not be reused.

There is no requirement to alert or inform site moderators and gatekeepers for access and retrieval of data for any site intended to be accessed.

12.   Do you intend to process personal data?

Explain whether data subjects included in your study can be directly or indirectly identified? Note that usernames such as 'Mickeymouse' can still constitute personal

data if the associated information is indirectly identifiable of data subjects through other identifiers, e.g. email addresses. (see guidance section at the end of the form)

Yes ☐   **No** ☒

If YES, please specify what personal data will be processed and why?

If NO, please go to section 3.

Although sites and forums that the netnography will draw information from will contain personal data that may directly or indirectly link to an identifiable individual, this data will be deliberately excluded from analysis and thus not processed or included in consequential results or discussions. The data items analysed when relevant to data subjects will purely be comments that refer to incel or by self-identifying incels in order to understand the digital community as a whole and not reference or analyse specific individuals.

No personal data will be included in analysis, purely comments of posters. Social media and forum handles will be disregarded as it is only content of the *comments* within the user's profile that are relevant. No personal data will be included in the netnography, nor included in any consequential analysis or included in the written results. Further, non-participatory observation of forums has been selected making contacting users for informed consent unnecessary, an approach which can add risk to the researcher given the nature of incel related forums in question, as well as potentially create unreliable data items as consequence.

13. **Are any of the personal data you are collecting Special Category Data or related to an actual or assumed criminal offence?**

Special category data includes personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life and sexual orientation. Criminal offence data relates to criminal convictions and offences, or related security measures. (see guidance section at the end of the form)

Yes ☐   **No** ☒

If YES, please specify what special category personal data or criminal offence data will be processed and why.

14. **Would the data subjects reasonably expect their data to be re-used for research purposes?** *(see guidance at end of form)*

Yes ☒   **No**   ☐

For social media sites such as Instagram and Twitter, the sites' privacy agreements explicitly state that users' products can be re-used by the sites and third parties, so users would reasonably expect their data items, specifically in this case comments, to be re-used.

For the incel wiki, this is a reference site free to access by the public and so it is reasonable that producers would expect this data to be re-used by those researching the community to which the information pertains.

For incel related forums, the site itself is free to access without registration as the community appear to be keen for out groups to understand them better, thus suggesting by extension that understanding of the community would likely involve research and thus use of their data items. All users that post have to be members of the site and thus recognise by being such that their product is in the public domain and so would reasonably expect it to be accessed by researchers especially given the heightened attention the incel community has received from academia in recent years.

15. **Would it be possible to let participants know that you are doing this research?** *(see guidance at end of form)*

Yes ☐   **No**   ☒

While it is *theoretically* possible to contact every data subject that produces a data item I intend to use, this would be unfeasible given the nature of the research design. The intent of the research is to review the community through non-participant observation of digital communities, by contacting data subjects this would become a form of participant

observation in a sense as the data subjects then become aware of my presence within these digital spaces akin to being physically within a social space that data subjects reside, leading to modification of practice and action of users.

16.   Would it be possible to obtain consent? *(see guidance at end of form)*

Yes ☐   **No**   ☒

If yes, explain how:

If no, explain why not:

Given the nature of data sampling and collection, little if any risk is posed to the data subjects that are producing the data items I will be analysing, items that will not contain any personal data as such information will be excluded from analysis. As mentioned above, users of social media sites have signed privacy agreements that explicitly state that data items that I will be viewing can be re-used by third parties, thus giving de facto informed consent, although the 're-use' of these items extends only to building extensive notes to form aggregative codes and themes.

For incel related forums, contacting these individuals would not only pose a potential risk to the researcher while also risk users altering their activity and products within the forums, thereby invalidating data, but such consent is unnecessary with publicly available digital products produced in spaces in which users are aware that their products are readily available for re-use. In essence and in line with existing published research on communities of criminological interest that utilise the same methodological approach, to produce in a publicly accessible digital space such as an incel forum is to give de facto consent.

17.   If it is impossible to obtain informed consent (and justified) what measures will you take to mitigate the impact of lack of informed consent?

Explain how you will avoid exposing user's personal details. (see guidance at end of form)

Although sites and forums that the netnography will draw information from will contain personal data that may directly or indirectly link to an identifiable individual, this data will be deliberately excluded from analysis and thus not processed or included in consequential results or discussions. The data items analysed when relevant to data

subjects will purely be comments that refer to incel or by self-identifying incels in order to understand the digital community as a whole and not reference or analyse specific individuals.

Thus, no personal data can be exposed as no personal data will be collected or analysed.

SECTION 3: About the analysis of data

18.   **How will you analyse the data?**

Describe what data will be included and how it will be analysed. (see guidance at end of form)

This stage of analysis concerns a netnography; non participatory observational interpretive analysis using discourse and content analysis of website information, forums, threads, comments, videos, tweets and posts contained within the aforementioned respective sites. Data will be processed manually in order to develop a rich analysis, producing detailed research notes that will provide the basis for coding and themes arising from data item observation. Any particular pieces of data that are retrieved for specific use in the resulting thesis, be it tweets, comments or videos that arise form users with particular usernames or monikers, will be curated into an unidentifiable format that prevents reverse search function application through for example Google.

19.   **Will you use data mining and/or other algorithms such as machine learning techniques?**

Yes ☐   **No**   ☒

If yes, how will you mitigate risks to data subjects associated processing data using Artificial Intelligence-type techniques?

20.   **Are you planning to link data?**

Yes ☐   **No**   ☒

If yes, how will you mitigate risks to data subjects associated with linking data?

SECTION 4: About the storage of data and what you will do with the results

21.   **How will you store and manage the data <u>before</u> and <u>during</u> the analysis? What will happen with the data <u>at the end of</u> the project?** *Please consult the University of Southampton's Research Data Management Policy (see guidance at end of form)*

I will follow the UoS Data management policy in terms of storage of data during and after analysis. Data will be stored on a password protected computer as well as within the UoS's cloud storage system. I do not expect my storage requirements to exceed 5GB of data. I will perform a fortnightly check to assure all files are still usable and accessible. I will primarily store all data on the UoS Institutional repository. A second copy of collected data will be held on my password protected computer as well as a password protected external hard drive secured offsite. Files will be uploaded to the UoS repository at the end of each week in which data is collected and backed up to the external drive at this time also. I am responsible for the archiving and formatting of data collected. Any data is assumed as textual and will be formatted into .txt or .trf before archiving to account for future access. Data will be stored in the UoS Institutional Repository as well as the UK Data Service.

22.   **Do you intend to share or publish your results?** *(see guidance at end of form)*

Yes ☒   **No**   ☐

I expect my three supervisors (Drs Anita Lavorgna, Lisa Sugiura & Mark Weal) to have access to any results published within my thesis, although no direct data item will be included in this thesis. Data items analysed may form part of a future book or journal article publication but again as this concerns a netnography, there will be no direct identifiable link to the data subjects' produced data items.

23.   **How will you minimise the risk that data subjects (individuals or organisations) could be identified in your presentation of results?** *How will you protect individuals' anonymity in your analysis and dissemination? Outline any risks that might result in re-identification and how you will minimise them. (see guidance at end of form)*

All specific forum and thread titles or video quotes or titles and any respective associated comments will be used to form curated textual narratives based on identified codes and themes. This will prevent any specific data items from being used to identify its creator.

SECTION 5: Any other issues

24. **What other ethical risks/concerns are raised by your research, and how do you intend to manage them?** *Issues may arise due to the nature of the research you intend to undertake and/or the subject matter of the data (see guidance at end of form)*

    Given the rationale for studying this group there is indeed a chance that I may encounter credible assertions to commit offline violence, in this instance I recognise the requirement to inform my supervisory team in order to discuss the necessity to report this to the proper authorities. Further, there may be declarations of intent to seriously harm oneself, however given the nature of the anonymity of the usernames upon sites such as Reddit and incels.net within which such intentional comments may be produced, my non-participant observation and lack of formal accounts within these spaces, it will be difficult to contact moderators although the same process of consultation with my supervisors in regards to contacting authorities will be carried out where deemed necessary

25. **Please outline any other information that you feel may be relevant to this submission.**

    N/A

26. **Please indicate if you, your supervisor or a member of the study team/research group (including any institution that they act for, if different from the University) are a data controller and/or data processor in relation to the personal data you intend to process as defined by the Data Protection Act 2018 following the GDPR, and confirm that you/they understand your/their respective responsibilities (** https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/key-definitions/controllers-and-processors//**)**

    Note that researchers, who are extracting data from a site and use them for a different purpose are also data controllers.

No such conflict exists

Appendix B   Ethnography Time Log

SITE	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	TOTAL (hrs)
Facebook		0.5				1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	6.5
YouTube	2.0	3.0			3.0		6.0	7.5	14.0	10.5		46.0
Incel wiki	12.0	24.0	4.0	4.0	2.0		2.0	4.0	2.0			54.0
Incels.is	9.0	12.0	10.0	6.0	0.3		5.3	31.3	14.5	9.0	9.0	106.3
Incels.net							1.0	11.0	3.0			15.0
Reddit					2.0		0.0	15.0	3.0	6.0	3.0	29.0
Looksmax.org								1.0	10.0			11.0
Blackpill.club									11.0			11.0
Loveshy.net		2.5	2.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	0.5	1.5	0.5			12.0
TikTok										6.0		6.0

Appendix C   Incels.wiki pages visited

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Main Page	23/03/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Main_Page
Incelosphere timeline	23/03/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Incelosphere_timeline
Incel Glossary	24/03/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Incel_Glossary
Blackpill	24/03/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Blackpill
Feminism	24/03/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Feminism
Scientific Blackpill	25/03/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Scientific_Blackpill
Scientific Blackpill	28/03/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Scientific_Blackpill
Scientific Blackpill	29/03/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Scientific_Blackpill
Incelebrity	29/03/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Incelebrity
Incel Vloggers	29/03/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Template:Incel_Vloggers
St. Blackops2cel	18/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/St._Blackops2cel
Kent	18/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Kent

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
William Greathouse	18/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/William_Greathouse
Oreo Man	18/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Oreo_Man
Steve Hoca	18/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Steve_Hoca
FACEandLMS	18/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/FACEandLMS
Eggman	18/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Eggman
Kyle Incel	18/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Kyle_Incel
Incel TV	18/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Incel_TV
Scientific Blackpill	19/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Scientific_Blackpill
Scientific Blackpill	20/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Scientific_Blackpill
Scientific Blackpill	21/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Scientific_Blackpill
Scientific Blackpill	22/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Scientific_Blackpill
Demographics of inceldom	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Demographics_of_inceldom
Incelosphere	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Incelosphere

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
English incelosphere	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/English_incelosphere
German incelosphere	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/German_incelosphere
Absolute Beginners	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Absolute_Beginners
Loveshy.de	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Loveshy.de
Hilferuf.de	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Hilferuf.de
Kohlchan	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Kohlchan
Italian incelosphere	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Italian_incelosphere
Black incelosphere	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/IBMOR
Russian incelosphere	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Russian_incelosphere
Japanese Incelosphere	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Category:Japanese_Incelosphere
Kakuhidou	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Kakuhidou
NEET Army	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/NEET_Army
Unpopular Men	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Unpopular_Men
French incelosphere	25/04/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/French_incelosphere

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Gymmaxxing	04/05/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Gymmaxxing
Moneymaxxing	04/05/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Moneymaxxing
Statusmaxx	04/05/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Statusmaxx
Jestermaxx	04/05/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Jestermaxx
SEAmaxx	05/05/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/SEAmaxx
Betabux	05/05/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Betabux
Trannymaxxing	05/05/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Trannymaxxing
Looksmaxing	05/05/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Looksmaxing
Chad	13/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Chad
Stacy	13/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Stacy
Femoid	13/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Femoid
Soyboy	13/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Soyboy
Becky	13/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Becky
AWALT	14/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/AWALT

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
JBW theory	14/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/JBW_theory
It's over	14/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/It%27s_over
Lookism	14/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Lookism
Looksmatch	14/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Looksmatch
Cuckoldry	14/06/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Cuckoldry
Dating	04/07/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Dating
Rejection (dating)	04/07/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Rejection_(dating)
Tinder	04/07/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Tinder
Hinge	04/07/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Hinge
Offline Dating	04/07/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Offline_dating
A poem for Chad by Toolman890	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/A_poem_for_Chad_by_Toolman890
Collection of Poems by 'TheIncelBard'	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Collection_of_Poems_by_%27TheIncelBard%27
Collection of Poems by ryanobes	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Collection_of_Poems_by_ryanobes

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Haiku by /u/Revoltization	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Haiku_by_/u/Revoltization
Friday night LDAR poem by AbuIncelAlAustrali	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Friday_night_LDAR_poem_by_AbuIncelAlAustrali
Manlets: The Poem by dravidIAncel102	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Manlets:_The_Poem_by_dravidIAncel102
On Showers by RippedRichAndIncel	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/On_Showers_by_RippedRichAndIncel
Words of Encouragement by uLookCuteToday	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Words_of_Encouragement_by_uLookCuteToday
Poem by 6102540265	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Poem_by_6102540265
Poem by Allblueeeee	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Poem_by_Allblueeeee
Poem by doktordoom	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Poem_by_doktordoom
Poem by Firefly	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Poem_by_Firefly
Poem by kappo0	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Poem_by_kappo0
Poem by SerialSesamist	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Poem_by_SerialSesamist
Poem by Steppenwolf	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Poem_by_Steppenwolf

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Poem by Stoic Stranger	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Poem_by_Stoic_Stranger
Poem by theVman	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Poem_by_theVman
Normie	19/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Normie
Mogging	21/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Mogging
Looksmax.org	21/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Looksmax.org
Puahate, Sluthate & Lookism (PSL)	21/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Puahate,_Sluthate_%26_Lookism_(PSL)
Averageblokecel	21/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Averageblokecel
Downhill D Miller	21/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Downhill_D_Miller
Gymcel	21/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Gymcel
Whitepill	30/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Whitepill
Purplepill	30/09/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Purplepill
Wizard	11/10/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Wizard
Love-shy.com	07/11/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Love-shy.com
Shy Boys IRL	07/11/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Shy_Boys_IRL
Caamib	07/11/2022	https://incels.wiki/w/Caamib

Appendix D   Incels.is visited pages

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Blackpill The BBD: Big Blackpill Dump (aggregate thread)	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-bbd-big-blackpill-dump-aggregate-thread.36608/
It's Over My photofeeler results	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-photofeeler-results.359658/
TeraChad VS Tera-Incel (PhotoFeeler results)	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/terachad-vs-tera-incel-photofeeler-results.358708/
Blackpill Brainlets to Framecels; How the contrasting imperatives between natural selection and sexual selection may have helped create incels	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/brainlets-to-framecels-how-the-contrasting-imperatives-between-natural-selection-and-sexual-selection-may-have-helped-create-incels.96164/
Serious [STUDY] Solitary confinement shows how devastating loneliness can be - Forced isolation is recognized as a form of torture	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/study-solitary-confinement-shows-how-devastating-loneliness-can-be-forced-isolation-is-recognized-as-a-form-of-torture.273108/
Blackpill SCIENTIFIC PROOF that the order of importance is: Race > Height > Face > Money	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/scientific-proof-that-the-order-of-importance-is-race-height-face-money.59098/
[Tinder Experiment] Ugly gymcel gets hot Tinder matches! [Spicy thread] [GTFIH]	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/tinder-experiment-ugly-gymcel-gets-hot-tinder-matches-spicy-thread-gtfih.14475/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
News Incel charged with sexual assault for touching a womans arm	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/incel-charged-with-sexual-assault-for-touching-a-womans-arm.150088/
LifeFuel Roundup of Thailand Trip - girls, advice, conversation screenshots etc	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/roundup-of-thailand-trip-girls-advice-conversation-screenshots-etc.28034/
Must-Read Content	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/forums/must-read-content.23/
Must-Read Content page 2	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/forums/must-read-content.23/page-2
[Tinder Experiment] 5'7 incel gets more than 40 cute matches in Asia in 1 day	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/tinder-experiment-57-incel-gets-more-than-40-cute-matches-in-asia-in-1-day.4268/
Blackpill [STUDY] The ideal penis size is the top 5% and manlets get LESS of a boost than tallfags	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/study-the-ideal-penis-size-is-the-top-5-and-manlets-get-less-of-a-boost-than-tallfags.209229/
My HIV Chad Got 35 + Matches In a Night + a hot GirlFriend (PICS/PROOF)	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-hiv-chad-got-35-matches-in-a-night-a-hot-girlfriend-pics-proof.20831/
Blackpill Tinder experiment in the UK: Latino/Med vs Muslim vs Mulatto	23/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/tinder-experiment-in-the-uk-latino-med-vs-muslim-vs-mulatto.30569/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Serious I'm gonna try taking creepshots in the gym today	30/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/im-gonna-try-taking-creepshots-in-the-gym-today.364291/
Serious Chads at the gym	30/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/chads-at-the-gym.358067/
It's Over This is what every foid thinks about ugly men	30/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-is-what-every-foid-thinks-about-ugly-men.200913/
Experiment when I read about how so-called "ugly" women feel about their life and days it makes me wish we could hang out and try holding hands or something	30/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/when-i-read-about-how-so-called-ugly-women-feel-about-their-life-and-days-it-makes-me-wish-we-could-hang-out-and-try-holding-hands-or-something.351047/
LifeFuel Gentlemen, give it up for @itsOVER	30/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/when-i-read-about-how-so-called-ugly-women-feel-about-their-life-and-days-it-makes-me-wish-we-could-hang-out-and-try-holding-hands-or-something.351047/
Theory Will Smith's slap set a precedent for unmasculine violence	30/03/2022	https://incels.is/threads/when-i-read-about-how-so-called-ugly-women-feel-about-their-life-and-days-it-makes-me-wish-we-could-hang-out-and-try-holding-hands-or-something.351047/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
I don't think heterosexual men actually find "Gigastacy" foids like this appealing	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-dont-think-heterosexual-men-actually-find-gigastacy-foids-like-this-appealing.360270/
RageFuel Women hate men who don't conform to what they find attractive	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/women-hate-men-who-dont-conform-to-what-they-find-attractive.353729/
RageFuel How the fuck can you think this guy is attractive?	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-the-fuck-can-you-think-this-guy-is-attractive.363609/
SuicideFuel This is what women ACTUALLY think of short men.	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-is-what-women-actually-think-of-short-men.362032/
Inceldom Discussion	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/forums/inceldom-discussion.2/
This couple proves the heightpill!	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-couple-proves-the-heightpill.365571/
This is what happens when you bring an ethnic foid to the west !	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-is-what-happens-when-you-bring-an-ethnic-foid-to-the-west.326085/
SuicideFuel Meet Sliker the 5'4 balding dude who managed to score a goodlooking gf	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/meet-sliker-the-54-balding-dude-who-managed-to-score-a-goodlooking-gf.364788/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
JFL My incel friend fucked a granny!	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-incel-friend-fucked-a-granny.363143/
TeeHee Dude possibly saves female's life but she dates another dude instead.	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/dude-possibly-saves-females-life-but-she-dates-another-dude-instead.361188/
Why I am not blackpilled	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-i-am-not-blackpilled.350387/
TeeHee Thug and famemaxxed riceman gets rejected by noodlewhore	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/thug-and-famemaxxed-riceman-gets-rejected-by-noodlewhore.365565/
Brutal I found a ricecel youtuber, its over for him	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-found-a-ricecel-youtuber-its-over-for-him.363550/
Brutal Almost 200 Pornstars Say Size Matters (Brutal dickpill)	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/almost-200-pornstars-say-size-matters-brutal-dickpill.363669/
LifeFuel The mod team is finally finished as we welcome Caesarcel and SlayerSlayer to the team!	05/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-mod-team-is-finally-finished-as-we-welcome-caesarcel-and-slayerslayer-to-the-team.364878/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Brutal Women gain sexual pleasure from the pain that is inflicted upon them.	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/women-gain-sexual-pleasure-from-the-pain-that-is-inflicted-upon-them.254271/page-5#post-8374740
Theory I think we should consider including the "Elliot Rodger effect" in our theories (details below)	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-think-we-should-consider-including-the-elliot-rodger-effect-in-our-theories-details-below.361187/
News Blackpill: inside the incel death cult	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/blackpill-inside-the-incel-death-cult.352816/
News SergeantIncel, founder of incels.co, joins Document to discuss the nuances of the internet's most despised subculture	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/sergeantincel-founder-of-incels-co-joins-document-to-discuss-the-nuances-of-the-internets-most-despised-subculture.340878/
SuicideFuel Giga ovER for ukrainecels. Polish and Russians raped your foid left and right. My condolences to you.	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/giga-over-for-ukrainecels-polish-and-russians-raped-your-foid-left-and-right-my-condolences-to-you.361831/
News How Hatred Of Women Is Fueling The Far-Right	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-hatred-of-women-is-fueling-the-far-right.349725/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
"Homeless model" arrested for masterbating at Starbucks in Miami Beach during spring break	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/homeless-model-arrested-for-masterbating-at-starbucks-in-miami-beach-during-spring-break.360268/
Mudshark gets Tyrone arrested for rape because he didn't wear a condom	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/mudshark-gets-tyrone-arrested-for-rape-because-he-didnt-wear-a-condom.133494/
Serious It's hell over here, literally the worst thing imaginable	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/its-hell-over-here-literally-the-worst-thing-imaginable.365073/
LifeFuel I saw a train full of blonde ukrainian women arrive at the train station	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-saw-a-train-full-of-blonde-ukrainian-women-arrive-at-the-train-station.363803/
Any 25 years old over here?	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/any-25-years-old-over-here.362577/
Story VERY LONG RANT ABOUT MY 22 years OF SUFFERING	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/very-long-rant-about-my-22-years-of-suffering.359844/]
Story (VERY LONG) Retrosperctive of my college years: 2018-2022	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/very-long-retrosperctive-of-my-college-years-2018-2022.363089/
Serious so tired of suffering from inhibition	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/so-tired-of-suffering-from-inhibition.362237/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Based ITCels, this is our alternative to NEETing for 5+ years/dewing it as a sub-5 male	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/itcels-this-is-our-alternative-to-neeting-for-5-years-dewing-it-as-a-sub-5-male.362780/
Serious Just a quick rant here	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/just-a-quick-rant-here.358366/
JFL Men in pornography are the embodiment of Chads (said two foid feminazis authors)	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/men-in-pornography-are-the-embodiment-of-chads-said-two-foid-feminazis-authors.360817/
Theory Make no mistake, Incels are despised because we are sad kisses virgins, not because we are supposedly misogynistic.	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/make-no-mistake-incels-are-despised-because-we-are-sad-kisses-virgins-not-because-we-are-supposedly-misogynistic.359691/
Discussion The l'Ookist fallacy and the corruption of the blackpill	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-lookist-fallacy-and-the-corruption-of-the-blackpill.361842/
Why are women better copers than men ?	06/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-are-women-better-copers-than-men.363752/
Serious Did i develop autism from bullying?	11/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/did-i-develop-autism-from-bullying.363382/
SuicideFuel Life is so unfair in every aspect	11/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/life-is-so-unfair-in-every-aspect.359332/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
SuicideFuel This Stacy bimbo youtuber has a life so easy and tutorial mode it's ridiculous	11/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-stacy-bimbo-youtuber-has-a-life-so-easy-and-tutorial-mode-its-ridiculous.365218/
Blackpill I'm coping too hard. I don't even care about foids anymore, I care about their hypocrisy.	13/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/im-coping-too-hard-i-dont-even-care-about-foids-anymore-i-care-about-their-hypocrisy.363483/
Serious I don't know how to cope anymore	13/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-dont-know-how-to-cope-anymore.362667/
SuicideFuel This made me feel some type of way	13/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-made-me-feel-some-type-of-way.354406/
Inkwell Trait: You are always ghosted by foids	13/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/inkwell-trait-you-are-always-ghosted-by-foids.365167/
Foid in my class touched me	13/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/foid-in-my-class-touched-me.365076/
RageFuel Oneitis is dressing like a slut these days	13/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/oneitis-is-dressing-like-a-slut-these-days.364061/
Story This is what happened the first time I asked a girl out. what happened to you when you tried?	13/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-is-what-happened-the-first-time-i-asked-a-girl-out-what-happened-to-you-when-you-tried.365537/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Blackpill When did bullying start for you?	13/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/when-did-bullying-start-for-you.364734/
LifeFuel Just fucked a escort	13/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/just-fucked-a-escort.365465/
RageFuel Idiots eating everything "professionals" say	13/04/2022	https://incels.is/threads/idiots-eating-everything-professionals-say.363850/
It's so sad that we replace socialization with this forum.	16/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/its-so-sad-that-we-replace-socialization-with-this-forum.259787/
I'm so tired of the self destruction in this forum…	16/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/im-so-tired-of-the-self-destruction-in-this-forum.371638/page-2
Agapemaxxing (long post).	16/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/agapemaxxing-long-post.231871/
i am with inceltear	16/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-am-with-inceltear.424943/
I"ve officially made it to r/IncelTear. FUCK YEAH!!!!! *opens sparkling apple juice*	16/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-ve-officially-made-it-to-r-inceltear-fuck-yeah-opens-sparkling-apple-juice.408869/
Explains this ITcucks, I dare you	16/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/explains-this-itcucks-i-dare-you.407881/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
OkCupid Deletes Blackpills	16/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/okcupid-deletes-blackpills.40796/
Things I don't appreciate about incels	24/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/things-i-dont-appreciate-about-incels.371299/
My Experience Being Arrested By The FBl And Put In A Psych Ward For My Posts Here	24/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-experience-being-arrested-by-the-fbl-and-put-in-a-psych-ward-for-my-posts-here.343180/
I took advantage of my foid neighbor	24/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-took-advantage-of-my-foid-neighbor.374668/
Huge tasty dick for my gigastacy classmate	24/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/huge-tasty-dick-for-my-gigastacy-classmate.376012/
6 y/o foid won't respond to me, but will to my chad friend	24/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/16-y-o-foid-wont-respond-to-me-but-will-to-my-chad-friend.374412/
I got my first date in 20 y	24/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-got-my-first-date-in-20-y.371715/
White Chad dies, Fox News cries	24/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/white-chad-dies-fox-news-cries.367478/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
I insult women as chad and they continue talking to me and give me their number	24/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-insult-women-as-chad-and-they-continue-talking-to-me-and-give-me-their-number.39717/
My incel friend went on a date and the girl was roasting him to her friends after	24/05/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-incel-friend-went-on-a-date-and-the-girl-was-roasting-him-to-her-friends-after.375643/
R.I.P LengZengCel: A farewell to a fallen brothER	08/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/r-i-p-lengzengcel-a-farewell-to-a-fallen-brother.379445/
Whos the real bad guy?	08/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/whos-the-real-bad-guy.373668/
The cause of our suffering and Inceldom in the modern world.	08/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-cause-of-our-suffering-and-inceldom-in-the-modern-world.366043/
My Response to "Just Go Outside" or "Touch Grass" (IT won't touch this)	13/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-response-to-just-go-outside-or-touch-grass-it-wont-touch-this.365249/
Would you Bang?	13/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/would-you-bang.382561/
Foid feeling that she's not good enough for her bf and trying to get some validation from soys		https://incels.is/threads/foid-feeling-that-shes-not-good-enough-for-her-bf-and-trying-to-get-some-validation-from-soys.381161/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
This hoe is only 28	13/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-hoe-is-only-28.380656/
Would you ascend with her?	13/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/would-you-ascend-with-her.378764/
I don't hate women, I only want revenge	13/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-dont-hate-women-i-only-want-revenge.382563/
If you got a gf someday, would you be loyal to her?	14/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/if-you-got-a-gf-someday-would-you-be-loyal-to-her.381940/
Which following category of foids do you hate most?	14/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/which-following-category-of-foids-do-you-hate-most.376466/
How many of you would become highly suspicious if a female "showed interest" in you.	14/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-many-of-you-would-become-highly-suspicious-if-a-female-showed-interest-in-you.83616/
Is Joker (2019) a classic?	14/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/is-joker-2019-a-classic.377265/
The REAL truth about Joker	14/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-real-truth-about-joker.359708/
The blackpill is truth.	14/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-blackpill-is-truth.367244/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
If you reject fat foids, are you volcel?	14/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/if-you-reject-fat-foids-are-you-volcel.269604/
What kind of porn do you like to watch?	14/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/what-kind-of-porn-do-you-like-to-watch.368388/
The actual incel homicide rate is tiny (this is the most effort I ever put in a post so pls come)	14/06/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-actual-incel-homicide-rate-is-tiny-this-is-the-most-effort-i-ever-put-in-a-post-so-pls-come.372788/
Incel charged with sexual assault for touching a womans arm	12/07/2022	https://incels.is/threads/incel-charged-with-sexual-assault-for-touching-a-womans-arm.150088/
Women gain sexual pleasure from the pain that is inflicted upon them.	12/07/2022	https://incels.is/threads/women-gain-sexual-pleasure-from-the-pain-that-is-inflicted-upon-them.254271/
The Life and Times of itsOVER (Legendary white incel slaying in Thailand)	13/07/2002	https://incels.is/threads/the-life-and-times-of-itsover-legendary-white-incel-slaying-in-thailand.59409/
Data on people having sex, virgins, etc. (WARNING: SUICIDEFUEL)	13/07/2022	https://incels.is/threads/data-on-people-having-sex-virgins-etc-warning-suicidefuel.174978/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
"Me [52M] just found out at least 4 of my 5 children [33F][30F][28M][24F][14F] are not mine. Wife [51F] wont say anything."	14/07/2022	https://incels.is/threads/me-52m-just-found-out-at-least-4-of-my-5-children-33f-30f-28m-24f-14f-are-not-mine-wife-51f-wont-say-anything.115218/
The media is beginning to freak out because tinder is blackpilling men	14/07/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-media-is-beginning-to-freak-out-because-tinder-is-blackpilling-men.170239/
SCIENTIFIC PROOF that the order of importance is: Race > Height > Face > Money	15/07/2022	https://incels.is/threads/scientific-proof-that-the-order-of-importance-is-race-height-face-money.59098/
Evolutionary Psychology and Mate Selection in the Age of Tinder	15/07/2022	https://incels.is/threads/evolutionary-psychology-and-mate-selection-in-the-age-of-tinder.39777/
Another one bites the dust	01/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/another-one-bites-the-dust.415023/
My grandpa even though bluepilled	01/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-grandpa-even-though-bluepilled.415052/
My question for low inhibcels and high inhibcels	01/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-question-for-low-inhibcels-and-high-inhibcels.415049/
IM BACK FROM BOOT CAMP QNA	01/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/im-back-from-boot-camp-qna.410531/

Appendix D

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Researcher calls Incels „a pack of wolfs" raw raw raw	01/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/researcher-calls-incels-a-pack-of-wolfs-raw-raw-raw.414283/
Would you become a 5'3 currycel and a millionaire	02/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/would-you-become-a-53-currycel-and-a-millionaire.408401/
I Sometimes Consider Dying and Respawning as Chad Theory	02/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-sometimes-consider-dying-and-respawning-as-chad-theory.415226/
Bluepilled fuckers: "Women can detect your desperation/insecurity/low self-esteem/misogyny/etc." DEBUNKED	02/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/bluepilled-fuckers-women-can-detect-your-desperation-insecurity-low-self-esteem-misogyny-etc-debunked.386634/
Why are curryland foids wearing such skin tight jeans with their asses about to pop out??	02/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-are-curryland-foids-wearing-such-skin-tight-jeans-with-their-asses-about-to-pop-out-reeeee.413970/
You can get away with "muh mysoginy" if you're a tranny	02/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/you-can-get-away-with-muh-mysoginy-if-youre-a-tranny.415228/
[POLL] Skinny jb vs her thicc robust slutty crossfit mom	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/poll-skinny-jb-vs-her-thicc-robust-slutty-crossfit-mom.415487/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Landwhales cause inceldom	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/landwhales-cause-inceldom.413284/
Russian incels fleeing Russia	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/russian-incels-fleeing-russia.415244/
The madness of my past writings.	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-madness-of-my-past-writings.415446/
Seeing sex havers enjoy their life ruins me. (also got laughed at by them)	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/seeing-sex-havers-enjoy-their-life-ruins-me-also-got-laughed-at-by-them.415482/
I'm Living Proof that Money Doesn't Attract Women	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/im-living-proof-that-money-doesnt-attract-women.98488/
Words and its meaning in our community.	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/words-and-its-meaning-in-our-community.396815/
Undeniable proof of the blackpill: birdcels are looksmaxxing and getting cucked by more attractive birds! (IT WON'T TOUCH THIS)	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/undeniable-proof-of-the-blackpill-birdcels-are-looksmaxxing-and-getting-cucked-by-more-attractive-birds-it-wont-touch-this.410841/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
It's childish to keep focussing on looks as being the reason why you're incel, the focus should be on money	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/its-childish-to-keep-focussing-on-looks-as-being-the-reason-why-youre-incel-the-focus-should-be-on-money.369222/
Why does nobody care about adult men suffering ?	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-does-nobody-care-about-adult-men-suffering.411661/
Men are disposable	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/men-are-disposable.407585/
The Rage of the IncelsIncels: aren't really looking for sex. They're looking for absolute male supremacy. [2018]	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-rage-of-the-incelsincels-arent-really-looking-for-sex-theyre-looking-for-absolu te-male-supremacy-2018.410472/
I feel hurt that my life has ended up here': The women who are involuntary celibates	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-feel-hurt-that-my-life-has-ended-up-here-the-women-who-are-involuntary-celibates.409907/
MY LANDWHALE GOT 10+ LIKES LESS THAN A MINUTE AFTER SETTING THE ACCOUNT	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-landwhale-got-10-likes-less-than-a-minute-after-setting-the-account.49282/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Betabuxx UKcel's girl fucked my attractive roommate AND EVEN PAID HIM 10€ just cuz he was attractive	03/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/beta buxx-ukcels-girl-fucked-my-attractive-roommate-and-even-paid-him-10eur-just-cuz-he-was-attractive.356489/
This night was disaster	04/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-night-was-disaster.415839/
What I envision any time someone here mentions having a crush/oneitis	04/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/wha t-i-envision-any-time-someone-here-mentions-having-a-crush-oneitis.415911/
I'm invisible even on this forum	04/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/im-invisible-even-on-this-forum.415872/
Answering IT's question to my thread "I want IT to explain my situation and why I'm incel" IT GTFIH	04/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/ans wering-its-question-to-my-thread-i-want-it-to-explain-my-situation-and-why-im-incel-it-gtfih.415887/
Incel trait: you are always in pain	04/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/ince l-trait-you-are-always-in-pain.379643/
The Blackpill Ruined My Life	05/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-blackpill-ruined-my-life.416119/
I'm Gonna Try To Ascend	05/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/im-gonna-try-to-ascend.416132/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Nofap/semen retention day 10	05/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/nofap-semen-retention-day-10.416112/
Stop with the "NT" cope	05/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/stop-with-the-nt-cope.413268/
Being NT makes females hate you EVEN MORE	05/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/being-nt-makes-females-hate-you-even-more.414277/
I legit looked in the mirror for 2 hrs just being pissed at myself for being so ugly	06/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-legit-looked-in-the-mirror-for-2-hrs-just-being-pissed-at-myself-for-being-so-ugly.416474/
Gaming is filled with sexhavers and friendhavers	06/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/gaming-is-filled-with-sexhavers-and-friendhavers.416290/
Do you have BlackPill eyes yet?	06/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/do-you-have-blackpill-eyes-yet.416462/
Going outside is a brutal bluepill	06/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/going-outside-is-a-brutal-bluepill.416354/
What type of toilet would you pay for if you were to be escort cel	06/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/what-type-of-toilet-would-you-pay-for-if-you-were-to-be-escort-cel.412230/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
What do you think of people such as Jordan Peterson or Andrew Tate and similar?	07/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/what-do-you-think-of-people-such-as-jordan-peterson-or-andrew-tate-and-similar.416752/
This is what you will never have	07/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-is-what-you-will-never-have.416742/
Hello I am a new user migrating from looksmax.org	07/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/hello-i-am-a-new-user-migrating-from-looksmax-org.416673/
"Why incels don't understand that it's their behaviour that drives women away?"	07/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-incels-dont-understand-that-its-their-behaviour-that-drives-women-away.400004/
Newcels should be aware of the fishpill	07/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/newcels-should-be-aware-of-the-fishpill.220925/page-2
Do people know about your incel side?	10/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/do-people-know-about-your-incel-side.417631/
True or False Incels: an analysis of the Incels.is forum [Aug 2022]	10/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/true-or-false-incels-an-analysis-of-the-incels-is-forum-aug-2022.414326/
Look at this slayer god skull	10/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/look-at-this-slayer-god-skull.417615/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Average female body count in 2022 is still higher than @proudweebs postcount	10/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/average-female-body-count-in-2022-is-still-higher-than-proudweebs-postcount.417418/
Teenagers finding the site because of normies not us	10/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/teenagers-finding-the-site-because-of-normies-not-us.417390/
Why did you become an incel? Do you still try getting into a romantic relationship?	11/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-did-you-become-an-incel-do-you-still-try-getting-into-a-romantic-relationship.417083/
Clearing up the myth that curries are better than blacks	11/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/clearing-up-the-myth-that-curries-are-better-than-blacks.417124/
Do women like fat guys	11/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/do-women-like-fat-guys.417798/
Anyone else have just given up?	11/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/anyone-else-have-just-given-up.417355/
Remember: A girl will NEVER like you	11/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/remember-a-girl-will-never-like-you.417672/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Why you should kill yourself to reach your higher spiritual connection and reach Gensokyo (The Land of illusions)	12/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-you-should-kill-yourself-to-reach-your-higher-spiritual-connection-and-reach-gensokyo-the-land-of-illusions.398727/
(Brutal Urgent TLMR/TOO LONG MUST READ) Mods please pin this post for when the time comes	12/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/brutal-urgent-tlmr-too-long-must-read-mods-please-pin-this-post-for-when-the-time-comes.418125/
Why is this forum racist?	12/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-is-this-forum-racist.417794/page-2
Favourite ER quote?	12/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/favourite-er-quote.418281/
Dude I just wanna rope	12/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/dude-i-just-wanna-rope.407016/
I have been enjoying a lot of BDSM porn recently	13/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-have-been-enjoying-a-lot-of-bdsm-porn-recently.414734/
True or False Incels: an analysis of the Incels.is forum [Aug 2022]	13/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/true-or-false-incels-an-analysis-of-the-incels-is-forum-aug-2022.414326/
People who lost your virginity to prostitutes, how was the experience?	13/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/people-who-lost-your-virginity-to-prostitutes-how-was-the-experience.418014/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
you will NEVER have this - cute gf giving you bj while you play video games	13/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/you-will-never-have-this-cute-gf-giving-you-bj-while-you-play-video-games.418490/
Does anyone else feel like a Jock trapped in a incels body?	13/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/does-anyone-else-feel-like-a-jock-trapped-in-a-incels-body.417388/
If your parents didn't have this for your birthday as a child THEN THEY SUCK AS PARENTS	14/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/if-your-parents-didnt-have-this-for-your-birthday-as-a-child-then-they-suck-as-parents.418316/
My cat died and I want to rope	14/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-cat-died-and-i-want-to-rope.418756/
Idk how you can't hate women as an incel	14/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/idk-how-you-cant-hate-women-as-an-incel.415240/
High IQ fags deserve to be incel.	14/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/high-iq-fags-deserve-to-be-incel.418700/page-2
No one's trying to help you, no one supports you, it's over	14/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/no-ones-trying-to-help-you-no-one-supports-you-its-over.410617/
Most white girls have fucked a black dude at some point	17/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/most-white-girls-have-fucked-a-black-dude-at-some-point.419591/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Why do mods allow non KHHVs to brag on this forum?	17/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-do-mods-allow-non-khhvs-to-brag-on-this-forum.419954/
What are your plans when you're 60+ and still a kissless virgin with no family?	17/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/what-are-your-plans-when-youre-60-and-still-a-kissless-virgin-with-no-family.419857/
How many rejections do you have?	17/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-many-rejections-do-you-have.412706/
You are not entitled to anything	17/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/you-are-not-entitled-to-anything.400524/
Have you ever had a gf	18/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/have-you-ever-had-a-gf.419011/
helped this girl out in exams now she acts like i don't even exist	18/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/helped-this-girl-out-in-exams-now-she-acts-like-i-dont-even-exist.416663/
fuck convictions, escortcel, JBWmax, do whatever the fuck you have to do to escape inceldom	18/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/fuck-convictions-escortcel-jbwmax-do-whatever-the-fuck-you-have-to-do-to-escape-inceldom.420249/
Race doesn't matter	18/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/race-doesnt-matter.420231/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
I literally dreamt about hugging a foid and refused sex	18/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-literally-dreamt-about-hugging-a-foid-and-refused-sex.414532/
If a normie made fun of you, what would your reaction be? (ER doesn't count)	19/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/if-a-normie-made-fun-of-you-what-would-your-reaction-be-er-doesnt-count.420218/
How Many Women Per Man Would Completely Get Rid of Inceldom?	19/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-many-women-per-man-would-completely-get-rid-of-inceldom.420808/
fuck off LGBT"cels"	19/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/fuck-off-lgbt-cels.420483/
i went on my first date today!	19/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-went-on-my-first-date-today.419448/
Incels who quote these male sexlessness studies	19/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/incels-who-quote-these-male-sexlessness-studies.420582/
Bullying is a Choice. Being a coward is underrated.	20/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/bullying-is-a-choice-being-a-coward-is-underrated.389829/
When do you have sympathy for a 6'6" man	20/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/when-do-you-have-sympathy-for-a-66-man.408998/
.is users	20/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/is-users.420805/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Please Ban By Account.	20/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/please-ban-by-account.420622/
Escortcels being allowed on this forum is like allowing femcels on here	20/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/escortcels-being-allowed-on-this-forum-is-like-allowing-femcels-on-here.420926/
What is with the obsession on which race is the biggest victim?	21/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/what-is-with-the-obsession-on-which-race-is-the-biggest-victim.413830/
Started hitting my facial bones for growth	21/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/started-hitting-my-facial-bones-for-growth.420971/
First time at the gym (maybe the last)	21/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/first-time-at-the-gym-maybe-the-last.414016/
SORORITIES SHOULD BE THE NUMBER 1 TARGET FOR ANYONE WHO GOES ER (IN ROBLOX)	21/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/sororities-should-be-the-number-1-target-for-anyone-who-goes-er-in-roblox.411797/
Do you ever feel bad about the hateful things you post? I do.	21/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/do-you-ever-feel-bad-about-the-hateful-things-you-post-i-do.420994 /
How well known are Incels in the general public?	24/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-well-known-are-incels-in-the-general-public.421637/
Why I'm against racism	24/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-im-against-racism.134506/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
how can you cope when going outside and seeing what you're missing out on?	24/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-can-you-cope-when-going-outside-and-seeing-what-youre-missing-out-on.419693/
It never began for sub8 males (undeniable proof)	24/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/it-never-began-for-sub8-males-undeniable-proof.416175/
How was your last cold approach to a girl?	24/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-was-your-last-cold-approach-to-a-girl.421428/
rank your prefered race of girl to date	25/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/rank-your-prefered-race-of-girl-to-date.422341/
Why is Bosnia, Sweden, Norway, Canada, US, searching "incel" the most in the entire world	25/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-is-bosnia-sweden-norway-canada-us-searching-incel-the-most-in-the-entire-world.420450/
How old are you?	25/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-old-are-you.418229/
Why I don't hate women, and other older-cel perspectives	25/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-i-dont-hate-women-and-other-older-cel-perspectives.391397/page-2
How I was in my bluepilled days, and how I view sex now.	25/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-i-was-in-my-bluepilled-days-and-how-i-view-sex-now.413606/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Stacy told me something that kind of contradicts the incel Ideology	26/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/stacy-told-me-something-that-kind-of-contradicts-the-incel-ideology.422672/page-2
mods pls delete my account forever	26/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/mods-pls-delete-my-account-forever.419077/
Were You Always An Outcast?	26/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/were-you-always-an-outcast.421967/
I Hate High School	26/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-hate-high-school.413384/page-2
Dalhousie University researcher delves into misogynistic incel world	26/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/dalhousie-university-researcher-delves-into-misogynistic-incel-world.421548/
What's your ideal life ?	27/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/whats-your-ideal-life.386435/
Truecel Trait: You can't send Dick Pics because you have a Micro Penis!	27/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/truecel-trait-you-cant-send-dick-pics-because-you-have-a-micro-penis.422819/
I am posting this thread while my three year old female cousin is looking at my phone along with me	27/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-am-posting-this-thread-while-my-three-year-old-female-cousin-is-looking-at-my-phone-along-with-me.423096/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Girls Looking At Me	27/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/girls-looking-at-me.404428/
Case Study of Typical "Incel" on Incels.is	27/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/case-study-of-typical-incel-on-incels-is.422961/
You shouldn't be here if you are 18 or under	31/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/you-shouldnt-be-here-if-you-are-18-or-under.424407/
If you're under 18 leave this forum	31/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/if-youre-under-18-leave-this-forum.423419/
Age 18 Is Oldcel	31/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/age-18-is-oldcel.422786/
It's time to retire this statistic	31/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/its-time-to-retire-this-statistic.424307/
Slut gets FURIOS when asked how many she has slept with	31/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/slut-gets-furios-when-asked-how-many-she-has-slept-with.421202/
Virginity tests should be mandatory for foids	31/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/virginity-tests-should-be-mandatory-for-foids.424491/
You've been programmed to be a slave to the Matrix	31/10/2022	https://incels.is/threads/youve-been-programmed-to-be-a-slave-to-the-matrix.415522/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Second attempt asking out oneitis on valentines	01/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/second-attempt-asking-out-oneitis-on-valentines.425123/
My sister is applying lipstick and painting the nails of my toddler aged nieces AND nephew; and my mom says it's not a big deal.	01/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-sister-is-applying-lipstick-and-painting-the-nails-of-my-toddler-aged-nieces-and-nephew-and-my-mom-says-its-not-a-big-deal.424585/
The word Incel is overused and abused we need a new term	01/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-word-incel-is-overused-and-abused-we-need-a-new-term.424986/
what do truecels do to cope?	01/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/what-do-truecels-do-to-cope.425004/
Yesterday a foid asked me for help after getting raped	02/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/yesterday-a-foid-asked-me-for-help-after-getting-raped.425034/
A lot of you contradict yourselves and may not be incels. By your logic Chad is an incel	02/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/a-lot-of-you-contradict-yourselves-and-may-not-be-incels-by-your-logic-chad-is-an-incel.422989/
Why are Indians so subhuman and beta?	02/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-are-indians-so-subhuman-and-beta.424469/#post-9973733

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
I missed the chance to talk with a female on discord	02/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-missed-the-chance-to-talk-with-a-female-on-discord.425024/
Should I meet up with a discuck foid	02/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/should-i-meet-up-with-a-discuck-foid.424924/
Leaving the forum , I'm finding joy in life	02/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/leaving-the-forum-im-finding-joy-in-life.418949/
TERMINAL JBW LEVELS OF JBW NEVER BEFORE SEEN	03/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/terminal-jbw-levels-of-jbw-never-before-seen.425312/
Onlyfans model denied entry into restaurant	03/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/onlyfans-model-denied-entry-into-restaurant.425499/
this might be controversial however i have to say it anyway	03/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/this-might-be-controversial-however-i-have-to-say-it-anyway.425327/
Look at this Stacy heaven, Chad creampies this	03/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/look-at-this-s tacy-heaven-chad-creampies-this.423307/
What stops you from roping NOW?	03/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/what-stops-you-from-roping-now.422659/
Inceldom and porn addiction	04/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/inceldom-and-porn-addiction.325410/page-2

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Sheboon onetis thinks my incel life is easy and hers is hard	04/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/sheboon-onetis-thinks-my-incel-life-is-easy-and-hers-is-hard.425601/
Should I fix my neighbors daughters headphones?	04/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/should-i-fix-my-neighbors-daughters-headphones.423669/
What is with the obsession on which race is the biggest victim?	04/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/what-is-with-the-obsession-on-which-race-is-the-biggest-victim.413830/
Why shouldn't I feel angry and vengeful about my trueceldoom	04/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-shouldnt-i-feel-angry-and-vengeful-about-my-trueceldoom.425736/
Were you guys as surprised as I was at how vicious the normies were towards Nikolas Cruz?	07/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/were-you-guys-as-surprised-as-i-was-at-how-vicious-the-normies-were-towards-nikolas-cruz.426353/
autism is worse than lack of height	07/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/autism-is-worse-than-lack-of-height.426873/
Seems like everyone here is an ethnic. Are there any Whitecels left here? Please report to this thread.	07/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/seems-like-everyone-here-is-an-ethnic-are-there-any-whitecels-left-here-please-report-to-this-thread.427005/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
I Wish I Wasn't Blackpilled	07/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-wish-i-wasnt-blackpilled.426869/
One day I will ascend and leave this forum	07/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/one-day-i-will-ascend-and-leave-this-forum.426912/
I think I'm an incel or going to be one	08/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-think-im-an-incel-or-going-to-be-one.427004/
Do you hate or do you pity simps??	08/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/do-you-hate-or-do-you-pity-simps.420684/
Thoughts on Youngcels?	08/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/thoughts-on-youngcels.426772/
When was the last time you got hugged?	08/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/when-was-the-last-time-you-got-hugged.426321/
truecel trait, not even parents believe you can bang a chick	08/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/truecel-trait-not-even-parents-believe-you-can-bang-a-chick.426930/
I have no Idea how to leave inceldom I'm lost	09/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-have-no-idea-how-to-leave-inceldom-im-lost.427364/
Incel brainwashed by PUA has been trying to get a date for 11 YEARS	09/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/incel-brainwashed-by-pua-has-been-trying-to-get-a-date-for-11-years.426222/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
ER was a fakecel and hated incels	09/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/er-was-a-fakecel-and-hated-incels.419513/
At the end of the day a family is just a cult	09/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/at-the-end-of-the-day-a-family-is-just-a-cult.423687/
Describe yourself with 4 of your most impactful subhuman traits	10/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/describe-yourself-with-4-of-your-most-impactful-subhuman-traits.426309/
The blackpill is inevitable, the normiesphere is crumbling	10/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-blackpill-is-inevitable-the-normiesphere-is-crumbling.427752/
My experience (First Post)	10/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-experience-first-post.423959/
If you ascended would you show your gf your incels.is account?	10/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/if-you-ascended-would-you-show-your-gf-your-incels-is-account.426456/
Education and IQ is giga-cope.	10/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/education-and-iq-is-giga-cope.420247/
Females depriving us of the right to reproduce is a Crime Against Humanity	11/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/females-depriving-us-of-the-right-to-reproduce-is-a-crime-again st-humanity.427868/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
There Is Nothing Wrong About Going ER (in video game)	11/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/there-is-nothing-wrong-about-going-er-in-video-game.427862/
"Incels, I implore to you, Grow up, Grow a pair and Man up."	11/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/incels-i-implore-to-you-grow-up-grow-a-pair-and-man-up.419372/page-2
Stop with the "NT" cope	11/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/stop-with-the-nt-cope.413268/
i chatted with becky at gym !	11/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-chatted-with-becky-at-gym.421831/
How old were you when you woke up to the truth about the world?	11/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-old-were-you-when-you-woke-up-to-the-truth-about-the-world.375579/
Every group I belong to is losing and losing HARD!	14/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/every-group-i-belong-to-is-losing-and-losing-hard.428411/
Others will bully you but if you don't bully others, they will use your good will against you	14/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/others-will-bully-you-but-if-you-dont-bully-others-they-will-use-your-good-will-against-you.422540/
Elliot Rodger truly has the saddest legacy of all time	14/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/elliot-rodger-truly-has-the-saddest-legacy-of-all-time.397885/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Would you hang out with Elliot rodgers	14/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/would-you-hang-out-with-elliot-rodgers.418415/page-2
What's your type?	14/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/whats-your-type.428130/
I cried to my mother when we both got drunk	15/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-cried-to-my-mother-when-we-both-got-drunk.156413/page-2
A new incel is born	15/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/a-new-incel-is-born.425472/
I Want To Meet With Local Incels	15/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/i-want-to-meet-with-local-incels.422666/
BRUTAL HEIGHTPILL: Ethnic 5´0 midgetcel breaks his bones just to be 5´3	15/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/brutal-heightpill-ethnic-5-0-midgetcel-breaks-his-bones-just-to-be-5-3.428494/
British Jew media cocksucker Piers Morgan calls incels despicable and weirdos. Thoughts?	15/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/british-jew-media-cocksucker-piers-morgan-calls-incels-despicable-and-weirdos-thoughts.414515/page-2
If any government actually cared about incels here's how they could actually help us.	16/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/if-any-government-actually-cared-about-incels-heres-how-they-could-actually-help-us.428879/
Yearly SEA Trip	16/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/yearly-sea-trip.121035/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Chad killed by blackcels while on a date with girlfriend	16/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/chad-killed-by-blackcels-while-on-a-date-with-girlfriend.418368/page-2
80% of Thai Migrants in Sweden are women	16/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/80-of-thai-migrants-in-sweden-are-women.345053/
What's the furthest you've ever gotten with a girl?	16/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/whats-the-furthest-youve-ever-gotten-with-a-girl.425073/
Incel trait: your bully traumatized you in high school	17/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/incel-trait-your-bully-traumatized-you-in-high-school.429465/
Dangers of anime	17/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/dangers-of-anime.427969/
How I was in my bluepilled days, and how I view sex now.	17/11/2022	https://incels.is/forums/inceldom-discussion.2/
Age pill is one of the most brutal pills	17/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/age-pill-is-one-of-the-most-brutal-pills.423537/
Cuddled with my oneitis	17/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/cuddled-with-my-oneitis.426198/page-2
Incel Blog: Why Does Noone Care about Male Loneliness?	22/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/incel-blog-why-does-noone-care-about-male-loneliness.430220/page-2

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Is there any way a woman could be a femcel?	22/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/is-there-any-way-a-woman-could-be-a-femcel.430918/
I'm out.	22/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/im-out.431024/
No longer feel a connection to this place.	22/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/no-longer-feel-a-connection-to-this-place.430742/
"Goodbye, My Friendcels": An Analysis of Incel Suicide Posts	22/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/goodbye-my-friendcels-an-analysis-of-incel-suicide-posts.430152/
Why are you here? (how you found this place)	22/11/2022	https://incels.is/threads/why-are-you-here-how-you-found-this-place.430554/
Balding is so terrifying that almost every famous/rich person gets a hair transplant (HUGE COMPILATION)	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/balding-is-so-terrifying-that-almost-every-famous-rich-person-gets-a-hair-transplant-hugecompilation.244977/
Being ethnic is as bad as being 5'4'' according to studies	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/being-ethnic-is-as-bad-as-being-54-according-to-studies.26312/
The Average Male Is "JesterMaxxing" (That's All That "Game" Really Is), Nothing Worth Envying	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-average-male-is-jestermaxxing-thats-all-that-game-really-is-nothing-worth-envying.133125/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
My HIV Chad Got 35 + Matches In a Night + a hot GirlFriend (PICS/PROOF)	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/my-hiv-chad-got-35-matches-in-a-night-a-hot-girlfriend-pics-proof.20831/
All black pill comics	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/all-black-pill-comics.37392/
ULTIMATE TEENLOVEPILL: PROOF THAT TEEN LOVE IS IMPORTANT (EVERYONE GTFIH)	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/ultimate-teenlovepill-proof-that-teen-love-is-important-everyone-gtfih.251254/
HEIGHT PREFERENCES	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/height-preferences.42810/
I've not had a hug for 10 weeks: The truth about lockdown for lonely singles like me	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/ive-not-had-a-hug-for-10-weeks-the-truth-about-lockdown-for-lonely-singles-like-me.205324/
Therapists are the capitalist equivalents of KGB informants	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/therapists-are-the-capitalist-equivalents-of-kgb-informants.207775/
If you think your "want for validation" is biological rather than socialized, you aren't blackpilled	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/if-you-think-your-want-for-validation-is-biological-rather-than-socialized-you-arent-blackpilled.163262/
Bullies typically go on to lead more fufilling, healthier lives than their victims.	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/bullies-typically-go-on-to-lead-more-fufilling-healthier-lives-than-their-victims.32434/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
If you think your "want for validation" is biological rather than socialized, you aren't blackpilled.	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/if-you-think-your-want-for-validation-is-biological-rather-than-socialized-you-arent-blackpilled.163262/
I'm going to do a tinder experiment to disprove -3 theory.	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/im-going-to-do-a-tinder-experiment-to-disprove-3-theory.64205/
How Society is Sociopathic Towards Incels	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/how-society-is-sociopathic-towards-incels.166145/
Unattractive Men Not Viewed As 'Dating Material,' No Matter How Great Their Personality	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/unattractive-men-not-viewed-as-dating-material-no-matter-how-great-their-personality.41815/
Study on the sexual market of Tinder	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/study-on-the-sexual-market-of-tinder.45375/
Tinder experiment in the UK: Latino/Med vs Muslim vs Mulatto	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/tinder-experiment-in-the-uk-latino-med-vs-muslim-vs-mulatto.30569/
Debunking the "your bad personality is why you can't get laid" argument once and for all	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/debunking-the-your-bad-personality-is-why-you-cant-get-laid-argument-once-and-for-all.346247/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Study shows that bullying does more damage and harm than child abuse	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/study-shows-that-bullying-does-more-damage-and-harm-than-child-abuse.250789/
Studies expecting to find discrimination against women often find discrimination against males instead	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/studies-expecting-to-find-discrimination-against-women-often-find-discrimination-against-males-instead.206629/
Blackpill straight from the horse's mouth	02/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/blackpill-straight-from-the-horses-mouth.281275/
Women's brain structure resembles that of pathological liars (3 studies, neuroscience)	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/womens-brain-structure-resembles-that-of-pathological-liars-3-studies-neuroscience.260425/
Sexual Behaviour of Highschool Students by Race.	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/study-sexual-behaviour-of-highschool-students-by-race.269201/
Masculinity IS fragile.	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/masculinity-is-fragile.259928/
The Blackpill Manual – Reasons Why It's Over & Answers	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/the-blackpill-manual-reasons-why-its-over-answers.251187/
Blackpill 101 Infographics	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/blackpill-101-infographics.54216/

Appendix D

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
[STUDY] The ideal penis size is the top 5% and manlets get LESS of a boost than tallfags	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/study-the-ideal-penis-size-is-the-top-5-and-manlets-get-less-of-a-boost-than-tallfags.209229/
Racepill Part 6 - Why women are inherently racist, Koinophilia and Neoteny	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/racepill-part-6-why-women-are-inherently-racist-koinophilia-and-neoteny.47888/
Attractive people are objectively smarter (genetically superior) than unattractive people	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/attractive-people-are-objectively-smarter-genetically-superior-than-unattractive-people.37474/
Celibacy Rate is at least 25% for men under 26 years old	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/celibacy-rate-is-at-least-25-for-men-under-26-years-old.41749/
Take the VOICE PILL	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/take-the-voice-pill.209436/
I've got a husband, Fiance and two boyfriends" Ugly 2/10 White female in 2018	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/ive-got-a-husband-fiance-and-two-boyfriends-ugly-2-10-white-female-in-2018.43377/
You are NOT subhuman	05/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/you-are-not-subhuman.257061/
Even 1 YEAR OLDS AVOID unattractive people	08/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/even-1-year-olds-avoid-unattractive-people.44715/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Ethnic male celibacy >30% in 2018	08/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/ethnic-male-celibacy-30-in-2018.41806/
Web devcel hired by femcels to build their forum calls them misandrist whores & destroys their servers! They can't find any female to build their site	08/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/web-devcel-hired-by-femcels-to-build-their-forum-calls-them-misandrist-whores-destroys-their-servers-they-cant-find-any-female-to-build-their-site.293283/
Incels are called "psychopaths" for analyzing society and advocating for a more ethical order, while actual psychopaths are loved by normies and foids	08/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/incels-are-called-psychopaths-for-analyzing-society-and-advocating-for-a-more-ethical-order-while-actual-psychopaths-are-loved-by-normies-and-foids.178768/
ITS BEGUN! THE FUTURE IS POLYGAMY!!!	08/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/its-begun-the-future-is-polygamy.264643/
Circumcision/MGM	08/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/circumcision-mgm.39743/
Ugly face of crime: too ugly to get a job	08/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/ugly-face-of-crime-too-ugly-to-get-a-job.40405/
Inceldom Is Actually A Blessing In Disguise (If You Let It Be)	08/12/2022	https://incels.is/threads/inceldom-is-actually-a-blessing-in-disguise-if-you-let-it-be.31539/

Appendix E   Incels.net visited pages

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
FAQ 1.0	12/09/2022	https://incels.net/threads/faq-1-0.838/
UPDATED: Report feature reminder	13/09/2022	https://incels.net/threads/UPDATED-Report-feature-reminder.1023/
Part 2. Added status of relationships and human rights	13/09/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Part 2-Added-status-of-relationships-and human-rights.478/
Now they're calling us pedophiles	01/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/now-they're-calling-us-pedophiles.506/
I don't wanna do a prostitute. I'm gonna be 28 soon.	01/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/I-don't-wanna- do-a-prostitute-I'm-gonna-be-28-soon.61191/
Readers for my book?	02/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Readers-for-my-book.990/
Feminist Norah Vincent Tried Living 2 Years As a Man	03/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Feminist-Norah-Vincent-Tried-Living-2-Years-As-a-Man.3954/
Female sees therapist and begins 'intentional dating'	04/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Female-sees-therapist-and-begins -'intentional-dating'.263/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Ukraine female dumped by good looking male	05/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Ukraine-female-dumped-by-good-looking-male.223/
Pregnant woman only wanted child if it was normal.	05/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Pregnant-woman-only-wanted-child-if-it-was-normal.2618/
Woman staying with me for four days	05/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Woman-staying-with-me-for-four-days.145/
Should the black pill become a official religion?	05/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Should-the-black-pill-become-a-official-religion.21284/
They call incels entitled...	06/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/They-call-incels-entitled.3082/
Prenuptial agreement	07/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Prenuptial-agreement.136/
Weekends are the worst as an incel	07/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Weekends-are-the-worst-as-an-incel.2461/
Women would do anything for Chad	07/10/2022	https://incels.t/threads/Women-would-do-anything-for-Chad.2620/
Incels Edward Dutton video	08/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Incels-Edward-Dutton-video.14261/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Do you want to start a family?	09/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Do-you-want-to-start-a-family.2194/
Dress code	10/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Dress-code.2264/
I got kicked out of a nightclub for no reason one time.	11/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/I-got-kicked-out-of-a-nightclub-for-no-reason-one-time.3921/
I really want to be flirt with girls	12/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/I-really-want-to-be-flirt-with-girls.4325/
Corporate women are very unapproachable	13/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Corporate-women-are-very-unapproachable.221/
Places INCELs Should Avoid	13/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Places-INCELs-Should-Avoid.238/
Starting to realise I have no friends	15/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Starting-to-realise-I-have-no-friends.18473/
double standards with being degraded	16/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/double-standards-with-being-degraded.23799/
Why don't you guys have girlfriends?	16/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Why-don't-you-guys-have-girlfriends.23816/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Are older wome easier to attract?	17/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Are-older-wome-easier-to -attract.29932/
Bouncers are the most unwelcoming type of security guards	17/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Bouncers-are-the-most-unwelcoming-type-of-security-guards.153/
EscortMaxxing	17/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/EscortMaxxing.2718/
Does the TV/media industry have a face-ist problem?	18/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Does-the-TV/Meda-industry-have-a-face-ist-problem.3049/
Alternative to abortion	18/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Alternative-to-abortion.3118/
The Alienation from normies that comprise this society	20/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/The-Alienation-from-normies-that-comprise-this-society.2820/
Old way of dating	21/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Old-way-of-dating.1131/
Possible end of reproductive discrimination?	21/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Possible-end-of-reproductive-discrimination.1254/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Why do men get judged for being week based on their failure to get a partner?	21/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Why-do-men-get-judged-for-being-week-based-on-their-failure-to-get-a-partner.30541/
Should our community drop the incel lingo?	22/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Should-our-community-drop-the-incel-lingo.109/
Do displays of bad boy characteristics help incels attract women?	23/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Do-displays-of-bad-boy-characteristics-help-incels-attract-women.1025/
Mainstream media says this forum posts violent threads	24/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Mainstream-media-says-this-forum-posts-violent-threads.425/
Will women become a privilege for the top 10% of men in the future?	25/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Will-women-become-a-privilege-for-the-top-10%-of-men-in-the-future.1003/
An ugly girl	25/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/An-ugly-girl.1064/
Explain your avatar	26/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Explain-your-avatar.30268/
The definitive Incel band	26/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/The-definitive-Incel-band.30299/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Even undesirable and average foids are Chad only	27/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Even-undesirable-and-average-foids-are-Chad-only.18943/
International Pronouns Day	28/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/International-Pronouns-Day.2173/
What are the chances you'll get laid this year?	28/10/2022	https://incels.net/threads/What-are-the-chances-you'll-get-laid-this-year.3045/
I'm Living Proof that Money Doesn't Attract Women	07/11/2022	https://incels.net/threads/I'm-Living-Proof-that-Money-Doesn't-Attract-Women.103/
It's childish to keep focussing on looks as being the reason why you're incel, the focus should be on money	08/11/2022	https://incels.net/threads/It's-childish-to-keep-focussing-on-looks-as-being-the-reason-why-you're-incel-the focus-should-be-on-money.3895/
Why does nobody care about adult men suffering ?	09/11/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Why-does-nobody-care-about-adult-men-suffering.3401/
Men are disposable	09/11/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Men-are-disposable.3409/
This guy was incel before the term	10/11/2022	https://incels.net/threads/this-guy-was-incel-before-the-term.25352/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Why do yu guys consider roping?	10/11/2022	https://incels.net/threads/why-do-guys-consider-roping.25329/
How hard do you try?	14/11/2022	https://incels.net/threads/how-hard-do-you-try.25276/
Quesitns about Relationships?	14/11/2022	https://incels.net/threads/Quesitns-about-Relationships.25937/
Back from Vegas.. I Escortmaxxed for 2 weeks. But a minor caution for incels	15/11/2022	https://incels.net/threads/back-from-vegas-i-escortmaxxed-for-2-weeks-but-a-minor-caution-for-incels.1501/
IncelTears is FAKE news	15/11/2022	https://incels.net/threads/inceltears-is-fake-news.3151/

Appendix F   Blackpill.club visited pages

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Belle Delphine is influencing young girls	28/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/belle-delphine-is-influencing-young-girls.5264/
Why I feel no remorse for being a degenerate leech on society:	28/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/why-i-feel-no-remorse-for-being-a-degenerate-leech-on-society.5370/
The average IT user is very stupid.	28/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/the-average-it-user-is-very-stupid.5932/
Everything sucks now.	04/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/everything-sucks-now.25230/
JBW Theory is Outdated: Being a European Male in 2021	04/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/jbw-theory-is-outdated-being-a-european-male-in-2021.5353/
Female biologist writes scientifically peer reviewed book confirming the Blackpill:	08/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/female-biologist-writes-scientifically-peer-reviewed-book-confirming-the-blackpill.5807/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
(GIGASUIFUEL) A Woman's Sexual Imprint vs her second choice (DON'T read if you're new to the Blackpill this is BRUTAL)	08/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/gigasuifuel-a-womans-sexual-imprint-vs-her-second-choice-dont-read-if-youre-new-to-the-blackpill-this-is-brutal.2324/
The Family is extinguishing	09/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/the-family-is-extinguishing.7862/page-2
The United States will never again be prepared for a serious war.	09/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/the-united-states-will-never-again-be-prepared-for-a-serious-war.11919/page-2
You Will Never Be Good Enough (Rant)	11/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/you-will-never-be-good-enough-rant.6832/
Men arent allowed to be sad	11/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/men-arent-allowed-to-be-sad.10741/page-2
No one wants a daughter, and THE GENERATION INCEL SCORE	14/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/no-one-wants-a-daughter-and-the-generation-incel-score.10446/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
ARMAGEDDON BLACKPILL: Reddit coper keeps hitting on girls, having hobbies, taking care of himself... And getting called a creep	14/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/armageddon-blackpill-reddit-coper-keeps-hitting-on-girls-having-hobbies-taking-care-of-himself-and-getting-called-a-creep.14373/
Alt-right tradcucks and white-women worship.	15/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/alt-right-tradcucks-and-white-women-worship.17271/
Womens unrealistic standards are making them lonely	15/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/womens-unrealistic-standards-are-making-them-lonely.203/
A Phrase Often Misused By Hypocrites: "Life Isn't Fair" (Unfairness Begets Unfairness)	15/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/a-phrase-often-misused-by-hypocrites-life-isnt-fair-unfairness-begets-unfairness.11804/
A comprehensive "guide" on how life begins & ends with FACE/LOOKS! Your Looks = Your Life!	16/11/2022	https://incels.in/index.php?threads/a-comprehensive-guide-on-how-life-begins-ends-with-face-looks-your-looks-your-life.22298/
Were you in denial before taking the Blackpill?	16/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/were-you-in-denial-before-taking-the-blackpill.867/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
"Evolutionary sexuality" is a speculative system of apologetics meant to justify female desire	16/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/evolutionary-sexuality-is-a-speculative-system-of-apologetics-meant-to-justify-female-desire.11952/
The true black pill	17/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/the-true-black-pill.12263/
Why should I get vaxxed?	17/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/why-should-i-get-vaxxed.9217/
55% of male university students in the UK identity as involuntarily celibate.	22/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/55-of-male-university-students-in-the-uk-identity-as-involuntarily-celibate.16678/
Camgirls make more money than we ever will.	22/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/camgirls-make-more-money-than-we-ever-will.4013/
"Alienated men need therapy"	22/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/alienated-men-need-therapy.3925/
My Torched Mind: The Story of how I came to be.	23/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/my-torched-mind-the-story-of-how-i-came-to-be.1020/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
You are not a "psychopath" nor "antisocial"	23/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/you-are-not-a-psychopath-nor-antisocial.8321/
BPD foid survival guide	24/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/bpd-foid-survival-guide.10047/
(MOUNT EVEREST SUIFUEL☠️☠️) Nothing gets a woman more AROUSED than rejecting normies and chasing Chad ??(DON'T READ if you're suicidal or coping)	24/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/mount-everest-suifuel%E2%98%A0%EF%B8%8F%E2%98%A0%EF%B8%8F-nothing-gets-a-woman-more-aroused-than-rejecting-normies-and-chasing-chad-dont-read-if-youre-suicidal-or-coping.4060/
(EXTREMELY BASED☠️☠️) Women have absolutely NO value in humanity ?(?IT/Feminazi lurkers DO NOT ENTER⛔)	25/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/extremely-based%E2%98%A0%EF%B8%8F%E2%98%A0%EF%B8%8F-women-have-absolutely-no-value-in-humanity-it-feminazi-lurkers-do-not-enter%E2%9B%94%EF%B8%8F.4193/
Is it just me or do young people seem quite rare???	25/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/is-it-just-me-or-do-young-people-seem-quite-rare.6591/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Women are freaking out because dating app statistics are Blackpilling men:	26/11/2022	https://blackpill.club/index.php?threads/women-are-freaking-out-because-dating-app-statistics-are-blackpilling-men.6014/page-2

THREAD TITLE | DATE | URL

Women are freaking out

26/11/2022

Appendix G   Love-Shy.net visited pages

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Mixed feelings about probably being friend-zoned by attractive girl at work	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=492
Awful escort experience.	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=571
Ain't it funny how incels today (like on their big forum) are some of the biggest snowflakes on the internet	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=564
Have you thought about pretending to be a woman to get women?	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=569
Confidence does make all the difference, IMO its the primary factor determining whether you and a girl have chemistry	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=566
My eyes are open comrades, I should be focusing on building myself rather than trying to attract women	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=572
My father stopped going to church because of couples.	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=547
Do you think straight women/lesbian/gay men can be Incels?	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=574

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
What's The Point?	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=576
The latest word used for Nice Guys	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=518
What is your response to the usual "You don't need a relationship to be happy" or "work on yourself" comments?	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=530
Discussion for VIRGIN TERRITORY: 50 Years Without Sex	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=456
How do you personally think you got to this point?	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=51
Feels Over	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=553
Lets have a discussion about what works and doesn't work on online dating	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=563
Cultivate Hobbies and Interests	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=568
When did you last attempt to date?	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=496

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Do you use Facebook?	30/04/2022	https://love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=579
Do You Let Your Incel Define You?	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=580
You just need to change your mindset!	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=565
Sometimes I wish I was born a women so I could have their advantages in life.	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=581
How Do Noncels Do It?	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=517
Interesting survey of things that can wreck potential relationships	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=582
No GF = Not Adult?	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=506
Shyness as a Deterrent	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=585
Why I find constructive advice so patronising and annoying	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=577
For those of you on the autism spectrum how does that effect dating and socializing for you?	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=480

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Halo effect (horn effect for us) is real, but its more than just about looks	30/04/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=587
No one loves me, neither do I	31/05/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=555
The concept of pre-rejection	31/05/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=584
How Many Relationships Have You Had With Women?	31/05/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=348
American vs other school experience question	31/05/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=597
Founder of the largest self-described incel forum is now under government investigation	31/05/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=598
Physical appearance check in (since lookism is so popular here)	31/05/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=592
My story so far (31-year-old incel)	31/05/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=195
Have a date for Saturday . . .	31/05/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=593

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
It's my birthday	31/05/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=586
Let tackle the Elephant, incel links to violence	30/06/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=578
Oneitis' are terrible ordeals. What's the most effective way to prevent one?	30/06/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=590
In the workplace	30/06/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=589
A non-creepy example to follow?	30/06/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=588
Online Autism Test	30/06/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=599
I'm Boring	30/06/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=601
Covid Test Poll	30/06/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=603
Any schizoids on here?	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=602
DSR IRL	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=610

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
I think what's really holding me back is I just really don't have much going and I haven't done a lot of stuff	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=608
How Do You Respond When DSR Comes Up?	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=607
It's the Missing Out	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=614
I Don't Know If I Want a Relationship Anymore...	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=595
CNN: "Professor warns growing mating inequity in US is dangerous"	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=464
Would date you if you were a girl (or guy). Explain	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=612
Friend from highschool contacted me 10 years later.	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=615
Not Sure What's Left	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=609
What to talk about when on a date?	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=575

Appendix G

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Update on girl who posted about me when I was 13	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=613
Hi guys, it's former Alexius/Dante	31/07/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=620
How social are you? Be honest	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=604
What Position Are You In?	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=616
What do you want at this point?	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=600
Accepting Incel....	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=591
Tomorrow i'm turning 21 and still a virgin	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=606
Porn Addictions	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=624
Going to a Rave in a couple weeks and this is definitely out of my comfort zone	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=617
Some specific problems with Gilmartin's book	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=621

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Where might you be if you hadn't suffered rejection?	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=627
Just passing by. How is everyone?	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=622
Right now what makes me self conscious around hot girls is them realizing my life is kinda boring.	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=623
Do you have any nephews or nieces?	31/08/2022	https://love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=625
Can those who claim incel men are toxic explain this?	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=519
So I met a shy girl.	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=626
Online dating is broken	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=631
General discussion about social interaction and dating	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=633
Are You Close With Anyone?	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=634

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Article that perhaps acknowledges our situation	31/08/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=632
Made a chat room for incels and love-shys	30/09/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=637
Can anyone relate?	30/09/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=636
Know What's HILARIOUS?	30/09/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=642
Not Assertive	30/09/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=630
Running in place	30/09/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewforum.php?f=2&start=150
Is it possible that you are too polite?	30/09/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=594
Are you disgusted by courtship, dating and related activities?	30/09/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=643
Foreign Dating Sites	30/09/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=596
Interesting Video on Incel	30/09/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=648

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
How a non-cel perceives incelibacy	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=651
Ever feel like women don't take you seriously as adult?	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=650
Interesting read	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=654
Do you have friends that are incels?	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=653
Diary of a Radishman	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=638
Game Over.	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=635
Do You Feel Judged Because of Your Incel?	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=659
INCEL's in the news again.	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=657
Incel IRL	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=660
The Experience Gap	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=652

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
How is everyone?	31/10/2022	https://love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=646
***A WILD update on my life - potential father, miscarriage, divorce, and dating again	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=618
Post Nut Clarity	31/10/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=647
Is It Me?	30/11/2022	https://love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=662
Video - "Why Are Men In Crisis?"	30/11/2022	https://love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=644
Met a girl at a bar	30/11/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=664
My Update	30/11/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=649
Half of young people can't function anymore	30/11/2022	https://www.love-shy.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=665

Appendix H   Lookxmax.org visited pages

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Rules and FAQs	21/10/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/rules-and-faq.1/
The First Rule of Looksmaxxing	21/10/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/the-first-rule-of-looksmaxxing.81508/
Ultimate Guide on Hyaluronic acid, what is it, why it's important and why you need it.	21/10/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/ultimate-guide-on-hyaluronic-acid-what-is-it-why-its-important-and-why-you-need-it.186489/
The Ultimate Penis Size Encyclopedia [The Final Dickpill] [The Truth Revealed] [NSFW]	21/10/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/the-ultimate-penis-size-encyclopedia-the-final-dickpill-the-truth-revealed-nsfw.104502/
A Guide to Phenotypes	21/10/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/a-guide-to-phenotypes.130243/
why do all tretinoin transformations look like this?	21/10/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/why-do-all-tretinoin-transformations-look-like-this.559736/
Women live life on tutorial mode	21/10/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/women-live-life-on-tutorial-mode.578936/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
Foid fogs with her mandibular forward projection | GTFIH	21/10/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/foid-fogs-with-her-mandibular-forward-projection-gtfih.584039/
Testosterone maxxing lookism thread	04/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/testosterone-maxxing-lookism-thread.238706/
A Detailed breakdown on Male dimorphism, indicators of health and its roles in attractiveness	04/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/a-detailed-breakdown-on-male-dimorphism-indicators-of-health-and-its-roles-in-attractiveness.265952/
Ideal ratios for ethnic (black) men	04/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/ideal-ratios-for-ethnic-black-men.456032/
Girls giving subtle hints is gigacope	04/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/girls-giving-subtle-hints-is-gigacope-water.585405/
Not going to the gym for 2 weeks made my face puffy	04/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/not-going-to-the-gym-for-2-weeks-made-my-face-puffy.584619/
I'm Tate Maxxing	04/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/im-tate-maxxxing.566172/
Facial Luminance Difference and Impact on Attraction	07/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/facial-luminance-difference-and-impact-on-attraction.310246/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
PUA Cold Approaching Is Fundamentally Flawed	07/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/pua-cold-approaching-is-fundamentally-flawed.53114/
Personality Theory Destroyed	07/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/personality-theory-destroyed.65213/
Alcohol LOWERS TESTOSTERONE. Alcohol is also a looksMIN and heathMIN as well	10/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/alcohol-lowers-testosterone-alcohol-is-also-a-looksmin-and-heathmin-as-well.234753/
The 48 Laws of Power (shortened)	10/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/the-48-laws-of-power-shortened.340934/
So Many People are still coping with "Beauty is Subjective".	10/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/so-many-people-are-still-coping-with-beauty-is-subjective.467166/
Truth ACTN3 is the holy grail for genetic athletic advantage	10/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/truth-actn3-is-the-holy-grail-for-genetic-athletic-advantage.44868/
THE DEVASTATING SCAPULA-SHOULDER PILL - THIS HAS DESTROYED MY LIFE ⚠	10/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/the-devastating-scapula-shoulder-pill-this-has-destroyed-my-life.221490/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
How to build facial bone, guide to forward craniofacial growth, and bone remodelling. My hypothesis.'	11/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/how-to-build-facial-bone-guide-to-forward-craniofacial-growth-and-bone-remodelling-my-hypothesis.103372/
Two huge mistakes looksmaxxers make regarding risk	11/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/two-huge-mistakes-looksmaxxers-make-regarding-risk.293112/
Best eyelid surgeons for upper eyes to fix assymetry?	11/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/best-eyelid-surgeons-for-upper-eyes-to-fix-assymetry.583627/
What supplements made a difference in your skin?	11/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/what-supplements-made-a-difference-in-your-skin.517091/
Average men on the street thinks they need ripped body to attract women but what they really need is $5000 to ascend.	11/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/average-men-on-the-street-thinks-they-need-ripped-body-to-attract-women-but-what-they-really-need-is-5000-to-ascend.532602/
Top 5 mistakes looksmaxxers make	11/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/top-5-mistakes-looksmaxxers-make.156715/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
How to actually understand what women like in terms of attractiveness, IRL attractiveness	17/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/how-to-actually-understand-what-women-like-in-terms-of-attractiveness-irl-attractiveness.571666/
LOOKSMAXXER'S STUDY REVEALS shocking differences between what women, normie men, and PSL users find attractive in men	17/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/looksmaxxers-study-reveals-shocking-differences-between-what-women-normie-men-and-psl-users-find-attractive-in-men.315707/
Why you will never get a hot white girl in the UK	17/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/why-you-will-never-get-a-hot-white-girl-in-the-uk.610967/
Girthcels stay the fuck out	17/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/girthcels-stay-the-fuck-out.609795/
This is Life	21/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/this-is-life.605747/
how much does acne lower smv?	21/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/how-much-does-acne-lower-smv.583157/
Back on college campus. It's over.	21/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/back-on-college-campus-its-over.574675/
Tretinoin for skin	21/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/tretinoin-for-skin.524420/

THREAD TITLE	DATE	URL
What you don't understand about gym	21/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/what-you-dont-understand-about-gym.605097/
"life starts at chadlite"	21/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/life-starts-at-chadlite.605619/
The problem with SMV	21/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/the-problem-with-smv.599976/
Life as a 6'5	29/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/life-as-a-65.612810/
TikTok foid gets addicted to incel forums	29/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/tiktok-foid-gets-addicted-to-incel-forums.610144/
SEX IS A HUMAN RIGHT	29/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/sex-is-a-human-right.612898/
Truecel ascends with femcel we all gonna make it !	29/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/truecel-ascends-with-femcel-we-all-gonna-make-it.612855/
I am going on a hunger-strike	29/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/i-am-going-on-a-hunger-strike.598206/
When she upgrades	29/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/when-she-upgrades.612346/
Aesthetically pleasing females are rare	29/11/2022	https://looksmax.org/threads/aesthetically-pleasing-females-are-rare.960/

Appendix I   Reddit.com pages visited

SUBREDDIT TITLE	DATE	URL
IncelTear	11/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/
IncelTear	12/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/
IncelExit	13/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/
Are you guys familiar with the r/virgin sub?	12/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/comments/xwpnix/are_you_guys_familiar_with_the_rvirgin_sub/
A positive post for a change, I'm happy for him!	12/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/comments/y1p9px/a_positive_post_for_a_change_im_happy_for_him/
Reddit Virgins!	12/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/virgin/top/?t=all
Why do people say its ok to be a virgin...	12/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/virgin/comments/y1hhev/why_do_people_say_its_ok_to_be_a_virgin/
this guy is a wizard	12/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/virgin/comments/k01ilz/this_guy_is_a_wizard/
It brings me so much satisfaction knowing this man and his asshole friends will never touch a woman.	12/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/comments/yic8o5/it_brings_me_so_much_satisfaction_knowing_this/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=andro

SUBREDDIT TITLE	DATE	URL
		id_app&utm_name=androidc ss&utm_term=1&utm_conten t=share_button
Found this gross shit.	12/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/Inc elTear/comments/y1spok/fou nd_this_gross_shit/
Incel insists that women can't be attracted to women. So being a lesbian is just an excuse not to date him.	12/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/Inc elTear/comments/y22mo5/in cel_insists_that_women_cant _be_attracted_to/
One of incels biggest misconceptions is that women have as much sex as we want. Not realizing that there are a lot of women who have either never had sex or haven't had sex for over 12 months, but you'll never see us being aggressive or life threatening over that.	12/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/Inc elTear/comments/yjzyxq/one_ of_incels_biggest_misconcep tions_is_that/
IncelTear	14/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/Inc elTear/
IncelTear	14/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/Inc elTear/
omg this	14/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/Inc elTear/comments/jzfskf/omg_ this/
Truth	14/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/Inc elTear/comments/kwfixt/truth /

SUBREDDIT TITLE	DATE	URL
For those lurkingcels	14/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/comments/mbuc2j/for_those_lurkingcels/
Video games were next on his fulfilling agenda for the day.	14/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/comments/m9wv6a/video_games_were_next_on_his_fulfilling_agenda/
If you're reading this, random citizen: keep going, I believe in you	14/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/comments/jcuci5/if_youre_reading_this_random_citizen_keep_going_i/
Just sayin'	16/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/comments/oqpsnw/just_sayin/
Fun fact: no	16/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/comments/klr6g6/fun_fact_no/
Holy shit	16/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/comments/ofsgxp/holy_shit/
And you guys think the black pill is hard to swallow	16/10/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/comments/mt987k/and_you_guys_think_the_black_pill_is_hard_to/
I'm an incel and I don't want to be. But apparently I suck at life and I can't seem to find a solution.	04/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/ylyvcl/im_an_incel_and_i_dont_want_to_be_but_apparently/
Is anyone terrified that people see them as an incel?	04/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/ylcdne/is_a

SUBREDDIT TITLE	DATE	URL
		nyone_terrified_that_people_ see_them_as_an/
I never truly understood "I like you more as a friend" until I felt like I was about to need to say it to a friend of mine myself.	04/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/xa2llm/i_never_truly_understood_i_like_you_more_as_a/
I asked her out and she said yes	04/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/uzlg2a/i_asked_her_out_and_she_said_yes/
I got a job and lost 99.8% of my insecurities	04/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/xo3h4c/i_got_a_job_and_lost_998_of_my_insecurities/
How I Escaped Inceldom: A Possible Guide for You	04/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/xn7fbq/how_i_escaped_inceldom_a_possible_guide_for_you/
I am rapidly being de-radicalized from incel beliefs and moving in the right direction	04/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/x4ungr/i_am_rapidly_being_deradicalized_from_incel/
Today, I have gone the longest I have ever gone without a crush blocking me on social media	04/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/s72z2h/today_i_have_gone_the_longest_i_have_ever_gone/
Lost my virginity	04/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/voeieq/lost_my_virginity/

SUBREDDIT TITLE	DATE	URL
I feel like the porn industry's sexualization of black men has done irreparable damage to dating while black: An observatio	04/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/vt9irx/i_feel_like_the_porn_industrys_sexualization_of/
I'm so sick and tired of this bullshit advice	22/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/virgin/comments/yx5i6f/im_so_sick_and_tired_of_the_bullshit_advice/
It's over for me	22/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/virgin/comments/z1wkqd/its_over_for_me/
Is it a good idea to ask out a girl at the gym, why or why not?	22/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/virgin/comments/mgyi8u/comment/gsvytgn/
Does anyone else struggle to feel like a real person?	22/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/virgin/comments/z1fdtu/does_anyone_else_struggle_to_feel_like_a_real/
Yes, online dating IS real life	22/11/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/virgin/comments/z1yiod/yes_online_dating_is_real_life/
The rise of "rage fuel" across the internet	05/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/z168y2/the_rise_of_rage_fuel_across_the_internet/
Masculinity is in Crisis, but not in the Way We Think	05/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/zeaep6/masculinity_is_in_crisis_but_not_in_the_way_we/

SUBREDDIT TITLE	DATE	URL
Am I allowed to like women? My desire and want to be with women make me feel disgusting.	05/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/zikdrq/am_i_allowed_to_like_women_my_desire_and_want_to/
To all the 17-year-olds looking for help here	05/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/zap66l/to_all_the_17yearolds_looking_for_help_here/
Turns out I'm not an incel just anti-Social and incredibly stupid	05/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/z0kdj6/turns_out_im_not_an_incel_just_antisocial_and/
I think I'm starting to become a positive influence in other people's lives.	05/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/yumy9h/i_think_im_starting_to_become_a_positive/
Incels- not a science but a mental addiction	05/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/yxz6b6/incels_not_a_science_but_a_mental_addiction/
I feel like I'm in the wrong for wanting to have sex with women...	05/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/zbqg56/i_feel_like_im_in_the_wrong_for_wanting_to_have/
How do you get over blackpill thinking when it is everywhere?	12/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/zjmdao/how_do_you_get_over_blackpill_thinking_when_it_is/
How do I stop being an incel	12/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/zh5h7j/how_do_i_stop_being_an_incel/

SUBREDDIT TITLE	DATE	URL
My worst fears were confirmed as she only sees me as a friend	12/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/zgqdh9/my_worst_fears_were_confirmed_as_she_only_sees_me/
I'm leaving this sub, I realized what "loving yourself" truly means	12/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/vbyhip/im_leaving_this_sub_i_realized_what_loving/
I'm really happy with the direction my life has taken ever since I've let go of the blackpill.	12/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/y5wroy/im_really_happy_with_the_direction_my_life_has/
Stumbled upon this sub while looking for Braincels to mock them, but you guys are far more interesting. My incel story	13/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/fa64le/stumbled_upon_this_sub_while_looking_for/
You are a man. It is not something you have to become.	12/12/2022	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/xt1g6a/you_are_a_man_it_is_not_something_you_have_to/
I guess im not as bad as i think i am	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/ibrby3/i_guess_im_not_as_bad_as_i_think_i_am/
The amount of shame Incels made me feel about my ethnicity is embarrassing.	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/fqtp4o/the_amount_of_shame_incels_made_me_feel_about_my/
From blackpill to married in four years	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/pjfsor/from_

SUBREDDIT TITLE	DATE	URL
		blackpill_to_married_in_four_years/
Fuck it I'll bite.	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/dje8yd/fuck_it_ill_bite/
I asked a girl to hang out… and she actually did!	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/otz702/i_asked_a_girl_to_hang_out_and_she_actually_did/
I spend my 28th birthday utterly alone, last weekend I celebrated my 32rd birthday with my girlfriend and nearly 20 of my dearest friends	05/01/2023	https://reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/o0mp6y/i_spend_my_28th_birthday_utterly_alone_last/
To People Saying This Sub Is for It Folks to "Expose" or "Gaslight" Incels	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/dq80bz/to_people_saying_this_sub_is_for_it_folks_to/
I'm going to stop identifying as an Incel	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/m4thhs/im_going_to_stop_identifying_as_an_incel/
I used to be on the other side. Being attacked by people from IT was a rude wake-up call and pushed me towards the incel perspective.	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/dw80d3/i_used_to_be_on_the_other_side_being_attacked_by/
My therapist shows me the endless circle that i, and probably other incels, are stuck into.	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/18iwpbe/my_therapist_shows_me_the_endless_circle_that_i/

SUBREDDIT TITLE	DATE	URL
I'm finally out	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/fy1pgy/im_finally_out/
A list of things Incels get right, and what they get wrong	05/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/o8t632/a_list_of_things_incels_get_right_and_what_they/
The black pill is a collective ideology of what psychology calls "learned helplessness"	12/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/owbcai/the_black_pill_is_a_collective_ideology_of_what/
Im leaving this sub, I just want to thank everyone who helped me	12/01/2023	https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/comments/m0g3kn/im_leaving_this_sub_i_just_want_to_thank_everyone/

Appendix J   YouTube pages visited

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
Predicting 8 o'clock at 7:30	<u>14/04/2022</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sz9gCk1VJ7M
Daygame cringe | A PSL Classic	<u>14/04/2022</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfmkHNSSSMs
Blame The Truth	<u>02/04/2022</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ICM3KLH6JY
Blackpill 101 - E06: White fever in Korea (Korean men, DO NOT watch this video.)	<u>20/04/2022</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9uPDkOu5lw
Incel Diagnosis | 7 Deadly Sins	20/04/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MftLoXfUKwY
Best of HeedandSucceed	<u>02/04/2022</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCCLS-weez0
Best of Oreoman 1	02/04/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_x2njSKE2cM
mstowmaxxed	24/08/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TjHZxRzin0
Blackpill 101- The REAL reason why Asian men are NOT seen as attractive	23/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWD9n1cyeQU
Blackpill 101 - E07: The plight of Indian men	23/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4agyEFFKJTY
Blackpill 101 E04 - BBC takeover, myth or fact ?	23/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zAbHooWQNA

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
Bald manlet got destroyed on takemeout; looking old + balding = DEATH	24/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eF1HXO1yTA4
Blackpill 101 E03 - The importance of Lower Third	24/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lW6lNzlj63c
When the blackpill hits	24/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPqk98FiOUw
Blackpill 101 - E08: Black Women	24/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaYbJLE5ySA
Take the Black Pill	24/04/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tuf59ex-U0
WAW1.1: The Red Pill on what attracts women: Looks, Money, Status: BRUTAL	04/04/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFnJMPQow7A
WAW1.2: Do Looks Matter To Women? The TRUTH	05/04/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVB3ypWVu14
WAW3c: Hwīte Men Have The Highest Snuggle Market Value	04/07/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCbwQ7GDfjQ
WAW1.3: Women Have UNLIMITED Dating Options	17/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0m_GVG3Oxo
Ush1.1: "First 8 Things Girls Notice About Guys" - DEBUNKED	17/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5wPQ-ALD7E
Ush1.2: Most Of The "Spark" Or "Chemistry" Is Looks	18/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xAbIG5s0-o
WAW5: What Makes A Male Jaw Attractive	18/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xvtw8W0PBhc

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
OLD: What Attracts Women 3: Ext. Red Pill Remix	<u>18/11/2022</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krsNcFQwsbc
OLD: What Attracts Women 1 REMIX: LOOKS, MONEY and STATUS	<u>18/11/2022</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2V7TcSr9GiM
OLD: What Attracts Women 2 REMIX: The Look of Confidence	21/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeFdSPaHtt0&t=14s
WAW4: Women Want To Date Up - And They CAN | FACEandLMS	21/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqZBczYlQhA
LLB: "I'm Entitled To An Ablebodied Chad" (03-11-18)	04/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjr3VrHkQoc
USh2: Women Want Ugly Men Dead (A Blackpill Pummelling)	04/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bprpXiT11kU
WAW5: What Makes A Male Jaw Attractive	04/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xvtw8W0PBhc
LLB: The Mysterious Mythical Undateable Chad	04/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtNgPh1pBZY
Ush1.2: Most Of The "Spark" Or "Chemistry" Is Looks	04/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xAbIG5s0-o
My Statement - Involuntary-Celibate Introspection	06/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yX6GX5RF2CM

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
WAW1.4: How Men Cope With Not Being Goodlooking	06/12/2022	https://youtube.com/watch?v=6aq0eGdHMkA
WAW3c: Hwīte Men Have The Highest Snuggle Market Value	06/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCbwQ7GDfjQ
WAW3b: Hwīte Men Have The Highest Snuggle Market Value	06/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4pmhrZkKAU
WAW3a: Hwīte Men Have The Highest Snuggle Market Value	06/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A86cMX_WUa8
NEWS: Braincels | It's over for incels on Reddit: Saidit is the new home for now	06/12/2022	https://youtube.com/watch?v=TC4c4wi3VJk
LLB: Blackpill About Women	06/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIyljOpq3r8
WAW6: What Makes A Man's Eyes Attractive? - The Most In-depth Guide	06/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pF5Of13N4eI
BPV S1E1: Blackpill Denial is Data Ignorance (reupload incase of belated strikes from YouTube)	08/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RjCYZdpGo4
SOTY | AMERICA'S MOST WANTED INCEL: EGGMAN ON THE RUN (Eggy pt. 2)	24/04/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFvmvCTmvlE

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
Incels and The Last Man	06/04/2022	https://youtu.be/103uTU-lmsY
Do girls want to be approached?	11/07/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SV8NvQvWzgU
Feminised Education is Failing Boys - part 1 / 2	02/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X89xdbm4TZA
Rating, Looksmaxxing & Chadifying Reddit Faces ** Blackpill Analysis ** Ep: 2	15/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpQyt1K_lYY
Geomaxing will NOT work (rant vid)	15/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYj64cngX9Y
UNTOLD: The Secret World of Incels	Channel 4 Documentaries	06/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kReeoKoOvZI
Wheat Waffles Tinder Profile Breakdown	11/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNY8Yv5Pj7g
Rating, Looksmaxxing, and Chadifying Wheat Waffles	11/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Zpv5QYgzrE
Wheat Waffles VS NotsoErudite DEBATE (Blackpill Vs Bluepill)	11/12/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmo8zrU8kX8
Why The Blackpill is So Underrated in 2023 **4 In-Depth Reasons**	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJaoNN3OvSA
A 5 Minute Summary of the Blackpill Ideology	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HES6m8gQCYw

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
In-depth Analysis of Blackpill, Redpill, Bluepill (Definition, Beliefs, 6 factors of attractiveness)	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oz-tOcwlVs
The Blackpill's Case For Dating 2023 **4 In-Depth Reason's**	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiYrp_4Chmo&ab_channel=WheatWaffles
Top 10 Data Supporting The Blackpill **Undeniable Facts**	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YG1hH0Sh1Pw
The Jawline - Analysing the Perfect Male Face (Part 1/4)	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhEuWSXxu5k
Midface and Nose - Analysing the Perfect Male Face (Part 2/4)	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwbGW9jeDeo
The Eyes - Analysing the Perfect Male Face (Part 3/4)	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fz7tI7qT5t8
Hair, Health & Skull Shape - Analysing the Perfect Male Face (Part 4/4)	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2otjA_98StY
My Most Brutal Blackpilling Story – Why Dating Sucks for Average Guys	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlTFqcJklFs
100 Blackpill Beliefs in One Video.	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gK1w1cAKS7o

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
NO NO NO 3 Reasons NEVER to Take Women's Dating Advice	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWrDGl97Q0Q
Who Cares More About Looks? Men or Women	27/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZavkRHgQKY
50 Bluepill Lies DEBUNKED In 1 Video.	28/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeVRllGp8yk
How to Looksmaxx Properly (LIKE THIS GUY)	28/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDLsEKzcfWE
8 Exceptions to Blackpill Theory **Hot girl Ugly guy**	29/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcTveUAlo1I
CRAZY 6 Reasons Dating Is Getting Worse (for men)	28/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNxtm4_k64s
DELUSION 6 Reasons Entitled Women Believe This	28/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nlfuiVvsqY
AVOID 10 Reasons NEVER To Go Nightclubs as a Man	28/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swg9XaPzRcQ
6 More Exceptions of Hot Girl & Ugly Guy	28/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHS1pqYPr1Q
WARNING The Gap Between Normies and Chads is Growing	28/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNe6gCNxWaY

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
GOLD DIGGER What's The Oldest Man She Would Date?	28/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-IWJl1rKSg
REJECTED 5 Reasons Men Won't Date These Women	28/09/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohW2sz-oRnU
Looks Vs. Confidence For Dating in 2021 **In-Depth Blackpill Analysis**	15/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwvPlx7t8JI
DELUSION 8 Reasons Ugly Women Think This	15/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPvUpTdqNTg
Tinder Experiment Proves How Brutal it is For Average Guys	15/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35fiNZTVVtU
How To Calculate Your SMV (Sexual Market Value)	15/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZqNkkX7oeE
Are you Sub5, Normie or Chad? **How to know when it's Truly Over**	15/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azBEWpbtlxM
1000 FACES Where Are You On The 1-10 Looks Scale?	15/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jsj6Qr7Z7o0
100 Blackpill Beliefs in One Video.	16/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gK1w1cAKS7o
SHORT GUYS DON'T WATCH The Heightpill Will SHOCK You	16/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIQPPeqIZ6Y

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
REJECTED 5 Reasons Men Won't Date These Women	16/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohW2sz-oRnU
AVOID 5 Reasons NEVER to Use Online Dating as a Man	16/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFOCUs4Wns
The *3* Tiers of Men - Which Are You?	16/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqIqil-B0U8
GIGA CHAD Tinder Experiment Proves How Easy It Is For Top 5% Guys	16/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCCFXXCVTNs
40 Differences in Treatment Between a Sub5, Normie & Chad	16/11/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQOhRx3fDJ8
Talking about my childhood, early years Part 1	01/10/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QktciCGf3k
Talking more on my upbringing, kid pics Part 2	01/10/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRjVatih1_8
How women really feel about undesirable men (The truth)	01/10/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4hfsjBcQZ0
Being a guy unable to connect romantically with women	01/10/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10u0EnoDP5M
If you cant pull hoes it's not your fault (the truth)	01/10/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAdVLj5myXI

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
Constant rejection from women leads to depression and low self-esteem	01/10/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x56WvqqPEnc
Being a guy who doesn't get women (bad experiences with women)	02/10/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qksMTOgKpi4
Height is crucial to women (answering your questions)	02/10/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8qYThIwIRc
Some men are losers to women (the uncomfortable truth)	02/10/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTwbPTjfm7o
Realizing that you are not good enough for women	02/10/2022	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jivqisv5t2M

Appendix K   Facebook pages visited

GROUP	DATE	URL
Incels	31/08/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/264366044408727/
Incels united	31/08/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/505556713638156/
Femcels and incels unite	31/08/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/353623942517087
Incels	30/09/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/264366044408727/
Incels united	30/09/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/505556713638156/
Femcels and incels unite	30/09/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/353623942517087
Incels	31/10/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/264366044408727/
Incels united	31/10/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/505556713638156/
Femcels and incels unite	31/10/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/353623942517087
Incels	30/11/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/264366044408727/
Incels united	30/11/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/505556713638156/
Femcels and incels unite	30/11/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/353623942517087

GROUP	DATE	URL
Incels	31/12/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/264366044408727/
Incels united	31/12/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/505556713638156/
Femcels and incels unite	31/12/2022	https://www.facebook.com/groups/353623942517087
Incels	31/01/2023	https://www.facebook.com/groups/264366044408727/
Incels united	31/01/2023	https://www.facebook.com/groups/505556713638156/
Femcels and incels unite	31/01/2023	https://www.facebook.com/groups/353623942517087

Appendix L   TikTok pages visited

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
Hot to know if you're a Chad, normie or sub 5	05/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheat_waffles.clips/video/7157384832010489094?lang=en
Male thirst	05/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheat_waffles.clips/video/7157044921889852678?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc&web_id=7335861678074512929
How is simping detrimental to the dating market 1	06/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheat_waffles.clips/video/7158795183448984837?lang=en
How is simping detrimental to the dating market 2	06/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheat_waffles.clips/video/7159233335561047302
How is simping detrimental to the dating market 3	06/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheat_waffles.clips/video/7159235372004789510
How is simping detrimental to the dating market 4	06/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheat_waffles.clips/video/7159241822307470597
How is simping detrimental to the dating market 5	06/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheat_waffles.clips/video/7159244415096212741

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
How is simping detrimental to the dating market 6	06/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheat_waffles.clips/video/7159251517730475270
Wheat Waffles on nightclub flings	06/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheat_waffles.clips/video/7157291946384346373?lang=en
Height matters	08/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheat_waffles.clips/video/7157246194555555078?lang=en
40 differences in treatment between sub 5 normie and chad	07/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheatwaffles.clips/video/7164506180361178414
40 differences in treatment between sub 5, normie and chad	07/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheatwaffles.clips/video/7165225398895136046
40 differences in treatment between sub 5 normie and chad	07/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheatwaffles.clips/video/7164874952393379118
40 differences in treatment between sub 5 normie and chad	07/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@wheatwaffles.clips/video/7164507170023755050
Just be confident bro	07/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@grimywaifu1989/video/7280342626472086785?lang=en&q=blackpill&t=1711037967289

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
The blackpill is real	07/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@grimywaifu1989/video/7310058669964545281?lang=en
Tyrone and Stacey breaking necks everywhere we go	07/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@basedaustindunham/video/73347776486504795422?lang=en
Analyzing Damien Katyr	07/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@aahsab/video/7346186361537383687?lang=en
What is the blalckpill	07/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@aahsab/video/7346186361537383687?lang=en
Facts	08/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@face.and.lms/video/6843660821906607365?lang=en
Facts 2	08/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@face.and.lms/video/6847561465549966597?lang=en
Blackpill moment	08/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@defundsimping/video/7173830770472144171?lang=en&q=black%20pill&t=1711038788128
Part 1, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7148491863954115883?lang=en

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
Part 2, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7148492077297454379?lang=en
Part 3, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7148718488129916203?lang=en
Part 4, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7148492250916605230?lang=en
Part 5, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7148718532136652074?lang=en
Part 6, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7148718592006098222
Part 7, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7149127394639514923
Part 8, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7149127488520670506
Part 9, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7149127513254546734

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
Part 10, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7149266132988366123
Part 11, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7149266164927958314
Part 12, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7149266271572528430
Part 13, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7149326746788138282
Part 14, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7149326787531541803
Part 15, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7150865221840571691
Part 16, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7150865259350281515
Part 17, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7150865352451247402

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
Part 18, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7150865410265550122
Part 19, The 100 Black Pill Commandments	09/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@takeblackpill/video/7150865495883795758
She is GERMAN CHAD only. It's over for non 6'6 German chads	12/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@blackpilltok/video/7167028201473671173?lang=en
Sub-5 Approach	12/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@blackpilltok/video/7167081616077212933?lang=en
untitled	12/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@blackpilldasilva/video/7334055421344222470?lang=en
untitled	12/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@blackpilldasilva/photo/7336611593830059269?lang=en
untitled	12/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@blackpilldasilva/video/7340526381656231173?lang=en
just take the face pill	12/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@looxmaxxingm/video/7275487026030628101?lang=en&q=black%20pill&t=1711038948783

VIDEO TITLE	DATE	URL
Untitled	12/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@_shortcel_/video/7328369816803249441?lang=en
Untitled	12/12/2022	https://www.tiktok.com/@_shortcel_/video/7323911502291914017?lang=en

Initial Conceptual Map of Incel Network

Appendix M   Initial Conceptual Map of Incel Network
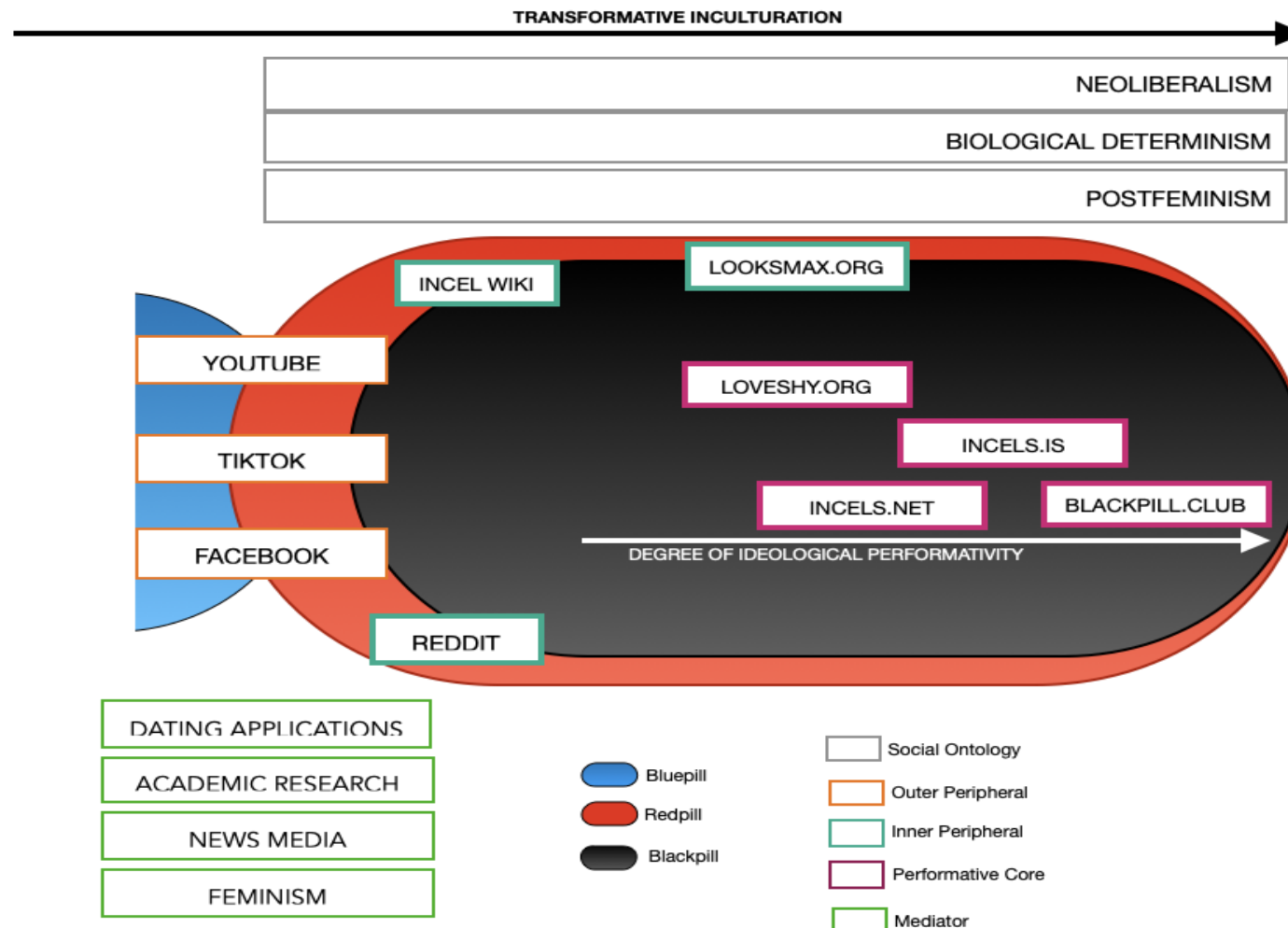
Appendix N   Interview ethics application

ETHICS APPLICATION FORM

Faculty of Social Sciences

Please note:

- ***You must not begin data collection for your study until ethical approval has been obtained.***
- ***It is your responsibility to follow the University of Southampton's Ethics Policy (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/ethics.page) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data.***
- ***You are advised to read the Advice on Applying guidance document, downloadable from the ERGO II website, before you submit your application.***

Important notice on Risk Assessment:

Health and Safety-type risk assessment is no longer part of the ethics review process. Questions pertaining to ethical and reputational risks have been moved from the old 'Risk Assessment Form for Assessing Ethical and Research Risks' to this form. Please do NOT upload a separate Risk Assessment Form to your ethics application.

However, it is your responsibility to undertake a Risk Assessment for your research study. Depending on whether your study is office based, involves off-site data collection and/or international travel, there are different risk assessment forms you can use. Please use this link to access the forms:

https://groupsite.soton.ac.uk/Administration/FSHS-Health-and-Safety/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2FAdministration%2FFSHS%2DHealth%2Dand%2DSafety%2FDocuments%2FRisk%20assessments%20and%20risk%20register%2FERGO%20interim%20documents&FolderCTID=0x012000BE79A4A3B3DC1143ABB38DFA6B580A8C&View={A5E79215-986A-4471-8CF9-B11F85214687}

If you need guidance or are unsure about which form to use, please contact your Discipline Health and Safety Rep in the first instance, and the Faculty Health and Safety Officer, Aloma Hack (A.J.Hack@soton.ac.uk), if you have further questions. Supervisors and Line Managers are responsible for ensuring risk assessments are completed for all research studies.

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1.   Name(s):   Stuart Lucy

2.   Current Position PGR

3.   Contact Details: s.lucy@soton.ac.uk

        Division/School   Faculty of Social Sciences, Sociology, Social Policy and

Criminology

        Email SSPC.StudentOffice@soton.ac.uk

        Phone 023 8059 3232

4.   Is your study being conducted as part of an education qualification?

        Yes   ☒   **No**   ☐

5.   If Yes, please give the name of your supervisor

        Dr Charlie Walker

6.   Title of your project:

        Investigation of the (in)formative influences upon incel identity (PROVISIONAL).

**7.   Briefly describe the rationale, study aims and the relevant research questions of
        your study**

        Rationale

        Recent instances of mass violence connected to homosocial online communities
        identifying as involuntary celibates ('incel' - the individual, 'incels' the plural/group,
        'incel' as an object e.g. incel ideology/ incel related mass shootings) raises concern
        regarding the safety of the general public. As online communities' activity and behaviour

seeps into the offline world in the form of targeted gendered violence, research into these communities is paramount in order to offer preventative strategies to combat the increase of this novel and unique threat. While a few studies that directly engage with incels (e.g. Sugiura, 2021; Daly & Reed, 2022) exist, the majority of research favours thematic analysis of forum data which provides a narrow and at times homogenised view of the incel identity. Further, of the studies that do engage directly with incels, there has not yet been a study that specifically addresses the subjective journey an incel takes in choosing to identify as an incel and adopt associated incel ideology in relation to their digital environment, neoliberal and masculine identities, and personal life experiences. This study aims to remedy this gap.

Aims

- To understand the subjective gendered experience of incels and how this has impacted the decision to self-identify as an incel.
- To detect and analyse nuance in individuals that identify as incels to understand the heterogeneity of the community.
- To understand the effects of social media and broader digital performances and the impacts these contemporary societal structures have had upon masculinity formation and the journey towards incel identification
- To discover any specific influences of neoliberal rationality and subject governance upon incels and any interaction these influences have with the digital and masculine spheres that impact incel identity formation.

Research Questions

What are the significant social and structural influences that inform decisions of individuals to identify as an incel and how are they impactive?

How does social structure impact men who adopt an incel identity and engage with the incel community?

How do resulting individual experiences and responses lead men to adopt an incel identity and engage with the incel community?

8. **Describe the design of your study**

This study employs the collection of semi-structured interview data acquired through opportunistic recruitment of 25 adult incels collected via asynchronous digital instant messaging applications of the participant's choosing. The sample of participants will be recruited through online forums and websites known to be used by incels. These websites have been identified as part of a previously conducted digital ethnography. Specific forums were identified through previous authors research (e.g. Jaki et al, 2019; Thorburn et al. 2022) to discover initial starting points. The 8-month ethnography then led to additional locations through cross referencing made by users. As part of the ethnography, Twitter and Facebook were also surveyed using key term searches such as 'blackpill' to find users that were associated with incel terminology, this allowed the identification of users that appear to identify as an incel directly or indirectly.

Structured interview questions will concern incel's views upon their use of and relationship with digital media, notions of masculinity in the 21st century, feminism and perceptions of success. Interview questions will also ask participants about the experiences they have had growing up and how they feel they relate to their identity. Unstructured follow-on questions will organically generate from responses to initial structured questions.

Interview data will be coded to produce a narrative analysis. Rather than breaking the data down into sentences, narrative analysis will allow for a larger story to be told that incorporates broader themes and multiple influences and events through the eyes of the participant that detail the interactional complexity of digital, social and structural influences that inform the gendered identity of incels.

9. **Who are the research participants?**

The participants will be cis male individuals identifying or previously identifying with the incel subculture.

All participants will be aged over 18.

A maximum of 25 participants will be recruited.

10. **If you are going to analyse secondary data, from where are you obtaining it?**

N/A

11. **If you are collecting primary data, how will you identify and approach the participants to recruit them to your study?**

I have identified online arenas in which incels congress, and I wish to use these sources as locations to recruit participants. This will require approaching moderators of incel specific forums to seek permission to then advertise to recruit as well as directly approaching identified incels on social media sites such as Reddit, Twitter and Facebook.

The sampling technique will be opportunistic as the individuals I wish to target are notably difficult to access and so I will be casting a wide net across incel specific forums as well as social media platforms to maximise chances of recruiting the required number of self-identifying incels. I expect resistance in gaining access to incel specific forums which is why social media sites that allow a direct approach to incels have also been used as an additional method of participant recruitment.

It is crucial to this study that incels be approached and interviewed. Only through direct contact will it be possible to ask questions that results in deeper, high-quality data regarding the life experiences and perspectives of these individuals away from performative forum spaces. Unlike data acquired from incel forums, this data is likely not to be guided by the rhetoric of the digital spaces they frequent but the researcher's schedule that offers free space and opportunity for reflection.

Potential individuals have been identified through a number of digital avenues: *Incels.is, incels.net, blackpill.club, wizchan.org, love-shy.net, looksmax.org, looksmaxxing.com, Facebook, Twitter and Reddit*. The first four of these sites will be approached via their moderators which will involve first making accounts with the sites. Within these applications will be a space to offer why you want to join, information regarding my intentions will be given. (see Attachment 1). In regard to the remaining three incel associated websites, *love-shy.net, looksmax.org* and looksmaxxing.com, I will create site accounts and post advertisements in specific threads requesting site users to take part in interviews (see Attachment 1). For Twitter, Facebook and Reddit, recruitment will involve direct messages to accounts identified as potentially belonging to incels or ex-incels requesting these individuals take part in an interview (see Attachment 2). The suitability assessment of these individuals relates to user's specific demonstration of incel associated terminology (such as 'blackpill', 'inceldom', (femoid') or public self-identification with the incel label. The Reddit forums that will be involved relates to virginity or having an ex-incel identity, these forums have been included in the aforementioned digital ethnography and the researcher is familiar with the terminology

users espouse as an incel. Twitter and Facebook will relate to specific use of terminology, subscription to incel pages or posts that clearly evidence the individual as having an incel identity. As the age if a user cannot be ascertained prior to contact, if the user is keen to engage with the research, the potential participant will be immediately questioned to determine their age. This is explained further in Q16 and Q18.

12. **Will you be collecting Special Category data as defined by UK data protection legislation? Will you be collecting Criminal Offence data? If so, please give details.**

Race and ethnicity will be collected for all participants in the initial demographic questionnaire (see Attachment 3). As part of the interview process, additional SC data may be offered such as health, sex life and philosophical and political beliefs. This has been clearly specified and differentiated in the consent form (see Attachment 4).

13. **Where will your data collection take place?**

Data collection will not be in person. Collection of interview data will involve asynchronous digital correspondence by email. Users will be sent a question (or questions) to the email account that has been provided to correspond with. Users will then respond to the researcher's secure UoS email account. Each response will be copied from the email and collated into an anonymously coded word document and stored on the researcher's UoS password-protected desktop computer, located within a securely locked UoS office. The email will then be permanently deleted from the researcher's email account.

14. **Will participants be taking part in your study without their knowledge and consent at the time (e.g. covert observation of people)? If yes, please explain why this is necessary.**

No

15. **If you answered 'no' to question 14, how will you obtain the consent of participants?**

Each participant will be provided with a consent form (see Attachment 4) with which to provide written consent before the interview takes place. These will be provided in digital format as a file attached to an email sent to an email account they have provided and

returned to my university account. Participants are not expected to wish to or need to provide their name and so a pseudonym and accompanying arbitrary signature as written consent indication are requested on the consent form.

16.   **Is there any reason to believe participants may not be able to give full informed consent? If yes, what steps do you propose to take to safeguard their interests?**

To ensure participants are above 18 years of age, on receipt of the first email or instant message I have received from a potential participant I will directly and explicitly ask for confirmation they are over the age of 18 before proceeding with detailing the data collection process and issuing the PIS and CF.

17.   **If participants are under the responsibility or care of others (such as parents/carers, teachers or medical staff), what permission do you have to approach the participants to take part in the study?**

N/A

18.   **Describe what participation in your study will involve for study participants.**

Participants will have been contacted either directly via social media direct private message or have been exposed to advert posts on incel related forums and approached the researcher voluntarily.

When a potential participant has replied to an advert or direct message, they will have been first asked to explicitly confirm their age.

Following this confirmation, the participant will be asked for a contact email address and then will have been sent a copy of both the PIS and CF alongside a request to first read the former and if happy with the information within, to complete the latter and return it to the email address from which it was sent.

Participants will then be asked their preferred mode of interview communication. I recognise there may be some safety concerns with giving participants the choice of the medium used to conduct the interview but given the difficulty in accessing the population, I wanted to give as much freedom and autonomy regarding privacy as possible to participants in order to increase their chances of participation. If they suggest a medium I believe to be unsecure or unfamiliar to me, I will suggest another more secure medium.

The interview process will then commence. The first digital message of the interview process will contain information regarding the content and nature of the interview questions and process of voluntary withdrawal at any time. Additionally, this message will contain information detailing support services available and the right to withdraw at any time, followed by the first question.

The participant will experience an asynchronous, back-and-forth, message by message interview process at a pace dictated by their own speed and frequency of response.

Initial structured questions will be asked from the interview schedule (Attachment 3) with particular follow-on questions organically generated from individual responses. The interview process will likely last numerous weeks given the potential time zone differences and the nature of asynchronous communication, requiring participants to continually engage as each new question is sent.

Certain questions, while not intentional, *may* elicit momentary emotional discomfort. If this becomes evident, this line of questioning will cease as the interview will not have been conducted by an individual with clinical psychology experience. At this time available support services will be again provided.

Once the interview has concluded, the participant will have been issued with a detailed debrief sheet (see Attachment 6). This document will again provide details of support services as well as the participant's right to ask for data to be removed from analysis up to two weeks from the date of issue of the debrief form. Further, this document will set boundaries as to expected future communications, explaining that the researcher will be unable to continue any further relationship with the participant and that they may be contacted through email informing them of publications resulting from their data and opportunities to receive copies if desired (and possible).

19. **How will you make it clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any point during the research without penalty?**

Information regarding the continual capacity and opportunity to withdraw will be provided on the consent form (Attachment 4), participant information sheet (Attachment 5) and each participant will be reminded at the start end of their interview journey. Further, following the conclusion of the interview, participants will be informed they have the right to withdraw up to two weeks after the debrief form has been issued.

20. **Detail any possible distress, discomfort, inconvenience, harm or other adverse effects the participants may experience, including after the study, and how you will deal with this.**

While not intentional, certain questions *may* elicit momentary emotional discomfort. If this becomes evident, this line of questioning will cease as the researcher is not an individual with clinical psychology experience. At this time available support services will be again provided.

I will provide information regarding counselling services and support organisations on the participant information sheet, prior to the commencement of the interview journey as well as within a debrief sheet. Participants will also be informed at these same junctures that they are free to terminate the interview journey at any point and have their data removed from the data pool.

It is unlikely the participants will suffer long term effects from generating responses to the questions being asked to them. All participants are over 18 and not considered a vulnerable population. Such interviewing of incels has been conducted by other researchers (e.g. Sugiura, 2021; Daly & Reed, 2022) as well as of other populations that may have experienced emotional distress in their childhoods (e.g. Glynn, 2021).

21. **Specify any possible distress or harm to YOU arising from your proposed research, and the precautions you will take to minimise these.**

I have considered the potential harm as a consequence of emotional distress this research project may cause to myself.

I have worked with one of my supervisor team, the DTP and faculty to equip myself with numerous effective support mechanisms to counter any potential emotional stress I may encounter. I have access to university wellbeing services, have robust separation schedules form work and personal life, have a strong friend group who are aware of the project and possible ramifications and engage in several dissociative and calming activities such as sport, volunteering, gardening, yoga, meditation and painting. I also will ensure project related pastoral care continues to remain a key part of my regular supervisory communication.

That said, the potential for experiencing emotional distress when conducting these interviews, given they will be asynchronous and performed through digital platforms without any direct interaction with participants, is relatively minimal.

It should be acknowledged there is the potential for networked harassment (Marwick & Caplin, 2016) as a result of engaging with the forums that I seek to recruit participants from. One of the members of my supervisor team has previously engaged with the community directly and can offer advice and supervision in regard to my engagement with the participants. It is entirely plausible and reasonable to conduct research upon such groups in a managed research setting provided a robust and clear plan of action to mitigate the risks of potential harassment is actioned. This includes tightened cybersecurity, private social media accounts, googling myself to see what is publicly available and managing this to minimise available personal, contact and location information.

22. **Does your planned research pose any additional risks as a result of the sensitivity of the research and/or the nature of the population(s) or location(s) being studied?**

Previous research of the incel space has demonstrated that while hostility to research has occurred in incel digital spaces, their reaction has focused mainly on the researcher and not the institution(s) from which it arose. This has remained in digital formats and to date I am unaware of any additional harm not already discussed to have arisen as a result of research being conducted upon the group.

It is also possible participants will attempt to extend relationships beyond the research period but, as mentioned above, advice from my supervisory team will ensure I am able to manage these interactions thoughtfully and practically.

23. **How will you maintain participant anonymity and confidentiality in collecting, analysing and writing up your data?**

Participants will state on the CF which pseudonym they would like to use and this will remain their moniker throughout all personal communications. A numbering system will then be applied in the data recording process and randomly assigned male names applied to their specific data if quoted in the thesis and/or journal article publication process. All data will be treated as confidential and stored securely in line with the UoS' data management guidelines.

24.   How will you store your data securely during and after the study?

The University of Southampton has a Research Data Management Policy, including for data retention. The Policy can be consulted at
http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/research-data-management.html

I will follow the UoS Data management policy in terms of storage of data during and after analysis. Data will be stored on a password protected computer. I do not expect my storage requirements to exceed 5GB of data. I will perform a fortnightly check to assure all files are still usable and accessible. I will primarily store all data on the UoS Institutional repository. A second copy of collected data will be held on my password protected computer. Files will be uploaded to the UoS repository at the end of each week in which data is collected and backed up to the external drive at this time also. I am responsible for the archiving and formatting of data collected. Any data is assumed as textual and will be formatted into .txt or .trf before archiving to account for future access. Data will be stored in the UoS Institutional Repository. Data will not be stored on the UoS One drive.

Personal data will be stored for no longer than 12 months following the completion of the project. Anonymised research data will be stored for 10 years.

25.   Describe any plans you have for feeding back the findings of the study to participants.

I will inform all participants via their provided email once the thesis has been completed and that they are free to read it upon request. Additionally, if specific interview data forms part of a published paper, I will contact all associated participants and inform them of the publication and offer a copy to any who wish to read it.

26.   What are the main ethical issues raised by your research and how do you intend to manage these?

Considering the probing nature of the interview questions, it is possible certain individuals will experience emotional distress when recounting difficult or traumatic

events from their past they may wish to divulge. It is impossible to know the extent to which these questions will affect the individuals in question, but the provision of support organisations (e.g. the Samaritans) will be provided at the start and repeated at the end of each interview journey to offer a level of support to assist with any negative consequences of participation. Informed consent offers all participants the chance to decline the interview process and have complete freedom to disengage without prejudice at any time.

While this process may cause discomfort to individuals, for the research and subsequent policy communities to expand understanding of the influences that draw individuals into the incel community, we must understand the idiosyncrasies of the individual to be able to formulate coherent and penetrative counternarratives that reduce the risk of indoctrination into the more extreme arms of the community. It is unlikely the participants will suffer long term effects from generating responses to the questions being asked to them. All participants are over 18 and not considered a vulnerable population. Such interviewing of incels has been conducted by other researchers (e.g. Sugiura, 2021; Daly & Reed, 2022) as well as of other populations that may have experienced emotional distress in their childhoods (e.g. Glynn, 2021).

Only though direct engagement with individuals and their life courses can we hope to acquire data that will elucidate the processes and experiences individuals progress through to end up in ideologically extreme environments. While forum data analysis offers some insight into the community itself, it does not offer understanding of the formative experiences of individuals or demonstrate the full extent of the types of vulnerabilities these individuals possess, details vital to development of policy to combat entry into and progression through digital spaces that produce radicalised men.

Direct contact with incels and ex incels is necessary to achieve this which, given the potential and evidenced harm some members of the community pose to wider society, warrants reflective questioning and extensive interaction.

27. **Please outline any other information you feel may be relevant to this submission.**

For example, if you have professional qualifications or experience relevant to your study, you may wish to state this here.

Appendix O   Participant Information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: Investigation of the (in)formative influences upon incel identity

Researcher: Stuart Lucy

ERGO number: 78681

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

As part of an ERSC funded PhD, this project aims to engage directly with adult members of the incel community to investigate from their own perspectives experiences throughout their lives that have affected them personally.

I, Stuart, the researcher, am keen to understand more about your experience and engagement with Incel communities. I want to allow individuals identifying with incel to offer, in their own words, opinions on specific aspects of their lives.

I hope to gather sufficient data from a broad range of incels to produce a critical narrative analysis of the life course events and how these relate to decisions to identify as an incel.

It is possible some of the questions may probe potentially difficult past or present traumatic personal situations you may have experienced. The sensitive nature of these questions may produce adverse feelings and reactions and so if you think you would likely react to these questions in way that would significantly affect your mental health and wellbeing, you should take great consideration before deciding to participate. As I am not trained to deal with the effects of trauma, any distressing line of questioning will be terminated, and, If at any time during the interview process it becomes difficult for you to continue, you are free to leave, request for your data to be destroyed and support helplines will be offered.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been approached specifically due to your self-identification as an incel.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you choose to take part, an interview process will take place across a digital messaging medium of your choosing (e.g. Reddit messaging/email/Facebook) in which I will ask you a series of initial questions that you can respond to you however you see fit. Based on your responses to these initial questions, follow-up questions may be asked to gather more detailed information about a specific issue you have raised or experience that has been described.

Questions will first concern demographic information before moving on to issues relating to childhood and adolescence as well as the journey to and in incel identity. This interview is a space for you to give full and detailed personal views about your life and the events in it.

Responses you provide will be copied to Word documents and stored in the UoS repository for later analysis. All messages received on the platform you have chosen will be deleted following the completion of the interview.

The interview will likely span days or weeks depending on the frequency of your answers to questions. The time required of you will depend on the amount of information and motivation you have to engage with the research.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

Participating in this research is an opportunity to provide detailed personal perspectives and information to explain your previous life experiences, identity and relation to the incel community in your own words.

Are there any risks involved?

This process may result in the recall of potentially sensitive and traumatic incidents or periods of your life which could cause adverse negative feelings and emotions to arise. While you are free to decline to answer any question and leave the interview process at any time, you should consider the potential consequences upon your wellbeing before engaging.

If you experience any negative emotional or psychological issues from the interview process, contact details of trained professional helplines and text services are listed below and will also be offered at the start and close of the interview process.

NHS (UK): Emergency 999, urgent 111

Samaritans (UK): 116 123

Papyrus HOPELINKUK (<35yrs UK): 0800 068 4141 Mon – Fri,10am-10pm

Samaritans (USA): **1 (800) 273-TALK.**

SAMSHA Disaster Distress Helpline (US): 1-800-985-5990/ Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746

NAMI (US): 1-800-950-6264/ Text 62640

What data will be collected?

Special category information of age and ethnicity will be collected. Within the life course information collected about you, additional special category information such as political opinions or philosophical and religious beliefs *may* be collected as a result of answering interview questions. Your provided contact email and offered pseudonym will also be collected.

Data will be collated from your email responses into an anonymised Word document. This document, along with your consent, form will be stored in an encrypted, secure University of Southampton data repository and within a password protected desktop computer locked in a secure University of Southampton office.

Your contact details will be stored in a database within a password protected desktop computer locked in a secure University of Southampton office and deleted upon completion of the interview unless you would like to be contacted with research publications containing your data.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential. No third parties will be involved in the interview process.

To ensure anonymisation of your data, your consent form will be stored with an anonymised file name corresponding to your stored interview data. All data is password protected on an encrypted, password protected, secure university cloud storage system.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign and return the consent form that was sent to you with this information sheet to formally indicate you have agreed to take part.

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected.

If you decide to withdraw at any time during data collection, or within two weeks of the interview concluding, please state this in an email sent to the email address you have received this information sheet from and all data will be removed and destroyed.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you without your specific consent.

The aim of this research will be to produce an unpublished thesis which once completed you may access upon request to the email address you have received this information from.

If any published journal articles or book/book chapters arise from this data, you will be contacted from the email account you received this information from and on request, a copy of the article provided and, where possible, any book chapter/book.

Your personal data will be held in the University of Southampton repository for no longer than 12 months following the completion of the research project, and anonymised data will be held for 10 years. Further research conducted by myself may arise from your interview data but will not be shared with anyone else. This data will be fully anonymised through removal of any identifiable characteristics (e.g. your data file will be saved via a number system not your name).

Where can I get more information?

If you have any further questions or require more information, please feel free to contact the researcher, please send an email to the address you received this information sheet from.

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please feel to contact Stuart who will endeavour to answer your questions.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Head of Ethics and Clinical Governance (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

To contact the researcher, please send an email to the address you received this information sheet from.

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The university of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

All data will be anonymised

Thank you.

I greatly appreciate you talking the time to read this information sheet and considering to take part. If you have any questions please feel free to enquire via the email address you have received this information from.

Appendix P   Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Study title: Investigation of the (in)formative influences upon incel identity

Researcher name: Stuart Lucy

ERGO number: 78681

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet 9/5/23 V5 and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I confirm I am aged 18 or over.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study and any future publications arising from this analysis of this data.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time during, and up to two weeks following the conclusion of, the interview for any reason without my participation rights being affected.	
I understand that I may be quoted directly in reports of the research but that I will not be directly identified (e.g. that my pseudonym will not be used).	
I understand that personal information collected about me such as my pseudonym and email will not be shared with any other person or body other than the study team.	

I understand that special category information about me will be collected to achieve the objectives of the study, these are: age and ethnicity. I further understand additional special category information such as political opinions or philosophical and religious beliefs *may* be collected as a result of answering interview questions.	
I give permission for any collected special category information to be held by Stuart Lucy and deposited into the University of Southampton data repository as described in the participant information sheet so it can be used for future research and learning concerning the life histories and perspectives of incels.	

Pseudonym of participant:

Signature of participant:

Date:

Appendix Q   Debrief Form

Debriefing Statement

Study Title: Investigation of the (in)formative influences upon incel identity

Researcher: Stuart Lucy

ERGO number: 78681

Thank you for your participation in this research

The aim of this research was to engage directly with adult members of the incel community to understand, from their own perspectives, the experiences throughout their lives that have personally affected their outlook and identity.

Your data will help our understanding of the incel community. Once again results of this study will not include your name or any other identifying characteristics. The experiment/research did not use deception.

Support

Given the sensitive nature of the questions you have been asked, below you will find suggested support contact numbers to discuss any distress you may have experienced with trained professionals.

NHS (UK): Emergency 999, urgent 111

Samaritans (UK): 116 123

Papyrus HOPELINKUK (<35yrs UK): 0800 068 4141 Mon – Fri,10am-10pm

Samaritans (USA): **1 (800) 273-TALK**.

SAMSHA Disaster Distress Helpline (US): 1-800-985-5990/ Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746

NAMI (US): 1-800-950-6264/ Text 62640

Boundaries

If you have any further questions, please contact me via the email address we have been corresponding with thus far.

I regret due to University of Southampton ethical protocol I am unable to continue communication with you.

However, following the publication of my PhD thesis I will be in touch via email to offer you a copy, as well as at any time following publication of any journal article/book/book chapter in which your data has been used to, when possible, also offer you a copy of this work.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel that you have been placed at risk, you may contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (+44 23 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

Thank you again for your time, I really appreciate your honesty and co-operation in research that aims to investigate the formative processes of members of the incel community.

Signature   Date

Appendix R   Example Approach Message

Hi

My name is Stuart, I'm a PhD student from the University of Southampton. I have received ethical approval from my institution to conduct this research (Ethics and Research Governance Online No. 78681).

If I have mistakenly identified you as an incel or identifying with the incel ideology or community, I apologise and please disregard the remainder of this message. If you are under the age of 18 please also disregard this message.

I'm looking for individuals identifying as incels to participate in life course interviews as part of research to better understand the life histories and perspectives of individuals within the community.

I am keen to understand the experiences of your community members in relation to identifying as an incel. I hold no preconceptions of you as a community and do not favour any particular analysis or viewpoint. I want to engage individuals directly allowing the opportunity to express themselves openly.

I would like to ask you to join my research as a participant in interviews across a digital messaging platform of your choice.

The interviews aim to understand your life as you have experienced and understood it. I am keen to discover how you have reached this identity and your perspectives away from online spaces that may prevent you from being as honest as you'd like to be or express true feelings.

This is an opportunity to provide the research community with detailed accounts of your life without any preconceived ideas or biases.

If you do decide to take part, I will request a contact email address with which to begin formal correspondence. This will be the account to which your participation documents and interview questions will be sent. You will be able to directly reply to these interview questions as you see fit, upon which another question will be issued. Further details of this process will be supplied if you decide to participate.

Please feel free to respond via DM if you're interested.

Appendix S   Coding and theme frames

S.1   Coding frame

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Punishing masculine performance Boys verbal assault Homophobia Bullying Boys physical Assault Masculinity regulation by peers	Homosocial bullying	Experiences of verbal and physical assault by male peers in relational social settings leading to adverse outcomes	When I was in high school, I became the victim of a violent hate crime while walking home from a friend's house. I was "gay". I wasn't. But I was considered effeminate. I went to school the next day with a swollen mouth. I looked like a Francis Bacon painting. It wasn't a good vibe. I was mistreated by both the boys and girls. More than once I heard from girls that "I wasn't a real man" and dating me was considered a joke. I wasn't treated any better after being beaten.

I was always the guy who was bullied for some reason. |

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Girls verbal assault Girls physical assault	Heterosocial Bullying	Experiences of verbal and physical assault by female peers in relational social settings leading to adverse outcomes	I was bullied in school which I can go in to detail about but in a nutshell, the Staceys would slap me, tell me I would die alone, call me a freak, spastic, freak out if I looked at them and always shoot me down if I tried to be funny. They circled around us and a girl pushed me toward the center [...] one female student called me a "goddamn freak." [...] a group of attractive girls would regularly sing an "ugly" song: "U-G-L-Y, everybody testify, you're ugly! I've always been bigger than just about everyone I encounter in school and woman were the primary ones to mock me because of it.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Criticised by woman for being bald Criticised by girls for being fat Physical weakness pointed out Compared to woman Masculinity questioned	Emasculation	The reduction of sense of worth by peers through discursive and physical practices that negatively communicated the individual's sense of masculine self	More than once I heard from girls that "I wasn't a real man [...] I felt absolutely dehumanized by these girls and later women and they treated me as such [...] I think it's critically important and necessary that people understand that women frequently do plenty of harm in regards to enforcing patriarchal expectations. A girl I tried to date decades ago, told me straight that she doesn't like my bald head. a woman told me I had "child-bearing hips". My sense that I was weaker than other kids came in first or second grade, when we compared biceps sizes. One student remarked that my muscles "felt like Jell-O." I was beat up on several occasions and laughed at for being weak.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Disability based insults Disability as cause of bullying Race based persecution	Marginalisation	Persecution based upon presentation of identities marginalised by hegemonic masculine standards such as age, race, disability, class	Because of my disability people are rude, incriminating, and just plain cruel towards me [...] because of my TD people are constantly making fun of me, mocking me, judging me, and treating like I am not a person, like trash. When they see me they look at me with hate, repulsion, and disgust, and I saw those in their eyes [and] all of my self-esteem just died, I feel like I should kill myself because I am ashamed [..] People avoided me, no one wants to be near with me, and so I experience social isolation. lots of bullying, racism, discrimination, mocking, [...] violence, bad memories etc with not much friends & allies.
Isolation Left out of things Exclusion Avoided	Social isolation & exclusion	The material practice of rejection from peer groups through lack of inclusion in peer groups or social settings	People avoided me, no one wants to be near with me, and so I experience social isolation. Excluded from things, made fun of for the reasons I previously stated. I was regularly picked last for sports team.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Sex needed to grow Driving force of sex Suffering in sexlessness	Sex as growth	The act of having sex produces a form of generative power in the receiver; sex is seen as a force that improves or contributed to the development of one's existence	I want to grow as a person. And for that, I have to stick my dick into somebody's vagina. Everyone knows one thing: the most important driving force in life is women.
Sex to be a man Sex to be mature Need for sex	Sex to exist	Sex is seen as inherently tied to the sense of masculine self, the having sex of sex increases masculine worth or positioning both to the self and in society	people judge a man's strength of character based on whether or not he can attract a lady. A man doesn't "become a man" within society until he's had sex.
Sex more important for men Need for a partner Treated less for being single Partner to be mature	Heterosexuality to exist	The participation in heterosexuality confers some sense of positive belonging in society. Absent this participation the individual lacks a necessary component to be viewed positively	women always say "I need to feel attracted to date him" which is true -- but other women could give unattractive men help by giving him some status. I believe that incel has a bigger psychological damage on men, than it does on women. Men see themselves as losers, if they can't attract any women. People around them would also see these men as losers, if they knew.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Peers talking about positive aspects of sex Media promoting sex Sex as normative Sex seen as common Teachers talking about sex Society promoting sex	Communication of sex	The perception of the transmission of the participation in sex a necessary and normative social practice	We are reminded by society day and night about how badly we need sex. Men who die virgins are mocked as if they were destined to an eternity in Hell. I think there's still a big, societal push for a man to get laid a lot, thanks to Hollywood and contemporary media. I think "toxic masculinity" exists but is not nearly as pervasive as people say it is, but this would definitely fall under that umbrella.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Depression Anxiety Despair Low self-esteem No will to live Hopelessness Worthlessness Lack of motivation Sadness	Adverse psychoaffective conditions	Adverse affect and poor mental health experiences as a result of the social experiences and events encountered.	I became pretty obsessed with these problems and was not able to do anything about it. I could not break the cycle and began to suffer from psychosomatic symptoms which really hindered my ability to participate in social settings. My anxiety grew that year as I heard students emphasize the plight of being ugly. It would usually make me feel like there was something detestable about me, and then my anxiety and sadness levels would spike. Oftentimes I would remove myself from social situations or mentally "shut down"... even at work, which lowered my productivity. I did not get out at my house for 1 month because I am afraid that if people see me they would beat me to death, or bully and humiliate me. Everyday going to university is like putting yourself in hell. I am emotionally traumatized.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
			I did have extremely low self-esteem at that time.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Won't try again Distancing from peers Avoid social events Feeling lonely Caution Hostility Distrust	Effects of rejection	The perceived impact of bullying, or social and romantic rejection	What is the impact of those rejections on me? The longer-term impact is unwillingness to try again. If a man gets rejected by women many times and has no success, that man often becomes unwilling to try again, too scared to approach women. I think bullying had two effects on me. First, it makes you have a disdain or your peers and people in general. Therefore, you tend to avoid them. This means that when High School roles around you avoid opportunities to attend social gatherings as I mentioned above, where potential romantic partners may be present. The second effect is that at a subconscious level you start to believe that you are deserving of the bullying. This makes you feel worthless and that you are not worthy of any woman. It's the loneliness thats the root of mental health I feel, that desire to be loved and wanted. A lifetime of despair and rejection has made us this way.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Self-loathing Envy of others Hatred for sexually active others Lack of motivation Never going to be a dad Craving sex Torment Nightmares Longing for partner Pain	Effects of sexlessness	The perceived impact of the inability to have sex or engage in heterosexual relationships.	It's mostly inadequacy and emasculation that drives me nuts about being a virgin. It would usually make me feel like there was something detestable about me, and then my anxiety and sadness levels would spike. Oftentimes I would remove myself from social situations or mentally "shut down"... even at work, which lowered my productivity. I've in the past felt extreme envy for people who have relationships and sex, and I still feel that way from time to time. I have nightmares in which I feel tormented at the thought of never having sex. The uninhibited psychological horror of the nightmares causes me to scream and bang my head on the floor or against the wall. I sometimes sense that people who know me don't treat me like an adult and that's mainly because I don't have a family. I sense that mostly in situations where families with

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
			children, and even couples, seem to get attention and respect, while I'm just ignored.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Men provide Men are strong Men are honourable Men are smart workers Dangerous Men have competence Never weak Men persevere Men punish enemies Men dominate Men protect Stoic	Understanding of gender roles	The individual's perception of the roles of men and or women in the social setting through their actions and praxes.	Good men must be honest, faithful, loyal, fight for what he believes, defend loved ones, vindicative, revanchist, working smarter than harder, masculine etc. and never let others use, cheat, betray him, take advantage of him etc and if they do just punish them and make a revenge. To be socially (and sexually) acceptable as cis hetero guys, we have to present ourselves to others fitting into a narrow set of traits, like never showing weakness, being hyperagents (a.k.a. being confident) in most situations. Patriarchic way was much better in all ways than all other systems, why? that's because it's natural. Men fighting, working, making decisions, being masculine and dominating etc while women raising children, attending home, being feminine and submissive etc. To be man means to provide, means to be manly in a way

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
			that a man can be. Be stereotypically manly, which means don't give up, don't feel sorry for yourself, don't vent in public groups on the Internet etc. Facing your fears.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Tattooed Muscular Tall Wealth Possessions Physical attractiveness Hairy	Masculinity as specific capitals	The perceived specific traits and features that define what a man is.	Being ugly, non-rich without a car, home, steady job etc makes a guy. You cannot escape it, looks, voice and height are EVERYTHING totally unattractive for women. A guy who pretends to be exciting by having tattooes, a beard, riding motorcycles, looking dangerous, being tall, looks like he can fight, etc. having looks that are barely under our performative control (having reached certain height, good physiognomy, not being bald, having a correct frame… except, to some extent, having an athletic physique if your genes aren't against you).
Other men getting girlfriends Certain men having sex Other men popular	Observation of dominant masculinity	The individual's subjectively observed social experiences that demonstrate what a successful man is or does.	I saw that men who were more stereotypically masculine (read: muscular, deeper-voiced, dominant) had no problems dating in high school, but thin, awkward nerds like me could not get anything. I've seen this happen a few times even outside of school.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
			When I started college I had the same story only this time it was explicitly obvious that I didn't match up to woman's desires. The guys there were massive, had basic douche bag personalities but were somehow getting women.
Not a good enough man Not what women want Not hairy I'm ugly Not successful Not rich Not tall Not masculine enough	Criticism of own masculinity	The individual's self-description indicating a failure to display the necessary features they deem indicative of what man should have or be.	As for me, I don't really have anything going for me. I don't pass the test in any department that women generally find important. I don't have looks, I don't have money, I don't have any remarkable achievements. Whatever women want, I don't have. Looks, money, a good career - I've just never been successful in those areas. My incel is mostly due to me being an ugly bald guy, who has little to offer to any woman of my age.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Looking for help Want answers Knowledge seeking Looking for information Seeking socialisation Needing validation	Seeking advice and help	The individual is looking for something to help or assist in improving his life and goes looking for this.	I tried to find help on the web. I started doing more research. I have nobody. I just go online to places like this in hopes of getting some socialization. If you are a young person who wants to have an active sex life, you will naturally seek out information on courtship. I started to feel increasingly isolated and desperate. So I tried to look for help online. When I was maybe 20 or so years old I started reading about things like hypergamy and other blackpilled concepts like the psychology behind human attraction.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Forums as place to find information YouTube Finding similar people with relatable experiences Using YouTube to seek help Wiki to learn about incels Finding incel forum Progressive use of incel space TikTok	Engaging with Incel Network	Exposure to and engagement with the various websites, forums, and platforms in which incel ideology and the incel identity are housed or performed.	I found a Wiki article on involuntary celibacy. That was how I learned the term 'Incel'. I then found a forum called IncelSupport. […] I watched one YouTube video titled something like, "Incels: the whole world hates you. Most of how I was influenced by incel rhetoric was just through casual scrolling of the internet. Many YouTube comments concerning dating or romance. I had convinced me that women will never want me. It started with social media groups and over time developed to the other sites/platforms. Just go on YT shorts or TikTok and look for videos were women speak about their height preferences in men - it's totally brutal.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Feel better in forum Agreed with existing belief Confirms what is seen Described personal situation Recognised issue Repetition = truth Feeds into existing narrative Empathy Confirms pill ideology	Confirming internal conversation	Interaction with the Incel Network that in some way concurs with the individual's previously held initial internal beliefs	It naturally fed into my internal narrative that I had built up in my head because of bullying and anxiety. I feel that black pill is the truth because I can see how people treat me. I kinda feel better about myself knowing that I am not alone. There I feel better because the guys there recognized the severity of my problem due to my disability, [...] so I felt better and understood. I feel that they emphatized me. I already had issues with dating already and self-esteem, and then the idea that I am inherently undesirable as a man fed into what problems I already had.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Provides answer Completion Produces identity Things make sense Gives community	Completing internal conversation	Interaction with the Incel Network that in some way finalised the internal conversation by providing the answer or, identity, or outcome.	Discovering the blackpill finally allowed me to put into words what I've been experiencing and feeling all along. I suppose, at most, at the time, I thought that being an incel at least gave me some identity, a community that I was a part of. I always knew there was something wrong. Finding the black pill was a bless to me, suddenly every thing began to make sense, I gladly accept it. The black pill was the missing piece of a jigsaw that I was trying to solve during years.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Misogyny Victim Antifeminism Evolutionary psychology Postfeminism Truth knowing SMP SMV Incel terminology Superiority	Being an incel	Demonstrating the ideas, structures, or sentiments of the incel identity and pill ideology	The "take my advice and you'll be fine" approach is contrary to evolutionary theory. Such theory contends that attractiveness owes, at least in large part, to genetic fitness. Of all aspects of the human body, genes are the most impossible to change. This stands 180 degrees at odds with society's "just improve yourself" attitude. Today's women simply expect more than they deserve. Society has convinced them that they are owed something by virtue of having a vagina. In this feminist society foids were indoctrinated to chain you to misery and pain' draining you till you're not useful for them anymore and then replace you with somebody else. You can say that a typical alpha male is someone between the first and the second meaning of chad, which is a man who is attractive and wanted by a lot of women, but also a man who can be dominant and make quick (and mostly good) decisions.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
			Incels ARE VERY special, thats why we arent the majority.. We are in a class of our own. Thats the definition of RARE, not common

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Can't change Fatalism How it is Ho hope Fatalistic acceptance and belief in blackpill ideology World is out to punish me	Futile existence	Belief or understanding that nothing can be done about one's social situation.	There is a perverse comfort in being a fatalist. If you are 100% certain that there is no hope and that nothing will ever get better no matter how often or what you try, then you can just be nothing and nobody. You can be a non-entity. it's simply how it is, how I was born and my caste in society. I am unlovable and it is what it is. I know i'm a misogynist. I'm also mentally ill. When there's no hope for tomorrow, when there's no hope for anything, it's can be perceived a as a lot off your shoulders.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Therapy is a threat Therapy won't work Won't go outside Avoidance Substance use Self-pity Making excuses No interest in therapy Reject self-improvement Wallowing in self-defeat	Rejection of proactive methods of change	Failure to engage in transformative activity, maintaining the incel identity and current situation	These generalizations have a tendency to give a simple, quick answer which allows one to evade responsibility for either coping with being single or from even trying. I kinda lost hope and made lots of excuses not to get out there. Such forums are a safe haven away from mental health therapists, who limit our freedom of speech. Anything our therapists interpret as "a threat to ourselves or others" can be used as a basis for involuntary hospitalization. Trying to decide how much longer I want to live. Only way I can get women is if it's paid and I'm blowing all my money on weed lately. When I'm not smoking weed I just want to die. Not sure what to do. I stopped taking all my meds. I guess eventually I'll run out of cash and just end it. I'm too avoidant and anxious to a pathological level to actually change and start socializing.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
			Its probably best to just avoid people in general, most normies cant be trusted. There's no point in trying to play catch up, this is just who I am

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Speaking to therapist Hanging out with friends New social groups Speaking to friend	Engaging with people in real world settings	Prosocial engagement with people outside of the Incel Network	There is a baseline of human dignity which clearly shows in the words and methods of my therapist and my clergy which is very evidently not there in incel ideology. I have friends and a community I regularly interact with. I specifically remember talking to a female friend of mine over a year ago about my dating struggles and my wants. It was something about calling myself a "up and coming high-value male" or something along those lines. She pulled me aside and asked, very openly and kindly, whether I was reading incel material. I told her that I was, and that I needed to get out of it. I did some reflecting afterwards and realized that a lot of it was just misogynistic rhetoric wrapped up in faux-scientific claims. Regarding therapy, my regular therapist (who is a man) and I have discussed this quite often, and I said that I wanted to stop generalizing women and have more healthy coping mechanisms for being single.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
			sticking to qualified people like my loved ones, psychologists, and advice columns from happily married people.

INITIAL CODES	REFINED CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Left incel forums Reframing of negative thoughts Adoption of therapy Reframing priorities Embracing feminism Positive self-talk Self-reflection Developing social skills	Engaging in proactive methods of change	Cessation of interactions	I began to really sit down and improve my mental hygiene. It became a matter of self-affirmation, forgiving myself, and training myself to be patient for my lovelife. It stopped being such a pity party, and it stopped focusing on how women were "ruining" my life. I've spent many, many hours learning social skills, hangout ideas, plans to boost confidence, learning about mental health conditions, and human psychological needs. I've been avoiding social media for this. I decided to do some deep research into Feminism and I subscribed to women's subreddits so I could spend my free time learning about women's lived experiences. After all that, I decided to identify as a Feminist. I experimented a lot with magic mushrooms and they definitely helped me to break out of old bad ways of thinking while also allowing me experience my grief more fully.

S.2   Theme frame

THEME	DESCRIPTION	SUBTHEME	DESCRIPTION	CODES
MAN UP	The material, discursive, and symbolic impacts produced by social structure.	**Boys Must Be Boys**	Lived experiences of gendered discrimination resulting from failure to exhibit and perform authorised masculine social practice during the formative years of adolescence and young adulthood.	*Homosocial bullying* *Heterosocial bullying* *Emasculation* *Marginalisation* *Social isolation & exclusion*
		Unpractised Practice	The material and symbolic impacts of perceived inability to engage in sex and heterosexual relationships.	*Sex as growth* *Sex to exist* *Communication of sex* *Heterosexuality to exist*
MAN DOWN	The subjective perceptions of the impacts of the social practice of masculinities and the perceived inability to perform heterosex and heterosexuality.	**Fallout**	The subjectively experienced psychological effects and consequences of adverse social experiences and lack of sex and intimacy.	*Adverse psychoaffective conditions* *Effects of rejection* *Effects of sexlessness*

THEME	DESCRIPTION	SUBTHEME	DESCRIPTION	CODES
		Haven't Been Doing do Good	Individually held perceptions regarding acceptable masculine performances and the individual's relative position to these ideals held either as ideology or observed in others.	*Understanding of gender roles* *Masculinity as specific capitals* *Observations of dominant masculinity* *Criticisms of own masculinity*
DEAL(ING) WITH IT	Varied dynamic responses to social experiences and subjective perceptions through actions that produce, maintain, or overcome the incel identity.	**Now It Makes Sense**	The development of an incel identity through the confirmation and completion of internal conversations achieved through engagement within the Incel Network.	*Seeking help and advice* *Engaging with the Incel Network* *Confirming the internal conversation* *Completing the internal conversation* *Being an incel*

THEME	DESCRIPTION	SUBTHEME	DESCRIPTION	CODES
		What's A Man To Do?	The ongoing reflexive process in which men either sustain or shed their incel identity through regressive and static or proactive and prosocial action.	*A futile existence* *Rejection of proactive methods of change* *Engaging with people in real world settings* *Engaging in proactive methods of change*

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