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Inceldom as a New Phenomenon and the Potential Threat of Terrorism: Portraying the Political Discourse of the Incel Threat Among Various Actors

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Inceldom as a New Phenomenon and the Potential Threat of Terrorism:

Portraying the Political Discourse of the Incel Threat Among Various Actors

Inceldom as a New Phenomenon and the Potential Threat of Terrorism: Portraying the Political Discourse of the Incel Threat Among Various Actors

By

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Foreword

The actions of the extreme misogynistic man called Andrew Tate show the power of venting hate and aggression, but also the fear of his ability to radicalize the male public into committing harm towards women. The extent of this fear is shown by the fact that, last month, Tate has been banned from multiple social media platforms, disabling him to promote more of his extreme misogynistic views. Andrew Tate continuously justifies his statements arguing he is a 'coach' and gave men advice for e.g., getting and treating women, and how to be an 'alpha male'. For many people, Tate appears as a rather terrifying figure. However, what is even more frightening, is how many young men practically worship him. In an incredibly short period of time, he became one of the most viewed persons and established a system where he not only made an enormous amount of money, but also engaged people to increase his content and thus his popularity. Andrew Tate is part of a broad movement of misogynists who feel they have certain privileges as men over women. An ideology that is shared with that of the incels.

During my master's degree Crisis and Security Management (CSM) at the University of Leiden, the moment had come where this thesis must be written. While many interesting topics came along, there is one lecture I remember very clearly. It was from the course called 'Social Movements and Political Violence', where in one specific lecture I got introduced for the first time with the 'incels'. It stuck with me as I had never heard of it before, and I was eager to learn more about it. In another lecture (of my current supervisor) inceldom was mentioned again and I gave in to my curiosity and decided I wanted to write about this topic.

The year 2020 was the beginning of my quest to the research about the involuntary celibates. From that moment on I was pleased to have been able to go in-depth into this matter and explore my interest regarding this new phenomenon. It has motivated me to reach for the unknown and to think about important, contemporary discussions. It has moved me to rediscover already existing definitions and think critically of what these entail, about the movement and the incel as an individual. I have struggled with keeping the focus as there were so many interesting aspects to the subject yet have gained so much information about the world of newly arising (and threatening) movements. This is an important subject, for both laymen, and for those who are involved in this: governments, academics, media and lawmakers. In many places this all-online incel movement is yet to be discovered, and hopefully this thesis will bring addition to the necessary knowledge needed to understand the signs of an incel threat.

While doing this research it made me aware of not trying to get too involved into the matter, yet to stay a critical thinker and to remain as objective as possible for the sake of the research. This period has given me many valuable lessons, deepened my interest in social movements and phenomena, extremism, and terrorism. It continues to remain a stimulating topic to further discover and discuss. It has built a foundation for me to want to continue any similar research in the future or share the knowledge and experience I gained during this process.

I would like to specifically thank my supervisor, Dr. G.M. van Buuren, for his great guidance, support, and insights during this research process. I am grateful to have had you as my supervisor, and dared me to go beyond my comfort zone, while at the same time you gave me the sense of trust in this research. While I have faced some barriers, you made it feel as an adventurous challenge.
Also, I want to thank some of my colleagues at the Financial Intelligence Unit, friends and family for their help and support. In advance I would also want to think my reader, and I hope you will enjoy it.

Florence Taudin Chabot,

Amsterdam, September 18, 2022

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Introduction

"*You forced me to suffer all my life, now I will make you all suffer*".[1] This statement, in May 2014, was followed by a chilling event in Isla Vista, California. The 22-year-old Elliot Rodger announced his attack in various ways on social media and carried out a mass shooting in Isla Vista, killing seven people.[2] Not only did he broadcast an extensive manifesto called 'My Twisted World', but he also published a video on social media emphasizing his motivations: "*If I can't have you girls, I will destroy you. (...) I can't wait to give you exactly what you deserve, utter annihilation*."[3] Since the conception of the Internet, the online environment has become a highly relevant part of social reality that has been integrated along with the growth of the Internet and technology.[4] The Internet has become a deeply fragmented infrastructure for many to have social interaction and to circulate knowledge that will substantially add to the complexity of social processes and in particular to those that are related to identity work and group formation.[5]

The involuntary celibate (also known as "incel") community begun in 1997 when a female student in Canada started a project hoping to find like-minded people and called it "Alana's Involuntary Celibacy Project."[6] Alana had defined the term 'incel' as both men and women that had not had sex for some time, despite trying.[7] She wanted to provide a platform for people, like her, who were lonely and who wished to start dating but were unsure of how to date and did not have the social skills to do so.[8] After the creation of the incel online platform project, incels of this community started to define themselves as persons who tried to be part of a romantic relationship but who had not yet been successful in their attempts.[9] Alana herself

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[1] Elliot Rodger "My Day of Retribution," YouTube, uploaded by Daryl Dixon, May 24, 2014 Manifesto video, 21:32 to 21:38, https://youtu.be/t-jCSZh2tMk.

[2] Bruce Hoffman, Jacob Ware, and Ezra Shapiro, "Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence," Studies *in Conflict and Terrorism* 43, no. 7 (2020): 565–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1751459

[3] Rodger, "My Day of Retribution," 20:17 to 22:18.

[4] Jan Blommaert, *Online-Offline Modes of Identity and Community: Elliot Rodger's Twisted World of Masculine Victimhood*. Tilburg University, 2017.

[5] Ibid.,1.

[6] Jim Taylor, "The Woman Who Founded the 'Incel' Movement," BBC News, August 30, 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-452.

[7] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 566.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Greta Jasser, Megan Kelly and Ann-Kathrin Rothermel, "Male Supremacism and the Hanau Terrorist Attack: Between Online Misogyny and Far-Right Violence," International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (May 2020), https://icct.nl/publication/male-supremacism-and-the-hanau-terrorist-attack-between-online-misogyny-and-far-right-violence/.

eventually left the community and from that moment onwards, the entire incel platform drastically changed.[10] Currently, the incel movement is mainly characterized by an online community consisting of cisgender heterosexual men who believe they are unwanted and incapable of having a relationship and receiving the sex they believe they are entitled to, blaming women and feminism for this incapability and discussing the victimhood they experience.[11]

An important development for the growth of the incel movement was the evolution of the Internet and technology because incels started to develop their own culture then that started to be reflected on online forums.[12] The incel movement, as an all-online subculture, has benefited from social mobilization as well as the online communication tools that have quickly increased the prominence of and attention paid to incels.[13] Since the rise of the Internet and social media, there has been given a path for the incels to grow towards a movement that has deep-seated sentiments of misogyny, sexual entitlement, racism, and patriarchy.[14] The danger lies in a curious person doing a Google search and discovering the world of the incel movement with its own language, culture, websites, and rituals.[15] Consequently, once in the world of the incels, the newcomer may be led into a rabbit hole that mainly exposes them to a variety of extremist subjects, propagated by the forum residents, who are eager to radicalize the newcomers.[16]

Some popular forum websites for the incel movement at the current time are, among others, 4chan, founded in 2003, and Reddit, established in 2005, but have extended to, among others, 8chan and YouTube. The incel movement currently has several incel-only forums such incel.co or incel.org.[17] These forums foster the incel extremists' declarations to gain more visibility.[18] As new online incel forums started to multiply on websites such as 4chan, the level of extremism rose.[19] In 2016, the incel movement expanded toward 40,000 users. In 2017, Reddit

[10] Peter Baker, "The Woman Who Accidentally Started the Incel Movement," Elle, March 1, 2020, https://www.elle.com/culture/news/a34512/woman-who-started-incel-movement/.
[11] Jasser, Kelly and Rothermel, "Male Supremacism and the Hanau Terrorist Attack," 2020.
[12] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 566.
[13] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 566.
[14] Bruce Hoffman and Jacob Ware, "Incels: America's Newest Domestic Terrorism Threat," Lawfare, January 12, 2020, https://www.lawfareblog.com/incels-americas-newest-domestic-terrorism-threat.
[15] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 565 -587.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 566
[19] Ibid.

ostracized the *r/incels*[20] subreddit for encouraging violence and aggression, violating the website's prohibitions on violent incitement.[21]

Therefore, the incel movement is specifically becoming an interesting and increasingly popular phenomenon in the Western world.[22] A major challenging aspect relating to the mobilization of the incel movement toward violence is that no specific legal measures or counterterrorism strategies currently exist against the incel movement.[23] So far, the debate continues to exist on how incels and the incel movement should be interpreted. Since the incel movement is relatively new, there remains to be hardship in identifying an official definition that suits the incel phenomenon. Because this is an online movement it is completely decentralized, without a clear hierarchy or leaders within the movement, and therefore has no targetable offline structure or funding streams that can be investigated.[24] The incels have defined themselves as victims of current society, yet outside the incel community, fear and awareness of potential threats arises on a global scale, unknowing what the impact of this growing movement will entail. Therefore, the question arises whether or not the incels should be perceived as a terrorist threat or not.

Research Question

This research will attempt to investigate the question, "*To what extent and based on what arguments has the incel movement been defined, or not, as a potential terrorist threat?"*
This research aims to describe the political discourse related to the growing violent incel threat. More specifically, it explores in-depth the political debate surrounding whether the incels should be considered as a manifestation of terrorism or not and what arguments are considered for this discussion. As States and organizations seek to attempt to construct a label that embraces the concept of an incel, the movement and the underlying threats, it appears the interpretations about inceldom can widely vary. Hence, it is important to underline the difficulties of defining a phenomenon and the importance of the latter, for law enforcements to construct and prepare an action plan in order to minimize future incel attacks. Along with that,

[20] A subreddit indicates a specific page within the Reddit forum. r/incels refers to a reddit page dedicated to incels.
[21] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 567.
[22] Jasser, Kelly and Rothermel, "Male Supremacism and the Hanau Terrorist Attack," 2020.
[23] Hoffman, Ware, "Incels: America's Domestic Terrorism Threat."
[24] Ibid.

this thesis seeks to lay out characteristics of the incel movement as well as creating awareness when incels show signals of possible threats.

To clearly portray this matter, the discussion around the definition of terrorism also will be discussed within this research. This will provide insight in the degree of difficulty that precedes when there is need for a categorization concerning law enforcement. Using the incel movement as a case study will help to clearly present the discussion pertaining to terrorism. For this, the most violent incel cases that have primarily occurred in North America, namely the United States and Canada, are applied in this thesis to provide a more complete framework.

Academic Relevance

It is relevant to examine the incel movement in the context of the various attacks, identified as increasing in their number, committed by men. As of 2020 the number of fatalities and injuries, since Elliot Rodger's attack in 2014, numbered over 90.[25] Moreover, where the incel related attacks started in North America, it has transitioned towards Europe. For example, an attack in Germany was described as being committed by an incel in 2019, as well as some cases in the United Kingdom. In 2020, Canada was the first country to announce an attack by a seventeen-year-old incel to be a terrorist activity.[26] As far as it is known, no other country has made the link between an attack by an incel and terrorism. The teenager had stabbed several men and women at an erotic massage parlor, and it was only the second time in Canada that such an attack had been charged as terrorism not connected to Al-Qaeda or inspired by the Islamic State.[27] This is significant, as the number of attacks by incel-influenced men is increasing. The ongoing discussion about the label of "terrorism" and the fact that no single collective label reflects what terrorism entails, complicates the process of creating a framework for counterterrorism structures, both at the national and international levels. Within the literature, therefore, this research hopes to contribute by using the incel movement as a case study to provide a perspective on this political discussion about the terrorism label.

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[25] Megan Kelly, , Alex DiBranco and Dr. Julia R. DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism: Overview and Recommendations for Addressing the Threat of Male Supremacist Violence," *New America*, (February 2021): 24. https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/misogynist-incels-and-male-supremacism/.

[26] Hoffman, Ware, "Incels: America's Domestic Terrorism Threat."

[27] Preston Lim, "Canadian Authorities Charge Teenager With Terrorism Violence," Lawfare, June 30, 2020, https://www.lawfareblog.com/canadian-authorities-charge-teenager-terrorism-over-incel-based-violence

The incel movement is an interesting phenomenon as a case study since it is a young and emerging movement that manifests itself entirely online. The movement, mainly based on misogyny, is an ideological movement and does not represent only a few isolated cases of similar attacks. The notorious violent incel acts and the incel movement offers a perspective on how the political discourse perceives terrorism. It challenges the exploration of new goals, ideologies, strategies, and ambitions and perhaps even the restructuring of the concept of terrorism. More concerning is that over the years, it has been intermingling with violent right-wing extremism and its own groundwork of misogyny, hatred, and intolerance [28] Especially since the attack by Elliot Rodger in 2014, this has increased, where far-right extremists see "men's rights activism" as a possible common ground along with the incel ideology.[29] Since that event, far-right extremism in the incel community has grown significantly.[30] This thesis subject about the incels is of importance because there is still much unknown about the incel movement that needs more investigation.

Societal Relevance

The societal relevance of this thesis is emphasized by the need for a better understanding of the impact of conceptualizing the incel movement within politics: once the incel movement or incel related attack is described as terrorism, much political attention will be given to it, and as a result, awareness will be raised among the population. Consequently, the public will take the phenomenon more seriously. As knowledge of the incel ideology remains low in most countries, it is relevant to do more research. Doing so will raise awareness about this ideology, create more political awareness, and might lead to the possibility for states to act upon it and investigate and specialize in the incel community or the violent acts committed by members of the movement. Another important point is the danger of overusing the label 'terrorism'. This thesis will attempt to show it is of importance to use the label precisely and carefully for several reasons. To label an individual, group, or movement as terrorism is a strong categorization that is followed by severe consequences. First, the overabundance of the term 'terrorism' can potentially lead to an underestimation of the danger and, as a result, to inadequate counterterrorism policies. Secondly, inadequate use of the label terrorism can also create severe

[28] Hoffman, Ware, "Incels: America's Terrorism Threat".
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

consequences by overestimating the danger. For example, labelling a specific group or individuals might further anger or triggers them to become violent. On the contrary, a reaction of this could be that these designated “terrorists” will disappear to the background and start acting covertly. All this will complicate the entire process of monitoring any potential threat. For that reason, careful thought will need to be given to the implications of categorizing terrorism.

Structure

In the first chapter, the literature framework forms the discussion of why and how the terrorism label is used among some nations and political actors. Then, this research explores the definition of terrorism, The second chapter elaborates on what academic literature or other research exists on the incel movement. The third chapter addresses the methodology and research of the thesis. By means of a qualitative case study as a research method, the chapter discusses how data was collected and explores in-depth the specific research procedures. The fourth chapter contains the analysis of this subject and presents the results. The fifth chapter contains a discussion and conclusion of the research. The sixth chapter will follow up with a reflection specifically regarding the incel phenomenon. Chapter 7 ends with a conclusion of that reflection.

Chapter 1: What is Terrorism

"Mass shootings are committed almost exclusively by men and the great majority of those are white men." [31]

The discussion on consensus on the definition of terrorism arises because not every state have similar factors that makes a group, person or an act terrorism, and many have different views on the meaning of terrorism. The way on how terrorism is being defined mainly depends on who did the defining.[32] Consequently, there exist various definitions of the concept of terrorism in use in different contexts.[33] In perspective, terrorism as a concept is a social construct and influenced by political and ideological bias, which could mean that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."[34] This chapter will provide an insight into how these definitions by various international actors can differ. One important issue resulting from not being able to find a global definition of terrorism is the struggle to create a (global) counterterrorism structure. To find consensus on a collective meaning for terrorism, all states should be aligned regarding the main characteristics of terrorism; that will make path for creating a global definition of terrorism and can facilitate a global strategy to counter terrorism. The issue surrounding terrorism, however, seems to be that it is a highly subjective and highly politically charged theme, for which the intention and content differ dramatically between states. Looking at the history of terrorism, where many shifts in the definition of terrorism have occurred, may also reveal why countries have altering definitions of terrorism.[35] Further, extremism and terrorism are interlinked, which creates faded borders between the two concepts and makes it difficult to directly pinpoint when an event is representative of one or the other. Various reports, news articles, and media or political actors have argued that the incel movement shows components that spark violence and should be considered a threat, as the assaults by incel-related perpetrators are difficult to classify as hate crimes, extremism, or

[31] Carolyn M. Byerly, "Incels Online Reframing Sexual Violence," *The Communication Review* (Yverdon, Switzerland) 23, no. 4 (2020): 292. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2020.1829305.

[32] Katie Cohen, "Who Will Be a Lone Wolf Terrorist?: Mechanisms of self-radicalisation and the possibility of detecting lone offender threats on the Internet," *Avdelningen för Informations-och aerosystem, Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut (FOI),* (December 2012): 1-28

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Alice Martini and Emeka T. Njoku, "The Challenges of Defining Terrorism for Counter-Terrorism Policy," in the *Palgrave Handbook of Global Counterterrorism Policy*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), 73-89.

political terrorism but do show however that misogyny and sexual frustration trigger violence.[36] That this sparks violence is an indicator that should most likely be taken into account in the prevention and repression of violent activities.

Difficulties in Defining Terrorism in Political Discourse

Terrorism is a concept widely used by scholars, the media, politicians, and the mainstream public but still lacks a universally agreed-upon definition.[37] In fact, since 1972, shortly after an attack on Israeli athletes during the Olympic Games, the United Nations (UN) has been attempting to define international terrorism as a foundation for a comprehensive treaty to develop a global legal basis for anti-terrorism measures.[38] Despite the many efforts made by political institutions worldwide to come to a consensus, conceptualizing terrorism still remains the subject of a politically charged debate.[39] Defining the phenomenon of terrorism appears to be a persistent problem as political institutions have made concerted efforts to define and distinguish terrorism from other forms of political violence for a long time without success.[40] Still, all the options that have been provided by authorities or international institutions have been criticized as "flawed" or lacking specific elements that others think should be implemented into the concept.[41] This raises the question of *why* finding a universal concept of terrorism remains so complicated.[42]

A major dilemma lies in the fact that "terrorism" is a politically charged term, and therefore when proposals are provided for possible definitions of terrorism, disagreement among actors arises about the exact meaning and the specific elements that the definition of terrorism should

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[36] "When Woman are the Enemy: The Intersection of Misogyny and White Supremacy," Anti-Defamation League (ADL), July 20, 2018, https://www.adl.org/resources/report/when-women-are-enemy-intersection-misogyny-and-white-supremacy; Tore Bjørgo and Jacob Aasland Ravndal, "Extreme-Right Violence and Terrorism: Concepts, Patterns, and Responses," *nternational Centre for Counter-Terrorism*, ISSN: 2468-0486, (September 2019): 1-23. https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2019/09/Extreme-Right-Violence-and-Terrorism-Concepts-Patterns-and-Responses.pdf. 12-15; Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assesing Incel Violence," 572.

[37] Martini and Njoku, *Challenges of Defining Terrorism,* 74.

[38] Eva Herschinger, "A Battlefield of Meanings: The Struggle for Identity in the UN Debates on a Definition of International Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 25, no 2. (March 2013): 183-201. https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2011.652318. 184.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

focus on, such as the causes, perpetrators, or means of attack.[43] Preceding collective attempts from political institutions to make a clear distinction between terrorism and other sorts of political violence alongside new strategies adopted by some current terrorist groups create new discussions about the logical exactness of the definition.[44] As Maskaliunaite stated, the ethics of politics requires a neutral description of the phenomenon of terrorism, and based on that description, the division of what is and what is not terrorism must be made and laws implemented.[45] However, neutrality in this sense hardly ever occurs, and the issue of defining terrorism shows the tendency to include specific interests in such a seemingly "neutral" description of what is acceptable and what is not.[46] Therefore, a consideration to reconceptualize the definition of terrorism, and to along to incorporate contemporary theories regarding the influence of components such as technology, the Internet and social media to terrorism. Moreover, the process of finding a clearer definition of terrorism will be enhanced by a clear understanding of the distinct boundaries between extremism and terrorism. A reconceptualization will also have implications for the design of a counter-terrorist framework considering the most recent methods used by present-day terrorists.[47] Arguably, to define terrorism is difficult but nonetheless important, as potential counterterrorism strategies' successes will depend on the eventual suitable designation of terrorism.[48] Hence, incorporating contemporary tools and strategies that belong to present-day terrorism or extremism will be valuable in gaining a better perspective on the threat level of the incel community and potentially other new forms of political violence. Furthermore, new developments that constantly evolve — including the speed of developments and the rapid spread and evolution of modern technologies—increases interdependence between countries. And this has caused multilayered global governance institutions, such as the UN or European Union, to face security challenges at the national, regional, and global levels.[49] In this framework, terrorism also has been globalized, showing the importance of an international security system that must be able to adapt and evolve its necessary responses to changes in terrorism.[50]

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[43] Martini and Njoku, *Challenges of Defining Terrorism*, 73.

[44] Martini and Njoku, *Challenges of Defining Terrorism*, 73-74.

[45] Asta, Maskaliunaite, "Defining terrorism in the political and academic discourse, "*Baltic Defence Review* No. 8 (January 2002): 37.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 74.

[49]Filip Tuček and Richard Warnes, 'The European Union Against Terrorism: Challenges and Future Opportunities," In *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Counterterrorism Policy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), 315-36. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55769-8_13.

[50] Tuček, Warnes, "The European Union Against Terrorism," 315.

Various studies that have researched why defining terrorism remains a challenge and have offered several explanations for why finding an international agreement on terrorism is so complex. Some scholars state that states or political actors have contradicting national interests or preferences, which leads to definitions of terrorism being dependent on a nation's self-interest. Hence, different interpretations of terrorism or political violence limit the process of defining international terrorism.[51] Academics such as Schmid, Hoffman, Martini, and Njoku characterize the terroristic groups from the other political violent movements by elements that specifically differentiate terrorists from one another. The most important criteria for being considered a terrorist group are a lack of intention to function as a military unit, an avoidance of confrontation with military forces, and a lack of capability for territorial acquisitions.[52] The political violent groups that have these goals described above would fit the description of a guerrilla or insurgency group. The authors argue that terrorists' main goal is to explicitly make use of violence to influence or coerce other actors into certain political decisions.[53] For example, Jackson and Spaaij conceive 'a terrorist act as a violent act aimed at attaining a political, ideological or religious goal.'[54]

Challenges

Derived from diverse articles, six main challenges can be identified by academics that potentially explain the real challenge regarding defining terrorism and that are found among all international actors and on which perhaps most of these actors can agree.[55] First, the word "terrorism" has a definition applied by the "outside" group. For example, the government that has been attacked by the offenders. And while the perpetrators almost never voluntary identify themselves as being a terrorist group; the perpetrators—groups or individuals, believe that their

[51] Herschinger, Struggle Definition of International Terrorism,"185.

[52] Alex Peter Schmid, *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* (London; New York: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2011).; Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). ; Martini and Njoku, "*Challenges of Defining Terrorism,"*79 – 81.

[53] Schmid, *Handbook of Terrorism.*

; Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism.*; Martini and Njoku, "*Challenges of Defining Terrorism,"*81.

[54] Richard Jackson, "In Defence of 'Terrorism': Finding a Way through a Forest of Misconceptions," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2011): 116–130. https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2010.512148; Spaaij, Ramón, "The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 33, no. 9 (August 2010). 854-70.

[55] Ibid., 74 – 86.

actions are validated and are to be viewed as legitimate and politically motivated.[56] Therefore, because their actions have a "cause," they are believed to be validated and therefore do not consider themselves terrorists but rather as, for example, freedom fighters.[57]

The second challenge is that governments have the tendency to use the definition too often, or as stated by Martini and Njoku "the word has been used throughout history by states to define their opponents in so many occasions that we can actually talk of an abuse of its application."[58] Not only states but also the media are inclined to overuse this definition in a belief that it attracts a larger audience to their articles, tabloids, or television programs.[59] The problem of the misuse of this definition in such a wide variety of contexts and its application to many different attitudes and behaviors consequently leads to create an umbrella term for terrorism, without clear designated characteristics of what terrorism should entail.[60]

The third challenge is that the difficulty in defining "terrorism" essentially lies in the fact that it is highly subjective and the consequence of a political decision.[61] Terrorism is a highly political concept, and it is paramount to understand that its core characteristics rest on various aims, motivations, purposes, and finally how it is distinguished from other types of political violence.[62]

Fourth, the contemporary usage of the concept is, according to Hoffman, fundamentally and inherently political: it is the aim of pursuing power through violence, in order to achieve political change.[63] It is a biased process since every procedure giving terrorism meaning is dependent on 1) personal perspective, 2) political point of view, 3) the specific political situation, 4) and the culture of reference of the actor applying this label to an act. Due to this, the meaning of terrorism varies so widely among various states.[64] And subsequently, for international actors to come to a consensus on a universal meaning of terrorism, political actors and states should first agree on what kind of actions should be included as legitimate and what

[56] Ibid., 74.
[57] Ibid., 74.
[58] Ibid., 75.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 2.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.,75.

should be illegitimate violence.[65] However, deciding what actions are considered legitimate or illegitimate highly depends on each government.

The fifth challenge, most terrorist actions are very hard to distinguish from other criminal or military actions, which makes it harder to see the nuance between terrorism and other forms of violence such as extremism, hate crime, or vandalism.[66]The sixth and final challenge is that throughout time, great shifts in political and social aspects of the meaning of terrorism have occurred, meaning that currently, around the world, there exists a wide range of definitions, which makes it complex to achieve a universally accepted concept of terrorism.[67] During the French Revolution,[68] terrorism was viewed as an activity perpetrated by the government, while terrorism is currently, in broad lines, more likely to be viewed as an illegal type of action or violence, executed by non-state actors with the specific purpose to pressure the government into specific political goals.[69]

To summarize, the issues regarding the concept of terrorism lie in the existence of a wide variety of interpretations of the meaning of "terrorism." This is because nations have different political and social perspectives regarding values, norms, or ideas about political violence. This difference of meaning stems partially from the historical perspective, where changes in the definition of terrorism occurred and different variations of the meaning terrorism emerged throughout the world. However, increasing globalization in the world, the growth of modern technology, and the fact that due to the spread of information, traveling has become faster means that nations are more connected and their experience of certain aspects, such as criminal networks that operate cross-border relies on each other: creating interdependence. The same is true for political violence becoming globalized and therefore terrorism is globalizing. Globalization makes it possible for terrorists to execute attacks across borders without being present and therefore terrorism acts can become stateless.

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[65] Ben Saul, *Defining Terrorism In International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[66] Martini and Njoku, "*Challenges of Defining Terrorism,"* 75.

[67] Martini and Njoku, "*Challenges of Defining Terrorism,"* 75-86; Marcello Di Filippo " The Definition(s) of Terrorism in International Law," In *Research Handbook on International* (2020): 2-15. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788972222.00008. 3.

[68] **"**The word "terrorism" was first popularized during the French Revolution. In contrast to its contemporary usage, at that time terrorism had a decidedly *positive* connotation. (…) Hence, unlike the term "terrorism" as it is commonly understood today, meaning a *revolutionary* or antigovernment activity undertaken by non- state or subnational entities, the *régime de la terreur* was an instrument of governance wielded by the recently established revolutionary *state*." Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 3.

[69] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*; Martini and Njoku, "*Challenges of Defining Terrorism,"* 75-86.

The Internet makes it easy for perpetrators to increase in number, plan, and execute from the other side of the world and not be arrested due to the different meanings of terrorism because in one country the terrorism charge is not similar to the other and miss out on potential arrests. This asks international actors to assemble and create a universal definition of terrorism and desire the same policies against terrorism in order to have an effective counterterrorism strategy.

Global Governance and Terrorism

The first attempts that have been made to develop a definition for terrorism on a global basis initially started in the 1930s, and the UN started to prioritize the development of an international definition of terrorism after the 1972 attacks. However, the accomplishment of that goal remains absent.[70] Herschinger explains that the struggle to find a global definition of terrorism at the UN is rooted in collective identity struggles among states.[71] In addition, Herschinger argues that there tends to be a desire to define terrorism in order to indirectly create an "other" once there is a precise content to terrorism.[72] By creating an "other", one can discern a collective "self"; that is, to create a common unified meaning about those who confront terrorism and strive to defeat terrorism.[73] Hence, the desire to find the desired definition of terrorism will remain unaccomplished as long as there remains a disputation about the meaning of terrorism among states.[74] Thus, without conformity among political actors and states to have a similar core meaning of terrorism, it will remain complex to establish terrorism as a concept on a global basis.[75] For international institutions such as the UN or European Union to establish a solid security system, the sense of shared identity is a necessity to generate shared policies: it allows these actors to define a clear position and role in these policies through the identification of values, ideas, goals, and ambitions.[76] This chapter examined and discussed the hardship of defining terrorism. The following chapter will look more specific onto the discussion of terrorism with regards to the case of the incels.

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[70] Herschinger, "Struggle Definition of International Terrorism,"189.
[71] Ibid., 196.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid., 197.
[76] Tuček, Warnes, "The European Union Against Terrorism," 316.

Defining Terrorism in the Academic Discourse

The political debate among various states whether incel assaults should be labeled as terrorism appears to be ongoing since the first officially identified incel shooting in 2014 by Elliot Rodger and differs among different actors. Part of the explanation for the disagreement about the labeling of violent acts by incels stems from the deeper-layered debate on the definition of terrorism: what movements and what specific (violent) acts are considered to be terrorism.[77] Furthermore, the terrorism debate focuses on what (dis)advantages arise once an act, group, movement, or person is given the label "terrorist."[78] Once someone or an act is labeled as "terrorist," this can have severe consequences, and therefore there tends to be a reluctance to label something as terrorism, before it is certain or meets the requirements of terrorism.

Since the 2014 shooting Elliot Rodger, the number of violent attacks based on the incel ideology has increased and as well a large number of right-wing extremists joined the incel movement as it appears to have quite some interfaces with the right-wing extremists' movement.[79] It is argued that as the attacks by incel perpetrators were motivated by sexual entitlement and misogyny, these should be incorporated as indicators for potential violent extremism or terrorism.

According to Bjørgo and Ravndal, terms such as "extremism," "hate crime" or "terrorism" tend to be used interchangeably, especially when looking at right-wing movements.[80] Moreover, it is claimed by some academics that the incel movement is part of the right-wing extremist movement, rather than an independent movement. Yet the between terrorism and extremism differences are very nuanced. For example, within the right-wing movement, the distinction between radicals and extremists is that extremists are promoters of illegal activities, encourage violence, and perceive any non-democratic means as legitimate.[81] Within the various levels of right-wing extremism, violence as a primary characteristic is perceived as necessary and legitimate and a method frequently viewed as something praiseworthy in the right-wing circle.[82] The clearest difference between extreme-right violence and extreme-right terrorism is that the

[77] Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism," 24.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 572-573.
[80] Bjørgo and Ravndal, "Extreme-Right Violence and Terrorism," 2.
[81] Ibid., 3
[82] Ibid., 5

category of violence consists of *all* violent attacks that are executed based on extremist right-wing viewpoints and targeted against those who the extremist right perceive to be their enemy such as immigrants, minorities, political foes, or governments, where such attacks also include vandalism and spontaneous violence.[83] For example, for specifically the extremist right-wing attacks to be considered as terrorism according to Bjørgo and Ravndal, two criteria apply: 1) the goal exists to intentionally instill fear in wider society as a means of influencing a political outcome; and 2) the attack is premeditated and planned (financially, plan of execution, announcements, meetings).[84]

Another important category is described as the concept of *hate crime*; which entails acts that could also qualify as either extreme-right violence or terrorism but also includes acts that are non-violent, such as harassment or hate speech, and for which the hate against people is extended to categories regarding religion, race, disabled people, or sexual minorities.[85] The issue, however, is that these three categories are often used ambiguously and interchangeably in politics, media, or by international actors. In threat assessment reports, for example,[86] extremism or terrorism are sometimes used for the same category, without specifically clarifying why it is categorized as either of those and while there are no specific indications of why it is one or the other.[87] Due to the many overlapping factors, it remains complex to clearly identify when something is terrorism or otherwise. This chapter sought to explain the fine differences between the definition of terrorism and extremism, and specifically focused on right-wing extremism as it tends to be regarded as part of the incel movement.

Problem: The Absence of a Universal Definition of Terrorism

Previously, the discussion about terrorism has been explained on a general note, as well as the academic discussion what should define terrorism. This chapter will look at the interpretation of the terrorism definition in the United States and Canada. The reason for this choice is because of the number of incel cases that have occurred, which currently have the most incel attack

[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Bjørgo and Ravndal, "Extreme-Right Violence and Terrorism," 6.
[86] In the 2020 report of Europol (Terrorism Situation and Trend report), the Incel movement is discussed under in the right-wing terrorism chapter (95), not depicting at as being terrorism, but also in the right-wing extremism section, however naming it as being a bridge for the right-wing extremism (71).
[87] Bjørgo and Ravndal, "Extreme-Right Violence and Terrorism," 6 -7.

cases. The reason for this is to show how this can lead to variations of the term among countries, within countries or even between states and institutes.

United States

Regarding the definitions of terrorism used by United States (government) agencies, there are differences in the meaning of terrorism. The Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security expressed in a report in 2002 that practically "every agency of the United States Government (USG) with a counterterrorism mission uses a different definition of terrorism."[88] Almost 20 years later, while terrorism definitions do overlap, there are still variations occurring of the meaning of terrorism in US agencies. In US government agencies alone, there already exist at least eight different definitions of terrorism.[89] Even if there seems to be some overlap, the differences are larger than the similarities: while one definition describes terrorism as "illegitimate or premeditated use of political violence against the populace," another describes it as "violent and criminal acts committed by individuals/groups to further ideological goals" to "(…) racially motivated, (…) anti-government, (…) single issue actors (…) with personal and ideological grievances and underlying drivers (…) [including] perceptions of government or law enforcement overreach, sociopolitical conditions, racism, anti-Semitism or anti-Muslim beliefs."[90] These examples do suggest that the terrorism label requires factors such as political ideology and instilling fear on citizens to a certain extent. However, the incoherency in definitions complicates an agency's internal clarity on when a case should be defined as extremism or terrorism. It impedes the nuance between these two categories and this complicates the decision process. Hence, it can be argued that those are subtle differences and transitions that are important to define when deciding whether such violence belongs to the terrorism category or is another kind of violence or crime.

Canada

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[88] *A Report To The Speaker Of The House Of Representatives And The Minority Leader*, Counterterrorism Intelligence Capabilities And Performance Prior To 9-11 (Washington, 2002).

[89] See annex for elaborate insight on the various definitions of terrorism among US government agencies

[90] Texas Fusion Center Intelligence & Counterterrorism Division Texas Department of Public Safety, *Assessing The Threat Of Mass Attacks In Texas*, 2020, https://www.dps.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/director_staff/media_and_communications/2020/txmassattackassessment.pdf.

In Canada, government agencies such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service define terrorism under Canadian Criminal Code section 83.01. s.[91] [92] Noteworthy, however, is that one incel assault case in Toronto in 2020 is defined as an terrorist act, while all other violent assaults committed by incels in Canada are not charged as (incel-motivated) terrorist activity under this code. Therefore, in Canada there appears to be more alignment regarding the definition of terrorism between institutes. There is one example that indicates it is in theory possible to have a collective criterion for the definition of terrorism: The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is an open-source database that includes information on domestic and international terrorism acts on a global scale.[93] This database has over 200,000 cases of terrorism, and because this platform is aware of the fact that there does not exist a universal definition of terrorism, GTD makes use of a single definition: "*the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation*."[94] This definition is dissected into a set of criteria, of which a minimum of two are required for GTD to categorize an event as terrorism.[95] More importantly, the following criteria must be present for GTD's inclusion of terrorism and are relevant for this research:

1. "The act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal"[96]

[91] National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, *Annual Report 2020* (Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2021), https://www.nsicop-cpsnr.ca/reports/rp-2021-04-12-ar/annual_report_2020_public_en.pdf.

[92] "Despite Bill C-51, how terrorism is defined can and does vary in Canada. Legal definitions generally serve as the most formally recognized source by many governments and individuals.[2] Section 83.01 of Canada's Criminal Code defines terrorism as an act committed "in whole or in part for a political—religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause" with the intention of intimidating the public "…with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act."[3] Activities recognized as criminal within this context include death and bodily harm with the use of violence; endangering a person's life; risks posed to the health and safety of the public; significant property damage; and interference or disruption of essential services, facilities or systems. The Criminal Code provides 33 subsections detailing specific and related terrorism offenses, several cross-referenced to other historically significant acts and conventions"

[93] "Overview Of The GTD", *Start.Umd.Edu*, accessed 6 January 2022, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/about/.

[94] *Global Terrorism Database Codebook: Methodology, Inclusion Criteria, And Variables* (University Of Maryland, 2021).

[95] For an event to be considered as a possible terrorist event there are three elements addresses that must be present, namely: First, "the incident must be intentional" (GTD Codebook, 10), indicating the perpetrator made a conscious decision / calculation. Secondly, "the incident must entail some level of violence or immediate threat of violence" (Ibid.); And thirdly, "The perpetrators of the incidents must be sub-national actors", meaning that state terrorism will not be included (Ibid.,11). Benjamin Allison, "The Devil's in the Details—or Is He? The Ethics and Politics of Terrorism Data." *Perspectives on Terrorism (Lowell)* 15, no. 2 (2021): 128.

[96] Regarding the economic goal, the sole aim of making profit is not suffice for this criterion, yet instead it must involve the strive for fundamental economic change. GTD Codebook, 11.

2. “There must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other. message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims”[97]

This platform shows the possibility of a general definition of terrorism. However, the GTD functions as an independent organization and therefore has more opportunity to have an objective view than the political actors. Due to its independence, the GTD has more freedom in defining the concept.

[97] Meaning that if every person that is involved in conducting the act was aware of the intention, and of which the intention of the attack was “to coerce, intimidate or publicize, the intentionality criterion is met” (Ibid.)

Chapter 2: Defining Incels

The Incel Movement

Incels define themselves (on forums such as incel.org) as people who seriously tried to be part of a romantic relationship but have not yet been successful in their attempts.[98] The incel movement has been an online establishment consisting of cisgender heterosexual men who believe they are unwanted and incapable of having a relationship and receiving the sex they believe they are entitled to, blaming women and feminism for this incapability and discussing the victimhood they experience.[99] The belief in their entitlement to women is often expressed by their hatred of men and women.[100] The incels identify their personal limitations in accessing a sexual or a romantic relationship, such as unattractiveness or shyness.[101] Remarkably, there is a simultaneous hatred and desire for women among the incels, as women have failed to provide incels with opportunities for a relationship.[102] The men that are 'chosen' instead by women are therefore loathed.[103] The deeply misogynistic online incel movement goes further than just the loneliness and frustration of men feeling that they are unable to find a romantic or sexual relationship,[104] as the incels are regularly resentful and misogynistic and blame women for their involuntary celibacy.[105] In more extreme cases, this deeply misogynistic online movement attempts to advocate rape, sexual assault, or other violence against women and also toward men that are more sexually successful.[106] For example, Reddit had to ban the entire r/incels subreddit as it was advocating violence and aggressiveness.[107] What is typical for the phenomenon of the incels is that is non-organizational nor has particular structure and thus is a

[98] Jasser, Kelly and Rothermel, "Male Supremacism and the Hanau Terrorist Attack," 2020.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Sian Tomkinson, Taual Harper and Katie Atwell, "Confronting Incel: Exploring Possible Policy Responses to Misogynistic Violent Extremism." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (2020): 152-69. https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2020.1747393.
[101] Ibid., 154.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] *Global Terrorism Database Codebook: Methodology, Inclusion Criteria, And Variables* (University of Maryland, 2021).
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Christine Hauser, "Reddit Bans 'Incel' Group For Inciting Violence Against Women (Published 2017)", *Nytimes.Com*, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/technology/incels-reddit-banned.html.

fragmented, socially diverse movement that most importantly enhances the conventional gender norms that seems to be more acceptable by the public.[108]

Misogyny

At this time, the incel movement is associated with misogynism on online forums and websites and additionally has been linked to various deadly attacks by men who aligned themselves with the incel identity.[109] Misogyny—the hatred of women and desire for a social construct where women are inferior and face hostility in a patriarchal world—is becoming part of the radicalization process of incels as it forms a large part of the incel ideology.[110] Deadly attacks that have been performed by among others Elliot Rodger have inspired other incels to do the same, leading, for example, Alek Minassian to do the same; it is therefore important to see the incel movement as a potential security threat and to attempt to counteract possible attacks in the future. In a survey performed in 2020 on the forum website *incels.co*, it appears that incels are mainly young men, many of whom still live in their parents' house and have never been intimate with a woman or in a romantic relationship with a woman.[111] Moreover, 80% of the survey respondents were North Americans or Europeans (Western world), had not been to university, and showed indications of mental illness, distress, or trauma: the majority of all the respondents mentioned having depression or had identified themselves as being autistic.[112]

The Manosphere and Male Supremacy

Feminism has flourished through the years and has expanded and thrived online for the past years, especially since the *MeToo* movement in 2017. However, the same is true for anti-feminist masculinist politics.[113] Websites, subcultures, and identifications that can possibly be linked with this anti-feminist online movement have increased and multiplied to an great

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[108]Eviane Leidig, "Why Terrorism Studies Miss The Mark When It Comes To Incels", *ICCT*, 2021, https://icct.nl/publication/why-terrorism-studies-miss-the-mark-when-it-comes-to-incels/.

[109] Jasser, Kelly and Rothermel, "Male Supremacism and the Hanau Terrorist Attack," 2020.

[110]Sean Illing, "What We Get Wrong About Misogyny", *Vox*, 2020, https://www.vox.com/identities/2017/12/5/16705284/elizabeth-warren-loss-2020-sexism-misogyny-kate-manne.

[111] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 568.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Angela Nagle, *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars From 4Chan And Tumblr To Trump And The Alt-Right (Ropely*: John Hunt Publishing Limited, 2017). 1-117. 1-117.

extent.[114] Within these subcultures, which display a great deal of animosity, and have become collectively referred to as the 'manosphere'.[115] Manosphere is explained by Angela Nagle as a way to describe "all matters relating to progressive men's issues activists dealing with the neglect of male health, suicide, and unequal social services and the more horrific corners of the Internet characterized by incel-obsessed, hate-filled, grudge-fueled cultures that reach extreme levels of misogyny."[116] The manosphere is a combined set of forums, websites, blogs, or videos that promote anti-feminism, (toxic) masculinity, and hatred against women and is highly linked to the political alt-right and radical left.[117] Similar to the radical right movement, participants in the manosphere believe that feminism is the cause of the decline of Western civilization.[118] More importantly, there is a connection between the incel movement and the manosphere: the establishment of the manosphere has become a significant manifestation in the past years since the increase of the Internet.[119] A study suggested that the manosphere has become even more toxic on online media such as 4chan and Reddit and that the conflicting beliefs are becoming a pathway for radicalization.[120] Therefore, the manosphere is an important indicator that stresses how misogyny is alive in the incel movement. The incel movement is becoming an interesting and increasingly popular phenomenon, specifically in the Western world.[121] The rise of the Internet and social media have provided a path for the incel movement to grow. It has deep-seated sentiments of misogyny, sexual entitlement, racism, and patriarchy. Toxic masculinity is also playing a part in this movement, where men believe that they are not the type of men women are looking for, which adds to their feelings of incapability. However, it became notable that some incels went much further in their ideas about women and validated their views to perform terrorist attacks to kill as many women as possible. Misogynistic views are inherently linked to the incel community and should be handled similarly to Islamist extremism, according to Tomkinson, Attwell, and Harper.[122] To date, the terrorist attacks linked to incels have been performed individually; however, they find incentive and support on the Internet or are being

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[114] Ibid., 63.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., 64.
[117] Debbie Ging, "Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the Manosphere," *Men and Masculinities* 22, no. 4 (October 2019): 638-57. https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X17706401.
[118] Patrik Hermansson et al, "From Anger to Ideology," in *The International Alt-Right: Fascism for the 21st Century? (*London: Routledge, 2020), 175-193.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Jasser, Kelly and Rothermel, "Male Supremacism and the Hanau Terrorist Attack," 2020.
[122] Tomkinson, Attwell and Harper, "Confronting Incel."

inspired by previous incel-related attacks.[123] Forums such as Reddit, 4chan, 8chan, Sluthate, incel.org, incel.is, incel.net, incel.co, and the community's own online encyclopedia called incel.wiki[124] are websites that encourage these views and beliefs and even inspire the killing of people. Beyond sites only providing a platform for incels, some sites lean toward an extremist incel ideology posing threats to the security of society. The worrying aspect of the incel movement is its accessibility. Unlike others, this is not an ideology that requires training or indoctrination through political texts.[125] Rather, it regards emotions and (sexual) frustrations, which apparently appeal more efficiently to individuals who are merely lonely or angry than those with established extremist tendencies.[126] By combining feelings of isolation and sexual frustration, the incel ideology can weaponize these into a hateful ideology that attacks women, men, and occasionally minorities and individuals with mental illness.[127] The danger lies especially in the online characteristic of the incel movement: due to the online presence, anyone with Internet access can reach a range of incel chatrooms and forums.[128] The danger of the incels is that, compared to Islamism or White supremacism, this is an ideology that any young man, in any community, could fall into and become deeply entangled in.[129]

Femcels

The pioneer of the incel community, Alana, was a so-called "femcel." There is a tendency to confuse this as the female version of the incels. However, the femcels as a community do not relate to the incel community. For women, the term "femcel" uniquely refers to being a female celibate due to romantic rejection.[130] Like the incels, femcels believe that they experience rejection based on appearance and therefore struggle to have a fulfilling and romantic relationship.[131] The femcels have received hateful attention from the incels: the incels do not

[123] Ibid.

[124]These are similar pages, but some are also regularly changing the name of the websites; https://incels.wiki/w/Main_Page

[125] Hoffman and Ware, "Incels: America's Terrorism Threat"

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Harriet Piercy, November 15, 2020, Screenshot media; https://screenshot-media.com/visual-cultures/toxic-masculinity/incels-and-femcels/

[131] Harriet Piercy, November 15, 2020, Screenshot media; https://screenshot-media.com/visual-cultures/toxic-masculinity/incels-and-femcels/; The Femcel Revolution – How an underground group of women is reclaiming involuntary celibacy. Nona Willis Aronowitz, September 1, 2021 https://www.elle.com/life-love/sex-relationships/a37288143/0168-0169-the-femcel-revolution-september-2021/

acknowledge the femcels as a community, as incels believe that women cannot be incels or experience rejection of any kind, as all women have the liberty of choosing.[132] The community of femcels appears not to be aggressive, and hence they seek to guide each other and support members with their attempts of achieving an enjoyable romantic relationship.[133]

The Chads and Stacys

The incel ideology is grounded in two inevitably intertwined beliefs. First, their perception of society is understood as a hierarchy where a person's faith is mainly determined by their physical characteristics and the main culprit for this hierarchy is the person's identification of women.[134] This hierarchy is divided, wherein the top of the structure starts with the "ideal" men and women, also referred by the incels as "Chads" and "Stacys"; the middle of the hierarchy is occupied by the "normies," and finally the deprived incels are found suffering at the bottom.[135] According to the incel belief, the "Chads" charm the majority of women, which leaves the—according to the incels—unattractive women for the "normies," which evidently leaves no women at all for the incels, according to their theory.[136] For example, the deadly attack by Alek Minassian in 2018 was inspired by the incel movement,[137] and Minassian announced that "The Incel Rebellion has already begun! We Will overthrow all the Chads and Stacys! All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger!," stating his motivation driven by his inceldom.[138] Incels feel they are destined to be ignored or rejected by women, and more specifically, there is not a single spark of hope or positive change in that belief.[139] This dark perception is being called by the incels as taking "the black pill."[140]

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[132] Harriet Piercy, November 15, 2020, Screenshot media; https://screenshot-media.com/visual-cultures/toxic-masculinity/incels-and-femcels/

[133] The Femcel Revolution – How an underground group of women is reclaiming involuntary celibacy. Nona Willis Aronowitz, September 1, 2021 https://www.elle.com/life-love/sex-relationships/a37288143/0168-0169-the-femcel-revolution-september-2021/

[134] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 567.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., 568.

[137] Kapur, "Different Kind of Terrorism."

[138] Michael Talbot, "'This Is The Day Of Retribution': Accused Van Killer'S Chilling Police Interview Released", *Toronto.Citynews.Ca*, 2019, https://toronto.citynews.ca/2019/09/27/this-is-the-day-of-retribution-accused-van-killers-chilling-police-interview/.

[139] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 568.

[140] Ibid.

The Blue, Red, and Black Pills

Taking the "black pill" is a concept inspired and derived from the science fiction film *The Matrix*. In the film, the main character must choose between the "blue pill" or "red pill," which means that if a person takes a blue pill, she will remain in a world of illusion, while those who choose the red pill will experience an awakening to the core, fundamental truths about the world.[141] In the manosphere (and thus incel ideology), the theory of taking the "red pill" will reveal the core truths about women and society: it allows takers to recognize the intrinsically shallow nature of women and to give more insight into how men can *manipulate* and *exploit* these imaginary and shallow characteristics of women.[142] Taking the black pill as an incel, however, indicates that one will accept the more harsh and brutal reality than the red pill is providing: the truth where women and society are inherently biased against those who do not have the specific physical requirements that cause them not to be recognized and accepted as attractive by women or even society.[143] Consequently, within the incel ideology, taking the black pill is important, as it indicates that one is regarding inceldom as a permanent situation that is unchangeable.[144] Another incel form, the militant incel identity, joined with the original version of the incel identity, while the militant incel has a more aggressive edge.[145] The main difference in this case is the conviction that those who embrace the idea of being an incel should take control of their lives and take revenge for the denigrating and dismissive way they have been treated.[146] Hence, Reddit became a popular website for these militant incels, specifically the subreddit[147] *r/incels*.[148] At the moment, Reddit has banned this subreddit due to the heavy violent content.

[141] Ibid.
[142] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 568.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., 566
[146] Ibid., 566
[147] Subreddit is a forum page within the Reddit website, r/incels thus refers to a subreddit regarded to incels
[148] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 566-567.

Violent Incel Cases

Six cases of violent incel attack are briefly described to provide a clearer insight, and considering cases according to the criteria of the GTD might reveal components that correlate between the GTD definition and the incel cases. These cases include perpetrators that self-identify as an incel committing attacks in the United States and Canada.

United States

Elliot Rodger

The first known self-identified violent incel was Elliot Rodger.[149] In May 2014, Rodger announced his plans with a video called the "Day of Retribution" on social media where he mentioned his desire to punish women because of rejection and emphasized his envy of sexually active men.[150] At that time, Rodger was active on online communities that PUAHate[151] and ForeverAlone. Both these were communities that fully embraced misogyny and delivers/ facilitates methods that should manipulate woman into sex.[152] This led to him injuring 14 people and killing 7 people, including himself in Isla Vista, California.[153] He also wrote a 137-page manifesto named "My Twisted World," explaining his motivations and justifications to execute an assault, driven by his life as an incel (inceldom).[154] The arguments to perform this attack that Rodger explained in the manifesto was that the ultimate reason for his misery was the rejection of women to him, that he hated women for that and because of jealousy toward men who *were* sexually active.[155] Prior to Rodger, the term involuntary celibate was quite unknown to the public space, limited to the online world of the manosphere. [156]After the Isla Vista shooting,

[149] Ibid., 570.

[150] Rick Anderson, "'Here I Am, 26, With No Friends, No Job, No Girlfriend': Shooter's Manifesto Offers Clues To 2015 Oregon College Rampage", *Los Angeles Times*, 2017, https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-school-shootings-2017-story.html. ; Blommaert, 2017, 3; Richard Winton, Rosanna Xia and Rong-Gong Lin II, "Isla Vista Shooting: Read Elliot Rodger's Graphic, Elaborate Attack Plan", *Los Angeles Times*, 2014, https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-isla-vista-document-20140524-story.html.

[151] PUA stands for Pick Up Artists, also known as PUA. Sugiura, *The Incel Rebellion*, 18.

[152] Sugiura, *The Incel Rebellion*, 18.

[153] Blommaert, *Online-Offline Modes, 3*; Winton, Xia and Lin, "Elliot Rodger's Attack Plan."

[154] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 569.

[155] Allerga Passmann, "The Sociosexuality and Well-Being Of Incels" (Bachelor Psychology, University of Twente, 2020).3.

[156] Sugiura, *The Incel Rebellion*, 18.

Rodger became a true inspiration to many in the incel movement: incels saw Rodger as a saint, often referring to him as the "Supreme Gentlemen" or "Saint Elliot."[157] The attack by Rodger became a major factor for incels and has defined one of the main components of the movement's ideology since then—the privilege of sex and relationships and the "dehumanization" of women have played a major role within the incel movement.[158] After Rodger's attack, the many attacks inspired by him thereafter, the wider public sphere, including the media, gained attention for the incels and presented them as extremist and violent misogynists.[159]

Chris Harper-Mercer

On October 1 in 2015 at the Umpqua Community College in Oregon Chris Harper-Mercer killed nine people and wounded seven.[160] Inspired by among others, Elliot Rodger, the Columbine kids,[161] and Seung-Hui Cho,[162] Harper-Mercer prepared his plan well in advance and made a manifesto explaining how his frustrations regarding his virginity, not having a girlfriend, and feeling mistreated led to him having the urge to take violent action as means of revenge.[163]

Scott Beierle

On November 2, 2018, the 40-year-old Scott Beierle opened fire in a Hot Yoga studio in Tallahassee, killing two women, injuring five other people, and finally killing himself.[164] His

[157] Adam Frisk, "Explaining Incel Slang Used By Alek Minassian During Interrogation", *Toronto*, 2019, https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/explaining-incel-slang-used-by-alek-minassian-during-interrogation-1.4612905.

[158] Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism," 6.

[159] Sugiura, *The Incel Rebellion*, 18.

[160] Anderson, "Shooters Manifesto".

[161] The Columbine kids Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were friends from school who killed thirteen students at the Columbine High School – motivations were rejection, bullying and Eric Harris faced much rejection from women. ("Eric Harris And Dylan Klebold", *Incel Wiki*, accessed 21 February 2021, https://en.incelwiki.org/Eric_Harris_and_Dylan_Klebold.)

[162] "Seung-Hui Cho", *Incel Wiki*, accessed 21 February 2021, https://incelwiki.com/w/Seung-Hui_Cho

[163] Anderson, "Shooters Manifesto".

[164] Jeff Burlew and Karl Etters, "Tallahassee Yoga Studio Shooting: TPD Report Reveals Gunman Planned 'Horrific Event' For Months", *Tallahassee Democrat*, 2018, https://eu.tallahassee.com/story/news/2019/02/12/tallahassee-yoga-studio-shooting-scott-beierle-report-tpd-florida/2849736002.

attack was planned months in advance[165] and he often compared himself to Elliot Rodger[166] and broadcasted his incel issues and thoughts on women via numerous manifestos and videos.[167]

Canada

Alek Minassian

On April 23, 2018, the self-identified incel Alek Minassian killed 10 people and injured 16 citizens in Toronto.[168] Minassian had prepared the assault weeks in advance: he rented the van three weeks beforehand, and shortly before the attack, he announced on Facebook "(…) The Incel Rebellion has already begun!."[169] Not only did Minassian state in the interrogation that his plan was to kill as many people as possible,[170] he also mentioned that he hopes to be an inspiration to other incels, as Elliot Rodger inspired him.[171] Minassian faces multiple charges of murder and attempted murder yet no charges of terrorist activity.[172] Before executing his attack, Minassian announced his motivations for the assault based on his beliefs. Moreover, the motivations were directed at civilians: the intention was to harm and frighten the public.

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[165] Ibid.

[166] Anna North, "How Mass Shooters Practice Their Hate Online", *Vox*, 2018, https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/10/31/18039294/scott-beierle-tallahassee-shooting-pittsburgh-gab.

[167] YouTube, *The Rebirth Of My Misogynism - Scott Beierle (Tallahassee Yoga Studio Shooter)*, video, 2018, https://youtu.be/rI86cxb7r1s.; Fineout, Gary. "Yoga Shooter Appeared To Have Made Misogynistic Videos". *AP NEWS*, 2018. https://apnews.com/article/tallahassee-north-america-us-news-ap-top-news-shootings-dea39b8b45d2471a8c0df817cb9656d0.

[168] Adam Frisk, "Explaining Incel Slang Used By Alek Minassian During Interrogation", *Toronto*, 2019, https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/explaining-incel-slang-used-by-alek-minassian-during-interrogation-1.4612905.

[169] Tomkinson, Attwell and Harper, "Confronting Incel," 152.

[170] "Toronto Van Attack: Minassian Guilty Of Killing 10 People", *BBC News*, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-56269095.

[171] Adam Frisk, *Explaining Incel Slang Used By Alek Minassian During Interrogation*. Video, 03:25-03:37, 2019. http://Explaining incel slang used by Alek Minassian during interrogation. https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/explaining-incel-slang-used-by-alek-minassian-during-interrogation-1.4612905

[172] BBC News, "Toronto Van Attack"

Alexander Stavropoulos

Alexander Stavropoulos stabbed two victims with two knives in New Sudbury on June 3, 2019. During the interrogation, he stated that, as a member of the incel community, he was inspired by Alek Minassian and acted upon his frustration about not being able to have sex.[173]

Anonymous Man

On February 24, 2020, a 17-year-old male was the first to be charged with terrorist activity in Canada that is not Islamic extremism[174] after attacking—with a machete—women working at the Crown Spa—an erotic massage parlor—killing one woman and injuring three others.[175] Based on evidence that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) uncovered, the motive was violent misogyny in relation with inceldom.[176] The anonymous boy was initially charged with first-degree murder; however, the RCMP later has announced that he is being charged due to incel-related "terrorist activity" or as Canada defines it, an ideologically motivated violent extremist movement[177].

To sum up, Rodger, Minassian, Harper-Mercer, Beierle, and Stavropoulos all expressed a clear desire to kill (women) by means of revenge in response to their inceldom and to frequent rejection, virginity, or not getting sex, and in addition, also hoped to spark inspiration to others. The 17-year-old appears to have sought to attack in relation to the incel community or inceldom. Along with that, Rodger, Minassian, and Mercer all wrote manifestos in advance for their assaults, explaining their arguments and motivations, sometimes with statements aimed at their targets, which indicates that they wanted to convey a message to the victims and toward a larger audience, specifically women. Beierle posted several misogynistic videos aimed at women but not directly in relation to the attack. Stravopoulos and the 17-year-old male argued they were

[173] Erik White, "Sudbury Man Pleads Guilty In Random Knife Attack On Mom And Baby—'I Just Saw Her And Decided That Is The One' | CBC News", *CBC*, 2020, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/alexander-stavropoulos-sentencing-random-knife-attack-1.5398849.

[174] Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism," 23.

[175] Lim, "Canadian Authorities Charge Teenager With Terrorism Violence."

[176] Leyland Cecco, "Canada Police Say Machete Killing Was 'Incel' Terror Attack", *The Guardian*, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/19/toronto-attack-incel-terrorism-canada-police.

[177] Ben Cousins, "Terrorism Charges Against Teen 'Incel' In Massage Parlour Stabbing 'Appropriate': Blair", *Ctvnews*, 2020, https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/terrorism-charges-against-teen-incel-in-massage-parlour-stabbing-appropriate-blair-1.4945277.

motivated by their inceldom, but there are no indications that they intended to send a message to a specific target.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Method

This research aims to explore the incel movement as a new phenomenon, and assess both what it entails, and how it relates to the political discourse surrounding the definition of terrorism. In addition, it leads to a discussion regarding the impending threat of the incels is perceived as is a manifestation of terrorism. The list of the definitions of terrorism enables insight into how different attacks by incels can be viewed. Specifically, looking at assaults executed by incels in the US and the US definition creates an understanding of how the United States perceives the incel threat. The same is true, for example, for Germany, Canada, the United Kingdom and other important actors in relation to the incel community. The incel environment is still a much-unexplored area, and therefore more research is needed. For this reason, flexibility is necessary in determining what this movement entails, but more importantly how it fits in the political terrorism discourse.

Methodology

For this research, a qualitative multiple case study is the most suitable research design. To view the different perspectives of how incels are perceived, the data for this research will be assembled by viewing several instances of violent incel attacks, and how incel attacks are perceived by actors such as the government, media, academics, nongovernmental organizations and think thanks. The research is structured as such that the threat of the incel movement is discussed per actor. The purpose of this is to show how the incel phenomenon is perceived. First, the government is covered. Then, how academics discuss this matter is considered. Third, the media and lastly the discourse of a nongovernmental organization or think tank is considered. In doing so, the aim is to create a more complete picture of the political discussion and various interpretations of where the incels belong to. Combining incel violent event cases together, can provide an interesting look at the different classifications these incel cases get in Canada and the United States.

The period that is chosen for the data collection starts from 2014 – due to the first identified incel attack – towards 2021, since these attacks are very topical and still occur today. Yet due to the deadline of this thesis and the time that was available to collected makes it not possible

to keep everything up to date, the data is limited up to 2021. Most of the data that will be collected for the study will involve information from reports, (academic) publications, media reports, interviews, media reports or articles, interviews, and blogs. The sources that are chosen for the research are specifically as inceldom is a new phenomenon and political, the chosen sources will frame the best insight into the political discourse of this research. Thus, the sources used are of importance for this discussion as well as the sources participate in these political discussions. Therefore, reason for the use of these sources is because the political discourse regarding the label terrorism and inceldom occurs in science and academic organizations, among think tanks, within the political spectrum and in opinionated pieces within the media. Hence, gathering data from where the political discussion takes place is regarded as the best option. During research the main search terms used when doing online were among others "incel", "inceldom", "involuntary celibate", "terrorism", "extremism", "incel attack", "terrorist threat" and "incel threat". During reading through the resources, the main things that were deemed relevant or important for the analysis were based on whether or not the sources argued the political discourse among inceldom and terrorism – if it was or was not suitable to be categorized as a terrorist attack or otherwise; how these sources described the incel movement; the attacks and the aftermath of such attacks and more.

For the analyses, this set of actors will be discussed for both Canada and The United States. Therefore, the data will exist out of the perspectives from the government, - media, - academic, - nongovernmental and think tanks actors. Within these analyses, each actor will broadly discuss all the arguments for and against regarding the research question of "to *what extent and based on what arguments has the incel movement been defined, or not, as a potential terrorist threat?"*.

By conducting the research through this way, a clear overview of the perceptions among the relevant actors vis-à-vis incels as terrorists is created. However, it should be kept in mind that several actors are influenced to a larger degree of bias. However, the data collected are provided with well-conceived arguments. Furthermore, because this research is based on a specific part of the world, it might not be possible to generalize the results and answers to the rest of the world, or other cases that also relate to terrorism, such as Jihadism, but only to the incel cases and discussions of political terrorism. Because this is a multiple case study, the results and conclusions can be possible to theoretically generalize the results of this research. This research teaches us about the theoretical quality or limitations of our knowledge about political discourse and the labeling of terrorism. Some limitations that influenced this research is the amount of

time that was available for conducting the research. And the number of pages that are allowed to use: this limits the scope of the research. Another limitation is that the chance of missing out on important sources are realistic – for example a news article or report.

The research enhances understanding of the phenomenon of the incel movement. This research contributes to the academic debate by focusing on the incel movement and hopes to offer more perspective on this political discussion. These perspectives being arguments for the degree of danger the incel movement carries, or to what extent the incels attacks are perceived as terrorist.This thesis seeks to contribute to forming a signal list of what might be possible signs of possible security threats from specifically incels. This is important as the incel movement is a relatively new phenomenon within politics and still a lot needs to be uncovered: *if* incels poses a threat, and if so, *when* that is the case. Also, it provides more insight of the movement and how the responses have been so far. The incel movement is an interesting phenomenon as a case study as it is a young and emerging movement that manifests itself entirely online. The movement, based on misogyny, is a large ideological movement which by far exceeds the level of a few isolated cases of the same kind of attacks. It nevertheless challenges us to explore new goals, ideologies, strategies, and ambitions, and perhaps even restructure the discussion.

Chapter 4: Research Analysis

The Current State of Affairs

The incels are mentioned various statements, reports, and research regarding extremist violence and terrorism in the United States and Canada, and there is also an indication of awareness of the level of threat they pose in law enforcement in the United States, and Canada is taking steps in their threat assessments.[178] The view of the incels as a violent movement is incorporated into these assessments and reports, and incels have been labeled as a new domestic threat by most state actors, in media coverage and by scholars in North America.[179] Actors in connection to the United States and Canada in relation to the incel threat are discussed in this chapter. It will consider whether the incels should be viewed as a manifestation of terrorism and what arguments are given for that statement. Next, empirical evidence regarding the incel movement is discussed. Finally, a conclusion is provided based on the research chapter and to answer the research question.

Government Actors

In Canada, the RCMP[180] announced 2020 in a statement that it will add the incels into the terrorism awareness guide and describes the incel movement as the "most dangerous subculture."[181] This terrorism awareness guide has primarily existed since 2015 for, e.g., parents to recognize the behavior of violent radicalization and terrorist planning at an early stage.[182] Another primary government agency, the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS), stated in its annual report that incels are classified as violent extremists under the subcategory of "gender-driven violence" in its 2020 annual report.[183] Gender-driven violence is introduced to the service's new vocabulary as part of one of the three identified forms of violent extremism, namely ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE).[184] The gender-

[178] Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism," 26.
[179] Stewart Bell, 2020, Global News, https://globalnews.ca/news/7021882/rcmp-incel-terrorism-guide/
[180] The Royal Canadian Mounted Police
[181] Global News, Youtube: https://youtu.be/b0UKZHEYr_I , 0:14
[182] Stewart Bell, "RCMP Adding Incels To Terrorism Awareness Guide | Globalnews.Ca", *Global News*, 2022, https://globalnews.ca/news/7021882/rcmp-incel-terrorism-guide/.
[183] "2018 CSIS Public Report", 2019, 1-52, http://canada.ca/content/dam/csis-scrs/documents/publications/2018-PUBLIC_REPORT_ENGLISH_Digital.pdf.
[184] Ibid.

driven violence is now part of CSIS' new vocabulary aiming to view, use, and describe the "violent extremist terrorist threat landscape."[185] In addition, the RCMP have also affirmed that incel and incel-inspired attacks fall under the category of IMVE.[186] For Canada, covering the incels as part of violent extremism implies that the government believes the (violent) incels to be a sincere public safety threat.[187] Striking, however, is that the Canadian authorities charged the assault of an underage boy in Toronto that had clear links to the incel community as a *terrorist act*: the first-ever incel-related terrorist charge.[188] In contrast, however, the attack of Alek Minassian, who killed and injured civilians by vehicle ramming and with clear motivations, has not been charged with any such "terrorist activity." It is therefore unclear why Canada did charge the unknown 17-year-old boy as a terrorist while the case of Alek Minassian, which does appear to have clear characteristics that could fit into the terrorism category, was *not* charged with terrorism, yet the verdict also reasoned that his autism spectrum disorder is not the reason for his violent actions.[189]

In the National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism of 2021, the United States created a framework for a strategy against "domestic terrorism."[190] One key point made in this assessment is that the threat of domestic terrorism mainly derives from inter alia hatred based on racial, religious, or ethnic aspects and motivates violent extremism.[191] Another key component for the threat of domestic terrorism according to this strategy report stems from "domestic terrorists" influenced by, for example, single-issue ideologies, *involuntary celibate violent extremism,* grievances, or a combination of ideological factors.[192] This publication broadly mentions that domestic terrorism has been executed mainly by lone actors and small groups and in general appears to have none to very little organizational structure or direction.[193]

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[185] Bell, "Terrorism Awareness Guide." ; "2018 CSIS Public Report."

[186] Bell, "Terrorism Awareness Guide."

[187] Ibid.

[188] "Updated Charge, Young Person Charged With First-Degree Murder And Attempted Murder, Updated To First-Degree Murder - Terrorist Activity And Attempted Murder- Terrorist Activity, Homicide #12/2020, Dufferin And Wilson Avenue | Royal Canadian Mounted Police", *Rcmp-Grc.Gc.Ca*, 2022, https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/news/2020/dufferin-and-wilson-avenue.

[189] Jack L. Rozdilsky and Edward Snowden, "Toronto Van Attack: Guilty Verdict, But Canada Still Needs To Tackle Ideological Violence", *The Conversation*, 2021, https://theconversation.com/toronto-van-attack-guilty-verdict-but-canada-still-needs-to-tackle-ideological-violence-156452.

[190] National Security Council, *National Strategy For Countering Domestic Terrorism*, (Washington, 2021), https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/National-Strategy-for-Countering-Domestic-Terrorism.pdf. 14.

[191] Ibid. 8.

[192] Ibid.,8-9.

[193] Ibid., 9

It is therefore clear that this strategy report defines components that align well with violent inceldom; for example, "especially on Internet-based communications platforms such as social media, file-upload sites and end-to-end encrypted platforms, all of these can combine and amplify threats to public safety."[194] This report emphasizes violent extremist movements, but the explicit identification of violent extremists groups, organizations, or individuals remains excluded. A possible explanation for this could be that in this report, it is highlighted that these (digital) threats are increasingly complex and constantly shifting, leading to substantial challenges for law enforcement.[195] This could be a plausible explanation for why there is a tendency to refrain from explicitly categorizing the incels.[196] Some goals that are established to counter contemporary domestic terrorism are, among others, restrictions in access to assault weapons by enforcing legal prohibitions, creating more awareness on the national and internal scale, and monitoring Internet forums.[197]

In the United States, at least 10 serious crime assaults have already been performed by incels.[198] However, the components on which the movement thrives—misogyny and male supremacy—seem not to have appeared in legislative acts in the United States.[199] It appears that the United States has no specific federal laws that will acknowledge misogyny and gender-based motivations as an official offense.[200] This gap in legislation became particularly evident when in March 2021, when perpetrator Robert Aaron Long murdered eight people, of which the

[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid., 8-9.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Elliot Rodger, Brian Clyde, Christopher- Harper Mercer, Scott Beierle, James Holmes,William Atchison, Nikolaz Cruz ,Christopher Cleary, Sheldon Bentley, Armando Hernandez Jr.,, Cole Carini, Tres Genco and more.
[199]Bill Chappell and Vanessa Romo, "Atlanta Shooting Suspect Charged In Spa Shootings", *WAMU*, 2021, https://wamu.org/story/21/03/17/atlanta-shooting-suspect-is-believed-to-have-visited-spas-he-targeted/. ; EJ Dickson, "The Excuses We Make For White Male Murderers", *Rolling Stone*, 2021, https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-commentary/atlanta-shooting-robert-long-1143318/. ; Kate Brumback, "Man Pleads Guilty To 4 Asian Spa Killings, Sentenced To Life", *AP NEWS*, 2021, https://apnews.com/article/shootings-georgia-massage-business-shootings-4c9d611102b25b49b8bfee276278c472.
[200]"Suspect In Atlanta-Area Spa Shootings Pleads Guilty To Four Of Eight Murders", *Cbsnews.Com*, 2021, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/robert-aaron-long-atlanta-spa-shootings-guilty-plea-four-murders/. ; Erin Donaghue, "Prosecutors In Spa Shootings Could Be First To Weigh Georgia's New Hate Crime Law", *Cbsnews.Com*, 2021, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/atlanta-spa-shootings-prosecutors-georgia-new-hate-crime-law/.

majority were (Asian) women,[201] at massage parlors where he received sexual services.[202] Long stated he did not execute this assault out of racist motivations, but rather blamed the massage parlors for giving him a sex addiction.[203] Although Robert Long is charged with among other crimes, aggravated assault, domestic terrorism, and murder, Long cannot be charged with offenses that are gender-based or misogynistic. In addition, not only does the government agency has no legislation for misogyny and gender-driven motivation for violence but also the American Psychiatric Association have no reference guide in which sex addiction is acknowledged as a mental disorder.[204] Regarding the fact that Long is charged with 'domestic terrorism', shows there is a connotation with the idea that these violent incel actions fit into the framework of terrorism and tends to be viewed as such. Yet, to label the entire incel movement as a terrorist movement is presumptuous.

In the United States, the military and law enforcement began to pay more attention to incels in 2019, after perpetrator 22-year-old Brian Clyde opened fire at the Earle Cabell Federal Building in Dallas Texas and appeared to have strong links with the incel movement.[205] An article of Homeland Security in January 2021 argued that although it is evident that the incel movement does pose a serious threat, those within the incel movement who will radicalize into violent incels are a small part in comparison to the total amount of incels.[206] Homeland Security therefore argues that one cannot speak of a clear ideology nor an organized group supporting the violent incels and should refrain from identifying and generalizing the incels as terrorists.[207] Both Canada and the United States are thoroughly examining for concrete law enforcement and

[201]Edward Lempinen, "Georgia Attack Reflects Misogyny, Racism Embedded In Mainstream Society", *Berkeley News*, 2021, https://news.berkeley.edu/2021/03/19/georgia-attack-reflects-misogyny-racism-embedded-in-mainstream-society/.

[202]Maria Cartaya et al., "Atlanta-Area Spa Shooter Pleads Guilty To Four Killings And Gets Life In Prison, But Still Could Face Death Penalty", *CNN*, 2021, https://edition.cnn.com/2021/07/27/us/atlanta-spa-shooting-plea/index.html.

[203] Brumback, "Man Pleads Guilty."

[204] Ibid.

[205] D. Branham, C. Jaramillo, The Dallas Morning News, 2019 ; B.Hoffman et al. Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence, 571

[206] "What Incels Can Tell Us About Isolation, Resentment, and Terror Designations". January 19, 2021 A. Speckhard et al. Homeland Security Today – GTSC https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/perspective-what-incels-can-tell-us-about-isolation-resentment-and-terrorism-designations/

[207] Anne Speckard et al., "What Incels Can Tell Us About Isolation, Resentment, And Terror Designations", *International Center For The Study Of Violent Extremism*, 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348857241_What_Incels_Can_Tell_Us_About_Isolation_Resentment_and_Terror_Designations.

legislation that is most suitable for these incel attacks. Yet this appears to be a ponderous process, given the distinct ways in which the incel attacks are viewed.

Academic Actor

Academics argue there is an indisputable link between misogyny, male supremacy, and violence: domestic violence is a course of action for a male abuser to compel (1950s) traditional gender roles, indicating the desire and the idea of men controlling women. Notably, a primary characteristic of enforcing control over women is by violence, or threats of violence to practice that control.[208] Since more than 60 killings have occurred in the United States and Canada under the category of "incel-inspired"[209] and in recent years more similar assaults have occurred, academics have framed their ideas about the incels and its community. As sociology professor Judith Taylor described it, these incel-related acts of violence are therefore becoming "habitual" and have reached a point where considering these attacks as separate random acts is no longer valid.[210] The authors of "Assessing the Threat of the Incel Violence" are proponents of the notion that the incel community should be seen as a terrorist movement.[211] They state that "The violent manifestations of the ideology pose a new terrorism threat"[212] and that monitoring and specific legislation for incels must be incorporated into domestic law enforcement agencies.[213] In their study, they describe various trends that occur in incel violent cases considered terrorism. According to Hoffman, Ware, and Shapiro, the incels' main ethos evolves around subjugation and oppression of women (and sexually active men), and has "far-reaching societal effects," and therefore the incel violence presumably "conforms to an emergent trend in terrorism with a more salient hate crime dimension."[214] Yet, their research does not present a definition that entails terrorism nor describes a definition that is used as a scale in their article regarding terrorism. It is therefore difficult to validate the pro-incel terrorism argument when there is no definition brought to bear on it.

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[208] Shannon Zimmerman, Luisa Ryan and David Duriesmith, "Recognizing The Violent Extremist Ideology Of 'Incels'", *Woman In International Security*, 2018, 1-5, https://giwps.georgetown.edu/resource/recognizing-the-violent-extremist-ideology-of-incels/.

[209] Bell, "Terrorism Awareness Guide."

[210] "Toronto Van Attack: Inside The 'War On Women' Waged By Sickening 'Incel' Movement", *Inside Edition*, 2018, video: 1:13-1.30. https://www.insideedition.com/toronto-van-attack-inside-war-women-waged-sickening-incel-movement-42792.

[211] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 568 – 574.

[212] Ibid., 581.

[213] Ibid.

[214] Ibid., 568.

The CEO of the Centre for Countering Digital Hate, Imran Ahmed, is in favor of considering incels as terrorists. Ahmed states that incels are and should be treated as terrorists as they "seek to teach women a lesson, to 'remold' society, to change through violence that which they could never possibly achieve through the ballot box or persuasion."[215] Scholar Phil Gurski, in contrast, argued in 2020 that the incel movement should not be considered terrorism, but rather as a hate crime, as only a small percentage of the movement seems to be violent as well as claiming that labeling a movement as terrorist can have a severe impact, while it does not mean that a movement promotes misogyny and even violence does not directly imply it makes the entire incel movement terrorist[216]. Moreover, author Alex DiBranco mentions that the incel movement is terrorism, in which elements such as misogyny, male sexual entitlement, and anti-feminism are the fundamental motivators itself for violent incel-attacks.[217] However, the author also states that misogyny and male supremacy are both still too much in the background, and instead of being viewed as "gateway drug[s]" into extremism and white supremacy, they should be acknowledged and included as ideologies themselves, in order to generate broader insight and understanding of modern right-wing extremism movements.[218] For example, right-wing extremist Anders Breivik, who killed 77 people on a Norwegian Island in 2011, executed this attack primarily based on xenophobic and Islamophobic ideologies.[219] However, Breivik was also highly convinced of the theory of "cultural Marxism" or "political correctness" in which he feared that among others, any form of multiculturism was destructive for the national identity, that it would take over Europe, and that it encouraged Islamic extremism.[220] More importantly, Breivik describes in his manifesto that feminism is a very important element of this "cultural Marxism," arguing that "radical feminism" or "feminization" is destroying the traditional European structures and culture and even supports mass Muslim immigration.[221] Taking Breivik's motives as an example, the misogyny and anti-feminism characteristics can certainly be intertwined with right-wing extremist ideologies. Dr. Eviane Leidig argues that

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[215] Townsend, "Plymouth Gunman Ranted Online."

[216] Phil Gurksi, "The Challenges Of Calling Any Act Of Violence 'Terrorism'P: The Debate Over What To Call Terrorism Is An Eternal One. Where Incels Fit In, If They Do, Will Also Go On For A While.", *Borealis Threat & Risk Consulting*, 2020, https://borealisthreatandrisk.com/challenges-of-calling-act-of-violence-terrorism/.

[217] DiBranco, "Male Supremacist Terrorism".

[218] DiBranco, "Male Supremacist Terrorism."

[219] Ibid.

[220] Dr. Arun Kundnani, "The Anti-Islamist: Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto", *ICCT*, 2012, https://icct.nl/publication/the-anti-islamist-anders-behring-breiviks-manifesto/.

[221] Anders Breivik, "A European Declaration Of Independence", *Democratie.Ulg.Ac.Be*, 2011, 1-1518. http://www.democratie.ulg.ac.be/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Breivik-Manifesto.pdf. 35- 38.

determining the ideological motivation for specifically the incel movement as a category of terrorism must not depend on terms of group affiliation, but rather on a diversity of organizational types like networks and subcultures.[222] On a more nuanced perspective, Leidig believes that counter-terrorism frameworks regarding online-based movements are ill equipped and that online-based violent ideologies must be defined by its content rather than the type of actor.[223]

Thus, these academics overall agree that the incels pose a serious threat, however, differ in their perspectives if it falls under terrorism or another structure: also, what elements of the phenomenon are most important to regard as threats.

Media Actors

Former Intelligence Analyst Canadian Jessica Davis believes that incel-related violence is a form of terrorism and urges actors to treat the movement that way. The underaged boy who attacked women in Toronto with a machete being charged for terrorist activity was only the second time that Canada brought terrorism charges against an individual who was not related to Al-Qaida or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Already in 2018, 10 incel violent attacks happened in Toronto. Davis depicts that the incel violent attacks all show tactics that reflect current terrorism trends, such as stabbings, shootings, or vehicle ramming attacks.[224] Since the attack by Elliot Rodger in 2014 in Santa Barbara, various offenders of severe violence and attempts of such that mainly occurred in the United States and Canada have referenced Elliot Rodger or have claimed to be connected to the misogynist incel ideology.[225] The awareness of the threat of this new phenomenon (inceldom) increased in the media.[226] Following the attack by Alek Minassian in April 2018, media awareness about incels rose, and questions were raised about incel-related attacks among people.[227] Frequently ,these violent incel offenders ended their lives after their attacks; however, Minassian survived and elaborately explained the

[222] Leidig, "Miss the Mark."
[223] Ibid.
[224] Jessica Davis, "Incel-related violence is terrorism – and the world should start treating it that way," The Globe and Mail. May 20, 2020, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-incel-related-violence-is-terrorism-and-the-world-should-start/.
[225] Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism," 22.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid., 23.

misogynist incel ideology during police hearings.[228] Later that year, another attack was conducted by Scott Beierle, who compared himself to Rodger and opened fire at a yoga class in Tallahassee, killing two women.[229] This again returned media attention to the new ideology.[230] For that reason, Jessica Davis believes the label of terrorism is the only correct category for the incel movement due to the specific hate mainly projected towards women, the desire to instill fear, advocacy for violence. While the ideology seems to be somewhat unclear, that happens to be primarily the case with other terrorist groups too.[231]

Nongovernmental Organization and Think Thank Actors

Several institutions such as the Anti-Defamation League[232] and the American organization called the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) added misogyny and male supremacy as part of *extremist* movements in 2018, when in both Canada[233] and in the United States,[234] attacks took place by men based on either misogynistic or (white) male supremacist views.[235] More specifically, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) labeled incel-related perpetrators as part of alt-right terrorism, labeling Elliot Rodger as the first alt-right incel terrorist.[236] Another organization "New America," an American think tank, published an article with recommendations about the incel movement. In short, the authors M. Kelly, A. DiBranco, and Dr. J. DeCook believe that certain acts of mass violence by incels show indications of ideological motivations and goals and thus meet the requirements for the label "terrorism."[237] Nevertheless, the authors imply that not all incel attacks must therefore be labeled as terrorist acts, but cases such as that of Elliot Rodger, where he in his 137-page manifesto explains his motivations for the attack and clarifies that because he "cannot kill every single female on earth,

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[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid., 22.
[230] Ibid., 23.
[231] Davis, "Incel Violence is Terrorism."
[232] The Center on Extremism (CEO), "Misogyny and White Supremacy."
[233] Attack by Alek Minissian in Toronto, Canada in 2018
[234] Alex DiBranco, "Shooting In Tallahassee Illustrates Increasing Misogynist Violence – Institute For Research On Male Supremacism", *Malesupremacism.Org*, 2018, https://www.malesupremacism.org/publications/shooting-in-tallahassee-illustrates-increasing-misogynist-violence/.; DiBranco, "Male Supremacist Terrorism."
[235] DiBranco, "Male Supremacist Terrorism."
[236]"Alt-Right", *Southern Poverty Law Center*, accessed 4 May 2021, https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/alt-right.; Zimmerman, Ryan and Duriesmith. "Recognizing the Violent Extremist Ideology of 'Incels'."
[237] Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism,"24.

but I can deliver a devastating blow that will shake all of them to the core of their wicked hearts"[238] seeks to instill fear and to inspire others with his acts, can be identified according to the scholars as having an ideological motivation and goal. Therefore, the authors recommend approaching the incel movement as a *transnational threat.*[239] The case of Alek Minassian in 2018 is another example that fits the terrorism category and should be considered as such according to Kelly, DeBranco and DeCook.[240] The case of Tres Genco, a self-identified incel who was arrested in Ohio, on July the 22nd 2021, by the police as he often published violent misogynistic content, and eventually had announced to execute a mass shooting specifically on women—ideally around 3,000 women according to his manifesto "A Hideous Symphony"[241]—is similar. Genco self-identifies as an incel and is facing charges of hate crime. As part of his preparation, he attended an Army Basic Training that lasted a few months, prepared a fully planned assault, and made purchases to complete his planned assault such as weapons, a bulletproof vest, and a knife.[242] Genco was charged for attempting to commit a hate crime by planning to kill 3,000 women.[243] In addition, it also appears that these incel-related perpetrators often choose spaces associated symbolically with young attractive women, such as a sorority, yoga class, or massage salons, that suggests a misogynist and potentially *terrorist motivation*, similar to the targeting of synagogues or mosques to represent anti-Semitic and Anti-Muslim ideologies.[244] As a result, there is a tendency to identify incels as a movement that has no specific political aims.[245] The details of a political agenda for the overall incel movement are not coherently developed, but incels do identify as an oppressed group that can only dissolve by drastically reforming the structure of society, with violence if necessary.[246] In a policy brief for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, it is argued that the incel movement should fall under right-wing terrorism, which is defined as violence by "sub-national or non-

[238] Winton, Xia and Lin II, "Rodger's Attack Plan".
[239] Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism," 24.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Jaclyn Diaz, "Police Foiled An Ohio Incel's Plot To Kill Women In A Mass Shooting, Prosecutors Say", *Text.Npr.Org*, 2021, https://text.npr.org/1019089834.
[242] "Ohio Man Charged With Hate Crime Related To Plot To Conduct Mass Shooting Of Women, Illegal Possession Of Machine Gun", *The United States Department Of Justice*, 2021, https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/ohio-man-charged-hate-crime-related-plot-conduct-mass-shooting-women-illegal-possession.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism," 23.
[245] Ibid.," 24.
[246] Ibid.

state entities whose goals may include racial or ethnic supremacy" rather than ethnically or racially motivated violent extremism.[247]

Quantity of Violent Incel Attacks

On a separate note, shortly after a violent incel attack, the government of the United Kingdom (UK) stated that if more radicalized incel violence occurs in the future, there is a great chance that the government will start classifying it as terrorism and treat it as such: it will allow authorities to do deeper analysis and use more tools to investigate extreme misogyny and incels.[248] The UK incel incident occurred on August 14, 2021, when 22-year-old perpetrator Jake Davidson killed five people including his mother, a three-year old girl, and later himself—a self-identified incel in Plymouth, the UK—with a shotgun.[249] He was active online on incel forums, as well as posting many videos on his YouTube account, which was, after his attack frequently visited, and Davidson was celebrated as a hero.[250] It appears that states nowadays let the quantity of attacks is a determining factor, or argument in favor of labelling it as terrorism. Already in the year 2021, at least four incel-related assaults have already occurred, which increases the likelihood states will categorize the violent incel acts as terrorism.

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[247] Seth. G Jones and Catrina Doxsee, *The Escalating Terrorism Problem In The United States*, CSIS Briefs, 2020, https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states. 2.

[248] Daniel Smith, "Plymouth Shooting: 'Incels' Will Be Treated Like Terrorists If There Are More Attacks", *Nottingham Post*, 2021, https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/uk-world-news/plymouth-shooting-incels-treated-like-5787339.

[249] Ffion Lewis, "Everything We Know About The Plymouth Shooting As Killer Named", *Walesonline*, 2021, https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/plymouth-shooting-jake-davison-died-21300529.amp?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=display&utm_campaign=exchange#origin=https://www.google.co.uk&prerenderSize=1&visibilityState=visible&paddingTop=32&p2r=0&csi=1&aoh=16288507077460&viewerUrl=https://www.google.co.uk/amp/s/www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/plymouth-shooting-jake-davison-died-.

[250] Mark Townsend, "Plymouth Gunman Ranted Online That 'Women Are Arrogant' Days Before Rampage", *The Guardian*, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/14/plymouth-gunman-ranted-online-that-women-are-arrogant-days-before-rampage.

Outline of Arguments For- and Against Terrorism.

Actor	Pro-Terrorism	Con-Terrorism	Ideology	Extra
Government				
Canada	The RCMP states will add the incel movement to the terrorism awareness guide and views it as the "most dangerous subculture".	The CSIS categorizes the incels in 2020 report as violent extremists; subcategorized under 'gender-driven violence".	Both the CSIS and RCMP identifies incels under the *ideologically motivated violent extremism* (IMVE).	Canada the first country to charge an incel assault as a terrorist act, unlike other incel-related assaults in Canada.
United States	The National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism mentions the involuntary celibate violent *extremism* in the category domestic terrorism.	Homeland Security argues that incel are a serious threat, but a generalization to label the whole movement as terrorism.	Homeland Security states that incels do not have a clear ideology, and to label it terrorism one must speak of an ideology or organized group.	The National Strategy reports that domestic terrorism in general has very little organizational structure or direction. There is no federal law in the US that perceives misogyny or gender-based motivations as an official offense.

Actor	Pro-Terrorism	Con-Terrorism	Ideology	Extra
Academic Actor				
Canada	Taylor: the attacks are "habitual": must not be viewed as random separate attacks anymore.	Gurski: the incel movement more likely hate crime.		
The United States	Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro: the		Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro:	

	view the incels as a terrorism threat. Ahmed: incels are terrorists. DiBranco: Violent incel-attacks is terrorism.		yes, the violent manifestations of the ideology forms a terrorism threat. DiBranco: Misogyny and male supremacy should be viewed as ideologies by themselves. Leidig: determining the ideological motivation for e.g. the incel movement as terrorism, depends on the range of organizational types, not group affiliation.	

Actor	Pro-Terrorism	Con-Terrorism	Ideology	Extra
<u>Media</u>				
Canada	Jessica Davis: incel-related violence is terrorism.			

Actor	Pro-Terrorism	Con-Terrorism	Ideology	Extra
<u>Nongovernmental organizations and Think thanks</u>				
The United States	SPLC: categorized incel-related attacks as part of *alt-right* terrorism. New America: Certain incel-attacks meet the	New America: Not *all* incel-attacks fall under the label terrorism.	New America: the incel movement certainly has ideological motivations/goals, but the political agenda for the overall incel movement are not fully established.	Anti-Defamation League and SPLC made misogyny and male supremacy part of extremist' movements.

	requirements for the category terrorism. Center for Strategic and International Studies: incel movements falls under right-wing terrorism.			New America: The incel movement should be viewed as *transnational threat.*

It appears that these actors tend to lean towards the idea that incels fall under the terrorist threat as the incels meet the terrorist requirements and should be considered as such. Also, it is visible that there is a wider shift within the various forms of terrorism between the actors as well as between the different countries.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion of the Research

The incel movement and their members are currently poorly understood and is important to know because of the frequent violent incel-related attacks. This research is of importance as it sheds light of the interpretation of the incel phenomenon and the surround political discourse. Due to the fact the incels are relatively new, authorities struggle how and when the incels pose a threat, and how to construct an action plan surrounding the threats the incels pose. Accordingly, this study used several important actors in the United States and Canada to investigate whether these actors believed the incel-related acts or if the incel movement falls under the terrorism category or not. Therefore, several notorious acts of incels in the United States and Canada where are used to illustrate the current situation. The actors discussed in the United States and Canada agree that the incel movement is extremist and threatening. The difficulty surrounding the incel assaults that have occurred lies in the fact that it has no coherent (specific) political or ideological goal; rather it concerns sexual frustrations projected at women—misogyny.[251]

This thesis started with the following research question: *to what extent and based on what arguments has the incel movement been defined, or not, as a potential terrorist threat?* The answer to the research question is that to label the incel movement as a terrorist organization is an excessive generalization, and therefore a sense of reluctance by government actors to treat the entire movement as such is apparent. However, individual violent incel cases show sufficient indications that make it plausible to define these as acts of terrorism. First, this research question takes two things into consideration: (i) that the concept of terrorism is highly political and varies of meaning throughout the world, which is problematic as the level of potential terrorist threats also deviates among states[252], and (ii) to what extent violent acts of incels or the incel movement are considered as terrorism by various actors. Hence, the main goal of this research is to discuss the political discourse surrounding the definition of the incel phenomenon and when something should be labelled terrorism. In the previous chapter a table with all the arguments regarding the incels and terrorism are listed. It shows the deviations of the meaning of terrorism, both domestically and transnational, and thus leads to a variety of statements about the incels and their movement. Even the view of ideology towards terrorism

[251] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 572.

[252] Asta, Maskaliunaite, "Defining terrorism in the political and academic discourse,"*Baltic Defence Review* 2.8 (2002): 36-50. https://www.baltdefcol.org/files/docs/bdreview/bdr-2002-8-04.pdf. 36.

can vary greatly. Some of the terrorism definitions of the US agencies described overlap in the meaning of terrorism and have common ground. However, there are still differences present that change the scope of the meaning of terrorism. This mainly applies to US Government agencies, meaning that if within a government there exists no universal meaning of the definition, it becomes difficult to conclude when an act, person, or group should and would fit in the terrorism category. The Texas Department of Public Safety is one of the few that explicitly depicts the incel as a single-issue terrorist actor, while other agencies' reactions to the incel-related attacks have remained vague.[253] Canada incorporates incels as part of gender-based violence extremism, while the United States appears not to have legislation that specifically concerns sexism, misogyny, or sexual frustration as a categorical act of violence or even as a terrorist act. However, the uprising incel violence indicates that these two are sufficient components of violence.[254] Moreover, in the case of the incel movement, elements such as misogyny, male sexual entitlement, and anti-feminism are the fundamental motivators for violent attacks.[255] However, this is not sufficient for government actors to label the entire incel movement as a terrorist organization. There are substantial arguments for attributing a terrorist motive to certain individual incel acts of violence.

There seems to be a tendency among many of the academic and media actors discussed above to be in favor of categorizing the violent incel attacks as terrorism, as most of these depict clear political indications. The debate of whether this movement falls under the right-wing extremist movement is questionable. Perhaps due to the incoherency of the movement, it is difficult for actors to define the correct categorization, and as the movement has many right-wing extremist members, it is understandable to tend to label it as a form of a subpart of right-wing extremism. It has many tangents with the right-wing extremist movement; nonetheless, the incels' focus remains on male supremacy, gender roles, and misogyny. Those aspects are highly acclaimed by the incels. This is also true of other violent extremist movements such as the Taliban. Finally, the incel movement's members are international due to the online fundament of the movement. Several similarities regarding the discussion of the incel movement and the manifestation of terrorism are evident. First, it is agreed that the incel movement is a threat in the sense that it triggers violence or supports specific violent extremist behavior. While there appears to be a collective agreement among these actors about the movement being notoriously violent, the

[253] Texas Department of Public Safety, " *Assassing Mass Attacks in Texas."*
[254] Hoffman, Ware and Shapiro, "Assessing Incel Violence," 572.
[255] DiBranco, "Male Supremacist Terrorism."

level of violence varies. At the same time, it also shows the different interpretations of how these incels should be labeled. Therefore, the United States and Canada have, in government reports, stated that the incel movement belongs to the extremist movement and that overall, there is consensus that this movement is a serious and growing threat. It seems that the differences between international actors about the meaning of terrorism display some indicators that show similarities to a certain extent, yet the variation is too large to find common ground regarding defining terrorism. Still, recent articles in the news or research regarding the new phenomenon of the incels suggest that this movement does seem to have gained attention of the media and many countries appear to perceive the incel movement as a violent threat.

The incel movement does not seem to share a clear existing political worldview and appears not to be a coherent movement, which complicates the decision by states about whether the movement has an ideology or if it leans on the ideology of right-wing extremists. The movement does, however, have a clear idea about gender roles and sexuality. The greatest difference is the way the incel movement and the incels' violent acts are perceived. As it is an unstructured movement without leaders or strong organization, it is unclear if the incels have their own ideology or not, but the movement has produced several radicalized violent incel attack cases. Canada is the only country that has labeled an incel attack as terrorist activity, yet other cases in Canada have not been charged with terrorism. The same is true for the United States, where no single violent attack by an incel has been categorized as terrorism. There seems to be a majority specifically among academics that believes the incels should be treated as terrorists; not as a whole movement but depending on the case. If incels of the incel movement are labeled as terrorists, this may have possible negative consequences. To label an individual, group, or movement as terrorism is a strong categorization that is followed by severe consequences. For example, a potential outcome could be that defining the movement as terrorism could lead to more anger and potentially trigger individuals to become violent. Another consequence could be that the "terrorists" will then disappear to the background and continue to be active covertly. This will complicate the entire process of monitoring any potential threat.

The table in the previous chapter shows the importance of labeling. It displays the need to revisit, for example, a collective definition of terrorism. Or conversely, an overall revision of the terrorism concept. What exactly does this definition mean? If a concept already varies within the country by organization, it does not contribute to efficiency and may lead to more confusion. Terms such as "ideology," "instilling fear," "politically motivated" or "disrupting

society" are some used to label a phenomenon as terrorist. Even though these terms overlap greatly, the outcome remains different. Especially with the growth of the incel movement, it is important to know what to look out for. For that reason, careful thought will need to be given to the implications of categorizing terrorism.

Chapter 6: Reflection

There are some interesting aspects that came across during the research on the incel movement. During the process of doing my research to incels, various things have become clear to me. I noticed I have formed my own thoughts regarding the incels and the movement as its own. Since most of it is not suitable to mention in the research, I deliberately left it out. However, for me it was important enough to make the decision to refer to it in the reflection chapter. Specifically, I want to revisit some questions such as: whether one can speak of an independent, inherently extremist, and potentially violent ideology; and what exactly is at the core of inceldom. It brings an important addition into understanding the movement of the involuntary celibates. Also, it can give insight to whether inceldom is more than a personal ideology and is part of a bigger societal movement. This, in turn can contribute to the question what are possible signs that might be a reason to be alert for incel threats.

What seems to emerge in this research, is that incels inherently believe that having a relationship or having sex is equal to a successful life, and if not, they have failed as a person in life. The heavy reliance on such a black-and-white mindset creates tunnel vision can induce violent radicalization. Thus, incels being "blackpilled"[256] suggests the belief that their unsuccessful life is genetically set, and the incels were destined for failure all along.[257] That black-pill stage, however, is often what can trigger incels to execute violent action or mass assaults as a reaction, often ending with suicide. That stage of the black pill is therefore extremely concerning and a great incentive to commit a violent attack. In the incel movement, the misogyny and male supremacy components are central. With the rise of the incel community, misogyny and male supremacy have since come to light.[258] What clearly surfaces with the incel movement is that the violent motivation stems from misogyny and male supremacy. Although the *grosso modo* of the movement is frustrated due to the belief that they (incels) are incapable of having a fulfilling romantic relationship or sex, they simultaneously do not acknowledge the fact that

[256] Being "blackpilled" is the ultimate stage that can be reached by an incel. Whereas "redpilling" is the belief that men accept that life is unfair and not all people will 'naturally' find a women, "blackpilling" indicates that the "genetically inferior men" as incels call themselves are whatsoever destined to fail. Tim Squirrel, "A Definitive Guide To Incels Part Two: The A-Z Incel Dictionary — Tim Squirrell, Phd", *Tim Squirrell, Phd*. https://www.timsquirrell.com/blog/2018/5/30/a-definitive-guide-to-incels-part-two-the-blackpill-and-vocabulary.

[257] Squirrel, "Guide to Incels".

[258] Alex DiBranco, "Male Supremacist Terrorism As A Rising Threat", *ICCT*, 2020, https://icct.nl/publication/male-supremacist-terrorism-as-a-rising-threat/.

there are female celibates (femcels) who desire the same. Indeed, the female involuntary celibates are despised and, in any case, not welcome in the community of incels. The argument here is that incels are convinced that only men can experience rejection and that women cannot. According to Lisa Sugiura, inceldom as a " subculture is not an isolated phenomenon; it is part of larger backlash against feminism propelled by the manosphere, consisting of groups of men all connected by their belief that feminine values have corrupted society and men need to retaliate against this misandrist culture to preserve their very survival"[259] And while there are many differences within the groups within the manosphere, their common thought is founding an unified identity.[260] The digital platform of the incel movement gives access to incel members across borders, making the community highly international. While incel assaults mainly commenced in North America, the overall incel movements online spreads throughout the world, and any country in which White (Western) males who speak English are connecting online with the shared desire of having a (sexual) relationship can be part of the incel movement.[261] A Swedish report stated that the most highly represented nationalities on incel forums were the United States and that from Europe Sweden had the most participants on incel forums.[262] On a global scale, several incidents occurred: on August 6, 36-years old Yusuke Tsushima stabbed 10 passengers in the train in Tokyo as he longed for killing "happy looking women" and chose the train so that no one could escape.[263] In Figure 2, a post shows that Tsushima received support from others online.

[259] Lisa Sugiura, *The Incel Rebellion: The Rise of the Manosphere and the Virtual War Against Women* (Bingley : Emerald Publishing Limited, 2021), 1-168.
[260] Ibid., 19
[261] Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism," 24.
[262] Ibid.
[263] "Police Say Man In Train Knife Rampage Thought Of Bombing Shibuya Crossing", *Https://Japantoday.Com/Category/Crime/Man-In-Train-Knife-Rampage-Thought-Of-Bombing-Landmark-Tokyo-Crossing*, 2021, https://japantoday.com/category/crime/man-in-train-knife-rampage-thought-of-bombing-landmark-tokyo-crossing; "Man, Out To Kill "Happy Women," Nabbed Over Random Tokyo Train Attack", *Kyodo News+*, 2021, https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/08/0f907d5a1ae8-10-passengers-stabbed-or-punched-on-tokyo-train-suspect-arrested.html.

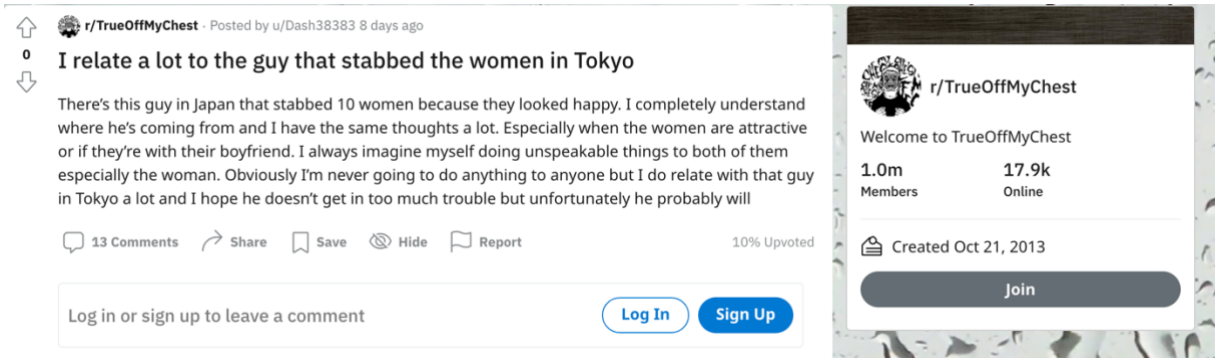

Figure 1: A post on Reddit shortly after the stabbing incident on r/TrueOffMyChest.[264]

The question therefore arises of why this aversion towards women exists. What this misogyny could possibly explain is that once incels do give in to the idea that women also experience rejection, the foundation of the incel movement collapses. What drives the incels and convinces the movement is that in the social hierarchy, the incels—and not women—have been placed at the bottom as "the garbage pit of society." As a result, these men will never succeed in what they desire, as women will not choose the incels under any circumstances. Incels believe that women have been given too much freedom and privileges, and so will choose Chads or normies and ignore the incels. The idea of women having all the choice also makes them want a society where women are "fairly" distributed among men—that is, arranged marriages or other arrangements—leaving the incels fulfilled.

Some radical incels appear to show overlapping political aims with those of the White supremacists: to overthrow contemporary culture and politics to advance their own movement, ranging from concentration camps for women to enforced monogamy to minimize the chance of people "having sex with people of your choosing" so that women might settle for incels,[265] to killing the "Chads" so women will turn towards the incels.[266] Some of these desires by the incel movement are featured in the book-inspired TV show *The Handmaid's Tale*: violence, misogyny, sexism, and enforced settlement of women are some of the characteristics that are broadcasted in the series. The violent attitudes and actions by men in this television show turned

[264]U/Dash38383, I relate a lot to the guy that stabbed the women in Tokyo," TrueOffMyChest, Reddit (August, 2021),https://www.reddit.com/r/TrueOffMyChest/comments/p0cqr0/i_relate_a_lot_to_the_guy_that_stabbed_the_women/ .

[265] Tabatha Southey, "The context of Jordan Peterson's thoughts on 'enforced monogamy'," May 25, 2018. https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/the-context-of-jordan-petersons-thoughts-on-enforced-monogamy/.

[266] Kelly, DiBranco and DeCook, "Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism," 24.

into a public policy and legal system as a means of living. *The Handmaid's Tale* sheds light on contemporary misogyny but also on the (political) cravings of the incels and what that it would look like in reality.[267] The figures below show a series of screenshots of a post about the discussion about the possibility of realizing a society that is inspired by this show. Originally, this story represents a dystopian society, yet in the eyes of the incels, it is a utopia and can be a good foundation as a blueprint for a future Western society in which women are oppressed. Even though society in this show is a result of Christian theocracy, the incels' focus lies on the treatment of women and the oppression, control, inferiority of women. The fact that recreating a society that supports these ideas and neglection of human rights may imply a social motivation. Additionally, discussions such as these, together with perpetrators such as Alek Minassian, who wishes to inspire others to take action to overthrow society, suggest that a part of the incel movement is also politically motivated to perform violent acts. Along with that, it is interesting to note that the movement is selling merchandise on, among others, these forums such as t-shirts. Also, there are these so-called Pick Up Artists (PUA), who identify as dating coaches and make an income via the incel movement. These PUA's represent themselves as experts of providing unique knowledge to make these incels worthy of gaining a female partner using strong a 'alpha male' identity: where the reproductive achievements rely on the men's dominant values and performances.[268]

[267] Cailtin PenzeyMoog, "This season, *The Handmaid's Tale* is making the connection between Gilead and present-day America explicit," AVClub, July 5, 2018, https://www.avclub.com/this-season-the-handmaid-s-tale-is-making-the-connecti-1825783576.

[268] Xiaoting Han and Chenjun Yin, "Mapping the Manosphere. Categorization of Reactionary Masculinity Discourses in Digital Environment," Feminist Media Studies, March 14, 2022, 10, https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/doi/pdf/10.1080/14680777.2021.1998185?needAccess=true

Figure 2: A post on an incel forum discussing a blueprint for a similar society as portrayed in the Handsmaid's Tale.[269]

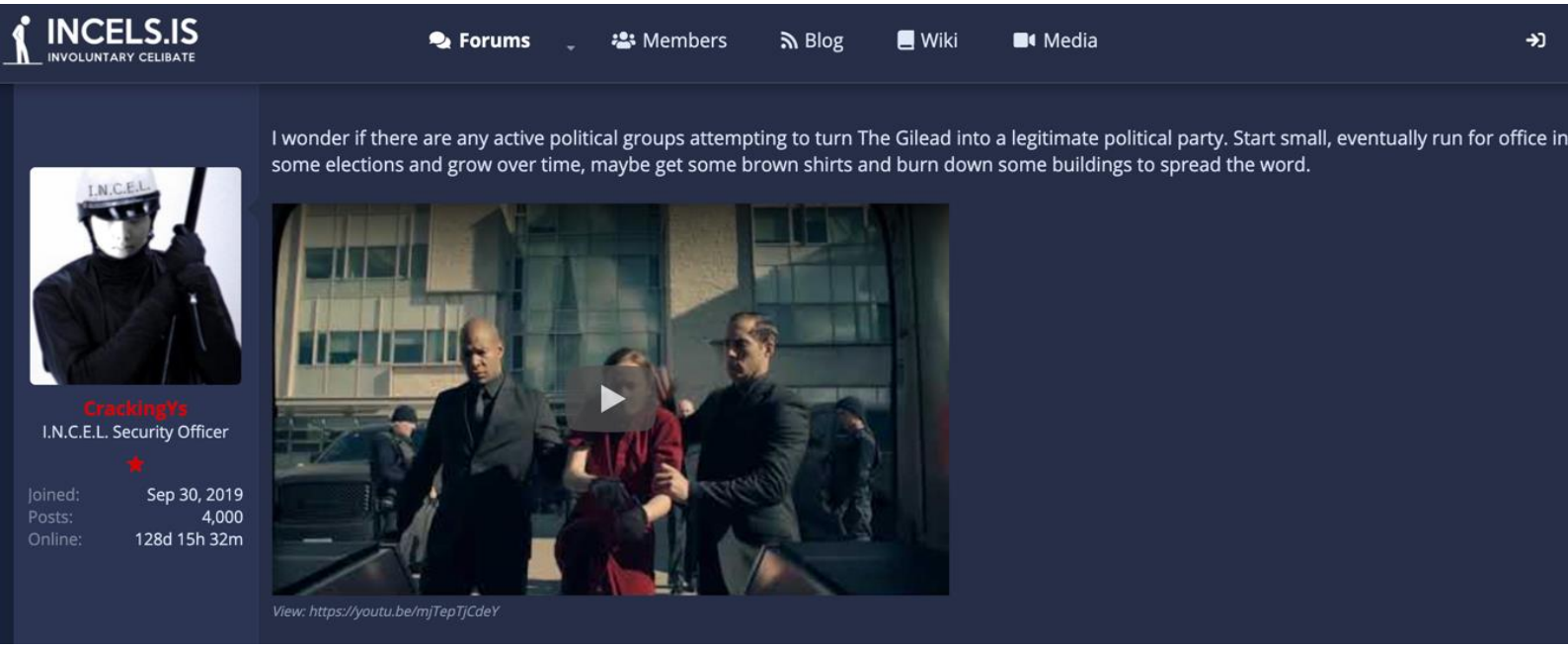

Figure 2.1: Follow-up of the post about recreating a similar society that is described in The Handmaid's Tale. [270]

[269] CrackingYs, "Should The Gilead (the based theocracy from Handmaid's Tale) actually be created? How can we get it started?" Incels.is , July 23, 2021. https://incels.is/threads/should-the-gilead-the-based-theocracy-from-handmaids-tale-actually-be-created-how-can-we-get-it-started.308136/.
[270] Ibid.

Yes this is an SJW horror fantasy. This is like a woman's idea of a dystopia that is my idea of a utopia.

The storyline goes like theres a fertility crisis in the future (kinda like what is actually starting to happen right now with falling testosterone levels) and during a societal collapse the Gilead forces women who can still give birth to become breeders (handmaids) and the men don't have sex with their infertile wives.

Paradoxically women are absolutely hooked on this show and they don't even know why because secretely they want to be used as sex objects and slaves even if they won't admit it.

View: https://youtu.be/LCEsoH1F-Us

Last edited: Jul 23, 202

Jul 23, 2021

> CrackingYs said:
>
> Paradoxically women are absolutely hooked on this show and they don't even know why because secretely they want to be used as sex objects and slaves even if they won't admit it.

Women are fundamentally chaotic. They love the things they hate, and hate the things they love. This is why every woman needs to have her tongue and fingers cut out from birth.

Figure 2.2: Follow-up of the thread of the discussion.[271]

[271] Ibid.

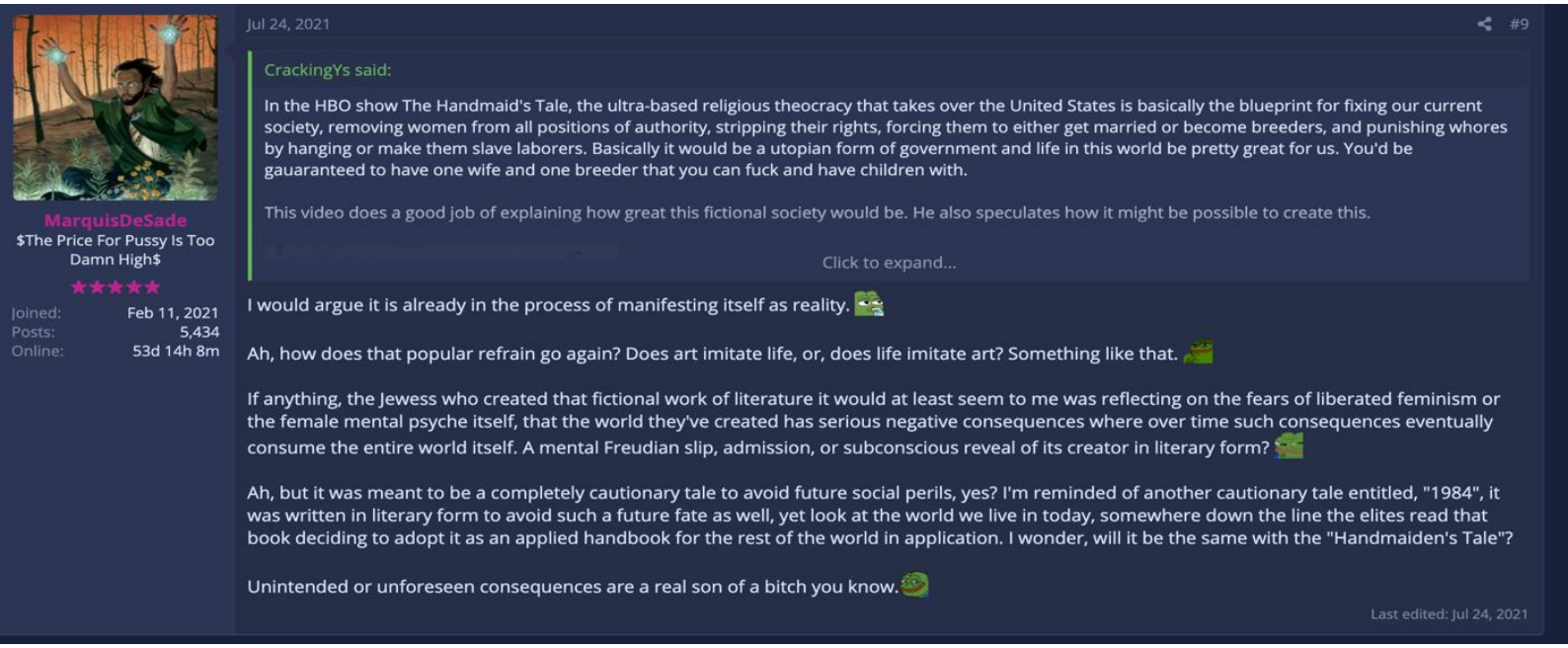

Figure 2.3: Another post regarding the discussion of a similar society to that in The Handmaid's Tale.[272]

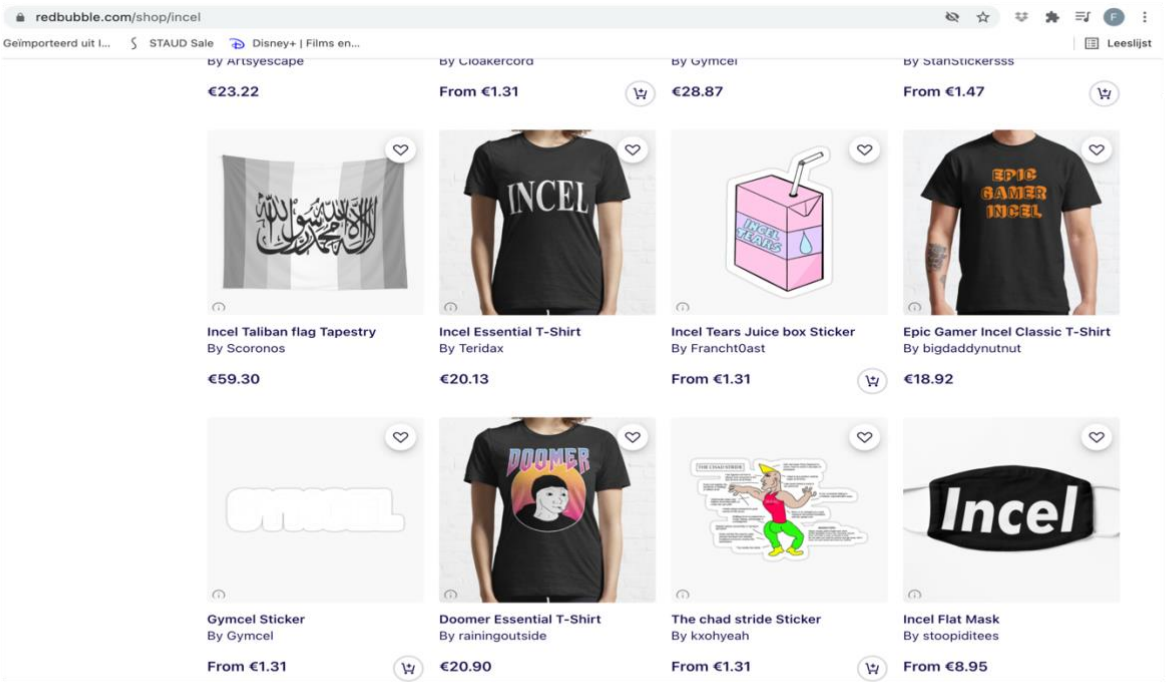

Figure 2.4: A screenshot of a website that sells Incel merchandise.[273]

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[272] Ibid.

[273] "Incel Gifts & Merchandise For Sale | Redbubble", *Redbubble.Com*, 2022, https://www.redbubble.com/shop/incel.

However, recognizing that women experience the same, the incels seem to fear that the movement no longer serves its value. This reveals that this movement goes much deeper than shared frustration over their inability to be part of a relationship. Another example is that while the world has yet to process the shocking news of the Taliban that took control of Afghanistan, the incels seem to be unable to contain their excitement. On the online forums, incels applaud the Taliban for their treatment of women and show excitement as "the first stage of the incel uprising has finally begun."[274] The incels express their desire that the same will happen soon in the Western world. As mentioned previously, the television series *The Handmaid's Tale* depicts a dystopian society, yet for the incels, it is perceived as a potential utopia. With the invasion of the Taliban, incels' hopes have increased considerably because—according to the online discussions—of the Taliban's treatment of women. The following are examples of posts:

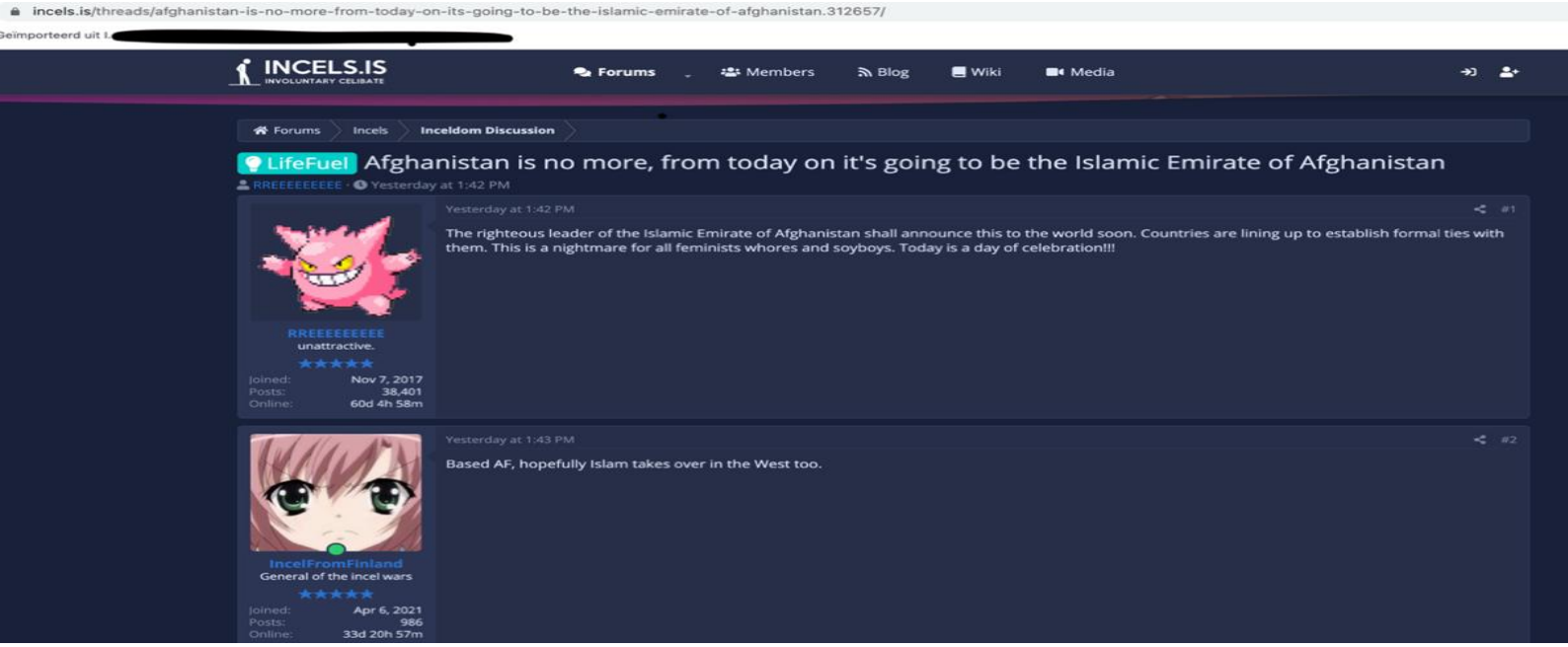

Figure 3.1: Discussion on an incel forum celebrating the Taliban. Obtained: 16 August, 19:53.[275]

[274] Saudade, "Talibans are already forcing local women to marry their fighters," Incels.is, August 15, 2021, https://incels.is/threads/talibans-are-already-forcing-local-women-to-marry-their-fighters.312675/.
[275] Ibid.

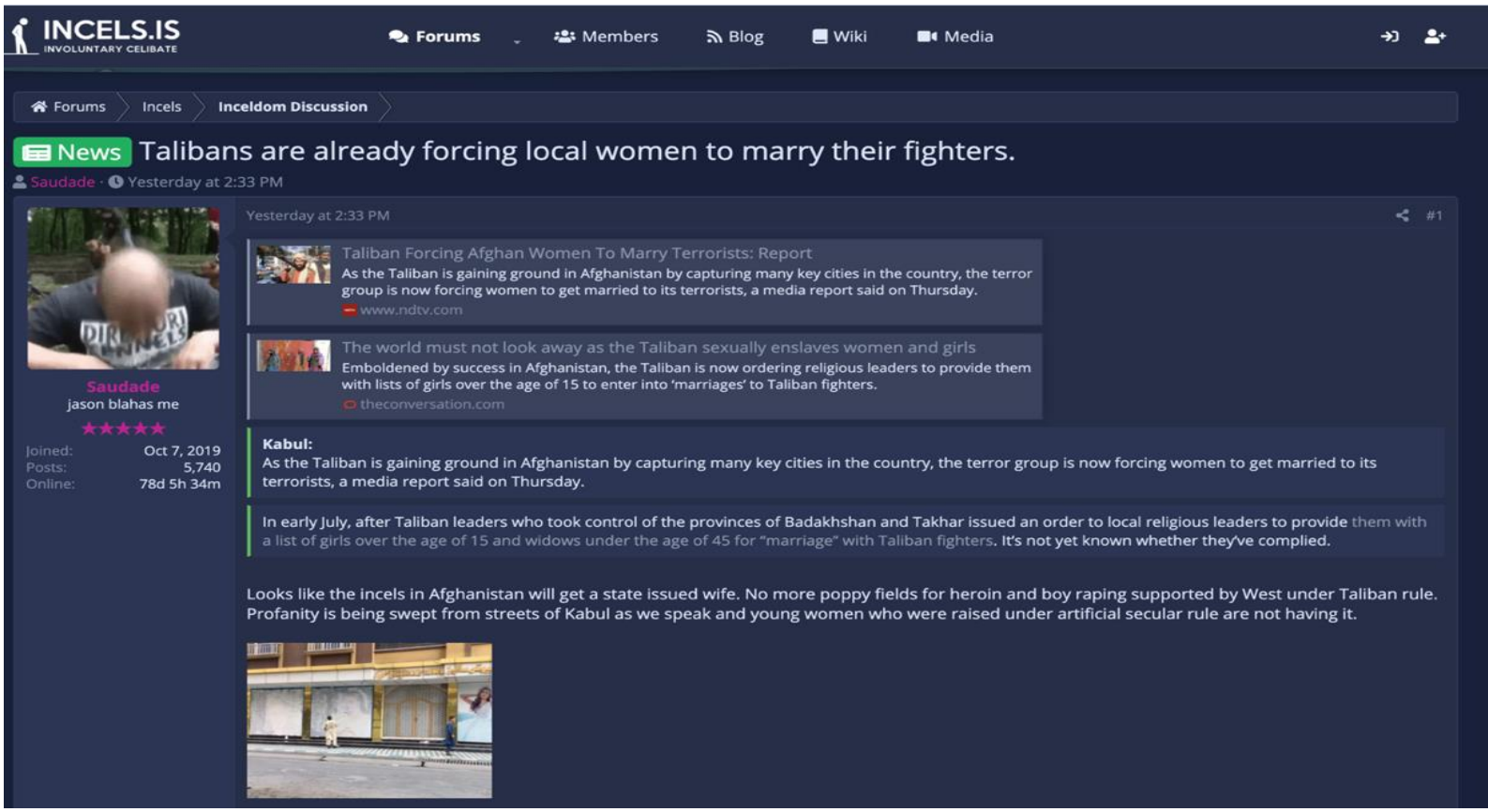

Figure 3.2: Another example that shows the excitement of incels about the Taliban taking over. Obtained: August 16, 2021, 19:53.[276]

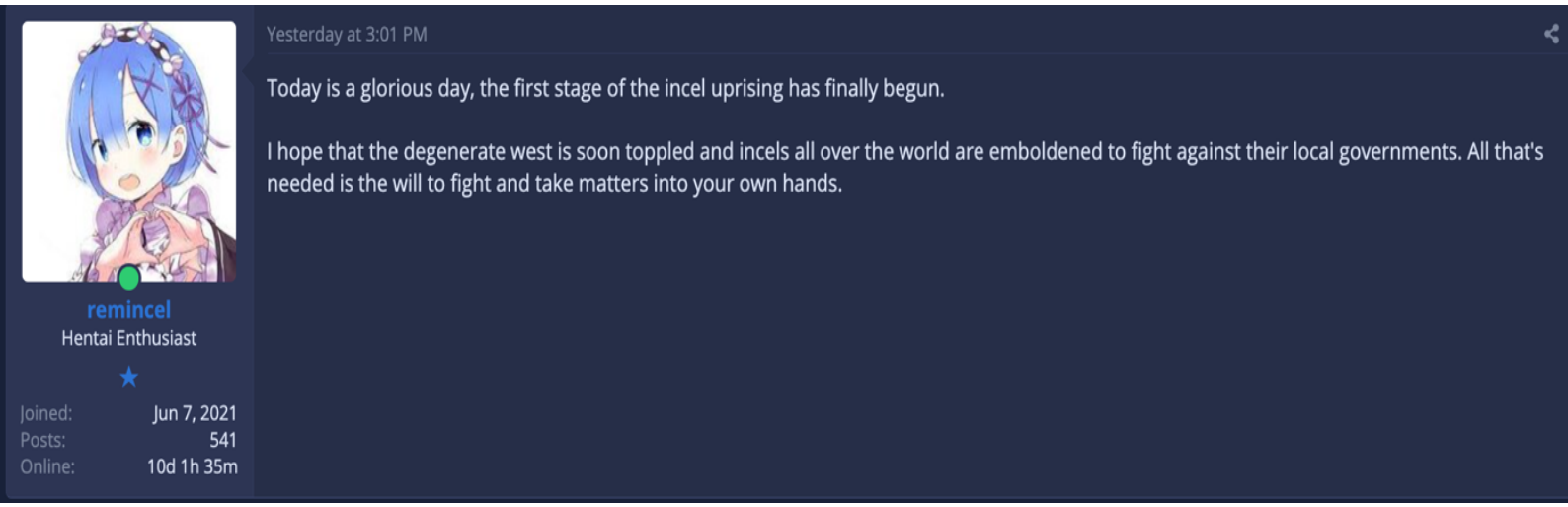

Figure 3.3: Celebrating the incel uprising on incel forum. Obtained: August 16, 2021.[277]

[276] Ibid.
[277] Ibid.

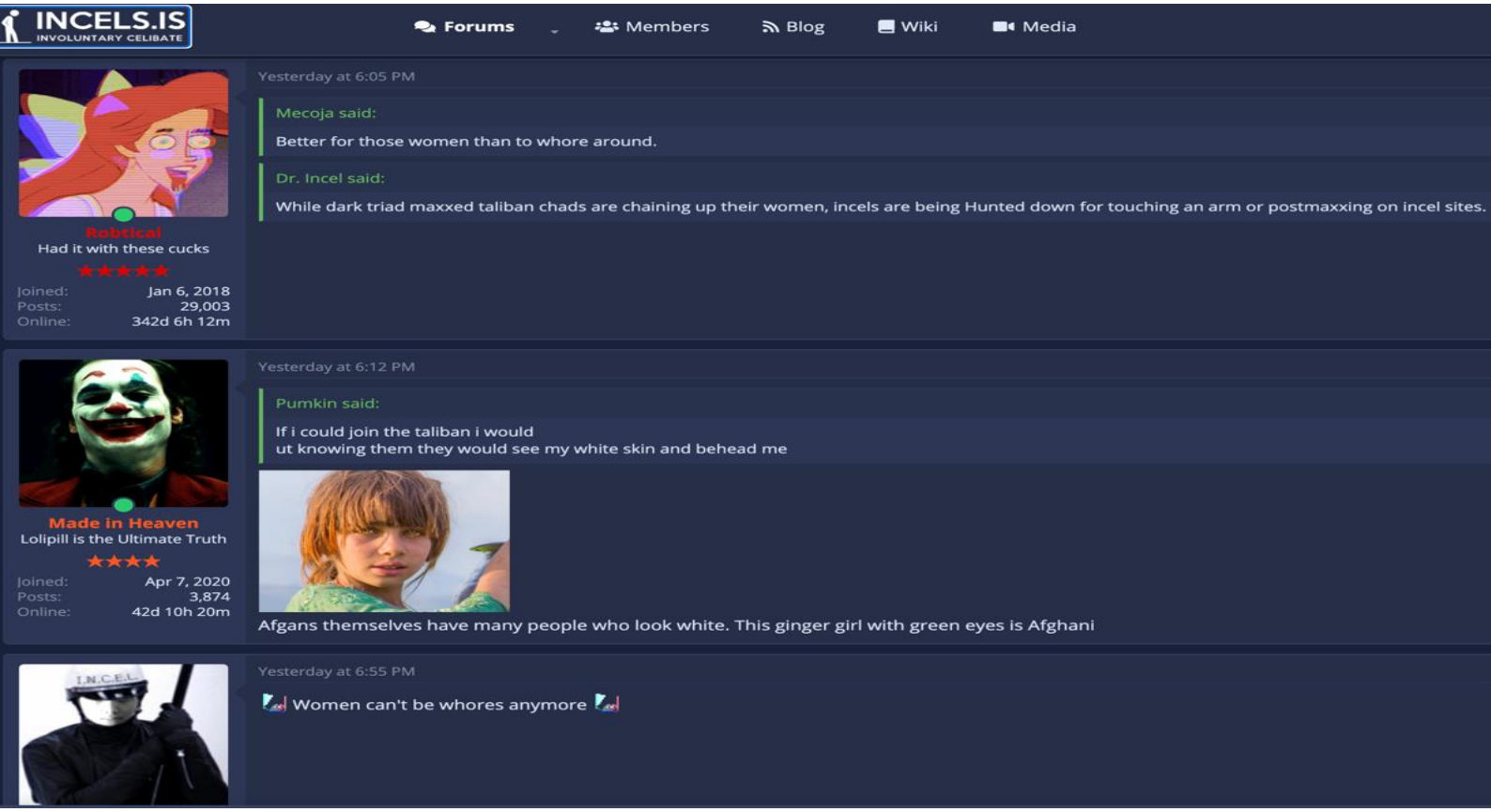

Figure 3.4: Various posts where incels say they want to join the Taliban. The posts depict the intrinsic hate the posters feel for women over the Taliban.

While it is difficult to interpret whether these disparaging posts are jokes or not sincere, violent posts such as those depicted above do have a reinforcing impact. According to several researchers, sexist, misogynist, and other discriminatory disparaging humor or comments erase the harmful core of such stereotyping and moreover reduce the willingness to act upon discrimination.[278] More importantly, the results of research by Ford and Ferguson show that such jokes and comments condone and strengthen the already existing preconceptions, and thus, one does not have to be actively misogynist to encourage others to act likewise.[279] Another piece of research by Ford et al. suggests that misogynist and sexist humor allows context to

[278] Hilda Bastian, “”Just” Joking? Sexist Talk in Science,” *Absolutely Maybe*, PLOS, June 22, 2015, https://absolutelymaybe.plos.org/2015/06/22/just-joking-sexist-talk-in-science/.

[279] Thomas E. Ford and Mark A. Ferguson,“Social Consequences of Disparagement Humor: A Prejudiced Norm Theory” (February 2004). https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0801_4 ; Bastian, “Sexist Talk.”; Nalyn Sriwattanakomen, "Who’S Laughing Now? The Effects Of Sexist And Rape Humor", *Psi Chi Journal Of Psychological Research* 22, no. 2 (2017): 85-97, doi:10.24839/2325-7342.jn22.2.85 ; Prasad, Pallavi. "Joke Or Sexism? Misogynist Humor Condones Prejudice". *The Swaddle*, 2019. https://theswaddle.com/humor-or-misogyny-sexist-jokes-condone-prejudice/.

justify bias against women.[280] Therefore, the manosphere of the incel community has a certain amplifying factor toward sexism and misogyny by making it acceptable or even normalizing sexism and misogyny among members. This simultaneously decreases any willingness to counteract prejudice, improve gender bias, or express sympathy for gender equality.[281]

It can be said that the redpilled or blackpilled incels, through tunnel vision only have an eye for hating women and berating them for their unsuccessful lives. This hatred of women, blaming women for depriving the incels of their right to sex and a relationship, is hidden under the surface of inceldom. But, the movements' main driver, inceldom, is the cover for the following deeper layers of the movement and seems to be more about the hatred of women, blaming women for depriving the incels. The fact that discussions occur within the manosphere about realizing a dystopian society where women are suppressed depicted in *The Handmaid's Tale* can indicate that the movement contains aspects of a political ideology. This alone is however not sufficient to label it as terrorism. In the end, it is possible that the incels and femcels can satisfy their deep desires and understand each other, given that they have experienced and felt the same feelings. These may range from sorrow to anger; misogyny; reproach; and wanting to control, regulate, undermine, oppress, belittle, and humiliate, projecting their anger on women. The incel movement is therefore based on misogyny hidden under the disguise of constant rejection. In doing so, misogyny is also reflected in incels blaming feminists, with incels believing that feminists are the reason that women have too much choice and too much freedom. For feminists, not all women need sex, a partner, or marriage, leaving even less opportunity for incels. What makes it complex and complicated to determine how to categorize this movement is also that in many ways the incels have common ground with other extremist movements, especially right-wing extremism. This is because most movements have the component of misogyny and male supremacy. However, the most significant difference is that for most groups, it is an afterthought, whereas, for the incels, it is precisely the central issue. A similar movement has not occurred before, which makes it confusing. Therefore, it is important not to look at where incels fit in, or whether they are right-wing extremists a single-issue movement, or something else but instead to see it as a new form of ideology, which through those two components form the basis, and have a lot of overlap with other existing groups or movements

[280] Julie A. Woodzicka et al., "Sexist Humor And Beliefs That Justify Societal Sexism", *Current Research In Social Psychology* 21, no. 7 (2013): 64-81, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286382131_Sexist_humor_and_beliefs_that_justify_societal_sexism.
[281] Ibid.

carrying the misogyny and male supremacist as component. The incel movement supports or applauds all kinds of other groups or movements where the components of misogyny and male supremacy occur or where members long for a traditional society where women naturally have fewer rights than men. Certain religions contain components of submissiveness in women under the guise of religion—God's will, for example—and where nationalist movements and right and left extremist movements contain components where women are inferior, the incels applaud. It is therefore primarily relevant that the gender motivators (misogyny, male supremacy) must be perceived as drivers of violence, rather than deciding if the movement falls under extremism or terrorism. This way, a strategic plan in states can be established to be able to deploy tools to decrease the threat of violent incels and keep people safe from violent actions by radicalized incels.

All incel accounts show that sexism, male supremacy, and misogyny are the ideologies and ultimately the motivations for incels to feel justified to plan, commit, and attack. It is disturbing to see the popularity of the incel community continuously grow, with incels committing attacks on a worldwide scale as a result. The fact that the urge to keep women in control and merely view them as a tool, being dehumanized and solely in the service of men, is a harsh reminder that the road to equal treatment and perception of different sexes (men and women) and gender is going backward. The incel ideology—a desire for power, controlling people, and wanting to turn around the current society—is worrying. Overall, emancipation stands for the desire for equal treatment, even more so that societies can live together more harmoniously and with less violence. The desires and frustrations of the incel movement are to some extent a form of emancipation. However, as soon as radicalization emerges, with activism turning into violence, this makes the incels the oppressors, and emancipation turns into extremism. Whenever a violent incel incident occurs, the hope for positive change in the deep desires of the incels therefore decreases. Hence, like a downward spiral, increasing numbers of incels will feel that violence will be an ultimate justification, and positive change is far from visible. If incels are labeled as terrorists by countries, this may generate a sense of incomprehension, frustration, or anger among incels, thinking they are not seen or heard.

Elements that should be considered as part of the threat of violence, extremism, hate crime or terrorism, are elements of violence motivated by gender—sexism, misogyny, misandry, or toxic male supremacy. Therefore, these should become implemented within the state's legislation. Not only in the incel movement but in most violent groups or organizations is such gender-

based violence an occurring issue, and it should therefore be taken more seriously. These beliefs have a considerable influence on violence. Gender-based violence, misogyny, and male supremacism should be taken into consideration for the political debate if the violent incels fit into the terrorism category.

Further, it would be an important step to take care of mental health issues and raise awareness. In the process of writing this research, new cases of incel attacks occurred and show the growth and popularity of the incel movement as well as the importance of creating more awareness and a strategy for handling the growing movement. Several recommendations might contribute to decreasing the dangerous threats of incels. A recommendation that might help limit the growth of the incel community is to create awareness on social media, the news, through governments, and especially among adolescents in primary and secondary schools in terms of dangers of the Internet and stressing that equal treatment, sex education where it will be discussed that among others sex is not something to be taken for granted, with an emphasis on making sure that feeling pressure to have sex or thinking one must have sex rarely leads to positive developments (unfortunately this not only leads to frustrations among single men, but feeling pressure to have sex also leads to assaults and rapes). Moreover, as most radical incels believe that they are unsuccessful and have failed as they have not had sexual encounters, it is important to point out that it is a fallacy that having sex is the key to a successful life. Sexual education should be extensive, elaborating on not only the biology of human beings but also on the social aspects, with an emphasis on equality and equal treatment. Since incels suffer from mental problems, such as depression, inferiority complex, loneliness, and so on, it might even be advisable to teach courses on mental health in schools, where young people receive basic teaching about their own mental health, stress, pressure, and being confident by default. It could perhaps be a potential means of preventing future problems.

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Annex:

Definitions described by the United States:

1. The Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on Counterterrorism, Intelligence Capabilities and Performance Prior to 9-11 (2002): "Terrorism is the illegitimate, premeditated use of politically motivated violence or the threat of violence by a subnational group against persons or property with the intent to coerce a government by instilling fear amongst the populace."[282]

2. Texas Department of Public Safety (January, 2020): "(U) Domestic terrorists include racially motivated, (e.g., white racially motivated, black racially motivated, etc.), anti-government (e.g., militia, sovereign citizen, and anarchist), and single issue (i.e., animal rights, environmental, abortion, and involuntary celibate [Incel]) actors. Although a complex blending of personal and ideological grievances motivates individual DT attackers, some underlying drivers of domestic terrorism include perceptions of government or law enforcement overreach, sociopolitical conditions, racism, anti-Semitism or anti-Muslim beliefs, and reactions to legislative actions." [283]

3. U.S. Code Patriot Act definition of Terrorism is: (…) "means activities that involve acts to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; (…) intended: to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping." (18 U.S. Code Chapter 113B – Terrorism)[284]

[282] Report of the Subcomittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on Counterterrorism, Intelligence Capabilities and Performance Prior to 9-11 (Executive summary), submitted by Mr. Chambliss of Georgia, Chairman, provided by FindLaw.com

[283] "Assessing the Mass Attacks Threat to Texas", 2020, 16: https://www.dps.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/director_staff/media_and_communications/2020/txmassattackassessment.pdf

[284] https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/2331

4. FBI defines *International Terrorism* as (2021): "violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups who are inspired by, or associated with, designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations(state-sponsored); and the FBI defines *Domestic Terrorism* as: "violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of a political, religious, social, racial or environmental nature". The FBI also refers to the US Code to further define and elaborate on international- and domestic terrorism. [285]

5. The Department Homeland Security refers to Domestic Terrorism (DT), defines an act of terrorism that: "is dangerous to human life or potentially destructive of critical infrastructure or key resources; and is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any State or other subdivision of the United States, and appears to be intended to: intimidate or coerce a civilian population; influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping." (*In the Homeland Security Act definition of Terrorism 6. U.S.C. 101(18))*[286]

6. U.S. State Department's description- and criteria of "terrorism" Section 2656f(d) of Title 22 of the United States Code defines certain key terms used in Section 2656(a) as follows: (..) "(1) the term "international terrorism" means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country; (2) the term "terrorism" *means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents*; and (3) the term "terrorist group" means any group practicing, or which has significant subgroups which practice, international terrorism." (9)[287]

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[285] (https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism)

[286] Both the FBI and Homeland Security refer to domestic terrorism as well as "violent extremism" because: "In our discussion of DT threats, we use the words "violent extremism" to define DT threats because mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute violent extremism, and may be constitutionally protected." (Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism, 2021, 4)

[287] https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/65464.pdfand https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328081163_Who_are_Incels_Recognizing_the_Violent_Extremist_Ideology_of_'Incels' . This report is submitted in compliance with Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f (the "Act"), which requires the Department of State to provide Congress a full and complete annual report on terrorism for those countries and groups meeting the criteria of the Act.

7. National Strategy For Countering Domestic Terrorism: " Under Federal law, "domestic terrorism" is defined as "activities that involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States." [288]

8. Department of Defense: "Department of Defense Dictionary of Military Terms defines terrorism as: "The unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce individuals, governments or societies in pursuit of terrorist goals."[289]

The definition(s) used for the label terrorism in Canada are described as:

The definition of "terrorist activity" has two components and applies to activities inside or outside Canada[290]:

- The first component of the definition is defined in part as an act or omission committed in or outside Canada that would be an offence under the major international treaties that apply to terrorist activities, like hijacking and terrorist bombing.
- The second part defines "terrorist activity" as an act or omission undertaken, inside or outside Canada, for a political, religious, or ideological purpose that is intended to intimidate the public with respect to its security, including its economic security, or to compel a person, government or organization (whether inside or outside Canada) from doing or refraining to do any act, and that intentionally causes one of a number of specified forms of serious harm.

[288] National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism June 2021 https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/15/fact-sheet-national-strategy-for-countering-domestic-terrorism/
[289] https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/dictionary.pdf)
[290] https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/page-13.html#h-116339 Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46, 83.01 (1)

- Under the *Anti-terrorism Act* (ATA), "terrorist group": is defined as an entity that has as one of its purposes or activities the facilitating or carrying out of terrorist activity or that is an entity set out in a list established by regulation. For listed entities, the fact of being listed establishes them as terrorist group. Being on the list does not itself constitute a criminal offence, although it can lead to criminal consequences. The list supports the application of other provisions in the Act.

- Comprehensive terrorism offences created in the *Criminal Code* include:

    - knowingly participating in, or contributing to, any activity of a terrorist group for the purpose of enhancing the ability of any terrorist group to facilitate or carry out a terrorist activity;

    - knowingly facilitating a terrorist activity;

    - commission of a serious (i.e. indictable) offence for the benefit of, at the direction of or in association with a terrorist group;

    - knowingly instructing anyone to carry out a terrorist activity for a terrorist group; knowingly harboring or concealing any person who has carried out or is likely to carry out a terrorist activity for the purpose of enabling the person to facilitate or carry out any terrorist activity; and

    - collecting, providing, or making available, using or possessing property for certain activities/purposes (terrorist financing). *In the Canadian Criminal Code, 2001*[291]

[291] https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/ns-sn/act-loi.html