



Underground Anti-Woman and Incel Movements and their Connections to Sexual Assault

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Abstract

Anti-woman movements online are growing in influence and entering the mainstream over time. A loosely related coalition of far-right, anti-feminist online communities called the “manosphere” might be a gateway to increasingly extremist misogynistic and violent worldviews. The manosphere is associated with several recent terrorist acts, including Rodgers’ killing spree in Isla Vista in 2014 and Minassian’s massacre of numerous pedestrians in Canada in 2018. “Involuntary celibates,” aka incels, are a community of mostly young men characterized by their virulent resentment towards women and their inability to find consenting romantic and sexual partners. There is evidence that users in the manosphere migrate from less extreme anti-feminist subcultures to incel forums (Ribeiro et al., *arXiv*. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2001.07600.pdf>, 2020), where

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they become increasingly radicalized in their beliefs and are encouraged to act violently towards women to intimidate women into behaving the way men want them to (e.g., Lilly, *The World is not a safe place for Men': The representational politics of the manosphere*. Theses, 2011. University of Ottawa. <https://doi.org/10.20381/RUOR-5184>, 2016). This chapter will provide a high-level analysis of the roots of the modern incel movement and examine putative effects, implications, and solutions regarding the incels.

Keywords

Incels · Manosphere · Terrorism · Sexual violence · Men's rights · Online harassment · Radicalization · Involuntary celibates · Masculinity · Backlash

Introduction

Online anti-woman movements are growing in influence and becoming more violent in rhetoric over time. The *manosphere* is a loosely related coalition of far-right and anti-feminist online communities and includes incels, men's rights movements, pick-up artist culture, and other forms of political activism in the pursuit of male hegemony (domination/leadership) (Lilly 2016). Users in the online manosphere migrate from less radical subcultures to more radical ones, such as incel forums (Ribeiro et al. 2020). There, they become radicalized and are encouraged to act violently towards women to achieve the goal of reversing feminist gains, returning to an era when women were subservient to men (e.g., Lilly 2016). Extreme examples of radicalization include domestic terrorist acts, such as Elliot Rodgers' killing spree in Isla Vista in 2014 and Alek Minassian's massacre of numerous pedestrians in Canada in 2018.

This chapter departs from the format and content of typical handbook chapters because it endeavors to explain a community and its dynamics that are not familiar to many social scientists, practitioners, or the lay reader. This chapter is not a comprehensive overview of the manosphere and its dynamics, but it provides a high-level overview and analysis of the roots of the modern online anti-woman, anti-feminist movement. The chapter includes many terms unknown to most readers. New terms will appear in italics and will be defined to facilitate comprehension. The chapter first describes the historical development of the movement and clarifies differences between subcultures within the anti-woman movements with a main focus on incels. As certain subcultures in the manosphere contribute, condone, and encourage violence against women through social coercion, sexual violence, and terroristic acts to achieve their agendas (e.g., Ging 2019), this chapter further explores the movements' relations to domestic terrorism and how the movement has infiltrated the mainstream. The chapter draws on a wide range of sources from social science literature, including psychology, political science, communication, and terrorism studies, directly from the online forums themselves, from journalists and social justice advocates. The chapter concludes with potential solutions.

As online anti-woman movements become more influential, subcultures in the manosphere can act as a gateway to extremist misogynistic and violent worldviews

as an entry point to other far-right communities, such as white supremacists or white nationalists (Hoffman et al. 2020). Furthermore, manospheric movements condone and encourage violence against women in themselves (e.g., Gotell and Dutton 2016; Lilly 2016; Ging 2019). At the forefront of the manosphere are incels, who are responsible for a disproportionate number of domestic terroristic acts in the West (Hoffman et al. 2020). The danger has become salient enough to require US government monitoring. For example, in the autumn of 2019, the FBI and the US Army issued warnings of a potential mass shooting by one or more incels at the movie premier of the Joker movie premiere (Cameron 2019).

Unbeknownst to many, involuntary celibates like Rodgers and Minassian comprise a disproportionate proportion of domestic terroristic acts in the Western world (e.g., Baele et al. 2019; Hoffman et al. 2020). Also known as incels, these men form a community of mostly young, sexually abstinent men characterized by virulent resentment towards women and an inability to find consenting romantic and sexual partners. In this context, the term incels does not refer to all adults who have not ever had sex. Here, “incels” refers to individuals who do not choose to abstain from sex and subscribe to incel theory. This use of “incels” thereby excludes self-identified asexuals and those who eschew sex for religious or other personal reasons. In this chapter, the term also excludes individuals who are unable to find a consenting sexual partner but do not actively participate in anti-feminist movements, thus excluding most individuals who do not identify as “incels” with forethought.

The Development of the Manosphere: A Response to Women’s Empowerment

The manosphere is a reactionary movement, or a backlash, to feminism and specific feminist aims, such as anti-rape movements (e.g., Gotell and Dutton 2016). Backlash is an attempt by a hegemonic group to recoup lost power or influence – or even the threat of lost power or influence. Backlash can entail using violence or intimidation towards the movement that caused the group in question to lose dominance (e.g., Faludi 1991; Mansbridge and Shames 2008). It can follow gains in social movements – for example, gains enjoyed by women during the second wave of feminism in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s may have been the antecedent to a societal backlash wherein women were undermined continuously in the media and the workplace. Backlash during this era entailed techniques such as hypersexualizing women and girls in entertainment and propagating bad science that declared women could become infertile in their youth, which implied that if women ever wanted to have children, then it was in their interest to become pregnant in their early adulthood and forgo careers (Faludi 1991).

Anti-feminist movements as backlash are founded on two main premises: (a) that women are either equal or more privileged than men today and (b) that feminism has profound, unforeseen consequences that damage the female experience, resulting in fewer women marrying and having children. (Faludi 1991). Faludi theorized that anti-feminist backlash is a defensive response to the ostensible crumbling of

traditional ideals of gender norms. This backlash is evident in numerous ways, such as typical anti-feminist characterizations of the modern American man who is emasculated for not engaging in archetypal male behaviors such as sexual dominance and breadwinning. In the manosphere, self-identified male feminists and men who care about women's empowerment are labeled *beta males* or *cucks*, a pejorative term for a male partner of an adulterous wife or girlfriend or to identify a man who is not sufficiently "masculine" because they care about women's rights (e.g., Ging 2019; Marwick and Caplan 2018).

This recoil against feminist supporters demonstrates an attempt to return to pre-feminism dynamics of gender by mocking people who support progressive models of gender relations. It also alludes to the possibility that liberal educations are not in and of themselves enough to address manospheric believers, as they often believe feminist educations exist to emasculate and weaken men (e.g., Ging 2019; Marwick and Caplan 2018). Not only do underground online anti-feminists in the manosphere show resistance and general disregard for women, but they actively seek to promote male hegemony (e.g., Ging 2019; Lilly 2016). Therefore, not only is there a form of backlash to women's empowerment, but an operative movement to suppress the role of women and often in ways that are often violent. This violence manifests in several different ways: physical violence, such as in domestic abuse and mass shootings; sexual violence; stripping protections from women under the law; economic violence; and even forms of psychological violence like bullying and manipulation from partners, male peers, and the media. What these different methodologies have in common is that they are designed to make and keep women docile, frightened, and disenfranchised (Lilly 2016).

As women have become empowered with access to higher wages, better jobs, and, ultimately, the right to choose what she wants to do with her body and time, women are staying single longer and often not marrying at all (Wang and Parker 2014). Research spanning decades has revealed that a large proportion of single women, even in older demographics, are happy with being single (e.g., Mintel Press 2017). Other research has found that men benefit more from heterosexual marriage than women (Stronge et al. 2019). For postmenopausal women, transitioning into a heterosexual relationship is associated with adverse health habits like increasing problematic drinking habits and unwanted weight gain, while divorce is associated with improved health indicators and behaviors such as improving body mass indexes and exercising more frequently (Kutob et al. 2017). Other studies have found that marriage is less beneficial for both men and women today than it was several decades ago (Stevenson and Wolfers 2009). These studies suggest that women are better off when they are empowered to choose whether or not they marry. This theory is buttressed by evidence that women residing in countries with strong stigma against being single do not benefit from being unmarried and often suffer as a result (e.g., Himawan et al. 2018).

Despite the robust data, there is pushback against women who choose to marry later or remain single. While social scientists suggest that the older marrying age is evidence that single women are flourishing, some traditionalists and manospheric users contend that marriage decline is a sign of a decaying society and that women

are worse off as a result (e.g., Ging 2019; Lerxst 2017). Though many institutions have adapted to the later marrying age and fewer people marrying, some subcultures have displayed incredible resistance to these demographic changes decrying declining marriage rates and numbers of traditional families. Those who express enmity to women marrying later in life frame the delay as “bad for women.” For example, Faludi (1991) recorded the remarkable reaction following poorly conducted studies in the late twentieth century that claimed women became infertile as young as 30. News outlets and anti-feminists cited these studies as evidence that feminism was to blame if women delayed childbearing after establishing a career and encountered fertility problems, leading to depression. Feminism remains the perceived fount of any consequence that delays heterosexual marriage or encourages women to work outside of the home (Charen 2018).

As fewer heterosexual women are marrying, fewer heterosexual men marry. Men have propelled entire social movements, subcultures, and communities revolving around their discontentment with women who choose to remain single longer, indefinitely, and otherwise on their terms (Lilly 2016). The immediate consequence for men that many manospheric subcultures identify is fewer opportunities for sex for most men, though this claim is dubious.

Indeed, sexlessness among young American men aged 22–35 appears to be at a high point relative to recent history. Over 20% of never-married men reported not having sex in the past year in 2016, nearly doubling from 2010. In contrast, sexlessness among never-married young American women has remained mostly stable since around 1990, with around 16% of never-married women reporting celibacy in the past year (e.g., Stone 2018; Wilcox and Stone 2019). The amount of sex young American women collectively have has remained comparatively stable since 2000, but never-married men have reported having fewer sexual encounters in the past year than never-married women (Stone 2018).

Some researchers attribute this phenomenon to poor economic prospects for millennial and Gen-Z men, as more are living with their parents and fewer have steady jobs than in generations past (Binder and Bound 2019). Some social scientists describe substandard unemployment among men to be part of a greater “shortage of marriageable men,” which we might also extend to “dateable” (Sawhill and Venator 2015). There are fewer unmarried, 25–44-year-old employed men compared to women, which researchers suggest contributes to risky behaviors like drug abuse and higher mortality among young men (Autor et al. 2019). This apparent disenfranchisement among a growing subset of men may be especially alienating when paired with the rise of the “lonely American man,” as Shankar Vedantam of National Public Radio dubbed the problem of men lacking nurturing communities when compared to women (Cohen et al. 2018). Indeed, there is evidence that men rely more on their female partners and friends for emotional and social support, while women tend to rely on their friends (e.g., Hamlett 2019; Wade 2013). Manospheric subcultures may represent some men’s attempts at mitigating this loneliness, whether by finding communities in their fellow lonely men or by blaming feminism for their pain.

The Manosphere: Men's Rights Activists, Pick-up Artists, and MGTOW

The descriptor “men’s rights activist (MRA),” without context, sounds innocuous. The movement seems critical when considering the issues the first MRA groups pushed to the vanguard of the movement: paternity leave, disproportionately high male suicide rates, and expectations of men’s behavior to constantly be powerful and unemotional and to align with traditional but problematic conceptions of masculinity. However noble some of these causes are, manospheric “men’s rights activism” is often employed as a euphemism for anti-feminist or misogynistic social movements. Indeed, there is evidence that some modern MRA and other manospheric groups specifically manifest as a backlash to anti-sexual violence activism, as they claim that anti-rape activism and other feminist issues act as a veneer for misandry (contempt for men) (e.g., Gotell and Dutton 2016). The manosphere encompasses modern MRAs, pick-up artists, incels, Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW), and other anti-feminist groups with overlapping and related philosophies on gynocentrism (e.g., Lin 2017) and prescriptions for how men and women should live their lives (e.g., Gotell and Dutton 2016; Lilly 2016). Despite their differing recommendations for how individuals should address the ostensible problems feminism causes men, manospheric groups almost all have the high-level goal of eradicating feminist gains (e.g., Lilly 2016).

The men’s rights movement entered the visual field of feminists and academics alike because of Warren Farrell’s 1993 *Myth of Male Power: Why Men Are the Disposable Sex*. The book, and Farrell’s authored works after it, concerns the men’s expendability in modern, putatively feminist society. It touches on evolutionary biology and the notion that males tote the majority of physical burdens in the world, from war to manual labor to football. He wrote that boys risk losing themselves in ideals of masculinity gone toxic and that men “freed” women and gave them rights. *Myth of Male Power* dramatically reversed the course of his previous career in women’s rights and paved the way for the current MRA movement (Blake 2015). Since then, he has vociferously lobbied for the interests of men, particularly fathers and boys, and argued against the idea that men are privileged compared to women. In his work, he consistently claims that women have more usable power than men because they sexually attract men which leaves men “weak.” In this same vein, he has suggested that the feminist idea that sexual assault as an exercise in dominance rather than solely one of sexual attraction is misguided and problematic, noting that we should not discount the overwhelming sway that sexual arousal has over men (Blake 2015; Farrell).

Other men’s rights movements vary in their goals. One might deem Farrell’s work as somewhat feminist in their philosophies if they have a generous interpretation. Indeed, Farrell contended that many of the problems men face are derived from an unreasonable and problematic expectation of stoicism and dispassionateness among men, while, in reality, men have emotions and have romantic and social needs (Farrell). Farrell’s men’s rights activism stands in stark contrast with the manospheric men’s rights movement that succeeded it (e.g., Blake 2015).

Manospheric and modern online anti-woman communities often use “pills” to refer to their overlapping belief systems. Most commonly, users will refer to the *red pill* and the *blue pill*. The blue pill symbolizes adherence to the status quo. In this context, “blue-pillers” refers to those who believe in feminism or do not believe that *gynocentrism* is a problem. Gynocentrism is the belief that people live in a *gynocracy*, or in a society that revolves around serving and pleasing women over men. Blue-pillers, according to manosphere users, believe they live in a justly equal society between men and women or even believe in patriarchy. Furthermore, blue-pillers do not believe women need to be manipulated in order for men to have access to sexual encounters, relationships, fair access to jobs, and other special goods manosphere users believe women have monopolized (e.g., Lilly 2016; Lin 2017; Schmitz and Kazyak 2016).

Modern men’s rights sites have adopted the philosophy that feminism and women’s rights are detrimental to modern men by undermining their vitality and masculinity. They typically consist of *red pill* adherents. The red pill loosely refers to those who are cognizant of the fact that feminism is an alleged power grab by women. Per the manospheric red pill, feminism is a poor deal for men and leads to gynocentrism. The red pill is associated with pick-up artist culture, MGTOW, and other men’s rights movements that live in the manosphere (e.g., Gotell and Dutton 2016; Lilly 2016). According to the red pill, feminism has not only enfeebled men but has also made it difficult for them to find partners. “Red-pillers” typically advocate for causes such as the annulment of the Violence Against Women Act, anti-anti-rape activism, and a return to traditional gender norms wherein women primarily hold domestic roles and adhere to conventional notions of femininity. Here, MRAs and pick-up artists alike disparage women as shallow, childlike, and conniving and contend that feminism has empowered women to the detriment of everyone’s well-being. Such websites often advise readers on how to “game” women in getting what they want (including sex) and on finding vulnerable women who are less likely to be feminists. These portrayals of women, demonization of female empowerment, and glorification of hegemonic masculinity reinforce a paradigm wherein women are dehumanized, problematic behavior is encouraged, and violence against women is condoned and at times celebrated (e.g., Gotell and Dutton 2016; Lilly 2016; Schmitz and Kazyak 2016).

Pick-up artist culture is distinct from men’s rights activism in the manosphere. Though they may not self-identify as men’s rights activists, they subscribe to similar worldviews, and some might identify with both communities. Pick-up artists, red-pillers as they are, aim to behave as “alpha,” or dominant, males and put hyper-masculinity on a pedestal. They generally have similar chauvinistic attitudes towards women as incels do, but do not believe that men are doomed to “cuckoldry” or incelhood. With elaborate and sometimes convoluted training, they pride themselves on being able to coach themselves and others to “pick up” women at bars to have sex with them. Pick-up artist culture in the 1990s and 2000s entered the mainstream with Neil Strauss’s signature work *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists* that detailed pick-up artist techniques and the philosophy of its adherents (e.g., Koul 2018; Lyons 2009). Pick-up artists will sometimes advocate for “game”

because they contend it is necessary to defeat women in gynocentric societies. For example, some platforms, like Return of Kings and Roosh V, prominent red pill websites, claim women prefer “alpha” men, that men who are not “alpha” men will get women of “lower value” and that alphas must manipulate women for society to thrive. In the manosphere, “lower value” typically means older women, heavier women, or women who have had sex with several men already, reinforcing misogynistic ideals about what good women are and that a “good society” is one where men dominate (e.g., Lilly 2016, Valizadeh 2015).

Modern incels may have stemmed from pick-up artist culture. Incels are known to be frustrated with pick-up artist advice and tactics, claiming that despite sophisticated techniques successful with other men, some men, like the incels, are genetically and, thus, biologically incapable of having consensual sex with women (e.g., ContraPoints 2018; Koul 2018). Ironically, some pick-up artists have argued that feminists’ rejection of “pick-up artistry” reinforces incel theory. Roosh Valizadeh, the author of several pick-up artist articles and books, wrote that he believed additional massacres by incels were inevitable unless incels were taught “game” or found alternatives for sex in foreign wives and legalized prostitution. (Valizadeh 2014).

Pick-up artists and other subcultures in the manosphere have touched on “solutions” to the incel problem. Valizadeh himself proposed a sophisticated system of incentivizing young, single women who were seeking partners that would compel them to sleep with incels (Valizadeh 2018). Valizadeh’s claims harken to a broader pattern of economists, psychologists, and journalists proffering ways besides pick-up artistry to “stop” the incels or placate them, often by offering novel modes of access to sex for incels.

Relatedly, incels scoff at the ideas that “normies” put forth to help incels and dismiss advice as paternalistic and condescending. Similarly to how they refer to testimonials on exercising or personal transformations as “cope,” they often claim that nothing they can personally do will alter their situation. On incel forums, suggesting therapy or “getting new hobbies” or other words of wisdom are mocked as platitudinous, resulting in a meme telling incels “clean your room.” Incels maintain that their sole problem is that they lack access to women and, in the absence of sexual access to women, will inevitably continue to be miserable and bitter (e.g., ContraPoints 2018).

In contrast, MGTOW are characterized by their voluntary abstinence from women. They believe that, as a result of feminism, men get the short end of the proverbial stick when it comes to marriage and relationships with women. MGTOW are also against affirmative action and similar measures; they believe anti-domestic violence and anti-rape legislation and activism are weaponized to oppress men (Lerxst 2017; Lin 2017). Some academics, such as Helen Smith, have sympathized with such ideas. Smith wrote a book, oft-cited by MGTOW, called *Men on Strike: Why Men Are Boycotting Marriage, Fatherhood, and the American Dream – and Why It Matters*, in which she characterizes feminist gains as a “backlash” against males and masculinity. She contends that men are increasingly forgoing college,

marriage, and work as a means of resistance against a society that marginalizes men by expecting them to be successful while also demonizing masculinity (Smith 2013).

By their own admission, MGTOW's misogyny is justified because of women's ostensible toxicity towards "good men." They desire to return to universal patriarchy, with the man at the head of the household and feminism being stigmatized. MGTOW also contend that problems the alleged gynocracy causes men may be solved through artificial wombs and sex dolls because it would render women "irrelevant (Lerxst 2017)." Of course, sex dolls and artificial wombs can only supplant women if one believes that women's value is derived from their sexuality and their ability to reproduce.

Except for /pick-up artistry, the default manospheric philosophy seems to be that the solution to gynocentrism entails overhauling feminism, society, and policy, rather than themselves. There is evidence that manospheric corners of the Internet, especially incel forums, encourage suicide and foster poor mental health. One YouTube blogger, Natalie Wynn, compared the incel forums' tendency to serve as an echo chamber of pessimism and negativity to that of other fringe groups, like those on 4chan.org, that foster extremist ideologies and conspiracy theories. She suggests that it is extraordinarily difficult for a person to break out of that type of environment once they have immersed themselves in it because of the addictiveness of those communities (ContraPoints 2018). Her ideas may allude to the "crab mentality," also known as "crab bucket theory." The idea is that when one crab is placed in a bucket, it can escape; when two crabs are placed in a bucket, it is slightly more difficult for each to escape, but nonetheless relatively doable. Escaping the bucket becomes progressively harder for the crabs in a bucket the more crabs there are. Eventually, it becomes virtually impossible for any one crab to escape, not because it is infeasible to get out of the bucket, but because the other crabs will block the crab from trying. This theory illustrates an "If we're going down, you will too," worldview; in the psychology of online behavior, it is hypothesized that people will suppress their group members' sense of self-worth out of spite, envy, or competitiveness (Spacey 2015). In the context of the manosphere, online forums serve as "buckets" that polarize users and, once steeped into the community's mentality, make it hopeless to escape.

However, there is growing evidence that individuals from other parts of the manosphere, including the men's rights movement, tend to migrate to the incel forums and gradually begin identifying with incel ideologies. Computational social science methods demonstrate that over time a larger proportion of the manosphere employs increasingly hateful and extremist language. This effect is possibly driven by mounting influence of MGTOW and the incels (Ribeiro et al. 2020).

Incels in the Manosphere

Enter the self-identified involuntary celibates, also known as incels, an alleged byproduct of women's empowerment. Incels' unifying philosophy is that modern feminism, married to the effects of social media and online dating, has resulted in a significant proportion of men getting the short end of the stick, leaving them sexless

and lonely. They fallaciously theorize that women are a coveted resource and that because women now have far more freedom to choose their sexual partners, women are chasing the top 20% of men who are wealthy, attractive, and intelligent, also known as *Chads*, rather than settling for men who are more physically compatible or in their words, *looksmatch* (Causes of incelism 2020).

Incels contend that women deny them sex for punitive reasons. Specifically, they attribute men's singledom not solely to increased socioeconomic independence among women, but women's engagement in *hypergamy*, wherein women exclusively pursue higher-status men than themselves (e.g., Saint-Paul 2008). Hypergamy allegedly results in the majority of women competing over a minority of men, with large swaths of men settling for women who are less attractive and socioeconomically successful than themselves and a considerable proportion of men who are entirely unable to find consenting romantic or sexual partners (Hypergamy 2020).

"Involuntary" celibates, in the broadest sense of the term, have long predated the modern feminist movement; those who are disabled, for example, or have some condition that precludes them from conventional sexual norms, disproportionately do not have sex (e.g., Donnelly et al. 2001). However, people who do not have partners for these reasons are generally not considered modern incels unless they actively subscribe to the manospheric incel movement. Instead, the manospheric incel movement is a mutated version of a community that once attempted to provide people who had trouble finding consenting sexual partners with advice and a sense of belonging. Alana, a Canadian woman, coined the term "involuntary celibates" in the 1990s as a project during her college years (Taylor 2018). The term involuntary celibacy entered the Internet in 1993, when Alana began an online forum for celibate individuals to congregate. The website, titled "Alana's Involuntary Celibacy Project," was designed to provide abstinent individuals with a community to express their emotions about not having a sexual partner and with resources to improve their social skills, if they so desired. For example, the site hosted "Craig's Shyness Resource Page" and a "neuro-linguistic programming" techniques list (Alana's Involuntary Celibacy Project 1997).

According to the incel wiki, Alana abandoned the project in 2003 (Alana's Involuntary Celibacy Project 2020). The community dispersed.

Today, the incel community exists cohesively on the Internet. Women are excluded from the incel community (SeargentIncel 2017). Current incels more closely resemble other manospheric subcultures than the relatively diverse communities on *Alana's Involuntary Celibate Project* or studied by academics nearly two decades ago. One should note that like many belief systems, there is some variation within the incel subculture with uniting themes of antifeminism and "involuntary celibacy." Incels' belief system is largely characterized by the *black pill*, analogous to the red pill and blue pill philosophies in other parts of the manosphere (e.g., Beauchamp 2019).

The erosion of the blue pill's utility, according to the incels and many red-pillers, is a result of the rise of social media, online dating, the media, and women's empowerment. Nevertheless, incels believe that the red pill still adheres to mawkish conceptions of feminism and wrongly suggests that women can be "conquered" in

modern society. Instead, they subscribe to the black pill. On the black pill, incels accept that some people are merely “genetically inferior” and thus doomed to perpetual singledom. Genetic inferiority may mean they are socially inept, are lacking in stature, possess a small penis, have asymmetrical facial features, or have other qualities that they believe impede their ability to find a consenting sexual partner (Blackpill 2020).

The black pill is sometimes controversial because some incels have used it to symbolize a nihilistic desolation without any chance of escaping being an incel and misery (Blackpill 2020). Still, the black pill has strongly influenced the incel community, even those who subscribe to slightly different philosophies. In addition to declaring some men naturally genetically inferior to others, in terms of intelligence, social prowess, and appearance, the black pill states that unless one is a “Chad” in the top portion of quality men, they are doomed to fail sexually. Some maintain that the black pill is evolutionarily and socially based. Incels believe women naturally gravitate towards men who are of superior genetic material, such as in appearances, success, and intelligence, and so desiring a Chad is part of the natural order (e.g., Jennings 2018).

Those on the black pill allow that even men who are not as genetically inferior as incels may fail to find long term a romantic or sex partner and instead be strung along as *beta orbiters*, men who circle a woman in hopes of being chosen by her (rafaelvicuna3 2018). The black pill philosophy contends that women will only settle for non-Chads after “riding the cock carousel,” or sleeping around, for several years, once their beauty has diminished and they long for stability. Even then, an incel runs the risk of being cheated on or left for a Chad, who women ultimately desire (e.g., Beauchamp 2019; Wizardcel 2019).

Incels point to social media and dating apps as an advantage for women and a detriment to men (e.g., Castle 2019). They contend that, with social media, women can showcase their beauty to more men and feel more desired. Coupled with dating apps, women end up having considerably more romantic and sexual prospects than they may have had before the rise of dating apps, thereby increasing competition among men. Homely men with poor social skills and mediocre career prospects, accordingly, fare more poorly in today’s dating scene than they may have several decades ago, according to incels and their sympathizers (e.g., Peake 2020).

Most of the time, incel forum users discuss topics about the nuances of the black pill, stories about being an incel, and theories on masculinity. Their conversations often revolve around sex and are based on themes such as suicide and violence to emphasize their desolate situations. Indeed, incels have crafted an entire philosophy and worldview revolving around their bereft sex lives and why women are at fault for incels’ purported suffering (e.g., Beauchamp 2019).

Thus, there is a sense of helplessness on incel forums. Users call posts that encourage people to try new mechanisms to find a partner or happiness in life, such as exercising or engaging in social activities *cope*, short for coping mechanism in a derogatory fashion (e.g., Beauchamp 2019). Certain groups of incels, such as r/IncelsWithoutHate, on Reddit who pride themselves on not advocating for overt violence against *normies*, short for “normal” (Manosphere Glossary 2020), suggest

that the only ethical solution for incel-dom is government-sanctioned, legal euthanasia. According to one manifesto, legal euthanasia would benefit incels because death would relieve them of their suffering and would be optimal for the human race because their inferior genes would not be transmitted to offspring (ugly-as-fuck 2018).

Some incels believe that *looksmxing*, enhancing one's physical appearance via diet and exercise, plastic surgery, or other means, to try and escape one's incel-dom could help their cause. These incels seek facial reconstruction surgery, among other enhancements (Hines 2019).

Incels believe that wealth could help them find a consenting partner as well. However, others see a problem with using wealth to entice women: they believe that normies and cucks are often taken advantage of by women who just want men's wealth rather than the men themselves. Such men, according to incel philosophy, settle for women who are typically less attractive than them, who have had previously had sex with an obscene number of men, and who will inevitably cheat on them. With this perspective, salvation from such an unfortunate, but common fate, can only come if one is a Chad (e.g., CopingManletcel 2018; Ging 2019; rightfulcel 2020b).

Incel forums are not the first of its kind on the Internet to degrade women in what sometimes sounds like hyperbolic chauvinism with posts such as “[It’s Over] Being A Cuck Is Inescapable If you’re Sub8-9 (COPE GmbH 2020),” “Ragefuel: Coworker is a Whore! (Forum_User_2345 2020),” or “[LifeFuel] Calling women toilets is the most high iq idea ever (rightfulcel 2020a).” Despite its ubiquity online and the coverage it receives from the media, “e-bile,” crude comments usually directed at women, is generally not discussed in scholarship (Jane 2014). While vitriol against women online may seem trivial, the consequences are often not only virtual: *doxing*, or revealing personal information about an individual, usually vindictively after that person has said or done something to the perpetrators’ dislike, threatens people’s well-being. Promoting and normalizing violent ideals against women promotes a culture of fear and can result in psychological or actualized physical violence against women (e.g., Baele et al. 2019; Hoffman et al. 2020).

Extremist, radical users constitute a substantial presence on the incel forums. These users believe that not only is feminism a tangible harm, but also that women do not deserve any modern rights, such as the right to vote, the right to work, the right not to be considered property, and the right not to be raped (e.g., curryZoomercoomer 2020; mylifeistrash 2018; thirsit 2018). They believe that the male right to sex trumps most, if not all, other moral and value-based considerations. The exact proportion of incel forum users who hold such beliefs is unclear; one poll conducted in January 2018 and accessed on April 20, 2020, found that approximately 39% of users of incels.co “supported rape” of women (iiiTeMpeR 2018). Furthermore, at least one empirical study has also found a relationship between self-reported incel-like characteristics and violent fantasies; individuals who scored higher on an inventory designed to measure incel-like qualities were more likely to fantasize about using powerful weapons and committing rape (Saptura and Boyle 2019). A recent quantitative and qualitative review of content on the now-defunct incels.me

investigated the connection between incel slang and the propensity for violence. While the authors didn't claim that there is a definitive causal relationship between increases in incel posts and incel parlance with terrorist attacks, they did find that those who committed acts of mass violence, like Elliot Rodger or Alek Minassian, were quickly elevated to "saint" status. Despite attempts to moderate and delete posts explicitly calling for violence, posts normalizing and exalting the violence as just retribution for denying incels the sex they believe they deserve remain (Baele et al. 2019).

Attention to the incel's fringe movement waned after Rodgers' attack in 2014 until Minassian revitalized discourse on them in 2018 when he drove a van into nearly two dozen pedestrians, mostly women, killing ten. According to BBC News (2018), before the attack, he posted to Facebook praising Elliot Rodgers and pledging loyalty to the incel terroristic movement:

"The Incel Rebellion has already begun! We will overthrow all the Chads and Stacys! All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger! ("Elliot Rodger: How misogynist killer" 2018)

Incels believe women who lack male partners are alone because they would rather be alone than with a "beta male" or anyone but a Chad. Women and girls have so little self-determination in incel communities that they're often referred to as *femoids*, a portmanteau of "female" and "android," classifying them as something less than human, if not worse derogatory terms like "holes" or "toilets" (e.g., Manosphere Glossary 2020; rightfulcel 2020a). The stereotypes about women as unintelligent but still manipulative, all contained in the term *Stacy*, a term referring to a vapid but beautiful woman, harken back to traditional views on the shortcomings of women. The "queen bee," or "mean girl" stereotype of girls and women, suggests that while girls and women pretend to play nice, they will hurt one another and boys with cruel rhetoric hold relationships and affection captive and generally behave mendaciously and deceitfully (e.g., Jenning 2018). The queen bee stereotype is also useful when drawing comparisons to incels' conceptions of women, because it infantilizes them and reduces them to girls, whom the prevailing culture tends to typecast as having a narrow inner life and superficial desires, behaviors, and attitudes (e.g., Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2008). Women who are not considered "Stacys" are derogatorily referred to as "Beckys," or average women who are contemptibly socially ambitious and mislead "beta orbiters" into believing they have a chance with them while actually coveting Chad (e.g., Jennings 2018).

Incel culture pigeonholes virtually all adult women into this archetype, and it is partly for this reason that incel culture is typically as a rule deeply misogynistic, though some incels will vehemently deny that they explicitly hate all women. In one comment from incels.co, one user contended that "Incels are just men who cannot find sexual partners and wish to . . . in general, most incels don't feel 'entitled' to women. We just greatly want one, as is our natural biological drive" (RageAgainstTDL 2018).

While the user may have a point that some incels feel more "entitled" to women than others, they try to dodge accusations of misogyny by announcing their desire

for “having a woman.” Yet, one can be attracted to women and still be a misogynist. Millions of men are romantically attached to women just within the United States and still harbor disturbing attitudes towards women. “Wanting” a woman is not a valid dodge against misogyny.

When perusing incel forums, it is evident that the users are deluded in their beliefs of what sexual behavior, mental states, and worldly outlooks are normal. Incels believe that the significant majority of people have had significant romantic and sexual experiences from their teenage years (e.g., Klee 2018; Tolentino 2018). This delusion is salient from a life course perspective (Donnelly et al. 2001). Dating and having one’s first sexual experience are normal behaviors during high school and early college that may be influential on one’s worldview, habits, identity, and so forth. Some theorize that these early experiences are indicative and pivotal in developing social skills necessary for sexual development. From this lens, then, incels are socially immature and may struggle to find a partner in ways where another person who is identical to an incel in every way except did have consensual sexual experiences earlier in life would not struggle.

One should note that this theory heavily leans on liberal American norms. For example, being a teenager or young adult in a sexually conservative or religious community without sexual experiences may not cause the same problems it could cause as coming of age sexually naive in a hypersexualized culture. Thus, a life course perspective on incels might rely on individuals’ perception of what is socially normal, rather than some absolutist account of what sexual behaviors are “normal” and what are not, because what is normal is decidedly subjective (Donnelly et al. 2001). Nonetheless, online users seem to be under the impression that almost everyone is having fantastic amounts of sex and that early sexual experiences are vital for normal psychosocial development. While studies have not been published, one can compare this “FOMO” (fear of missing out) to the mentality of young adults who tend to believe that their peers are drinking much more alcohol than they actually do (e.g., Chauvin 2012). This perception leads to a skewed worldview of what is “normal” young adult behavior versus what is not. Many incel forum users have written that even if they can find a partner in the future, they will have lost their youth and missed out on said euphoric, teenage experiences (Klee 2018; Over-BeforeItBegan 2018). Furthermore, incels have expressed concern about the age of the women they can be with if they are only able to find a partner when the incels are older, calling older women *roasties*, the slang term for an older woman. Roastie harkens to a roast beef sandwich, because they believe that women’s vaginas look like roast beef sandwiches after they’ve had sex with multiple men (e.g., Tolentino 2018), though not if they have sex with the same man multiple times. This dynamic emphasized incels’ beliefs that women and girls are valued for their sexuality, rather than for their humanity. Dehumanizing women here is a pillar of their devaluation of women and is, therefore, a justification for violence and apathy towards women.

The incels are not unique in their prescribed animosity and disdain towards women and girls, though their rhetoric may be more virulent. Incels are naught but one extreme subculture in the manosphere, a growing region of the Internet that glorifies the subjugation of women and helps normalize violence against them (e.g.,

Ging 2019). Still, what makes incels arguably more disturbing than other corners of the Internet defined by e-bile and rape fantasies is the aggressive misogyny that is defined by not being able to have a woman. What women desire is to be left alone by these men, while to these men, unreciprocated sexual longing is the ultimate affront. Incels often express incredulity at the concept that women would rather not date anyone than date some men, and they abhor women for it (e.g., Lookismisreal 2017; PM_ME_STRIPPERs 2018). The coexistence of the manosphere, incels, and their associated brutality towards women may represent an escalating influence of a more bellicose resistance and backlash towards feminism and women's gains (e.g., Hoffman et al. 2020; Ribeiro et al. 2020).

Terrorism Attracts Attention

The study of incels was relatively rare until the 2014 Isla Vista shooting, when Elliot Rodgers of California killed 6 and injured 14 before turning the gun on himself. He left behind a verbose, graphic manifesto on the perils of being an adult virgin. Rodgers discussed his "dream" of having a world where women are made sexually available to men by force so that men will not have to suffer the way he did (e.g., White 2017). For some, it was a wake-up call. The shooting, along with the disturbing manifesto, revitalized girls' interest in feminism. From interview data, Sales (2016) attested that the girls were markedly less resigned to lives of objectification and misogyny after the incident in 2014 than in 2013. Prior to the shooting, girls had little conceptions of feminism or why it was necessary; afterwards, they developed strong language for the cruciality of women's empowerment, sexuality, and fight against patriarchy (Sales 2016).

For others, however, Rodgers' rampage was an inspiration, sparking an unfortunate trend. After Rodgers' shooting, Harper-Mercer killed nine classmates at Umpqua Community College in 2015. Like Rodgers, Harper-Mercer left behind a manifesto detailing his frustration arising from not having a girlfriend and his resentment towards a world against him. In 2018, a Florida gunman who identified as an incel and had a criminal history of violence against women killed two women and injured five others before committing suicide (Zaveri et al. 2018). Additionally, there are a multitude of posts on incel forums that make calls to arms in homage to the movement. Committing a mass shooting or mass killing in the name of incelism even has its own nickname on such forums: *going ER*, short for "Elliot Rodgers" (e.g., Hoffman et al. 2020). Rodgers was far from the first – or the last – man to take out his frustration with his place in the world by committing violence against women and men in a public setting. Furthermore, incels are not the only men who are angry and lash out because of it. Incel communities are only one group in the manosphere (Lilly 2016), but they have garnered traction in the mainstream media as a result of their high-profile terrorist attacks (e.g., Beauchamp 2019) and, possibly, as a result of their incendiary and distinct rhetoric. While not everyone in the manosphere resorts to physical violence, studies have demonstrated a relationship between activity on the aforementioned incel forums and mass violence. Specifically, an academic text analysis of Reddit found a positive relationship between the frequency and volume

of activity on incel forums and incels' terrorist attacks (Baele et al. 2019). Furthermore, the philosophies on the manosphere are united by anti-feminist and often anti-woman sentiments that may normalize and condone violence against women (e.g., Lilly 2016).

Incel terrorism is associated with killing "normies" as a means to garner attention to their cause – some incels consider those who *go ER* as martyrs who died for the incel cause (e.g., Baele et al. 2019; Hoffman et al. 2020). However, violence against women as a result of sexual and romantic rejection is not unique to the incels. Women and girls are targets of violence unsettlingly frequently for ignoring men's advances, such as the girl killed on the morning of her junior prom after saying no to her murderer in 2014 (L'Heureux 2016) and the girl who was stabbed 11 times during a school assembly for telling a boy that she didn't want a romantic relationship with him (Quinlan 2018). Girls and women are also targeted in mass killings; in the 2018 school shooting in Sante Fe, Texas, the first person to be shot was reportedly a girl who rejected the killer when he asked her to go to prom with him ("Sante Fe school shooting:" 2018).

These are not isolated incidents of violence against women, but rather a disturbing pattern that some incels seek to exploit to make women fear rejecting men. Specifically, a troubling subset of incels and other manospheric groups advocate for violence against women, such as going ER or encouraging behaviors that are alarmingly similar to date rape and abusive behaviors in relationships. Said violence is designed to intimidate women as a group into submitting to men, whether politically to efface feminist gains or sexually and individually (e.g., Baele et al. 2019; Beauchamp 2019; Hoffman et al. 2020).

The attention incels and other anti-feminists have commandeered led to a national crackdown of the popular forums they previously used to congregate, especially Reddit. Over the past 2 years, most of the popular incel forums (including r/Braincels, r/Incels, incels.me, r/JustBeWhite) readily available to non-members to discuss incel philosophy and beliefs shut down, causing the incels to consistently need to relocate to new sites. Researchers from the Council on Foreign Relations suggest that incels' migration to platforms like Gab and Telegram, encrypted social services shared by terrorist groups such as ISIS, are one indication that the incel and grander manospheric threat has reached a critical level that must be addressed immediately (Hoffman et al. 2020).

Discussion, Analysis, and Outlook

Though all reasonable parties condemn violence against women, the incel question remains controversial. Some contend sex and a consenting partner may be considered a sort of special good that can improve one's quality of life, comparable to income or other conditions in life. Hanson (2018) suggested that people who lack access to sex have a poorer quality of life than those who have sex, akin to people who have a low income versus those who are middle class. He compared those who were interested in the redistribution of sex to those who advocated for income

redistribution. Hanson's comments are in the same family with incels' claims that a woman who is raped suffers less than a man who unintentionally remains virginal his entire life (Hanson 2018; Weissman 2018). If we consider sex as an aforementioned special good, particularly to men, access to women is a prime resource. Women becoming more selective reduces the pool for men. Therefore, via incel and other manospheric logic, the optimal way to mitigate the perceived deficit of requisite female partners is to increase the number of requisite available female partners. This growth in numbers could happen by eroding feminist ideals that empower women not to settle for men they are not attracted to (e.g., Ging 2019; Lilly 2016). An increase could also happen by forcing women to be more attractive to men by abandoning feminism. Posts on some men's rights forums, for example, allege that women have become "unfuckable" and especially "undateable" and "unmarriageable" because feminism has enabled them to not care sufficiently about staying thin, maintaining their long hair, behaving submissively, and other physical and personality aspects traditionally associated with femininity (e.g., Lilly 2016). These posts and articles fortify feminists' contention that the existence of and sympathy for the incel problem, among many of the purported "men's rights" issues men offer from the manosphere, are a facade for disempowering women and returning them to exclusively domestic roles.

Yet, studies suggest that being single, especially if one lacks considerable social support through family or other loved ones and is prone to loneliness, can have pernicious effects on quality of life (Adamczyk and Segrin 2015). Being single voluntarily can mitigate this loneliness, suggesting that being involuntarily single can be even more detrimental to one's well-being (Adamczyk 2017). However, suffering as a result of singledom or sexlessness is not evidence or support for the idea that people are entitled to sexual partners. The concept of a universal human right to sexual pleasure is ultimately incompatible with others' bodily autonomy and the rights to sexual self-determination (e.g., Di Nucci 2020a, b). Considering putative legalized, state-sanctioned, or charitable sex work as a solution for those who have difficulty finding consenting sexual partners on their own ultimately hinges on sex workers' implicit consent to have sex with any given person benefiting from that program. Even if any one given sex worker can say no, the program hinges on *someone* consenting to each beneficiary, and that cannot be an assumption while maintaining people's bodily autonomy (e.g., Di Nucci 2020a, b). Besides the problems associated with sexlessness, there is also evidence that young men do, on average, have more trouble finding romantic partners than women and experience more rejection (Wang 2014). Young men may also have inferior social support from other men than young women do from their social circles, causing their personal lives and sometimes their physical health to suffer (Kaul and Irwin 2018). The response from feminists, at least online, is often to call the men "toxic" and to tell them that they need to work on themselves (e.g., ContraPoints 2019). This response may not necessarily be false, yet it may not be constructive either. Even when feminists give constructive advice, it is dismissed as paternalistic and condescending, as mentioned earlier (e.g., ContraPoints 2018). It also could reward men who parrot feminist rhetoric without acting or believing in it, reinforcing a cycle

of commodifying social “wokeness” as a form of social and romantic capital without actually improving conditions for women.

While these phenomena are clearly not grounds for the violent misogyny found in the manosphere, they do speak to a potential gap in positive role models and constructive social support for men, as well as a need for a critical culture shift from the expectations that being in touch with one’s emotions and self-improvement are women’s domains (e.g., Wong et al. 2017). Feminists and others contend that it is not up to society – or, namely, women – to grapple with men’s singledom and any associated ways they may act out as a result. Other writers have expressed general sympathy towards the incels, with one calling them the “the Product of an Incomplete Sexual Revolution (Dalmia 2018).” Indeed, some studies have investigated gender dynamics on dating apps and hypothesize that women have more raw options to choose from, with one writer dubbing the phenomenon “attraction inequality” and suggested this evidence demonstrates that women have the luxury to be more selective with their partner than men (Tuckfield 2019). This alleged discrepancy in sexual access could foster resentment among male online daters, propelling otherwise normal young men into the manosphere (e.g., Peake 2020).

Yet another possible reason the incel community and black pill theory has flourished is the rise of the male loneliness, leading them to manospheric communities as a form of release and support (e.g., Cohen et al. 2018; Way 2014). Researcher Niobe Way has examined the effects of social isolation in men and boys on suicide ideation and other psychological issues. The rise of mass violence from boys and young men, per Way, is one direct consequence of a culture that expects stoicism from men rather than allowing them to express their emotions in healthy ways through constructive friendships and relationships (e.g., Way 2014; Way 2019). As mentioned earlier in this section, men often lack the robust social support many women have from their friends and family. Meanwhile, cultural expectations of romantic relationships have shifted. Rather than expecting companionship from a romantic partner, Americans appear to increasingly expect more from their romantic partners (e.g., Finkel et al. 2015). Realistically, one person generally can’t fulfill all of their partner’s social and emotional needs; one person can’t be someone’s psychologist, best friend, co-leader of the household, workout partner, and lover and everything else in their life. People who compartmentalize their relationships and allocate their social and emotional needs across multiple people, rather than concentrating their needs in a few people, live more satisfying lives (Cheung et al. 2015). By putting all of their social and emotional expectations on their putative female partners, men cause their mental health to suffer. They then endure the traumatic health effects of debilitating loneliness at higher rates than women, such as depression and dying from suicide at startlingly high rates. Studies have also shown a relationship between men’s subscription to traditional ideals of masculinity, including highly valuing status, toughness, and anti-femininity in themselves, and psychologically significant loneliness (e.g., Blazina et al. 2007).

Still, others, such as Ross Douthat and certain philosophers, have argued that potential resolutions to the incel question involve sex robots or prostitutes (e.g., Tolentino 2018). Nevertheless, if we are to take what the incels themselves say at

face value with the evidence we have on human relationships, there is reasonable evidence to believe that the problems here do not ultimately revolve around sex itself. Rather, they hinge on a need for companionship, unsatisfied yearning for social connection, and a longing for respect in all areas of life, including sexual satisfaction (e.g., Shakespeare 2000). Indeed, evidence shows that most men who possess sex dolls obtained them out of the desire for human connection or companionship (Langcaster-James and Bentley 2018).

Therefore, the solution to men's loneliness is not state-sponsored girlfriends or sex robots or the return of a cultural paradigm where women are compelled to pair up with men they are not interested in. Instead, we need a culture shift where men are not only allowed to but are expected to and compelled to deal with their emotions and mental health in constructive ways that do not default to leaning on women, or, in the incels' case, to leaning on the desire and perceived loss of a deserved female partner. This shift could manifest in multiple ways, such as encouraging and nurturing more positively productive male friendships or finding their places in uplifting communities with shared interests or hobbies. A solution could even be some sort of men's movement that *doesn't* hinge on anti-feminism, but rather seeks to reduce violence and mental illness among men and promote their well-being (e.g., ContraPoints 2019). In any case, the intensifying threat of male violence motivated by anti-feminism and male supremacy, as evidenced by the mounting influence of the manosphere and rise in terrorist attacks driven by its philosophies, is an attestation that what feminists and activists are currently doing is insufficient to battle manospheric menaces.

Key Points

- The rise of domestic terrorism by incels has drawn the nation's attention to a growing community of mostly straight white young men who harbor intensely misogynistic views and lack consenting sexual partners.
- Red pill theory, black pill theory, and other far-right men's rights philosophies are used to justify female subjugation, such as intimidation in dating and in interacting with women, and mass violence against women.
- Black pill theory is the belief that because of social media, women's "market values" are artificially high and they have become "hypergamous," only seeking the most attractive, handsome, and intelligent men to partner with. This phenomenon, according to adherents, leaves a large portion of men unpartnered, sexless, and frustrated.
- Part of the rise of far-right men's groups may be attributed to an epidemic of loneliness among men. Men disproportionately rely on the women in their lives, especially their romantic female partners, for emotional and mental support.
- Barring alternatives to this support, men without social networks in their lives suffer from depression, suicide, and other mental ailments at inordinate rates. Some men lash out with violence or seek support in philosophies that are inherently violent.

- Women teaching feminism to these men may not be the end of resolving the rise of problematic far-right ideologies; rather, we need a culture shift that normalizes and encourages male vulnerability and healthy coping mechanisms.

Summary and Conclusion

The manosphere is a burgeoning threat consisting of far-right anti-feminist and anti-woman groups that threaten women's safety and freedom. These groups, including men's rights activists, pick-up artists, incels, and Men Going Their Own Away, among others, may emerge as forms of anti-feminist backlash and widely seek to reverse feminist gains. They typically believe that feminism emasculates men and has led to American gynocracy, or society where women dominate over men, despite feminists' claims that we live in patriarchy (e.g., Gotell and Dutton 2016; Lilly 2016; Manosphere Glossary 2020). The manosphere fosters increasing radicalization within its sphere, wherein users emerge more militant in their misogyny than when they enter (Ribeiro et al. 2020). This dynamic may have contributed to rises in domestic terrorism and interpersonal abuse towards women in men's daily lives that are motivated by manospheric philosophies.

Involuntary celibates, aka incels, are a particularly erythrogenic portion of the manosphere, characterized by their inability to find consenting sexual partners. They subscribe to "the black pill," or the belief that, because of feminism, women are increasingly hypergamous or dating above their proverbial social caste. Incels believe hypergamy and women's ability to remain single, due to increased financial and sexual empowerment compared to decades past, results in a small portion of highly desirable men receiving a disproportionate amount of female attention. As a result, a majority middle portion of men date below their proverbial social caste, and a large bottom portion of men are doomed to sexlessness and singledom due to various factors, such as a misshapen facial structure or their height. Incels are also notorious for their virulent rhetoric, misogynistic philosophy and, at times, propensity for condoning and encouraging violence (e.g., Beauchamp 2019).

In addition to surfacing as a backlash movement, incels may be a consequence of pestilential loneliness among American men who have not developed healthy coping mechanisms for their emotions and lack communities for social support, especially when compared to women (e.g., Way 2014). Future directions for research may aim to investigate effective methods for inculcating men in the manosphere, especially in the incel subculture, with healthier views on women and improved ways to address their emotions.

Cross-References

- ▶ [A Feminist Perspective on the Criminal Justice System Response to Domestic Violence](#)
- ▶ [Adult Sexual Harassment and Assault: Victimization and Perpetration](#)

- ▶ Community Violence and Abuse: Victimization and Perpetration
- ▶ Defining Gun Violence using a Biopsychosocial Framework: A Public Health Approach
- ▶ Empowerment Strategies and Youth Community Organizing
- ▶ False Reporting of Sexual Victimization: Prevalence, Definitions, and Public Perceptions
- ▶ Future Directions in Advocacy in Response to Interpersonal Violence
- ▶ Future Directions in Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Across the Lifespan
- ▶ Future Directions in Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Interventions Across the Lifespan
- ▶ Future Directions in System Responses to Interpersonal Violence and Abuse: Community Perspectives
- ▶ Hate Crimes: A Special Category of Victimization
- ▶ Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Across The Lifespan: Foundations and Perspectives
- ▶ Men Stopping Violence's Definition of Male Sexual Violence Against Women: Implications for Prevention and Intervention
- ▶ Nature and Scope of Technology-Facilitated or Related: Focus on Pornography
- ▶ Reforming Comprehensive Sex Education
- ▶ Sexual and Gender-Based Violence as Warfare
- ▶ Sexual Harassment Communication Across the Context and the Lifespan: An Interdisciplinary Perspective
- ▶ Sexual Harassment Training: Why it (Currently) Doesn't Work and What Can Be Done
- ▶ Survivors, Economic, and Justice System Responses to Intimate Partner Violence
- ▶ Trauma and Violence Across the Lifespan: Public Policy Advances, Challenges, and Future Directions

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