Many Good Men

Young Scots' experiences of online misogynistic extremism and radicalisation

Z ZERO TOLERANCE

civic digits

Cover image: Chi Wai Cheung, Civic Digits

Authors: Clare Duffy (Civic Digits), Zaki El-Salahi, (Dark Matter Education), Katie Horsburgh (Zero Tolerance) and Jenny Wartnaby (Zero Tolerance)

Lead researcher: Clare Duffy (Civic Digits)

Co-researchers: Gael Cochrane, and Zaki El-Salahi (Dark Matter Education)

Content warning

This report contains discussions of misogyny, violence, suicide and other potentially disturbing topics.

Contents

Introduction

> "There is pressure to be a man. You are going to feel bad and that can be turned into misogyny."
> – young woman

> "[Incels] feel left out, disappointed and angry with themselves." – young man

> "Men are victims of masculinity." – young woman

Extreme misogyny is not new, but online spaces are facilitating a resurgence and re-entrenching of **attitudes and behaviours that seek to justify and incite violence against women and girls.** The internet makes it possible for these misogynistic views to spread rapidly on an unprecedented scale, uncontained by cultural or geographical borders.

These online spaces target young men and seek to radicalise them into extreme misogynistic beliefs. Many indoctrinated young men then perpetrate harm against their young women peers.

This phenomenon is of growing concern in Scotland. To learn more about it, **we commissioned participatory research to explore young Scottish men's and women's experiences and views of so-called 'incel culture'.**

Civic Digits ran a **participatory theatre project** called Many Good Men from August 2023 to March 2024. Clare Duffy, the Director of Civic Digits, and two senior youth workers, Gael Cochrane and Zaki El-Salahi, led a group of young White women and a group of young Black men to co-create two new plays to be performed by professional actors at Hearts Football Club in February 2024. The audience was other young people from schools and youth groups.

The Many Good Men project aimed to find out:

- **how young people experience online misogyny**

- **how it affects their lives**

- **how parents, youth workers, teachers, and other young people can support them to prevent radicalisation**

Both the creator groups started from the same premise:

> There has been an 'incel'-motivated shooting in Edinburgh, and two young male football players from a local professional club were present. Trying to understand the violent event, the players hear the reasons the shooter gives for his actions. **This leads them to explore the world of the 'manosphere':** websites, blogs and online forums promoting masculinity, misogyny and opposition to feminism. The young men learn about:
>
> - incels – 'involuntary celibates' – a misogynistic online community of men who feel they cannot attract women and are thus hostile towards all women, and
>
> - men who are sexually active
>
> During each group's version of the play, either one or both of the characters become radicalised.

This report explores:

- **incel ideology and behaviour**

- **the experiences and perceptions the play's creators had of incel culture and misogynistic online radicalisation**

- **how their understanding developed over the course of the project**

Image: 'Many Good Men' theatre project

Credit: Chi Wai Cheung, Civic Digits

Incels – 'involuntary celibates' – a misogynistic online community of men who feel they cannot attract women and are thus hostile towards all women.

What we already know about the manosphere and incels

The manosphere

The uniting ideological feature of the manosphere is antipathy towards feminism and a pervading sense of (white) male victimisation. *(Sugiura, 2021: 2)*

The incel community is one part of a wider online network known as the 'manosphere'. This encompasses various groups such as Men's [Rights Activists (MRAs)](#), [Pick Up Artists (PUAs)](#) and [Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOWs).](#)

Each group has a differing primary focus – MRAs on legal and social issues affecting men, PUAs on dating and relationships, and MGTOWs on disengagement from traditional expectations. In fact, the literature cautions against depicting the manosphere as homogeneous due to its internal conflicts, and inconsistent and unstable ideologies and identities (Nagle, 2017: 75; Sugiura, 2021: 5).

Nonetheless, its various groups share a common language and core beliefs that create and reinforce a unified identity centred on a hatred of women and feminism, and a pervading sense of (White) male victimisation (Ging, 2017; Sugiura, 2021: 2; Banet-Weiser, 2018: 119).

This shared language allows the manosphere to function as an echo chamber where people only see content in line with their existing beliefs, and so the manosphere's claims go unchallenged (Dynel, 2020: 12).

Z

Image: 'Many Good Men' theatre project

Credit: Chi Wai Cheung, Civic Digits

"This 'red-pilled' reality is one where the concept of male privilege is a feminist consipracy used to gain power over men."

A central concept in the manosphere is that of the **'red pill',** appropriated from the science fiction film *The Matrix* (Ging, 2017; Bates, 2020). The manosphere has co-opted this metaphor to frame its misogynistic worldview as a form of enlightenment, presenting the 'red pill' as a revelation of the supposed true nature of gender relations (Ging, 2019).

According to this narrative, 'red-pilled' men have awakened to the alleged reality that society is rigged against them, feminism is a destructive force, and women are irrational, hypergamous and in need of domination (Bates, 2020; Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021). This 'red-pilled' reality is one where the concept of male privilege is a feminist conspiracy used to gain power over men, who are the true victims of oppression (Ging, 2017; Bates, 2020: 15–16): in fact, the manosphere asserts, the patriarchy does not exist because not all men experience the privileges that patriarchy would afford them, such as access to women and sex.

In contrast, **'blue-pilled'** men remain 'ignorant' of these supposed truths, still believing in gender equality and treating women with respect (Ging, 2017).

The 'red pill' metaphor serves as a powerful recruitment tool:

- **It appeals to some men's sense of frustration and disappointment with the world.**

- **It presents the toxic ideology of the manosphere as revelatory hidden knowledge (Bates, 2020).**

By framing its misogynistic beliefs as the 'harsh truth' that society seeks to suppress, the manosphere positions itself as a **subversive counter-narrative, while in reality merely perpetuating regressive patriarchal norms and attitudes** (Sugiura, 2021; Banet-Weiser, 2018).

Incels

To better understand incels and their ideology, we explored:

- the origins and evolution of the term 'incel'

- the key points of incel ideology

- the implications of this world view for society

Since a woman coined it in the 1990s, the term **'involuntary celibate**' has evolved significantly. It originally described:

> **anybody of any gender who was lonely, had never had sex, or who hadn't had a relationship in a long time. (Taylor, 2018)**

It was first used in the context of an online support network for people seeking relationship advice (Donnelly et al., 2001).

From these origins emerged a virulently misogynistic online subculture of men. Today, 'incels' refers to this group of **men who hate women and blame them for their own lack of sexual and romantic relationships** (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4987).

As with the manosphere in general, **incels attempt to portray themselves as a subversive counterculture fighting against a dominant ideology.**

However, their beliefs are deeply rooted in and reflective of existing patriarchal systems of socialisation. **Incel ideology represents an "overtly extreme manifestation of [the] misogynistic, homophobic, racist, classist, and ableist ideas and beliefs"** that are prevalent in mainstream society (Sugiura, 2021: 70).

Spotlight on incels in the UK

From rural Scotland to central London, I started hearing the same arguments. The hair rose on my arms when I realised that these boys, who had never met each other, were using precisely the same words and quoting the same false statistics to back up their claims. (Bates, 2020: 8)

Author and activist Laura Bates has spent a decade discussing **sexism in schools.** In her book *Men Who Hate Women: The Extremism Nobody is Talking About* (2020), she described how since 2018 she had experienced a change in boys' responses to conversations about sexism, which had become increasingly angry and resistant (Bates 2020: 8).

In August 2021, Jake Davidson (aged 22) killed five people in Plymouth and reportedly shared misogynistic views on incel forums. Luca Benincasa (aged 20), based in Cardiff, was part of a neo-Nazi group and described himself as an incel; he was sentenced to nine years in prison for terror offences and possession of child sexual abuse materials.

The UK Commission for Countering Extremism (2021) found that there has been "a rise in extreme misogynistic hate speech in the UK, mainly perpetrated by incels".

Those engaged in counter-terrorism work are increasingly accepting incels' activity as a form of **ideologically motivated violent extremism that is emerging as a domestic terror threat.** The UK Government and Department for Education issued guidance at the end of 2022 warning teachers to be aware of 'incels' and the evolving risks of radicalisation of young people. In August 2024, the UK Home Secretary announced that extreme misogyny will be treated as a form of extremism (Catt and Rose, 2024).

How the global incel community has grown

The rise of the manosphere, including the incel movement, is intricately linked to the **growth of digital technologies.**

The internet connects like-minded individuals, allowing previously fractured hate movements to create a "collective identity and empowering a sense of community" (Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021: 2715). The perception that online spaces are safe because of their anonymity allows individuals to express opinions and ideas they are unlikely to share in public because of the risk of social rejection or a lack of similar values in their physical peer networks (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4985).

Incel culture thrives on social media and forums, which allow the hatred of women to develop and spread in unprecedented ways (Powell et al., 2018; Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021: 2715). These online spaces, such as YouTube, Reddit, TikTok and 4chan, purposely target young men and boys, through content that can appear harmless and satirical. They also enable incel ideology to spread quickly, unrestrained by geographical borders (Sugiura, 2021: 3, Ging, 2019: 648).

The rise of the manosphere, including the incel movement, is intricately linked to the growth of digital technologies.

What incels believe

In the incel world view, men are superior and dominant while women are expected to be meek and submissive (Sugiura, 2021: 3). The extreme misogyny expressed by incels includes advocating for:

- **the removal of women's rights**
- **the legalisation of rape**
- **the reduction of women to sexual slaves**

These attitudes are deeply rooted in patriarchal systems of socialisation. That is, they are not an aberration but an overt manifestation of the structural misogyny and rigid gender norms that already permeate society more broadly (Sugiura, 2021): incel communities serve as echo chambers that amplify and reinforce them.

Image: 'Many Good Men' theatre project

Credit: Chi Wai Cheung, Civic Digits

Incels often justify their beliefs through an appropriation of evolutionary psychology and biological essentialism (O'Malley et al., 2020; Chang, 2022). By framing women as genetically hardwired to be irrational, hypergamous and submissive to dominant men, they mirror the sexist stereotypes that have long been used to rationalise women's subordination under patriarchy (Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021; Banet-Weiser, 2018).

Evolutionary psychology and biological essentialism

Evolutionary psychology and biological essentialism are controversial pseudoscientific concepts that are often appropriated by incel ideology.

Evolutionary psychology explains human behaviour as a product of evolutionary adaptation, arguing that our behaviour is driven by our will to survive or continue our genes. It is widely criticised by social scientists and critical theorists for oversimplifying complex human behaviours and promoting sexist, racist and ableist stereotypes (Gannon, 2002; Rose and Rose, 2000).

- **Incel application of evolutionary psychology:** Incels argue that women are evolutionarily programmed to be attracted to men with certain physical features. They use this to explain their perceived lack of romantic success. This oversimplifies human attraction and ignores the complex factors involved in relationships.

Biological essentialism, including genetic determinism, is the belief that human traits and social outcomes are determined by biology. This view is strongly contested because it reinforces discriminatory ideologies by incorrectly framing social inequalities as natural and inevitable (Gannett, 2004; Medin and Lee, 2012).

- **Incel application of biological essentialism:** Incels claim that the biological differences between men and women include inherently different cognitive abilities. They use this to justify sexist views about women's roles in society. This disregards the significant impact of education, socialisation and individual variation.

Incels employ these problematic concepts in ways that align with their original biases, arguing that women are biologically programmed to seek only certain men, and that social and sexual hierarchies are fixed and genetically predetermined (Chang, 2022; O'Malley et al., 2020).

By using these theories, incels reinforce and amplify the existing sexist, racist and homophobic biases inherent in them, further dismissing the role of complex social structures in shaping human behaviour and society (Ging, 2019; Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021).

To **understand and effectively challenge** the attitudes that give rise to incels' virulent misogyny, and counter the violence they inspire (Carian et al., 2023; Witt, 2020), we must:

- recognise the incel movement as a symptom of wider patriarchal socialisation, rather than a fringe anomaly
- deconstruct its contradictions and show how incel ideology has its roots in prevailing misogynistic norms

Incels and the far right

The incel ideology is intertwined with the broader sociopolitical climate of the ongoing **'culture wars'** – heated debates and conflicts over issues such as feminism, sexuality, gender identity, racism, free speech and political correctness.

These are often linked to the far right and alt-right (Sugiura, 2021: 3), and scholars have noted **a significant ideological overlap and synergy between the broader far-right and alt-right movement and the incel subculture.**

> **Far right and incels share a common language of aggrieved male entitlement and a conspiratorial world view.**

The incel subculture's virulent brand of misogyny, which is rooted in the belief that feminism has destroyed society and that women must be put back in their place, resonates strongly with the patriarchal values of the far right (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021). As Gentry (2022) argues, violent misogyny has long been a central component of White supremacist and neo-Nazi ideology, with these far-right groups advocating for strict gender roles, male domination and the subjugation of women.

Also, the far right and incels share **a common language of aggrieved male entitlement and a conspiratorial world view** that positions White men as the true victims of modern society (Ging, 2019).

Incel beliefs and terrorism against women

The incel movement poses a serious threat to women and society at large. Witt (2020: 687) argues that the incel community is a **transnational terrorist network or cult** because they:

- idolise mass killers motivated by misogyny

- frame violence as 'divine punishment'

- portray murder as a path to masculine 'transcendence'

- are responsible for numerous deadly attacks around the world
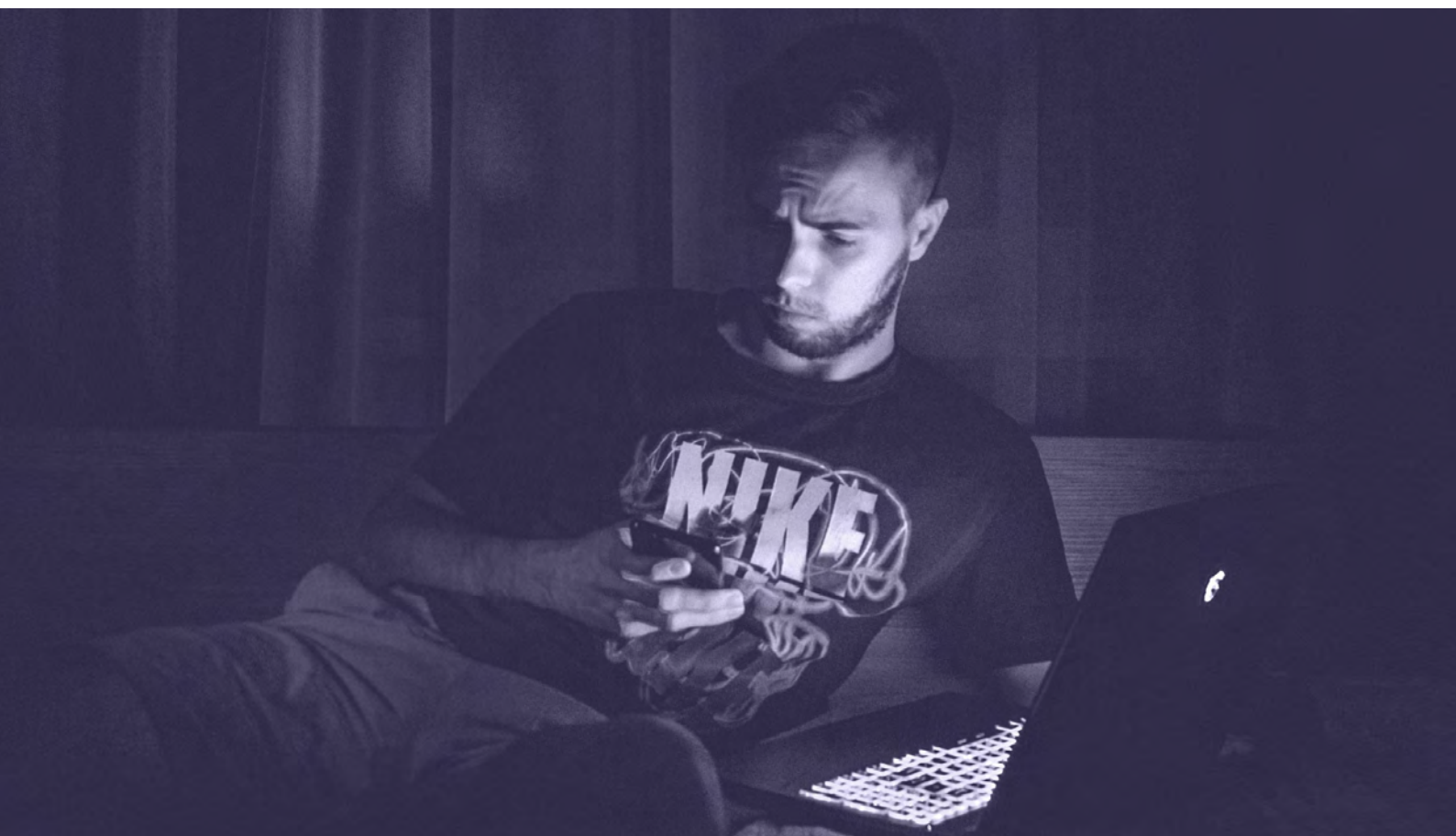
Scholars provide further **evidence connecting incel ideology to extremist violence.** Scaptura and Boyle (2019) found that men who experience threats to their masculinity and hold incel-like beliefs are more likely to fantasise about violence. Byerly (2020) argues that incel attacks should be understood as gender-based terrorism because they are rooted in an organised and collective ideology of misogyny and male grievance that specifically targets women: they are not random acts of violence. Gentry (2022) situates violent incel misogyny within the long history of far-right terrorism that is driven by misogynistic beliefs: she asserts that misogyny should be recognised as a dangerous political ideology on a par with the racist and antisemitic views of established far-right terror threats.

Experts in fields related to gender studies, sociology and extremism – particularly male supremacism and incel ideology – advocate a **structural feminist approach** to understanding and countering the threat of incel violence and ideology as a form of misogynistic extremism (Carian et al., 2021: 1–2). They argue that **continuing to dismiss incels as merely mentally ill or lonely young men obscures the serious danger they pose,** because incel violence emerges from a male supremacist worldview that:

- dehumanises women

- advocates for the removal of women's rights

- encourages violent enforcement of patriarchal domination

(Carian et al., 2023: 1–2, 6–7; Beale et al., 2019)

See also the subsection ['Legitimising violence and revenge',](#) below.

An analysis of incel ideology: five core elements

Numerous scholarly analyses of **incel discourse and ideology** have highlighted **glaring contradictions and inconsistencies** in the world view promoted by this online subculture.

This section will highlight the core elements of incels' ideology and look at the inconsistencies inherent in their world view.

O'Malley et al. (2020: NP4989) found that the incel community is structured around **five interconnected norms:**

1. the sexual market

2. women are 'naturally evil'

3. legitimising regressive forms of masculinity

4. male oppression

5. legitimising violence and revenge

1. The sexual market

The idea of the sexual market concerns incels' understanding of dating activities.

Incels' main concern is "accessing sexual relationships" (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4990). The sexual marketplace highlights their presumed **entitlement** to access women's bodies, and their **victimhood**, through claims that incels are subordinated and marginalised as women make them involuntarily celibate through rejection (Kimmel, 2015; Ging, 2019; O'Malley et al., 2020).

Incels also argue that this involuntary celibacy is evidence contradicting feminist claims about the patriarchy, because if feminist claims were true, under the patriarchy they would have regular access to sex (Ging, 2017; Hoffman et al., 2020).

The political rhetoric that incels use to explain the sexual marketplace includes **evolutionary psychology and genetic determinism,** consistent with 'natural selection'. This is highly problematic as it gives rise to a "uniquely misogynistic, heterosexist and racist lexicon" (Ging, 2019: 649; Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021; O'Malley et al., 2020; Chang, 2022; Van Valkenburgh, 2018; Banet-Weiser, 2018; Preston et al., 2021; Witt, 2020; Manne, 2017; Dar-Nimrod and Heine, 2011; Buss, 2016; Darwin, 1859).

By incorporating these concepts into their rhetoric, incels contribute to the creation of a harmful world view that:

- **fosters hatred towards women**

- **perpetuates prejudiced views about diverse sexual orientations and racial backgrounds**

(Ging, 2019; Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021; O'Malley et al., 2020; Banet-Weiser, 2018)

It is crucial to recognise and challenge the racist underpinnings of incel ideology and its misuse of scientific concepts, as these beliefs contribute to the perpetuation of racial prejudice, discrimination and White supremacy (Ging, 2019; Manne, 2017).

Incels frequently use the concept of 'sexual market value' (SMV) to rank individuals based on their perceived attractiveness and desirability (O'Malley et al., 2020). This ranking system often includes racist stereotypes, with individuals of certain racial or ethnic backgrounds being assigned higher or lower 'SMV' based on prejudiced assumptions about their inherent traits (Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021). For example, incels often fetishise Asian women as submissive and sexually available while denigrating Black women as masculine and unattractive (Ging, 2019; Chang, 2022).

Z

Incels conceive their own sexual market value to be limited, often blaming their own physical appearance and lack of material wealth (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4991). But while participating in self-loathing and self-degrading behaviour may lead to hopelessness, apathy and depression, it also creates a sense of unity (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4992).

The concept of the sexual marketplace serves two important functions in incel ideology:

• It draws a social boundary between incels and others in the sexual market: that is, unlike others, incels will never have access to sexual relationships regardless of their efforts, because of the system they are operating in (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4992; Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021).

• It highlights incels' simultaneous expression of self-loathing and misogynistic entitlement (Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021; O'Malley et al., 2020; Chang, 2022; Van Valkenburgh, 2018; Witt, 2020; Preston et al., 2021).

Incels conceive their own 'sexual market value' to be limited, often blaming their own physical appearance and lack of material wealth.

2. Women are 'naturally evil'

Incels argue that women are culturally and biologically driven to manipulate men for survival. They are 'less evolved' in their "animalistic drives towards reproduction and safety" (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4993).

This rhetoric aligns with (now discredited) pseudoscientific evolutionary psychology, which incels use to explain women's supposed promiscuity and attraction to "alpha males" or "Chads" (Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021). Incels try to substantiate evolutionary psychology with personal narratives of being **bullied and humiliated** by women, depicting women as manipulative, narcissistic, dishonest and evil (O'Malley et al., 2020). However, many examples they give of this alleged bullying are merely instances of women rejecting their advances.

"At the same time as condemning women for 'promiscuity', incels hate women for not having sex with them."

At the same time as condemning women for 'promiscuity', incels hate women for not having sex with them. They despise "women who refuse them, women who would sleep with several other men but say 'no' to incels" (Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021: 2723). There is a contradiction in incels' hatred of women both for being 'promiscuous' and for not being available to them. We see this contradiction further in incels' advocacy for it to be legal for men to 'buy' sex from women.

In this way, incels create a paradox where terms used to describe 'promiscuity' are applied to women who say 'no'. Meanwhile, **incels celebrate promiscuity in men,** glorifying 'Chads' with multiple sexual partners and fantasies of violent male sexual domination (Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021; O'Malley et al., 2020).

This selective celebration of evolutionary principles reveals deep ideological inconsistencies within incel discourse. Indeed, the fusion of entitlement and resentment, supremacy and victimhood in incel ideology reflects the inconsistencies and contradictions inherent in male supremacism more broadly (Chang, 2022; Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021).

Hatred of feminists

Incels use these arguments to reinforce the notion that men should have power over women, especially feminists, whom they perceive as striving for unnatural and undeserved equality (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4993).

Incels' hatred of feminists stems from their perception that feminists:

- **are inherently inferior**
- **have illegitimate power**
- **make hypocritical claims of oppression**

This fuels incels' rage and, in their mind, legitimises their own claims of oppression (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4994).

As well as claiming that women's supposed promiscuity is rooted in evolutionary psychology and biological determinism, incels also blame it on feminists, believing that they have falsely empowered women to be promiscuous with 'Chads' and reject incels.

Incels demonstrate specific hatred for feminists by using even more derogatory words about them than they use for women more broadly.

Incels demonstrate specific hatred for feminists by using even more derogatory words about them than they use for women more broadly. This language tends to be dehumanising, reducing feminists to crude stereotypes or biological functions. Common themes include:

- **portraying feminists as physically unattractive or unfeminine**
- **implying that feminists are unintelligent or irrational**
- **accusing feminists of hating men**
- **using animal imagery to describe feminists**
- **fixating on feminists' sexual history or choices**

This type of language reflects deeply misogynistic attitudes and often intersects with other forms of bigotry and prejudice, such as homophobia and racism.

3. Legitimising regressive forms of masculinity

Incels also prop up their ideology by legitimising common regressive masculine norms. **They claim that gender inequality is justified by the power dynamics of the sexual market as they perceive it:** they normalise the sexualisation of women and male aggression by arguing that women inherently desire to be sexualised and that men are hardwired to sexualise them (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4994).

This notion is further reinforced by incels' conversations about age and sexual attraction, where they justify their preferences using evolutionary psychology and biological essentialism, claiming that younger women are superior to older women (defined as 25 and above) (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4994).

Incels argue that attraction to young girls, described as 'jail baits' or 'JBs', is "biologically normal" and "appropriate", suggesting that feminism has redefined normal male sexuality as paedophilia (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4994). Sugiura (2021: 56) argues that this is also because of assumptions that young girls will be chaste and virginal, and that because they are younger they will be more submissive and less confident, and have less agency or bodily autonomy.

For incels, **the age of consent** is an arbitrary social construction that demonstrates women's supposed oppression of men, and as a result incels desire to reinstate patriarchal norms of the past (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4994).

Incels' legitimisation of regressive forms of masculinity is achieved through the **dehumanisation of women.** Bates (2020: 29) highlights how talking about women as mere objects helps to separate women from personhood and is essential to justify incels' proposed solutions to their involuntary celibacy, such as the redistribution of sex, the keeping of women as sex slaves or the massacre of women and girls.

This dehumanisation is epitomised by the fact that incels:

- **refer to women as 'femoids', 'foids' or 'roasties'**
- **draw on sexist tropes that portray women as cheaters, gold-diggers and leeches**
- **deem women to have only basic emotions**

(Sugiura, 2021: 51)

In the eyes of incels, this legitimises women's oppression by men and affords incels a sense of power and worth despite their perceived marginalisation (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4995).

Moreover, the dehumanisation of women serves as a way for incels to bond and create unity, providing them with the power they believe they lack. However, these attempts at dominance further intensify barriers to the intimacy they truly desire (Sugiura, 2021: 13).

4. Male oppression

Incels believe that it is men who are truly oppressed in modern society, by other, more masculine men and by women (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4995).

'Red pill' literature asserts that men are disadvantaged in society:

- It claims that family court systems are biased in favour of women.
- It claims that false rape allegations are widespread.
- It claims that sexual violence and domestic violence are gender-neutral problems.

(Nagle, 2017; Gotell and Dutton, 2016; Ging and Siapera, 2018; Sugiura, 2021)

Incels attribute the alienation they experience to **societal expectations about men's appearance**. Rather than criticising patriarchal structures and harmful male stereotypes, incels hold feminists and 'social justice warriors' responsible for 'invalidating' men's struggle and contend that these groups have continued sexual control over men (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4997).

5. Legitimising violence and revenge

Incels' interpretation of women's behaviour, the sexual market and the perceived oppression of men encourages incels to aim vitriol at society in general, and women in particular (O'Malley et al., 2020: NP4997). **The first four norms of incel ideology converge in the final norm: violence.**

Incels often make comments that incite and justify men's violence against women (Sugiura, 2021; O'Malley et al., 2020; Hoffman et al., 2020; Bates, 2020; Scaptura et al., 2019; Jaki et al., 2019; Marwick and Caplan, 2018; Nagle, 2017; Ging, 2017).

Some researchers take the view that most of the content in incel forums is **deliberately shocking and aimed at upsetting others, aka trolling;** thus, it is often impossible to tell apart those posting in anger, with sadistic humour or with the intent to carry out harm offline (Bates, 2020: 31; Sugiura, 2021: 5–6).

As the continuum of violence highlights, **supposed jokes and threats of violence sit on a continuum of activities that all cause real harm to women and girls** and should be taken seriously (Kelly, 1988). Regardless of their intent, incels collectively incite violence that typically goes unsanctioned in society. Consequently, the violence they incite thrives as a virtual war on women, causing extremely real harm online and offline (Bates, 2020: 31; Sugiura, 2021: 5–6).

Violence is a means of re-establishing male hegemony, and in online spaces it is achieved through hacking and doxing (making personal and sensitive data public) (Ging, 2019: 651).

The heinous discussions that incels publicly engage in serve to demonstrate the link between their narratives and justifications and men's violence against women. The particular and pervasive online abuse and harassment of feminists online paints a bleak outlook for gender equality and democracy (Ging, 2019: 653).

A product of mainstream values

The ultimate contradiction of incel ideology is that, while they view themselves as rebels who see the truth and tear down the societal structures that victimise them, incel ideology is in fact a concentration of current dominant beliefs and norms, which they actually reinforce.

Witt (2020) notes that incel identity is built on a paradox: incels both protest against and participate in patriarchal masculinity. **Incels claim to be victims of a rigged sexual marketplace** (Witt, 2020; Preston et al., 2021), **yet they fervently embrace hegemonic masculine hierarchies,** aestheticising 'Chad' masculinity and craving inclusion in the very system of male dominance and female subordination they claim to be excluded from (Witt, 2020). This contradiction captures the irrationality at the core of incel ideology.

In summary, the extreme misogynistic ideology and practices of incels cannot be separated from our patriarchal society. Incels present a false dichotomy between "the deviant fringe and the mainstream ideologies that, in actuality, are based on the same assumptions" (Sugiura, 2021: 74).

Why do young men become incels?

Men's Rights Activists (MRAs) increasingly **exploit young men's anxieties** about changes in sexual and gender norms, especially around consent (Ging and Siapera, 2018: 76). These online communities have brought together many young men who are "lonely [and] vulnerable and seeking solidarity, as well as an explanation for their problems" (Sugiura, 2021: 4).

The incel movement is successful because it **uses men's narratives of personal suffering** to foster a consensus about an "allegedly collective, gendered experience, namely men's position in the social hierarchy as a result of feminism" (Ging, 2019: 653).

The reasons incels give for their engagement in these communities are intricately linked to:

- **entitlement**
- **rejection**
- **an inability to meet perceived societal expectations**

(Sugiura, 2021: 45).

It is common for young men transitioning into adulthood to have anxieties about rejection (O'Malley et al., 2020). Sugiura (2021: 37) notes that **rejections that turned young men to inceldom often occurred at a young age** (14–15), "which seems premature to predicate the rest of their world view on". This suggests that some boys feel entitled to girls' attention and responsiveness from a young age (Sugiura, 2021: 37).

Romantic failure and rejection, and the resultant longing, depression, fear and disappointment, are not experiences unique to incels (O'Malley et al., 2020; Sugiura, 2021: 37). However, what sets incels apart is how these common experiences lead to distinct internal and external explanations for rejection (O'Malley et al., 2020; Sugiura, 2021: 37).

Z

O'Malley et al. (2020: NP4985) state that people who react to "perceived injustices with anger and frustration may be more likely to engage with, or be recruited by, extremist organisations". It is critical to consider how we **prepare boys and young men for disappointment,** so it does not adversely shape the rest of their lives.

Incel narratives focus less on finding love and partnership and more on their rage and frustration at being denied something they feel entitled to – sex (Sugiura, 2021: 46, 52–53). This sense of **aggrieved entitlement,** rooted in perceived threats to masculinity, is a key factor that draws young men to incel communities. Scaptura and Boyle (2019) found that men who experienced greater "acceptance threat" (stress about living up to masculine gender norms) and endorsed more extreme "incel" traits were more likely to fantasise about violence against "enemies" and about rape (Scaptura and Boyle, 2019: 288–290).

> Incel narratives focus less on finding love and partnership and more on their rage and frustration at being denied something they feel entitled to – sex.

The incel ideology's promise of a clear explanation, and a target, for young men's frustrations – the notion that feminist progress and women's choices are to blame for their lack of sexual success – provides a compelling recruitment narrative (Ging, 2019: 653). By scapegoating women and "gynocentric society", **incels offer disaffected young men a sense of community and identity based on shared victimhood** (Hoffman et al., 2020: 568).

In summary, young men seem to be driven to the incel community by a combination of the following **key factors:**

- entitlement
- difficulties coping with romantic rejection
- perceived threats to masculinity
- the allure of a narrative that validates their anger and resentment

Providing alternative outlets and support systems to help boys and men process these emotions in a healthy manner is crucial to preventing further radicalisation.

Research questions

Our literature review has highlighted a gap in our **understanding of the views and experiences of 'incel culture' of young people in Scotland.**

Zero Tolerance commissioned Civic Digits to use participatory methods to research young people's experiences, paying particular attention to the role of gender.

The following questions guided the research:

1. What are young people's existing experiences and perceptions of online incel culture and misogynistic online radicalisation and grooming?

2. Do these existing experiences differ by gender?

3. In what ways do other intersecting characteristics (e.g. race, sexuality, poverty) have an impact?

Methods

Participants were asked to complete an **anonymous survey** before the project started. They did this in an introductory session.[i]

The survey was designed to:

- **show how the young people identified demographically**
- **show whether they were able to recognise key incel terms and memes[ii]**
- **gauge how much the young people experienced online gender-based hate or abuse**

Facilitators followed up the survey with seven **group discussions,** which took place between August and December 2023. These two-hour **workshops** were held to:

- explore gendered body language through a series of drama exercises
- facilitate critical thinking about online content
- facilitate dialogue about gender-based violence statistics
- create characters vulnerable to misogynistic radicalisation and grooming
- exchange questions and answers between the two participating groups via video
- work with actors to bring characters to life through improvisation

Notes were taken by hand during the workshops. Facilitators recorded their reflections on the workshops immediately after each one. The workshops were written up shortly afterwards, and four of the workshops were recorded on film.

Participant demographics

Four young women and **five young men based in Edinburgh** participated in the project.[iii]

The young women were 13–17 years old. They identified as White, female, Scottish, British and Spanish. They were either not religious, agnostic or atheist. They identified as straight, bisexual, pansexual and unsure/unlabelled. One participant was dyslexic. They identified predominantly as middle class or as not knowing their social class. One young woman identified as being working class. During the workshop sessions there were in-depth discussions about class, which meant two young women later identified as being 'of low income'. Class presented in varying degrees as an alien and confusing concept to all of the young people.

Four of the young men identified as Black, Nigerian and/or of African cultural identity. One young man identified as being of mixed race/ethnicity and cultural identity. They were 15–19 years old. They all identified as male, Christian, heterosexual and having no disability. Two of the young men saw themselves as working class and one as a student, and two young men did not know what they identified their social class to be.

The young women were part of a feminist group organised by a teacher in school and the young men were part of a well-being and football youth group.

Findings

Prior experiences of incel culture and other misogynistic content

The young people were asked to complete an anonymous survey to reveal their **experiences of incel and online misogynistic radicalisation prior to the project.** They discussed their answers in face-to-face sessions.

Incel terminology

Interestingly, the young people could not identify the meaning of some **key common incel terms and images,** which indicated that this extreme end of the manosphere is not part of their daily internet consumption.

In discussion, the young men said that they did not even know the word 'incel', whereas the majority of the young women had heard the word, and some were very clear about what the term meant. When asked to describe an incel, one young woman stated:

> They're really lonely, sad people, boys, who can't get anyone to go out with them. So, they hate women.

However, the young men were very familiar with both the word for and the concept of a 'Chad'. The young men knew a 'Chad' had particular physical features, such as a very strong jawline, and was tall and extremely muscular. These identifiers of a 'Chad' are typical of those seen online. One young man connected the term 'Chad' with 'sigma' – 'sigma' is a manosphere term used to describe a 'lone wolf' type of manhood. So, some of the young men were very aware of key 'red pill' and manosphere terms, even if they would not identify them as being related to incels.

"Young women who are consuming content about feminism are more likely to be directed to content about men who hate women."

Social media platforms use personal data to predict what users are likely to be interested in and to promote content to them. Gender identification, age and time spent on different types of content are key factors in how young men and women are targeted online. The **gender difference** between the participants' knowledge of incels can be seen to reflect the different ways they are targeted because of their age and gender. It could be hypothesised that content that critiques incels is less likely to reach young men, particularly if they are consuming PUA and/or masculinist 'motivational' content. On the other hand, young women who are consuming content about feminism are more likely to be directed to content about men who hate women.

Both groups of young people also identified **race and racism** as prevalent, and problematic, in the vocabulary and terms used in the online content they researched.

Andrew Tate

Andrew Tate is a **very high-profile online influencer currently under arrest for rape and human trafficking.**[iv] Andrew Tate had a significant influence on the young men's group. They agreed he is "a motivational speaker" and that he says positive things about being a man.

Many, but not all, of the young men held a very strong, quite emotional admiration for Tate.

The group was asked if there was anything controversial about his image or statements. "Sometimes he pushes the line a bit," said one young man. None of them brought up the fact that he is accused of rape, human trafficking and forming a criminal gang to sexually exploit women. The young men's lack of knowledge about Andrew Tate was surprising but also reflects the analysis by YouGov 2023:

> **That there is such a significant gap between the number of men who appreciate Tate's words on success compared to his views on women suggests that at least part of his fanbase are following him for the philosophy behind e.g. Hustlers University, rather than for his views on the opposite sex.**[v]

Many, but not all, of the young men held a very strong, quite emotional **admiration for Tate.** It was clear that the trust established between the facilitators and young people could be damaged by challenging Tate's position too insistently. A more productive tactic was to engage the participants' empathy for someone whom Tate would consider to be a 'loser' through art and storytelling.

Other misogynistic content

When asked about disturbing misogynistic content in general that they had seen, **the young women mentioned much more extreme, sexualised and violent examples of online content than the young men.** The type of misogynistic content they found disturbing was "dick pics, nudes, people hurting each other, serial killer, true crime". Other examples the young women gave of disturbing content included "comments that are very sexualising of women", "racist content", "porn" and "gore".

The young men cited content that framed "feminists [as] giving excuses about being women" while "men's actions get scrutinised or misconstrued".

Both groups reported seeing content that disturbed them because of their gender, but for the young women this was experienced as threat rather than criticism.

The young women reported that they did not speak about their experiences of disturbing content with anyone, be it friends, family or teachers, whereas the young men reported talking to friends and family about content they were disturbed by. One young woman's reason for not talking with anyone about disturbing content was that "you become numb" and "it doesn't really matter". This young woman minimised the effects of the disturbing content because she had become 'numb' or desensitised to it.

Summary of pre-project findings

The findings from the pre-project survey and discussions reveal some key **gendered differences in young people's experiences and perceptions of incel culture and online misogynistic content.**

While young women had greater awareness of **the term 'incel'** itself, young men showed more familiarity with **related concepts** like the 'Chad' archetype, suggesting they may be absorbing incel ideas without necessarily recognising them as such.

The young women reported encountering more **extreme and threatening misogynistic online content,** which they experienced as a pervasive part of their digital lives. In contrast, the young men were more likely to see **critiques of feminism** and content that claims men's actions are often deliberately misrepresented by feminists: for example, male influencers might claim that well-intentioned flirting is misrepresented by feminists as sexual harassment. This may be symptomatic of different levels of targeting for online content, resulting in differing impacts on young men's and young women's sense of safety and well-being.

Efforts to combat online misogyny and radicalisation must take into account the different ways young women and men are targeted, as well as broader cultural and social factors that shape their experiences and responses.

For example, young women kept their experiences of disturbing content to themselves, while the young men were more likely to discuss it with friends and family. This may reflect the greater stigma and victim-blaming young women face in speaking about misogynistic abuse online.

Another important example is that often young men would not recognise online influencers such as Andrew Tate as promoting ideas that can damage their mental health, such as 'you must work harder', 'be a superhero', 'be in charge/in control'.

Overall, these findings highlight the need for **gender-sensitive approaches to digital literacy education and online safety initiatives.** By creating space for open, critical discussions about these issues, as the Many Good Men project aims to do, young people can be supported in navigating the complexities of online gender politics. The role of creativity and fictional world/character building is crucial. **Young people need to explore the complexities of gender politics through empathy rather than through the frameworks shaped by the debates of online influencers.** This will help them build healthier, more equitable communities online and offline.

Embodying gender: what does it mean to present masculinity and femininity?

The pre-project findings on young people's experiences and perceptions of incel culture and online misogyny provide an important foundation for understanding the gendered dynamics at play in these digital spaces.

To further explore these dynamics and their implications for young people's identities and relationships, the Many Good Men project engaged with participants in a series of participatory theatre exercises focused on embodying and interrogating gender norms and stereotypes. These exercises aimed to create a safe, creative space for young people to reflect on what it means to present and perform masculinity and femininity, both online and offline, and how these expectations shape their experiences and vulnerabilities to radicalisation.

Using drama exercises, the young people explored gender through body language and character creation. The young men and women produced very similar insights into the ways (stereotypical) men and women act. However, the young women were very keen to discuss what this meant for them and the men in their lives, whereas the young men were much more reluctant to explore what these insights might mean.

Embodying a man

Transitioning from the reflective discussions on gender dynamics, the exploration delved deeper, into **embodying a stereotypical man.**

The participants were asked to take on a stereotypical male stance. Participants in both groups initially made their bodies as big and square as possible. Both groups' characters were physically fit, wealthy, in control and ready to stand their ground physically and verbally. The predominant emotion the male characters expressed was anger. Both groups found the exercise a lot of fun.

One young man immediately took on an 'Andrew Tate stance', posing his fingers in a down-pointing triangle, with fingers interlaced. "It means being centred, being in touch with yourself and your power," he said.

Tate has said many different things about masculinity in different ways depending on the context and audience. He has been openly misogynistic in the context of his ''PIMP' university' – it is only accessible via payment but examples of it can be found in Channel Four's documentary I am Andrew Tate, which was first broadcast in February 2024.[vi] In other contexts, he claims that his attitudes are 'traditional' and that he is conservative and religious. In some contexts, he also denies that he is a misogynist, such as in his interview with Piers Morgan on 7th October 2022, while also attempting to discredit and undermine the concept of misogyny.[vii]

Participant reflections

The young women described the exercise as 'freeing'. They enjoyed being able to 'take up space' unapologetically. However, the young women also found themselves to be tense when portraying men, and they had a feeling that they had to pretend to be relaxed and hide their insecurities. One young woman said, "There is pressure to be a man. You are going to feel bad and that can be turned into misogyny." Another young woman said, "Men are victims of masculinity."

The young women brought up the fact that boys and men sometimes hold their genitals in public. The young women wondered if it is self-soothing, because they are uncomfortable or protecting themselves. They reflected that sometimes this is deliberately intimidating and sometimes boys seem completely unaware of doing it. The young women noted that this is another way of taking up space and being entitled to freedom of movement on a micro level.

Racism, masculinity and Black boyhood

In another workshop, the young men discussed male-on-male aggression and youth violence. They noted the protection that embodying traditional masculinity sometimes gave them when they were faced with threats 'in the street'. Race and racism also featured here, with some of the young men identifying the added dynamic of being Black boys living in a predominantly White country, where they are both hyper-visible and easily positioned as 'other' by White boys and men.

The group described local scenarios of being 'tested' (confronted) by 'ops' (informal opponents), in which they felt hyper-aware of the dangers of showing any signs of weakness or vulnerability. These signs ranged from aspects of their body language and facial expressions to the pitch of their voices and their gait. The boys explained the need to embody a stereotypical man (square-shouldered, purposeful stride, looking others in the eye, never looking down) so as to secure their safe passage while walking past hostile groups of predominantly White males in their own neighbourhood. They explained that they themselves were not part of such local gangs or 'teams'.

The group also made clear that displaying any form of stereotypically feminine traits in these scenarios, such as showing fear, would immediately be interpreted as weakness and vulnerability, making them a target for escalated aggression and violence from the hostile group.

Embodying a woman

Building on the exploration of stereotypical masculinity, the next phase of exercises involved participants **embodying a stereotypical woman,** offering a contrast to the previous exploration and shedding light on the complexities of gender presentation and perception.

When asked to take on the stance of a woman, both groups immediately shifted their weight onto one leg, and some of them fluttered their hands and batted their eyes. They explained that stereotypically women were unbalanced and took up less space.

Participant reflections

The young men concluded that, "A man is ready for action and a woman is ready to be looked at, to be photographed." They said that women are ready to be photographed for social media, indicating that they think women share images of themselves and

promote themselves more than men on social media. They did not add the further insight that women are more pressured by social media, or that they might be pressured by men looking at them both online and offline.

One young man said, "Women sit in a closed way. Men are more open" and "It doesn't look right if women sit like men, spreading their legs." When asked why that might be they said it was just the way it was. They were asked if they thought women might do this to protect themselves, which they thought could be possible. The young men found that playing women made them "very stiff", "unbalanced" and "uncomfortable", especially in "trying to be attractive".

The young women found it harder to perform stereotypical femininity. They reported feeling very sexualised, uncomfortable and aware of the tightrope of being sexually attractive but not 'dangerous'. One young woman said performing as a stereotypical woman was "embarrassing, because I don't believe in it, it's contrived". "I try not to be hyper-aware of my body," another young woman said. "I made a choice to reject that and when I started playing 'hyper-feminine' I felt that self-doubt feeling come back up immediately."

"They [young women] reported feeling very sexualised, uncomfortable and aware of the tightrope of being sexually attractive but not 'dangerous'."

When the young women were asked to explore a **less extreme version of femininity** everyone immediately became 'a mum'. They talked only about childcare, smiled a lot, found it hard to say 'no', were very judgemental of each other and said 'sorry' all the time. This led to a conversation about how they believed men do not smile as much as women and how as a woman you have to be extra nice just to be considered normal, otherwise you are perceived as 'a bitch'.

Embodying men and women's interactions

Shifting from the examination of stereotypical femininity, the exercises progressed to delving into **interactions between men and women, unveiling the intricacies of gendered behaviours and dynamics in social settings.**

Example exercise
Each group created a scene where a man asks a woman out.

The young man playing the woman said that she experienced disgust and felt threatened when being approached by the man because he acted in a passive-aggressive way. She tried to be quiet to show she was not interested. The male character quickly became very angry when she did not immediately want to spend time with him. "He's entitled," said one of the young men watching. The young men showed how much their perception of hyper-masculinity is about dominance, both physically and in terms of status, in particular a man's ability to make money. They did not express, even when pushed, a strong reaction to this activity, other than explaining that it was fun to play with.

When a similar scene was played out by the young women, the woman character acted much more politely and agreeably. The young women discussed at length how they need to be seen as 'nice' and how quickly there is the threat of violence if you do not do what a man wants you to. The young men's scene ended comedically, with the female character running away and the man chasing after her. However, this outcome (the woman running away and being chased) was exactly the same as in the young women's version of the scene, where real fear and the need to escape quickly arose when the man was told 'no'.

These dramatised interactions between men and women revealed **the deeply entrenched nature of gendered power dynamics and the pervasive threat of violence that underlies them.** These scenes served as a powerful catalyst for the young women to further explore the ways in which seemingly minor manifestations of male entitlement and dominance, often normalised and dismissed as insignificant, can contribute to a broader culture of misogyny and gender-based violence.

Interrogating gendered embodiment

Building on these insights, the young women critically examined how the **extreme ideologies promoted by incels and other factions of the manosphere are rooted in everyday experiences of gender inequality.**

The young women enjoyed thinking critically about how the extreme gender-based violence that incels promote could arise from less extreme factors such as men's sense of entitlement to take up space and receive attention. The young women thought that misogynistic rage from incels and others in the manosphere could come from their not getting what they think they are owed.

They discussed at length how terms like 'bitch' and 'pussy' are so normalised they might be described as micro-misogynies, but also how these words show that the worst thing to call a man is 'a woman'.

> The young women thought that misogynistic rage from incels and others in the manosphere could come from their not getting what they think they are owed.

The gender divide in participants' responses to the body language and character creation exercises was particularly striking, perhaps highlighting the differing impacts of patriarchal norms and expectations on young men and women.

- The young women were empathetic about what gendered stereotypes mean for men and keen to talk about the ways they themselves are affected by them.
- In contrast, the young men did not particularly want to talk about this, despite really enjoying the exercises.

This could be because the young women are more practised at thinking in these ways, partly because of their engagement with feminism.

It could be a factor that the young men admire more stereotypical types of masculinity and enjoyed stepping into these roles uncritically. It could also be that the young men find it difficult to explore the power aspects and/or negative side of these stereotypes because by questioning dominant norms they would risk losing status within the group. If this is the case it would demonstrate how the expectations of masculinity can create a mask for men, a barrier to their freedom to explore their own thoughts and feelings.

"...the workshops revealed the deep-seated nature of gendered expectations and the powerful ways in which they shape young people's sense of self."

Regardless of the underlying reasons, this pattern points to the urgent need to create **safe and supportive spaces where young men can critically and creatively examine the costs of rigid gender roles and explore alternative visions of masculinity** that are not founded on the subordination of women.

The participatory theatre exercises on embodying gender norms and stereotypes provided a rich and nuanced picture of how young people understand and negotiate the complex terrain of masculinity and femininity in their everyday lives. By exploring these themes through the lens of embodied experience, the workshops revealed **the deep-seated nature of gendered expectations and the powerful ways in which they shape young people's sense of self, their relationships and their vulnerabilities to online radicalisation.**

At the same time, the exercises also highlighted the role of gender in shaping young people's willingness to interrogate these norms and their implications. While young women demonstrated a keen awareness of the costs of patriarchal gender roles and a desire to challenge them, the young men appeared more hesitant to engage in this kind of critical reflection: this points to the need for more targeted interventions that can support them in developing alternative visions of masculinity.

Overall, these findings highlight the importance of **addressing how we feel, express and experience gender, both physically and psychologically, in efforts to prevent and counter online misogyny and extremism.** By creating a space for young people to explore and question gender norms and expectations in a supportive and creative environment, projects like Many Good Men can help to foster more critical and resilient understandings of gender that are less susceptible to the appeal of toxic online cultures.

Discussions of incels during the project

Building on these insights, the next phase of the project sought to engage participants in a **more direct exploration of incel culture and its underlying ideologies.** The groups were asked to use safe, anonymous devices to search for YouTube content using the phrase 'How to get a girlfriend' and then share it, with the aim of seeing:

- **how quickly incel content could be found**
- **what the young people thought about it**
- **how they thought it sat alongside other 'red pill' and manosphere content**

This exercise opened up space for critical discussions about:

- **how misogynistic online communities target and exploit young men's insecurities and desires**
- **the role of key influencers like Andrew Tate in normalising these world views**

Andrew Tate and 'red pill' thinking

The young men and women found quite similar content that promoted either masculinist or 'red pill' ideology after searching on YouTube for 'How to get a girlfriend'.

The facilitators suggested that during a session the young men's group watch an interview between Andrew Tate and Piers Morgan that they had shared.[viii] This was with the aim of unpacking **how Tate promotes misogyny and gender-based violence** as a necessary ingredient of his 'traditional' and positive masculinity.

In interviews, such as with Piers Morgan, Tate often denies being a misogynist. In this interview, Tate aims to reframe what misogyny means, claiming that what is called misogyny is in fact formed of traditional, positive masculine values such as 'stoicism', 'courage' and 'strength'. Tate also tries to claim that his older, explicitly misogynistic content has either been taken out of context or is just 'a joke', or 'ironic'. This can make challenging Tate's misogyny appear to be an attack on positive or traditional manhood, or fans of Tate can argue simply that the challenger does not 'get' the comic/ironic meaning.
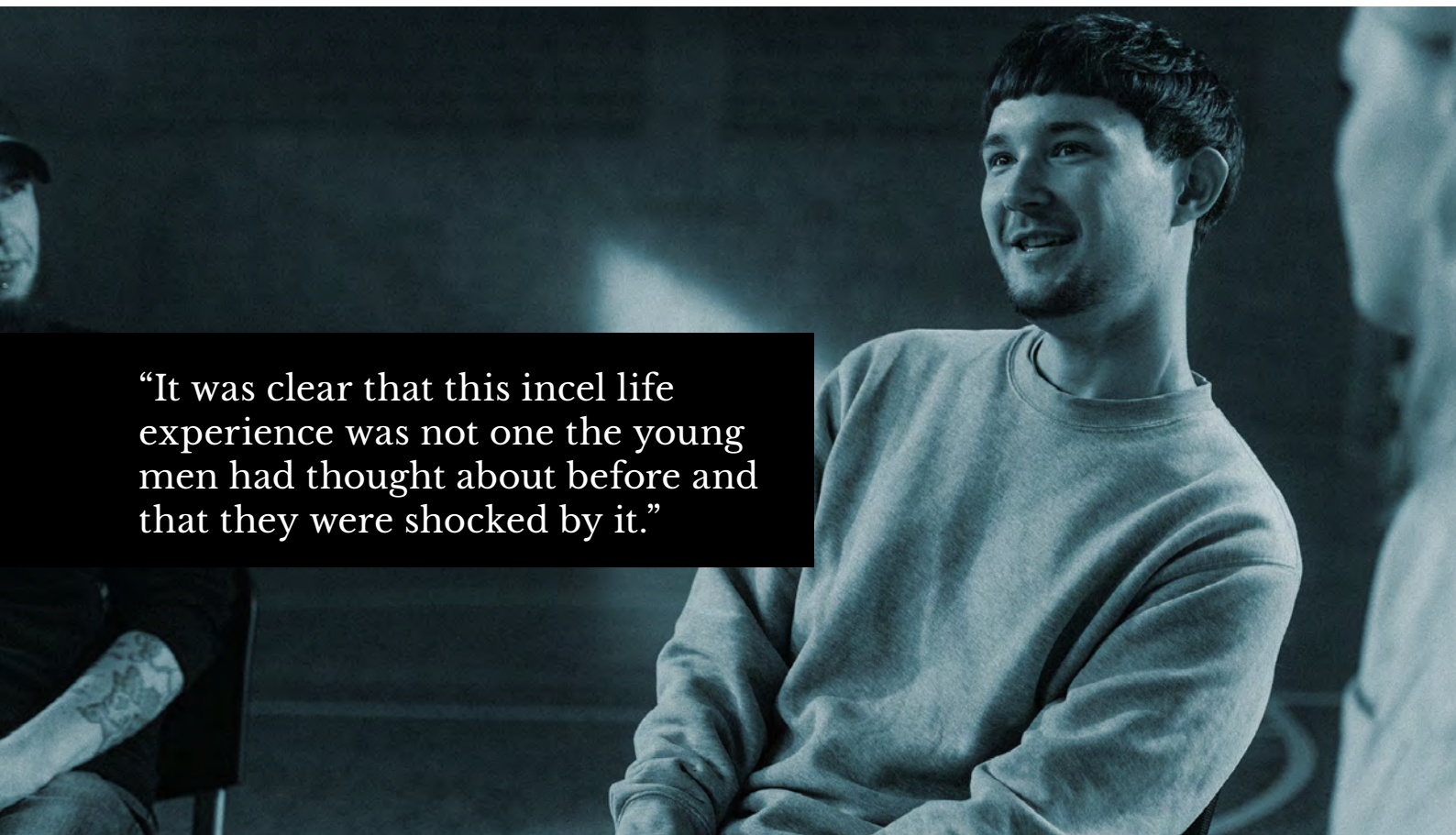
One young man strongly expressed the view that not being able to fulfil the expectations of traditional masculinity was the fault of the individual man.

Tate's body language is very tense and aggressive in the interview: he makes minimal eye contact with his interviewer, while also maintaining his signature hand sign. The young men, however, said he looked strong and good. One explained, "He was composed. Didn't flip out." When challenged with the suggestion that he seemed tense, even angry, the young man responded, "But that's because he's defending himself. He's being called a misogynist."

One young man asked **what 'misogyny' means.** Another young man responded, "Everyone uses the word, but no one knows what it means." The dictionary definition 'contempt for women' was then discussed. This demonstrates how internet content introduces many new terms to young people and they may not understand significant elements of it, given that they often do not have a space in which to discuss it and think critically about it.

Tate argues in the same interview that **emotional men are very dangerous** – that emotions cloud their judgement, which can lead to explosions of anger: "Oh, I'm sad. I'll just shoot everyone." The young men agreed somewhat with Tate that emotions are dangerous for men and that this could be why some men become incels or commit mass shootings. They saw Tate, one of the most famous 'red pill' spokesmen of the manosphere, as socially beneficial because he can help people avoid becoming violent incels because he is a role model for stoic, manly strength, rather than giving in to emotions such as despair and the pain of loneliness. In contrast, incel ideology sees 'alpha' men like Tate as dangerous (to incels) for their bullying behaviour and lack of understanding of the unfair advantage their physical attractiveness affords them.

One young man strongly expressed the view that not being able to fulfil the expectations of traditional masculinity was the fault of the individual man: "That person wouldn't be respected. They would be a loser." However, this opinion was not shared by the whole group. "People should be given second chances," said one young man. "There are different types of men. Not all have the same capacity," said another. **They were all reluctant to agree with the incel position that unrealistic expectations of masculinity are a reason for becoming an incel.**

"It was clear that this incel life experience was not one the young men had thought about before and that they were shocked by it."

Incels and 'black pill' thinking

Content warning: suicidal thoughts and suicide

The discussions around Andrew Tate and 'red pill' ideology provided valuable insights into the young men's perceptions of masculinity and their understanding of the manosphere.

To explore the more extreme end of this spectrum, the project facilitators shared a **video of a self-identified incel discussing 'black pill' thinking**.[ix] The black pill concept refers to the 'realisation' that an incel's situation is hopeless and to the decision to die by suicide.

It was clear that this incel life experience was not one the young men had thought about before and that they were shocked by it. "They feel left out, disappointed and angry with themselves," said one young man. The group noted how the incel described himself as "meek" and were shocked at how casually the interviewee noted that four of his friends had killed themselves recently.

The group could see the incel mental state is very poor, and they mostly thought that this was caused by incels not having anything to do and being too engaged with the internet: "it's not normal, no job, no school", and "he's on his laptop for two whole days".

The incel in the video identifies as having social anxiety, which was discussed by the young men. "There's nothing in the world for him, that's the cause," said one young man. "He feels more comfortable online and smoking, but going outside is an entirely different world. He is safe inside but outside is chaos and uncontrollable."

The young men were shocked by the **extreme behaviour** of the online incel group, one of whom defecated on screen during a Zoom meeting with the interviewee. They were also shocked by the extreme racist and sexist verbal violence of the incels, and surprised at the way incels made jokes about shooting and the fact that a shooter would be a hero for incels. The young men saw this as **fuelled by anger and desensitisation:** "Being exposed to something too much makes something normal, so it doesn't shock you any more."

> ## The young men's engagement with the incel video interview provided a sobering glimpse into the disturbing realities of the 'black pill' ideology.

The young men's engagement with the incel video interview provided a sobering glimpse into the disturbing realities of the 'black pill' ideology and its potential to fuel despair, self-loathing and extreme misogyny. By confronting the stark example of social isolation, mental health struggles and casual references to suicide and violence, the participants were able to recognise the dangerous allure of these communities for vulnerable young men seeking belonging and purpose. This experience highlights the urgent need for **proactive interventions that can offer alternative narratives of masculinity and identity and provide support** for those at risk of being drawn into these harmful ideologies.

Perceived causes of radicalisation

The insights gained from the young men's engagement with the incel video raised urgent questions about the factors that make some individuals more vulnerable to the allure of these harmful ideologies.

Based on this, the next phase of the project looked deeper into the participants' understanding of the potential causes of radicalisation, drawing on their own experiences, observations and reflections. The aim was to explore the complex interplay of **personal, social and cultural factors** that may contribute to the appeal of extremist worldviews, in order to think about prevention and identify points of intervention and support for young people at risk of being drawn into these communities.

In developing the narrative of the Many Good Men piece, the young men's group proactively chose to foreground **race** by opting to create one Black character and one White character. In workshop discussions the young men highlighted significant differences in the way Black and White parents in Scotland socialise their sons in terms of:

- whether their social freedoms in adolescence are limited or enabled
- whether pornography is taboo or accepted
- whether adolescent sexual development and relationships are limited or enabled
- whether models of masculinity are religious or secular
- what the family's attitudes are to being out of education or employment

Domestic abuse

It is notable that in some of the participatory exercises both groups created **characters who had experienced domestic abuse in the family home.** The example of violent masculinity set by the fathers (the perpetrators), coupled with a lack of communication from the mothers about the abuse both they and their children experienced, made their fictional sons feel extremely lost and lonely and therefore vulnerable to radicalisation.

This was a creative choice that the youth worker facilitators were able to back up with evidence that men in the justice system have disproportionately been the victims of domestic abuse in their childhood homes.[x] Of course, experiencing domestic abuse in childhood should not be understood as the cause of men's violence against women – many child survivors of abuse are not violent to women in adulthood (Hearn, 1998: 20, 74-83).

Although both groups noted the significance of domestic abuse, the young men highlighted **racialised differences** in how domestic abuse operated. It was telling that the young men, when developing the family dynamics of a Black and a White character, proactively identified distinct yet equally devastating ruptures in each character's relationship with his mum according to race.

In the White family narrative, the young men presented the character's journey towards 'red pill' ideology as being founded on an emerging hatred for Mum, due to her decision to separate and sever her son's relationship with his dad – even though in the narrative this was a protective act, due to Dad's addictions and violence at home.

In the Black family narrative, the young men presented the character's journey towards 'black pill' as being based on pent-up rage at Mum's complicity in Dad's absolute rule at home, and her emotional unavailability to her son – even though in the narrative

both parents were responsible for the psychological, emotional and social neglect of their son, because of their highly overprotective and controlling style of parenting.
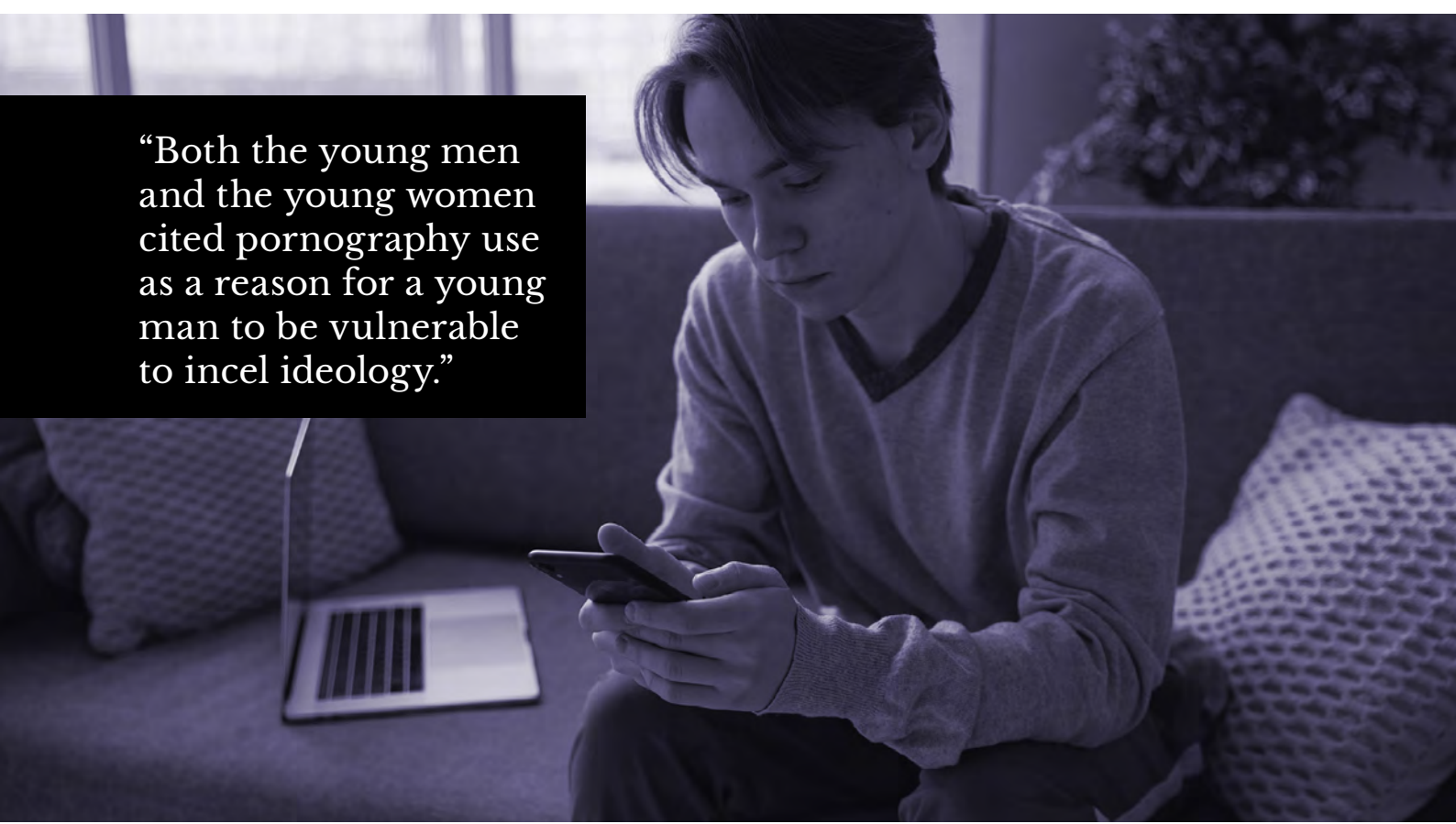
Both groups saw **both male and female parents as being responsible for their son's alienation and subsequent attraction to incel thinking in different ways.** They thought that the sons would blame their mothers, even though their mothers were also victims, and still have feelings of love and respect for absent and much-missed fathers. It is clear that this also aligns readily with the misogynistic world view that is promoted in the manosphere.

Pornography

Pornography and radicalisation

Both the young men and the young women cited **pornography use as a reason for a young man to be vulnerable to incel ideology.**

For the young men, this was because it 'made him feel bad' because he would know it was 'wrong'. These particular young men experience a strong taboo against talking about pornography because of their religious faith and culture, and this made them reluctant to discuss it in depth.

"Both the young men and the young women cited pornography use as a reason for a young man to be vulnerable to incel ideology."

Young people who have viewed pornography before the age of 11 are more likely to present with lower self-esteem.

The young men highlighted the **dangers of being overly censorious of pornography and sex** in creating their character 'Stirling'. 'Stirling' was a young Black man, a virgin, who had never had a romantic relationship with a woman. He did not masturbate and had never seen any pornography. He was so over-protected, even 'imprisoned' by his parents from the world, that he was vulnerable to radicalisation by a new friend who was misogynistic and who did not see pornography as problematic in any way.

This can be seen as a reflection of **the role of conservative religious communities** in the young men's gravitation towards the traditional masculinity championed by the manosphere. Such communities positively interpret traditional masculinity in ways that provide some protection against incel radicalisation and racism, but not necessarily sexism or gender-based violence.

The young men to some extent recognised pornography as a significant factor in radicalisation. However, the young women saw it as critical, and talked about it passionately and at length. They talked about the **desensitising violence** they witness their male peers consuming on a daily basis, sometimes even in classrooms, and how it affects the young women's safety and security both in school and in everyday life. "I think pornography has a lot to do with it. It promotes violence and desensitisation," said one young woman.

Pornography, mental health and relationships

The PSHE Association's first online edition of Fully Human discusses how online pornography seeks to co-author people's sexuality for profit.[xi] It cites shocking statistics about how **early exposure to pornography impacts self-esteem:**

- **Young people who have viewed pornography before the age of 11 are more likely to present with lower self-esteem, and 10% of children have viewed pornography by the age of nine in the UK.**

- **The average age of seeing porn is 13, for both boys and girls, and 51% of girls have seen sexually explicit content of someone they know, compared to 33% of boys.**[xii]

> "The young women felt that there is a huge disconnect between what young people are seeing online and the conversations they are having with teachers and parents."

The young women discussed how male friends their age had **sexual dysfunction because of watching pornography from a very young age,** and how overwhelmingly violent the pornography their male peers were interested in was. They also criticised the **sexual education** they had experienced for not making space to talking about pleasure and consent, as well as pornography, and not just pregnancy and STIs.[xiii] The young women felt that there is a huge disconnect between what young people are seeing online and the conversations they are having with teachers and parents.

The young women discussed how sites such as Pornhub target young men because of their gender and then push more and more extreme content. They wanted to express how much they perceived that **pornography makes young men feel entitled to sex and particular kinds of 'kinks'.** They said that the young men they know will see young women as weird or odd if they express the view that violence in sex is wrong. "Hitting a woman is not a kink," said one young woman.

The term **'demisexual'** was also discussed by the young women. It refers to people who only want to have sex with people they like and have a bond with. The young women felt this should be the normal reason for having a sexual relationship with someone and found it baffling and sad that it was seen as just another type of sexuality. They

talked about a normalisation of 'laddish' culture that says, 'Don't kink-shame!' The young women thought that some dangerous sexual behaviour such as hitting a woman for sexual satisfaction was shameful and wrong. "Bring back **kink-shaming!**" one young woman said.

This led to a discussion about how women are shamed for having sex with 'too many' people. One young woman talked about a viral YouTube series where a presenter asked people in public what they could buy with their **'body count'** if each body was worth £1. The young women and youth workers thought about the term 'body count' and how it used to refer only to how many people had been killed or died in an incident, whereas now it also means the number of sexual partners someone has had.

The path to becoming an incel

Overall, in the view of the young people, the online grooming of young men to adopt radically misogynistic thinking can therefore be seen to start in the **consumption of pornography and positive messages about being an 'alpha man',** which depend on misogynistic assumptions about women and gender.

So, when a traumatised young man looks for **reasons for his loneliness and rejection** and is told that it is because of women and feminism he is already primed to believe it. If he is then offered a community of lonely men, who are able to give him an identity, a place where he feels he can belong, he may, through a process of desensitisation, become ready to take part in violent expressions and even violent actions towards women.

So, when a traumatised young man looks for reasons for his loneliness and rejection and is told that it is because of women and feminism he is already primed to believe it.

Discussion

In conclusion, the Many Good Men project found that young men and women are very aware, in different ways, of the i**nfluence of the manosphere** on ideas around gender. Both groups also perceive incels to be the extreme end of that online world.

The young women feel that they experience a daily assault of misogyny that is fuelled by the internet through social media, YouTube content and pornography. **The young men feel a pressure to be successful as men,** and understandings of a successful man are deeply influenced by online pressure to be wealthy, muscular and attractive to the opposite sex.

The young men did not have the same practice of **analysing ideas about gender** as the young women. However, when offered the chance to use their creativity to think about why a young man might be vulnerable, they were profoundly **empathetic and intuitive** about the potential causes of depression and loneliness for young men.

The project revealed how **tackling misogynistic online content directly** was often not productive for the young men as this content also promoted an appealing vision of masculinity that viewers desire and buy into. However, **creative activity** provided a new frame for the young men to explore these issues and in this project became an effective 'bypass' of manosphere rhetoric.

The process of **creating fictional characters** to explore the radicalisation of masculinity was helpful for both groups as it enabled both young women and young men to protect themselves from being implicated personally in the issues.

The project revealed a need for **sex education** to include learning about consent and pleasure in relationships as well as the dangers of pornography. It also showed how important it is that **the adults in young people's lives** understand the online world young people experience and that they provide safe and creative ways for young

people to explore how their online experiences affect their identities and lives (both online and offline).

The project also revealed that for educators seeking to **challenge incel ideology and disrupt radicalisation,** a key opportunity lies in exposing the explicit racist and misogynistic archetypes central to incel culture. The project also indicated that there may be strong merit in counter-radicalisation early intervention programmes that focus on whole-family support and anti-racist community safety work.

In conclusion, the Many Good Men project found that young men and women are very aware, in different ways, of the influence of the manosphere on ideas around gender.

Conclusions and recommendations

The rise of the incel movement represents a deeply concerning manifestation of harmful masculinity and misogyny in the digital age. Born out of a sense of aggrieved entitlement and resentment towards women, **incel ideology is characterised by a disturbing fusion of self-loathing and grandiosity, victimhood and supremacism** (Ging, 2019; O'Malley et al., 2020). While incels may see themselves as subversive rebels against a "gynocentric" society, their worldview is ultimately a stark embodiment of the same patriarchal belief system they claim to be oppressed by (Sugiura, 2021).

The core tenets of incel ideology are:

- **the sexual marketplace**

- **female evil**

- **legitimised regressive forms of masculinity**

- **male oppression**

- **the justification of violence**

These core tenets paint a grim picture of radical misogyny (O'Malley et al., 2020). By selectively appropriating evolutionary psychology and genetic determinism, incels construct a **pseudoscientific narrative of women as inherently inferior, manipulative and undeserving of rights** (Tranchese and Sugiura, 2021). This rhetoric not only perpetuates deeply harmful gender stereotypes but also reinforces racist and homophobic prejudices (Ging, 2019).

The danger posed by the incel movement lies not just in the virulent hatred it spreads online but also in the real-world violence it inspires. From mass killings to the pervasive harassment of women, the **reality of incel extremism** is one that demands urgent attention (Hoffman et al., 2020). Dismissing incels as merely lonely or mentally

> "The danger posed by the incel movement lies not just in the virulent hatred it spreads online but also in the real-world violence it inspires."

ill young men risks underestimating the power of their ideology and the radicalising effect of online echo chambers (Bates, 2020).

The findings of this report are clear: we must act now to prevent online misogynistic radicalisation and the violence against women and girls it incites. The participants' input also reveals key information on how to do this.

The young women's awareness of **incel terminology** allowed them to have a critical lens, whereas the young men used incel terms without thought or knowledge of their origins, seeing figures like Andrew Tate as motivational. **Pornography and misogynistic content** made young women feel threatened, and young men felt criticised and defensive. We must **empower young people with knowledge about the online world** and support them to think critically about what they might see. Given the gendered and racialised differences in the young people's experiences, our response must be sensitive to this.

Both groups embodied **harmful gender stereotypes** easily when asked, showing the huge influence that stereotypes still have on young people's perceptions of themselves and others. The participants talked about how much of young people's behaviour is learnt from the adults around them, with **domestic abuse** being seen

as a key factor in risk of radicalisation as male dominance is normalised at home. The young women explicitly reflected that incel ideology was fuelled by a culture of smaller, more everyday **acts of male dominance,** such as taking up physical space. We must tackle **gender inequality,** which is the root cause of men's violence against women and girls, and which creates a context conducive to misogynistic radicalisation.

Crucially, the rise of incel extremism must be understood not as an aberration but as a symptom of the **wider patriarchal attitudes and rigid gender norms** that permeate society. Challenging the threat of incels requires a proactive, structural approach that addresses the root causes of young men's radicalisation, from pervasive misogyny to the lack of healthy outlets for dealing with romantic rejection and frustration (Scaptura and Boyle, 2019; Sugiura, 2021).

Ultimately, the incel phenomenon serves as a sobering reminder of the urgent need to foster **healthier models of masculinity** and to challenge the sexist beliefs and attitudes that continue to limit human potential. Only by working to dismantle the patriarchal structures that give rise to such hate can we hope to build a **society of true equality and mutual respect.**

In order to prevent online misogynistic radicalisation and the violence against women and girls that so often follows, **Zero Tolerance makes seven key recommendations for youth workers, groups and centres, and teachers and schools:**

1. **Talk to young people explicitly about gender inequality and online misogyny and racism, using safe, fun, creative and non-judgemental approaches. This will help young men develop the critical lens some young women already seem to have, and help young people of all genders counteract the harmful gender stereotypes they have likely internalised.**

2. **Be attentive to the gender-specific experiences and needs of your young people. This research revealed that young men and women in Scotland have vastly different understandings and experiences of online misogyny, and we must respond appropriately. In particular, young men need support with developing a sense of community and a critical lens for things they see online, accepting and expressing their emotions, and accessing safe spaces to talk about masculinity. Young women need safe spaces to discuss how unsafe they feel, and trusted adults who make them feel safe to disclose the violence, harassment and abuse they are experiencing. They may need some separate spaces for this, in the context of a gender-equal setting with many activities being delivered together.**

3. Embed gender-equal cultures in the everyday practice of your setting. This means considering the activities you deliver, but also how you deliver them. Consider what the young people learn from the behaviour of adults, the gendering of activities, and their everyday interactions in your setting. Develop a gender equality policy, and work as a team to create a genuinely gender-equal culture.

4. Role-model diverse and positive masculinities and femininities. Both young men and women need alternatives to harmful gender stereotypes, and many are left vulnerable to radicalisation or violence because their home lives do not offer positive role models. Support your young people by showing them through your everyday behaviour that there is another way to be.

Youth workers and teachers cannot solve this alone. Effective prevention requires a whole-system approach, and therefore Zero Tolerance calls on the Scottish Government to:

1. Make it compulsory and statutory to provide comprehensive, gender-equal, culturally sensitive education in relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP), so that young people do not have to resort to searching for information online.

2. Strengthen ties between the youth work and education sectors, so that every young person in Scotland has a youth worker they can talk to and ask for information. Youth workers' skills in relationship building and creating safe, non-judgemental relationships are vital.

3. Collaborate with UK and international partners to regulate online platforms, reducing the amount of harmful content and preventing algorithms from promoting it.

Together, we can prevent online misogynistic radicalisation and eradicate men's violence against women and girls.

About Zero Tolerance

Zero Tolerance is Scotland's expert organisation on preventing men's violence against women and girls. We tackle the root cause: gender inequality. Ensuring that children and young people grow up experiencing gender equality in the world around them is a vital part of the primary prevention picture.

Glossary

The manosphere: websites, blogs and online forums promoting masculinity, misogyny and opposition to feminism

Incels: 'involuntary celibates', a misogynistic online community of men who feel they are unable to attract women and are thus hostile towards all women, and towards men who are sexually active

Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOWs): a misogynistic online community advocating for men to separate themselves from women and society

Men's Rights Activists (MRAs): a global movement and ideology that asserts that men do not have the same rights as women, acting to criticise and inhibit women's rights work

Pick Up Artist (PUA): a man who uses manipulative techniques and social engineering to attract women

Chad: a tall, White, handsome man who has no problem finding sexual partners; can be used as an expression of jealousy

Alpha male: a strong, powerful man who likes to be in charge of others; the ideal man

Sigma males: a popular, successful but highly independent man; a lone wolf

Red pill: stemming from the film The Matrix, the red pill represents the choice to learn the alleged truth; a supposed kind of political awakening

Blue pill: stemming from the film The Matrix, the blue pill represents the choice to ignore the alleged truth and remain content with ordinary reality

Black pill: representing the realisation that the situation is hopeless, and the choice to LDAR (see below)

LDAR (lay down and rot): to die by suicide

Stacy: an attractive woman who has no problem finding a male partner; can be used as an expression of jealousy

Beth/Becky: an average-looking woman; an insult to a woman's physical attractiveness

Femoid: derogatory term for a woman, stemming from 'female humanoid'

Foid: short for femoid

Roasties: an insulting term for women deemed promiscuous; so-called because their labia are compared to roast meat

Jail baits: girls under the age of consent perceived as sexually attractive because of their assumed 'virtue'; so-called because they are seen as tempting men to commit rape

References

Banet-Weiser, S. (2018). *Empowered: Popular feminism and popular misogyny.* Duke University Press.

Bates, L. (2020). *Men who hate women: The Extremism No One is Talking About.* Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks.

Beale, D. J., Brace, L., and Coan, T. G. (2019). From 'Incel' to 'Saint': Analysing the worldview behind the 2018 Toronto attack. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 33(8), 1667-1691.

Buss, D. (2016). *The evolution of desire: Strategies of human mating.* Basic Books.

Byerly, C. M. (2020). Incels online reframing sexual violence. *The Communication Review,* 23(4), 290–308.

Carian, E. K., Orozco, E., & Kovacs, L. (2021). "The only solution is violence in the face": Assessing the threat of incel violence in the United States using the TRAP-18. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 1–15.

Carian, E. K., Orozco, E., & Kovacs, L. (2023). The violent incel: Assessing the threat of gendered terrorism using the TRAP-18. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* 1–21.

Catt, H., & Rose, C. (2024). Misogyny to be treated as extremism by UK government, BBC News, 18 August. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c15gn0lq7p5o [Accessed: 16/9/2024]

Chang, W. (2022). The monstrous-feminine in the incel imagination: Investigating the representation of women as 'femoids' on /r/Braincels. *Feminist Media Studies,* 22(2), 291–306.

Dar-Nimrod, I., & Heine, S. J. (2011). Genetic essentialism: On the deceptive determinism of DNA. *Psychological Bulletin,* 137(5), 800.

Darwin, C. (1859). *On the origin of species by means of natural selection.* London: John Murray.

Commission for Countering Extremism (2021). *Challenging hateful extremism.* HM Government.

Donnelly, D., Burgess, E., Anderson, S., Davis, R., & Dillard, J. (2001). Involuntary celibacy: A life course analysis. *Journal of Sex Research,* 38(2), 159–169.

Dynel, M. (2020). Vigilante disparaging humour at r/IncelTears: Humour as critique of incel ideology. *Language & Communication,* 74, 1–14.

Gentry, C. E. (2022). Misogynistic terrorism: it has always been here. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 15(1), 209-224

Ging, D. (2017). Alphas, betas, and incels: Theorising the masculinities of the manosphere. *Men and Masculinities*, 22(4), 638–657.

Ging, D., & Siapera, E. (2018). Special issue on online misogyny. *Feminist Media Studies,* 18(4), 515–524.

Gotell, L., & Dutton, E. (2016). Sexual violence in the 'manosphere': Antifeminist men's rights discourses on rape. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 5(2), 65–80.

Hearn, J. (1998). *The Violence of Men: How Men Talk about and How Agencies Respond to Men's Violence to Women.* London: Sage.

Hoffman, B., Ware, J., & Shapiro, E. (2020). Assessing the threat of incel violence. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* 43(7), 565–587.

Jaki, S., De Smedt, T., Gwóźdź, M., Panchal, R., Rossa, A., & De Pauw, G. (2019). Online hatred of women in the Incels.me forum: Linguistic analysis and automatic detection. *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict,* 7(2), 240–268.

Kelly, L. (1987). The continuum of sexual violence. In J. Hanmer & M. Maynard (eds), *Women, violence and social control* (pp. 46–60). Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International.

Kelly, L. (1988) *Surviving sexual violence.* Oxford: Polity Press.

Kimmel, M. S. (2015). *Angry white men: American masculinity at the end of an era.* Hachette UK.

Manne, K. (2017). *Down girl: The logic of misogyny.* Oxford University Press.

Marwick, A. E., & Caplan, R. (2018). Drinking male tears: Language, the manosphere, and networked harassment. *Feminist Media Studies,* 18(4), 543–559.

Nagle, A. (2017). *Kill all normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the alt-right.* John Hunt Publishing.

O'Malley, R. L., Holt, K., & Holt, T. J. (2020). An exploration of the involuntary celibate (incel) subculture online. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence,* NP4986-NP5006.

Powell, A., Stratton, G., & Cameron, R. (2018). *Digital criminology: Crime and justice in digital society.* Routledge.

Preston, K., Halpin, M., & Maguire, F. (2021). The black pill: New technology and the male supremacy of involuntarily celibate men. *Men and Masculinities,* 24(5), 823–841.

Scaptura, M. N., & Boyle, K. M. (2019). Masculinity threat, 'incel' traits, and violent fantasies among heterosexual men in the United States. *Feminist Criminology,* 15(3), 278–298.

Sugiura, L. (2021). *The incel rebellion: The rise of the manosphere and the virtual war against women.* Emerald Group Publishing.

Taylor, J. (2018). The woman who founded the 'incel' movement. BBC News, 30 August. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-45284455 [Accessed: 16/9/2024]

Tranchese, A., & Sugiura, L. (2021). "I don't hate all women, just those stuck-up bitches": How incels and mainstream pornography speak the same extreme language of misogyny. Violence Against Women, 27(14), 2709–2734.

Van Valkenburgh, S. P. (2018). Digesting the red pill: Masculinity and neoliberalism in the manosphere. *Men and Masculinities,* 1–20.

Witt, T. (2020). "If i cannot have it, i will do everything i can to destroy it." the canonization of Elliot Rodger: 'Incel' masculinities, secular sainthood, and justifications of ideological violence. *Social Identities,* 26(5), 675–689.

YouGov (2023). How many Britons agree with Andrew Tate's views on women? Available at: https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2023/05/23/how-many-britons-agree-andrew-tates-views-women [Accessed 16/09/2024].

Notes

Please be aware that the following notes include links to content that may be upsetting. Reader discretion is advised.

[i] The joining survey template: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CaE7oUnWViX5EVNQUfkthci3bdI_HOA-fpxHmKL_eVQ/edit; a summary of all the data: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VWeZlICt_JdC4XIvoa9OAx-ZcEiPzt_f/edit

[ii] Meme: a humorous image, video, piece of text or GIF that is spread across the internet, typically on social media, and often with slight variations.

[iii] Nine young women came to the introductory session. The main reason for five of those young women not attending further was given as being 'too busy'. One young woman's parents thought very carefully about their daughter taking part, because they were concerned she was too young to engage with this challenging subject, and ultimately the daughter decided not to participate.

[iv] https://www.theguardian.com/news/article/2024/aug/22/andrew-tate-placed-under-house-arrest-by-romanian-court-for-30-days

[v] https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/articles-reports/2023/05/23/how-many-britons-agree-andrew-tates-views-women

[vi] https://www.channel4.com/programmes/i-am-andrew-tate

[vii] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGWGcESPltM

[viii] https://youtu.be/QxbZ3l4qNWc?si=Lyl264kBtOb-J9DF

[ix] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oliq8m8Qph0

[x] https://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/article/most-children-in-youth-justice-system-have-suffered-trauma-research-suggests

[xi] https://fs.hubspotusercontent00.net/hubfs/20248256/Fully%20Human/FH%20Issue%201%20-%20Pornography%20and%20Human%20Futures.pdf?hsCtaTracking=50e7cfcb-cae4-4743-b970-c26f0ba04aff%7C8eeef9d8-0cb1-4950-9947-4dc599e15cd3

[xii] All statistics are to be found in the PSHE Association's first online edition of Fully Human: https://pshe-association.org.uk/fully-human

[xiii] It was particularly interesting that the young women never described any of the pornography they referenced in detail, as if they did not want to bring such explicit images or content into the room.

email info@zerotolerance.org.uk

Zero Tolerance is a Scottish charity: SC023484

www.zerotolerance.org.uk