



## UNDERSTANDING INCELDOM:

*An adapted framework for  
analysing the incel  
community within an online  
radicalisation approach*

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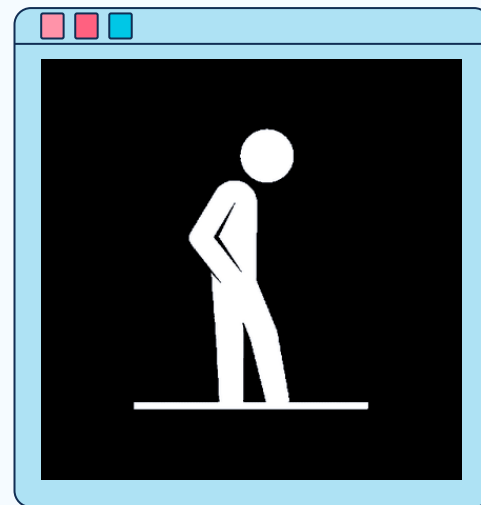
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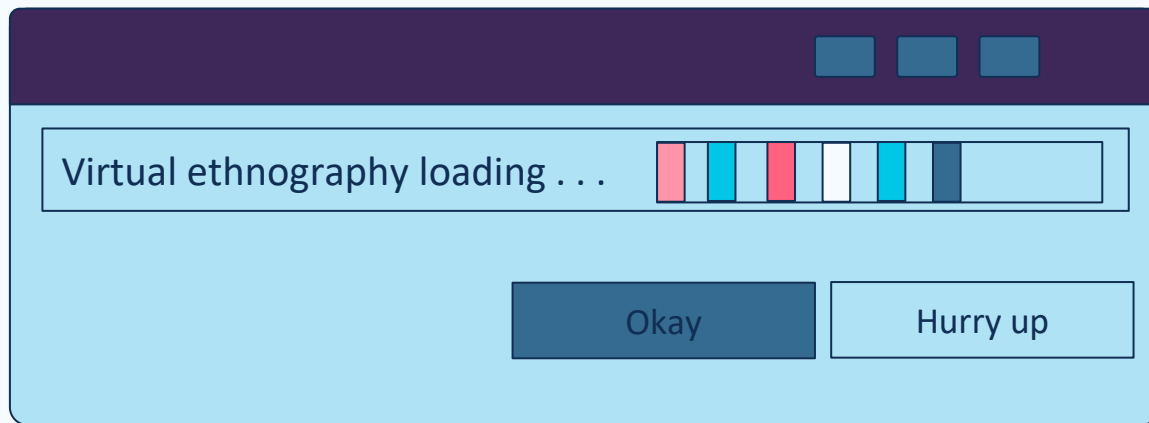
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Gert Vermeulen

# 01 Introduction

The incel community as a radical milieu

**Radical milieu** (Brzuszkiewicz): “an environment that – though not physically violent itself – can provide incels with a *support system*, a *sense of belonging* and *legitimisation* for their *grievances* and *frustrations*, lending itself as a space for *online radicalisation*”

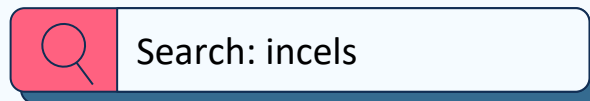




● Online non-participatory observations

● 15 months (January 2023 – March 2024)

● 3 incel-misogynist forums



# Radicalisation-Factor Model



**Features of the  
environment**



**Features of the  
individual**



**Features of the radical  
group/ideologies**



**Features of the means  
and technology**

## 02 Features of the individual

*“[T]he individual and their characteristics associated with a weaker or stronger vulnerability to radicalisation or affinity with certain ideologies” (Bayerl et al., 2020)*





## Demographic factors

- Young
- White – ethnically diverse
- Heterosexual
- No romantic/sexual experience ...

## Social and psychological issues

- Difficulties w/ socialisation (lacking social skills, friends, ...)
- Overall negative internal experiences (low self-esteem, hopelessness, ...)
- Mistreatment by peers and family
- Mental health issues
- ...

## Needs and reasons

Can be a source of contention

Okay

↳ grievances, feelings of perceived injustice, victimisation and exclusion → susceptibility

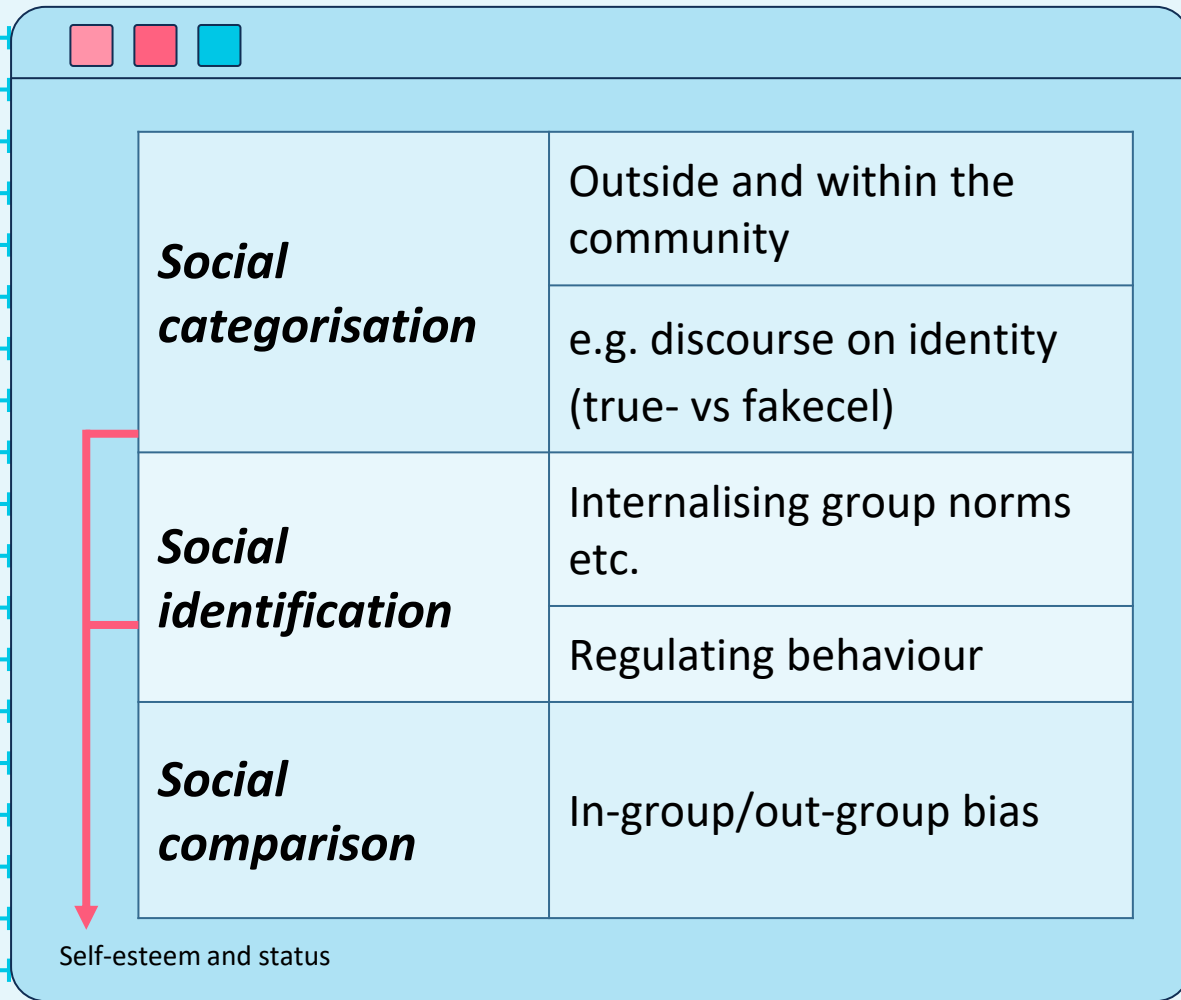


Social reasons	Psychological and self-developmental reasons	Instrumental reasons	Platform/ technical reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Socialisation</li><li>• Social &amp; emotional support and advice</li><li>• Like-minded people</li><li>• Friendships</li><li>• ...</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expressing emotions</li><li>• Entertainment</li><li>• Sense of belonging, community</li><li>• Identity construction</li><li>• ...</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exchanging information</li><li>• (Incel)ideological, political, ... discussions</li><li>• Organise/ participate on/offline activities</li><li>• ...</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forum rules</li><li>• Performance</li><li>• Degree of moderation</li><li>• ...</li></ul>

# 03 Features of the radical group/ideologies







# 04 Features of the means and technology





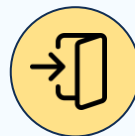
**Anonymity**



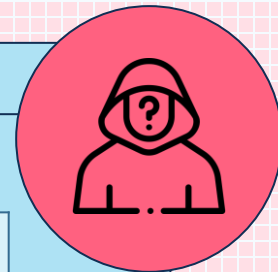
**Invisibility**



**Asynchrony**



**Accessibility**



### ***Social Identity Model of Deindividuation (SIDE)***

<b><i>Anonymity of the in-group</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Identity salience</li><li>– Online depersonalisation</li><li>– E.g. incel usernames</li></ul>
<b><i>Anonymity to the out-group</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Identity expression</li></ul>

### ***Online Disinhibition Effect (ODE)***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Self-compartmentalisation (A)</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Increased self-disclosure</li></ul>	<b><i>Benign disinhibition (e.g. talking about loneliness)</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Decreased accountability</li></ul>	<b><i>Toxic disinhibition (e.g. online hate comments)</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Lack of visual cues (I): greater free expression</li></ul>	



# 05 Features of the environment

*“[T]he broader context(s) in which not only (radicalising) individuals but also the ideological and extremist groups operate” (Bayerl et al., 2020)*



## 1. Changing gender relations

- Men's Liberation Movement > Men's Rights Movement > manosphere
- **(Hegemonic) masculinity** & privilege threatened by societal changes
- **Aggrieved entitlement:** “a sense of resentment that stems from the idea that something one was entitled to in the past has now been taken away by others”

## 2. Changing socialisation patterns (loneliness)

- Global loneliness
- Virtual (third) places: existence vs. quality/experience

# 06 Conclusion



## Context

Features of the socio-cultural, economic and political environment



## Individual

Features of the radicalised or radicalising individual



## Means

Features of the technologies used



## Ideology

Features of the extremist ideologies and groups



UNDERSTANDING INCELDOM:  
AN ADAPTED FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSING THE INCEL  
COMMUNITY WITHIN AN ONLINE RADICALISATION APPROACH

*Renée Pattyn\**

**Abstract**

In this paper, we explore the concept of 'inceldom' within the context of online radicalisation. We argue that the incel community, often characterized by its members' self-perception as 'involuntarily celibate', represents a unique and complex social group. This paper aims to develop a framework for understanding the dynamics of this community and its potential for radicalisation. We explore the role of online platforms, particularly social media, in facilitating the formation and maintenance of incel communities. We also discuss the challenges of researching this community and the implications of our findings for future research and policy.

**1. Introduction**

The concept of 'inceldom' has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in the context of online radicalisation. Incels, or 'involuntarily celibate' individuals, are often characterized by their self-perception as being unable to find romantic or sexual partners. This perception is often rooted in a sense of social isolation and a desire for connection. The incel community, which has emerged primarily through online platforms, provides a space for these individuals to share their experiences and seek support. However, this community has also been associated with extreme ideologies and acts of violence, raising concerns about its potential for radicalisation.

This paper explores the dynamics of the incel community and its potential for radicalisation. We argue that the incel community represents a unique and complex social group, one that is often misunderstood and misrepresented. By developing a framework for understanding the dynamics of this community, we can better understand the factors that contribute to its formation and maintenance. This framework can then be used to inform future research and policy, helping to address the challenges posed by the incel community in the context of online radicalisation.

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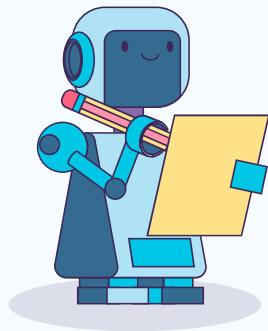
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