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**INCELS AND ONLINE DATING: HOW INCELS' ONLINE DATING EXPERIENCES
IMPACT THEIR MISOGYNISTIC RHETORIC**

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Abstract

Involuntary celibate, or “incel,” communities online have become more well-known in recent years, primarily as a result of several high-profile instances of incels committing mass violence attacks across the globe. Because much of incel ideology is fueled by failure in romantic and sexual endeavors, it seems likely that the dating world today, a world that resides primarily online and on phone apps, would be inextricably intertwined with incel ideology. The threat that incel violence poses is a gender-based one, whether it is incited by misogyny and targets women or takes its form as self-harm or suicidal ideation toward (overwhelmingly male) incels themselves. As a result, this study examines the connection between online dating and gender-based violence, investigating whether incels’ experiences on dating apps reinforce their ideology and if those experiences might exacerbate any tendencies toward violent inclinations. Previous research in this realm has been severely limited, and this paper strives to highlight an important connection in incel ideology that could impact the risk of future instances of incel violence. Through an analysis of data found on the incel forum Incels.is, this study finds that incel experiences on dating apps do reinforce incel ideology and that “chad fishing,” a method of catfishing used by incels to entice women, creates violations of privacy and has potential as a tool for gender-based violence. As a result, this paper makes several recommendations for future actions to mitigate this risk and to provide resources for incels that may help ameliorate the widespread mental health issues and risks of violence within the incel community.

Introduction

Extremism, including violent extremism, is not new. Scholars, however, have begun to uncover a connection between conceptions of masculinity and extremism. In recent years, much of this extremism has moved online, whether it lives on near-ubiquitous social media sites or on more obscure, topic-specific platforms. A large part of this online extremism lives in the “Manosphere,” an umbrella category encompassing various groups which subscribe to misogynistic masculine ideology. Involuntary celibates, or “incels,” are one such group. According to Incels.is, the most popular online dedicated incel forum, an incel is “a man who desires a romantic relationship but is unable to enter one.”¹ Incels are romantically and sexually unsuccessful, and many blame women, as well as sexually successful men, for their predicament.² The extreme misogyny, hatred, and hopelessness common in incel communities has even driven some to commit acts of violence, which have at times resulted in multiple casualties and often culminate with the perpetrator committing suicide.³

Numerous elements contribute to incel sentiment and violence, including mental health struggles, alienation from society, feelings of failure, and online radicalization. But one significant and oft-overlooked part of incels’ dating challenges may be the shift in dating culture to online dating and the increasing use of dating apps that has occurred over the past 20-30 years. With countless potential partners to choose from and an emphasis on physical appearance, dating apps are not necessarily helpful for everyone.

¹ “Rules and FAQ,” Incels.is.

² Sara Brzuszkiewicz, “Incel Radical Milieu and External Locus of Control” (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2020), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep29445>; Anne Speckhard et al., “Involuntary Celibates’ Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 14, no. 2 (2021): 89–121.

³ Sian Tomkinson, Tael Harper, and Katie Attwell, “Confronting Incel: Exploring Possible Policy Responses to Misogynistic Violent Extremism,” *Australian Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (April 2, 2020): 152–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2020.1747393>.

Objective and Significance

Given the impact of dating failures on incel ideology and the current prevalence of online dating, this project approaches the question of how incel experiences on dating apps contribute to their expressions of violence and misogyny. Does online dating reinforce incels' beliefs about society and about themselves? How do experiences of online dating impact incels' expressions of misogyny? Finally, how might these factors contribute to the pervasiveness of gender-based violence, whether toward men or women?

Although dating experiences are a defining feature of being an incel, researchers have done few studies surrounding this link, particularly in the modern era of online dating. Studies of incels generally are already sparse due to the fact that incels' online presence has surfaced relatively recently -- but the rise in popularity of dating apps has surely affected incel communities. As such, it is important to pursue research on this connection, especially due to the impact of dating failures on incel ideology.

Furthermore, because of the risk of incel violence, whether directed toward others or toward themselves, determining whether there is a correlation between incel experiences on dating apps and violent or highly misogynistic rhetoric online could be an important tool for understanding the risk of harm posed by the incel community. Incel rhetoric has resulted in multiple incidents of violence in the past, and it poses a gender-based threat primarily targeted towards women but frequently also affecting men. Because instances of incel violence often result in the perpetrator's suicide, any violent ideology perpetuated by incels also threatens incels themselves. Incel violence perpetrated upon others is relatively rare; the most likely and frequent occurrences of incel violence materialize as suicides that evade news outlets and dramatic

headlines. Addressing incel violence through a gender-based violence lens is essential for understanding its far-reaching ramifications for human rights and for the population as whole. In light of some of the challenges facing online content regulation, a framework of gender-based violence helps us target the problem holistically -- instead of only stifling the symptoms of an underlying problem -- and ideally could provide solutions that are applicable to other forms of gender-based violence, as well.

Existing research has looked into some of the underlying personal motivations for individuals to join incel communities, but we lack information surrounding how certain societal structures might contribute to these driving factors. Though there are surely multiple societal structures that fall into this category, dating apps are likely part of this group. In particular, it would be valuable to understand whether incels' experiences on dating apps perpetuate incel ideology by reinforcing their beliefs and pushing them towards further extremism. With this knowledge, it would be easier to take action addressing any problematic facets of dating apps and to better design incel deradicalization programs.

Current Literature

In order to tackle the research questions delineated above, this literature review will provide an overview of relevant scholarship through a look at gender-based violence, masculinity and extremism, the rise of the Manosphere, incel ideology and incel forums, existing research on incels' dating experiences, and proposed solutions and interventions for incel violence.

Frameworks for Combating Gender-Based Violence

Incel violence has serious implications for human rights, especially when it comes to gender-based violence. However, existing frameworks for tackling gender-based violence are not

comprehensive, so addressing incel violence through gender-based violence frameworks could be difficult. Existing literature on this subject tends to argue that though the way to address gender-based violence is through international fora, especially through the United Nations (UN) and regional human rights courts, the current state of these frameworks is insufficient given the realities of gender-based violence in today's world.

In her book entitled *Conceptualizing Femicide as a Human Rights Violation*, Angela Hefti describes femicide and gender-based violence as human rights violations “through which the aim of the subordination of women and girls is achieved.”⁴ Hefti argues that acts of femicide are widespread because they are rooted in structural inequality: essentially, gender-based violence helps keep women subordinate to men, and its perpetuation psychologically affects both men and women inversely.⁵ The solution Hefti posits has several potential avenues, but all depend on states implementing legal human rights frameworks -- states are responsible, Hefti asserts, because they are the ones who have failed to prevent violence committed by private perpetrators.⁶

Efforts to reduce gender-based violence, which are often considered synonymous with women's rights, through international law have not been sufficient, however. Hilikka Pietilä's *Engendering the Global Agenda: The Story of Women and the United Nations* documents how the presence of women and women's organizations at international fora has come about only through an uphill battle.⁷ Having limited resources and battling exclusionary standards, women

⁴ Angela Hefti, “Conceptualizing Femicide as a Human Rights Violation,” in *Conceptualizing Femicide as a Human Rights Violation* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022), 240–68, <https://www.elgaronline.com/monochap-oa/book/9781803920443/book-part-9781803920443-19.xml>.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁶ Angela Hefti, “No More Impunity: Femicide and State Responsibility,” in *Conceptualizing Femicide as a Human Rights Violation* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022), 269–97, <https://www.elgaronline.com/monochap-oa/book/9781803920443/book-part-9781803920443-20.xml>.

⁷ Hilikka Pietilä, “Engendering the Global Agenda: The Story of Women and the United Nations,” 2002, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/463757>.

demanded that their voices be heard and began the fight for women's rights on an international level. According to Anne Marie Goetz and Rob Jenkins, however, major portions of the women's rights agenda involving gender-based and sexual violence have consistently been sidelined.⁸ The authors argue that national action plans on the subject fail to see women's issues as domestic social tensions, instead addressing them as a matter of foreign aid.⁹ Another article points out that interventions such as the International Violence Against Women Act, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and other documents put forth by international bodies have frequently left out the Western world in their diagnoses of violence against women.¹⁰ Angela Hefti adds another layer, claiming that CEDAW's general recommendations are the best approach to violence against women and girls on the international plane, but still emphasizing that its focus is on eliminating discrimination and that it rarely addresses violence.¹¹

A paper by Lut Mergaert et al. provides a new dimension to the aforementioned arguments surrounding gender-based violence in international law. The authors also recognize the limitations of the UN model, pointing out that this model "was developed to address violence against women rather than gender-based violence," and that it thus excludes other groups, such as men and non-binary individuals.¹² This is a particularly important point in the context of incel violence, which often affects both men and women, even if it originates through a gender-based lens. The paper also notes that the UN model was not properly developed to address

⁸ Anne Marie Goetz and Rob Jenkins, "Taking Stock: Protection without Empowerment?: Evolution of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda since the Beijing Platform for Action," in *Women and Girls Rising* (Routledge, 2015).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁰ Corinne L. Mason, "Global Violence Against Women as a National Security 'Emergency,'" *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 2 (2013): 55–80.

¹¹ Angela Hefti, "Femicide, the UN System and CEDAW," in *Conceptualizing Femicide as a Human Rights Violation* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022), 107–26,

<https://www.elgaronline.com/monochap-oa/book/9781803920443/book-part-9781803920443-13.xml>.

¹² Lut Mergaert, Marcela Linková, and Sofia Strid, "Theorising Gender-Based Violence Policies: A 7P Framework," *Social Sciences* 12, no. 7 (2023): 385, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12070385>.

intersectionality and focuses heavily on a criminal justice response to violence, which might not always be the most effective way to address violence.¹³ Thus, the authors propose a “7P model” developed from the earlier 3P UN model and 4P Council of Europe Model.¹⁴ The Ps of this model are 1) policy measure, 2) prevalence and incidence estimates, 3) prevention through changes in social and cultural behavior, 4) protection of potential victims and survivors, 5) prosecution of perpetrators, 6) provision of services, and 7) partnerships with relevant actors at all levels.¹⁵ This model goes beyond previously established frameworks to address gender-based violence by creating more comprehensive strategies for prevention and protection, and it provides important guidelines that could be helpful in combating incel violence. Prevention through changes in social and cultural behavior is particularly relevant to this paper, as discussed in later sections.

Masculinity and Extremism

Scholarship surrounding violent extremism has shown that violent extremism is often linked to conceptions of masculinity, particularly when society appears to diminish the value of masculinity or gives a semblance of prioritizing other issues such as women’s rights or racial minorities’ rights. There are also several ways in which men are drawn into extremism, most of which hold deep connections to their masculinity.

According to existing literature around masculinity, white men often perceive a threat to their masculinity when feminist, LGBTQ+, and racial justice movements prosper.¹⁶ In a study

¹³ Ibid., 3.

¹⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶ Aleksandra Dier and Gretchen Baldwin, “Masculinities within the Extreme Right,” *Masculinities and Violent Extremism* (International Peace Institute, 2022), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep41516.8>; James A. Piazza, “The Determinants of Domestic Right-Wing Terrorism in the USA: Economic Grievance, Societal Change and Political Resentment,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 34, no. 1 (2017): 52–80.

analyzing the impact on right-wing violent extremism of economic hardships, societal changes leading to greater inclusion and empowerment of women and racial minorities, and resentment toward the U.S. government, James A. Piazza found that the empowerment of women in society directly boosted right-wing terrorism.¹⁷

Sociologist Michael Kimmel coined the concept of aggrieved entitlement: when young men feel entitled to certain things (holding moral authority over women and children, feeling belonging and community, and feeling that they matter in the world) but experience threats to these things, they perceive their masculinities as being damaged.¹⁸ Therefore, entry into extremism is a “gendered effort to ward off the shame that comes with their failures -- their failures as men.”¹⁹ Because these individuals have ostensibly failed to retain their manhood through traditional pathways, joining extremist groups gives them a way to recapture their masculinity in a way that (they believe) would not otherwise be possible.²⁰

When it comes to incels specifically, there are unique facets of the community that differ from other extremist groups. Sara Brzuszkiewicz’s 2020 study defines the “incel radical milieu,” or the community in which members find a sense of belonging but where demands for legitimacy and recognition drive the group to separate from greater society and to radicalize.²¹ Within the incel radical milieu, recruitment involves peer-pressure grooming, where incels simultaneously want to recruit more members but also protect themselves from the outside world.

¹⁷ Piazza, “The Determinants of Domestic Right-Wing Terrorism in the USA.”

¹⁸ Michael Kimmel, *Healing From Hate: How Young Men Get Into—and Out Of—Violent Extremism* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018), <https://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?qurl=https%3a%2f%2fsearch.ebscohost.com%2flogin.aspx%3fdirect%3dtrue%26AuthType%3dip%26db%3de025xna%26AN%3d1690639%26site%3dehost-live%26scope%3dsite>.

¹⁹ Kimmel, *Healing From Hate*, 19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

²¹ Brzuszkiewicz, “Incel Radical Milieu and External Locus of Control.”

Much of the literature surrounding the link between masculinity and extremism focuses primarily on forms of violent extremism with different pathways and inciting factors than incel extremism, but the works we have examined in this section are impactful in more narrow incel research and provide some of the key concepts and terminology that will be useful in the following sections to scrutinize incel ideology.

The Rise of the Manosphere

The “Manosphere” and the growth of the incel community both have their roots in the Men’s Rights Movement (MRM), which surfaced in the 1970s in response to second-wave feminism.²² The MRM narrative asserts that women’s rights posed a challenge to traditional forms of hegemonic masculinity, and it has significantly contributed to online gender-based violence. The Manosphere is a part of the MRM, with many subgroups falling under its umbrella, including incels. While these subgroups all include the rationalization of masculine superiority and the ultimate aim of suppressing women, some groups are larger than others and earn more references in research.

Some literature highlights the focus on evolutionary psychology within Manosphere dialogue. Louis Bachaud and Sarah E. Johns uncover the popular Manosphere “dual mating strategy hypothesis,” which argues that women are biologically driven toward having multiple sexual partners and that their supposed desire for monogamy is a myth.²³ And while Tomkinson et al. argue that Manosphere groups put together a “pseudo-biological conceptualisation,” Bachaud and Johns point out that Manosphere communities pull from reputable, peer-reviewed

²² Esli Chan, “The Rise of the Manosphere and Extremist Gender-Based Ideological Groups Online,” *Women’s Policy Journal of Harvard* 14 (2020): 56–68.

²³ Louis Bachaud and Sarah E. Johns, “The Use and Misuse of Evolutionary Psychology in Online Manosphere Communities: The Case of Female Mating Strategies,” *Evolutionary Human Sciences* 5 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1017/ehs.2023.22>.

journal research and cite over 100 scientific studies to bolster their arguments.²⁴ Both studies agree, however, that these users make logical leaps from the research to their own arguments, and that there is something lacking in their engagement with the research.

Other researchers focus on the link between the Manosphere and gender-based violence. Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell use the term “technology-facilitated sexual violence and harassment” to describe this link, applying it to “describe collectively the range of criminal, civil, and otherwise harmful sexually aggressive behaviors perpetrated against women with the aid or use of new technologies.”²⁵ Esli Chan also explores this connection in “The Rise of the Manosphere and Extremist Gender-Based Ideological Groups Online,” where she discusses how the United Nations infrastructure surrounding gender-based violence applies to the type of rhetoric present in the Manosphere.²⁶ Both papers conclude that research and legal frameworks relevant to this issue are lacking, and that we must delve more deeply into the repercussions and functions of these new technologies and online spaces that allow for gender-based harm.²⁷ Chan also mentions that international communities must put forth definitions of online gender-based violence, with policy and cybersecurity experts working in tandem to create new responsibility frameworks.²⁸

Incel Ideology and Forums

The term incel was originally coined in the 1990s by a Canadian university student known online as Alana.²⁹ Alana started a website called Alana’s Involuntary Celibacy Project, an

²⁴ Ibid., 5, 11.; Tomkinson, Harper, and Attwell, “Confronting Incel.”

²⁵ Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell, “Embodied Harms: Gender, Shame, and Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence,” *Violence against Women* 21, no. 6 (2015): 758–79, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801215576581>.

²⁶ Chan, “The Rise of the Manosphere and Extremist Gender-Based Ideological Groups Online.”

²⁷ Chan, 65; Henry and Powell, “Embodied Harms,” 772-3.

²⁸ Chan, “The Rise of the Manosphere and Extremist Gender-Based Ideological Groups Online,” 65-66.

²⁹ Brzuszkiewicz, “Incel Radical Milieu and External Locus of Control”; Bruce Hoffman, Jacob Ware, and Ezra Shapiro, “Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43, no. 7 (July 2020): 565–87,

online community forum where individuals could discuss their thoughts and experiences about being involuntarily celibate. Thus, the term incel was born. But after a few years, the community morphed into an exclusively male group increasingly focused on misogyny and male victimhood and Alana stopped her activity on the site.³⁰ Over time, the group became more extreme and shifted to platforms like Reddit, YouTube, 4chan, and other social media sites.

Though incels are part of the greater Manosphere, they differentiate themselves from other groups within the Manosphere through their subscription to the “black pill” philosophy. Proponents of this view claim that society is structured mostly by physical attractiveness: attractive and sexually successful men, aka “alphas,” are at the top; “normies,” or average-looking individuals, are in the middle; and “beta males”/incels are at the bottom.³¹ Incels believe that their failure to be sexually active is attributable solely to their status within the bottom tier of attractiveness, and they see the hierarchy as an immutable one -- they think that they will never be able to move up in the hierarchy and thus will never become sexually successful. In addition to the core misogyny of incel rhetoric, much of the commentary on incel forums is rooted in racism and homophobia.³²

Several studies have dived deeper into incel ideology, confirming it through data on incel forums and by surveying self-identified incels. According to a study by Stefan Stijelja and Brian L. Mishara that analyzed data from incel forums over many years, most incels struggle with romantic relationships, body image, and mental health, with anti-feminism and suicidal thought

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1751459>; Sophia Moskalenko et al., “Predictors of Radical Intentions among Incels: A Survey of 54 Self-Identified Incels,” *Journal of Online Trust and Safety* 1, no. 3 (August 2022), <https://doi.org/10.54501/jots.v1i3.57>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Stefan Stijelja and Brian L. Mishara, “Characteristics of Incel Forum Users: Social Network Analysis and Chronological Posting Patterns,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2023): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2023.2208892>.

³² Sarah Daly, “An Asian American Woman’s Reflexive Account of Direct Research With Incels,” *Forum : Qualitative Social Research* 23, no. 3 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-23.3.3932>.

both comprising a substantial part of incel rhetoric.³³ The authors conclude that there is a strong correlation between the prevalence of depressive symptoms and suicidal behavior and initial engagement with incel forums, but that engagement in incel forums is difficult to prevent. As a result, they recommend interventions targeted at the platforms that host these forums.³⁴ Anne Speckhard et al. go a step further in their data and conclusions, surveying self-identified incels and arguing that interventions may be most effective on incel forums themselves; such interventions could aim to reduce the risks of self-harm and promote an alternative to the black pill, which 95% of respondents endorsed.³⁵

Incel Violence

Much of the concern surrounding incel ideology stems from previous instances of incel violence and apprehension that more attacks will follow. One of the most high-profile cases of incel violence was perpetrated in 2014 by Elliot Rodger at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). Rodger stabbed his three housemates to death then drove to a UCSB sorority house, shooting people outside when he was denied entry and then driving around shooting at pedestrians. He ultimately crashed into a parked car and was found dead by police with a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head, having murdered seven people and injured thirteen.³⁶ Following Rodger's rampage, the incel community celebrated his attack and his manifesto, calling him a martyr and praising him as the "supreme gentleman." Incels also reverently

³³ Ibid., 10-11.

³⁴ Ibid., 15.

³⁵ Speckhard et al., "Involuntary Celibates' Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum."

³⁶ Tomkinson, Harper, and Attwell, "Confronting Incel," 155.; Brzuszkiewicz, "Incel Radical Milieu and External Locus of Control," 11.

referred to incel attacks as “going ER,” using Rodger’s initials to signify their approval and often encouragement of such attacks.³⁷

Attacks such as Rodger’s, however, are relatively infrequent. There have been fewer than ten documented instances of mass violence directly linked to incel ideology, despite many within the incel community expressing support for these attacks.³⁸ Incidents of mass violence such as these attacks are certainly cause for concern, especially when they are lauded by such a substantial number of people. The more pressing and constant threat, however, may be the threat to incels themselves through self-harm. Given the prevalence of mental illness and inclination toward self-harm among incels, as mentioned in previous sections, we must consider self-harm among incels as a significant threat to human life -- one that warrants comparable concern to that which instances of mass incel violence engender.

Researchers have debated what terminology to use when referring to violent incels, some arguing that they should be categorized as terrorists and others concluding that as a small minority within the mostly nonviolent incel community, they should not be classified as a terrorist group. Counterterrorism and national security researchers Bruce Hoffman, Jacob Ware, and Ezra Shapiro align incel violence with other major terrorism movements, arguing that incel violence should be considered terrorism and that strategies like better monitoring of online extremist communities, improved programming centered on countering violent extremism, and access to mental health resources for young men online are essential to counter it. Moskalkenko et al., however, push back on this view, positing that incel killers do not represent the broader incel

³⁷ Martha Thomas, “A Quantitative Analysis of the Language Used by Violent and Non-Violent Incels” (M.A., United States -- North Carolina, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2022), <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2714906657/abstract/D80F06EFA4794D38PQ/2Thomas>. Please note that this paper’s topic is a relatively recently surfaced one, so a substantial portion of the existing literature on incels is in academic papers such as master’s theses, as cited here.

³⁸ Brzuszkiewicz, “Incel Radical Milieu and External Locus of Control.”

population, and that the latter actually mostly reject violence.³⁹ The authors point out that while there is a “troubling minority” of incels who do support violent acts, incels as a whole should not be classified as a terrorist group and that interventions attempting to address incels’ psychological needs should be of paramount importance.⁴⁰

Incels and Dating

The first online dating site, Kiss.com, was created in 1994, three years before the first introduction of the incel concept.⁴¹ Since then, online dating sites have grown exponentially, with Tinder registering over one billion users just three years after its launch in 2011 and countless new dating sites catering to specific segments of the population based on various affinities.⁴² But though dating and sexual activity are core to incels’ philosophy, there is surprisingly little literature on the connection between incels and dating. However, a 2022 study by Sarah E. Daly and Shon M. Reed opened the door for this kind of research. Some subjects blamed women for not dating them, while others attributed their lack of romantic success solely to physical appearance and did not blame women for not desiring them.⁴³ Most subjects saw themselves as “unsatisfactory or insufficient to engage in the dating game or romantic marketplace.”⁴⁴ Because of the phenomenological approach the researchers took, however, the sample size was only ten subjects and it is therefore difficult to extrapolate their research to the broader incel community.

³⁹ Moskalenko et al., “Predictors of Radical Intentions among Incels.”

⁴⁰ Ibid., 14. While Hoffman et al. refer to *incel violence* as warranting the terrorist label, Moskalenko et al. focus on *incels* as a whole; as a result, the question remains as to whether Moskalenko et al. would consider labeling the violent members of the incel community as terrorists.

⁴¹ Lisa Portolan and Jodi McAlister, “Jagged Love: Narratives of Romance on Dating Apps during COVID-19,” *Sexuality & Culture* 26, no. 1 (February 2022): 354–72, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09896-9>; Bruce Hoffman, Jacob Ware, and Ezra Shapiro, “Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43, no. 7 (July 2020): 565–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1751459>.

⁴² Portolan and McAlister, “Jagged Love.”

⁴³ Sarah E. Daly and Shon M. Reed, “‘I Think Most of Society Hates Us’: A Qualitative Thematic Analysis of Interviews with Incels,” *Sex Roles* 86, no. 1 (January 1, 2022): 14–33, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-021-01250-5>.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 21.

A study from 2023 approaches the subject with a deeper focus on dating, especially through incel ideology surrounding the experience. With a sample size of 783, this study included both incel and non-incel male participants, with the aim of comparing trends between the two groups.⁴⁵ The survey found that incels had lower minimum mate preferences than non-incel men, that both incels and non-incels overestimated the value women place on physical attractiveness and financial resources, and that incels underestimated women's minimum preferences for positive traits like kindness and stability.⁴⁶ The researchers concluded that incels held several cognitive distortions when it came to dating, and that correcting these could be a way to help incels' dating lives and, subsequently, their mental health.

Finally, although much of the dating world is now online, there has been very little research done on the intersection of incels and online dating. It appears that only one study fits in this space: "An Exploratory Study of Incels' Dating App Experiences, Mental Health, and Relational Well-Being."⁴⁷ This study makes a key observation about the world of online dating -- that though online dating seems to widen the pool of options, the widening of options engenders a fatigue effect that causes individuals to be more selective.⁴⁸ Additionally, many dating apps focus on superficial characteristics, rather than on personality traits or other aspects individuals might have in common with one another. Once again, this study surveyed both incel and non-incel male users, ultimately finding that incels overall allowed for potential matches to come from larger geographic ranges and that they tended to swipe right more frequently than did

⁴⁵ William Costello et al., "The Mating Psychology of Incels (Involuntary Celibates): Misfortunes, Misperceptions, and Misrepresentations," *The Journal of Sex Research* 0, no. 0 (2023): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2023.2248096>.

⁴⁶ The minimum mate preferences surveyed in this study included things like facial and body attractiveness, financial prospects, being kind and understanding, being smart, having similar interests, being loyal and dependable, etc.

⁴⁷ Brandon Sparks, Alexandra M. Zidenberg, and Mark E. Olver, "An Exploratory Study of Incels' Dating App Experiences, Mental Health, and Relational Well-Being," *The Journal of Sex Research* 0, no. 0 (2023): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2023.2249775>.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

non-incels.⁴⁹ Incels only matched with other users 5% of the time, as opposed to 30% for non-incels, in spite of casting a wider net and swiping right more frequently. Incels were also more sensitive to rejection and more fearful about being single than were non-incels, and they experienced lower self-esteem and higher rates of depressive symptoms. They also reported higher rates of autism than did non-incels.⁵⁰ Despite the staggering differences between incel and non-incel experiences on dating apps, the article points out that it is difficult to say which aspects of incel dating app profiles drive the disparities between incel and non-incel males.

Overall, although dating experiences are a defining feature of being an incel, more research still needs to be done surrounding this link, especially in the current world of online dating. Just documenting incel success (or lack thereof) on dating apps is not enough, however; because of the risk of incel violence, it is essential to determine whether there is a correlation between incel experiences on dating apps and violent or highly misogynistic rhetoric online. In particular, it would be valuable to understand whether the disproportionately high rejection rates incels face on dating apps perpetuate violent incel ideology by reinforcing their beliefs and pushing them towards further extremism.

Methodology

In order to address this project's research questions surrounding dating apps and incel ideology and violence, all content containing the term "Tinder" and its relevant context on the incel forum Incels.is from the year 2023 was collected, categorized, and analyzed.

While incel content spreads over several social media platforms, the forum Incels.is is the most logical choice for analysis because it is the largest dedicated incel forum, with a constantly

⁴⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 8.

growing body reaching over 25,000 members and over 12,500,000 posts to date.⁵¹ Additionally, Incels.is only allows those who have made an account to post, and only heterosexual incel men are allowed to create an account, with all others getting banned.⁵² Because other social media platforms do not have such limitations on membership, it is more difficult to determine whether people who post truly identify as incels and whether their participation should be used for a project such as this one. Incels.is is explicitly and specifically for and about incels, so it provides the most clear data when gathering information on online incel rhetoric.

For data collection, the word “Tinder” was used as the search term because of Tinder’s popularity as an online dating platform and because of the high number of posts on Incels.is using this term. Tinder is the most popular dating app in the world, with over 530 million total downloads, millions of additional downloads every month, and a revenue of almost \$2 billion, over twice as much as its closest competitor.⁵³ Additionally, a preliminary review of Incels.is found that the word “Tinder” was much more common than the phrases “online dating,” “dating apps,” or other such terms -- for example, during October 2023, there were four instances of content on Incels.is including the phrase “online dating,” nine instances of “dating apps,” and 30 instances using the term “Tinder.” Because the amount of content containing the word “Tinder”

⁵¹ “Incels.is - Involuntary Celibate,” Incels.is.; “List of incel forums,” Incels.Wiki, January 27, 2023, https://incels.wiki/w/List_of_incel_forums. Incels.is was created in November 2017 and is primarily in English, though its users are not limited to a particular geographic region. Other notable incel forums or groups that still exist live on 4chan, YouTube, and saidit, though incel rhetoric is common in varying degrees on many platforms.

⁵² “Rules and FAQ,” Incels.is. These policies are enforced through self-reporting (e.g., individuals who reveal that they are not heterosexual, that they are not a man, that they have had sex, etc.) and by others inferring from their posts that they may not be following the rules. However, because there is no process for verification other than a prompt in the registration process asking why you want to join and if you’re an incel, it is plausible that one could get around these regulations. Many users who posted as recently as in 2023, when this study’s data is from, are now banned. There is an appeal process for reversing a ban.

⁵³ Amber Brooks, “10 Most Downloaded Dating Apps in the World (Nov. 2023),” DatingAdvice.com, May 16, 2023, <https://www.datingadvice.com/online-dating/most-downloaded-dating-apps-in-the-world>; David Curry, “Dating App Report 2023,” Business of Apps, September 13, 2023, <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/dating-app-report/>; Stacy Jo Dixon, “Dating Apps: Most Downloaded Worldwide 2023,” Statista, August 8, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1200234/most-popular-dating-apps-worldwide-by-number-of-downloads/>.

is so high, and because of the dramatic difference in prevalence between the various searches, using “Tinder” as a search criteria provides as wide a sample of data as possible and serves as a proxy for the majority of posts and comments discussing users’ experiences on dating apps. Finally, although there are other potential phrases that could be tested, such as “dating,” “internet dating,” etc., these terms are more broad and might encompass data that is not relevant to the research question.

Data was collected over the span of a year so as to have a broad sampling of data that prevents a skew based on season or time of year (e.g., incels might express more frustration surrounding dating around Valentine’s Day or during the winter holiday season). Of course, no data can be completely free from potential external factors, and it is possible that 2023 has some unique facet that impacts the data in some way. However, every year contains its own novel events and global happenings, and without an extended digital ethnography of multiple years this is a difficult challenge to surmount. Because this study looks at an extended period of time, it is probable that the data was fairly representative of average discourse on the incel forum; this was also verified by searching for “Tinder” on the forum during several other years to ensure that 2023 was not an outlier.

In order to collect data, this study used Google as a tool. While Incels.is lacks a function to search the entire website, Google has a useful method of searching that can effectively produce the same result. With the Google search “site:Incels.is ‘Tinder,’” the results consist of all instances of the word “Tinder” on the site Incels.is. The results can then be further narrowed by filtering for the custom date range of January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. Through this method, the remaining results include all instances of the word “Tinder” on Incels.is during the year of 2023.

In order to gather data, the full post or comment that included the word “Tinder,” as well as relevant metadata such as the username of the user who created the post and the date of the post, was inputted into a spreadsheet. However, not all comments referencing Tinder actually contained the word “Tinder.” For instance, if a post said something like “I hate Tinder because I don’t get any matches” and a comment on that post said, “Me too, women on there don’t like me,” that comment would still be relevant data for this study because it is part of the greater context of a post that does contain the word “Tinder.” As a result, all comments on posts containing the word “Tinder” were also collected, in addition to the parent post and other responses to comments containing the word “Tinder.” This process did result in the collection of a significant amount of irrelevant and extraneous data, but this surplus was easily eliminated during the categorization phase.

Once all data was gathered, categories were created for the data based on the beliefs they supported. First, any data not directly relevant to Tinder or dating apps was removed, and the remaining data was put into the following categories: direct “Tinder” data, about Tinder without naming it, relevant context, irrelevant, and undecipherable. From there, the data within the first three categories was grouped based on its theme or supported conclusion. The categories depended on the data and thus grew and changed dramatically over the course of the categorization process, and the final categories are listed in following sections of this paper. These sets of categories helped answer the questions of whether incel experiences on dating apps confirm and/or reinforce incel ideology, and whether these experiences contribute to incel expressions of violent or derogatory ideation.

Following the categorization of data, this project analyzed the data manually by observing and comparing the prevalence and instances of data in certain categories versus others.

For instance, if there were numerous examples of incels reaffirming their black pill beliefs in response to experiences on Tinder, we might conclude that certain experiences on Tinder -- and any that are common among these examples -- can perpetuate incel ideology. Similarly, if there were a high occurrence rate of violent or derogatory terms in conjunction with dating app experiences, analyzing those terms and their underlying values might give us an inside look into how dating apps can add to or confirm stereotypes and biases. While it is unlikely that data would allow for an explicit causal connection between Tinder and incel violence, it can aid an understanding of whether dating apps can play a role in radicalization and what incels believe is wrong with dating apps, opening doors for possible beneficial changes within dating apps' structures.

This study also engages multiple methods for the purpose of ensuring data privacy, preventing reverse-searchability, and avoiding alienating language. First, the methodology of this study was submitted to and approved by Columbia University's Institutional Review Board to ensure that its methods were sound and included appropriate protections. Second, any direct quotes from the data that are used in this paper have been run through ChatGPT, asking it to rephrase the content in a way that maintains its original meaning but changes it enough to make sure it is not reverse-searchable. Ideally, individuals reading the paper would be unable to find the original content that is cited, whether they looked for it because they supported the content and/or the incel community or because they wanted to respond to or make fun of the content in some way. Third, although incel violence is a real threat, many (if not most) incels are nonviolent and the vast majority suffer from mental illnesses.⁵⁴ As a result, it is important not to

⁵⁴ Moskalkenko et al., "Predictors of Radical Intentions among Incels"; Speckhard et al., "Involuntary Celibates' Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum."

unnecessarily alienate or eschew incels, and this paper strives to follow this policy in its content by not using derogatory or condescending language, seeking to understand incel behavior through an empathetic lens, and avoiding stigmatizing wording. Research has shown that effective deradicalization methods for incels exist -- but pushing incels out of society is surely not the way to work towards these processes.⁵⁵ Fourth and finally, it is important to note that only publicly available data was collected for this study. Additional data could have been accessed through the creation of an account on Incels.is, but doing so would have violated the site's regulations and would necessarily have included deceiving other users of the site. Because many users turn to Incels.is for community support and rely on the rules of the site to keep members limited, creating an account in order to see posts by individuals who elected to keep their posts and comments private ultimately would be an unethical breach of privacy.

Data Findings

Data Cleaning and Categorization

The data collected through these methods resulted in several major themes: physical appearance (excluding race) (19.3% of total responses); race (12.4% of total responses); generalizations about women (43.6% of total responses); generalizations about incels (2.7% of total responses); dating apps in general (16.8% of total responses); dating culture in society/real-life dating (3.9% of total responses); and dating abroad (1.5% of total responses). Users drew many different conclusions within each category, though some ideas were more frequently repeated than others were. As a result, this study highlights only those conclusions that made up at least 1% of the total data, or were supported by at least six responses. However, the full data breakdown of these seven themes and their respective parts, including conclusions

⁵⁵ Tomkinson, Harper, and Attwell, "Confronting Incel."

that made up less than 1% of the total data, is included at the end of this paper in Appendices A and B.

Though the largest category was generalizations about women, the majority of responses in this category corresponded to one specific topic: chadfishing. The term chadfishing comes from the idea of catfishing and the term “Chad,” a nickname used online to refer to highly attractive men who are sexually successful and supposedly “responsible for a majority of the sexual activity among men.”⁵⁶ According to Incels Wiki, a site created and curated predominantly by incels or those in other manosphere communities, chadfishing is “for a person who is not an attractive male to use one’s picture to seduce someone, generally a woman who wouldn’t give a non-Chad the time of day.”⁵⁷ There were 198 posts or comments expressing approval of chadfishing and aligning with the statement, “women deserve to have their time and energy wasted, and it is satisfying to waste their time and energy.” Approval of chadfishing thus made up 29.7% of the total responses. Many responses in this category, however, were by one user (hereafter called User X) using a single Incels.is post and numerous comments on that post to document every instance of chadfishing he perpetrated. In order to avoid a skewed outcome, 70 of these responses have been removed from the total numbers. The removed responses were comments simply documenting new instances of chadfishing with no direct responses from other users. While many other users also posted multiple times and are represented more than once in this data, none had as high numbers of posts as User X did, and none focused their posts on only one issue in this way.

Generalizations About Women

⁵⁶ Sparks, Zidenberg, and Olver, “An Exploratory Study of Incels’ Dating App Experiences, Mental Health, and Relational Well-Being.”

⁵⁷ “Chadfishing,” Incel Wiki, July 20, 2021, <https://incels.wiki/w/Chadfishing>.

The most common theme among the “generalizations about women” category was approval of chadfishing, but other conclusions with at least six responses were that making women feel bad is deserved and satisfying, that women have unreasonably high standards on Tinder, that women have endless options on Tinder, and that women on Tinder are sexually promiscuous. The last two were most common, with 13 and 14 instances, respectively. The conclusion that women on Tinder are sexually promiscuous was often accompanied by derogatory words or phrases describing women, such as “whore,” “slut,” etc. In general, responses in this category tended to express frustration that women seem to have an easier time on dating apps than men do, and a sentiment that women are unreasonable toward men and therefore deserve to be treated poorly or not given attention by men.

Physical Appearance (Excluding Race)

Conclusions around physical appearance, excluding racial features, made up the second largest category among the data. The most common conclusions were that women only care about appearance when it comes to men on dating apps, that even average-looking men can get women on Tinder (note that most incels consider themselves to be worse-than-average-looking or unattractive), and that attractive men can get any women/being good-looking is enough to get women. The other responses with six or more instances each were that a good physique will help in getting women’s attention, height is important to women, only attractive men get matches on Tinder, and that women only want very attractive men. Overall, the consensus of this data theme was that women care very much about men’s attractiveness and physique, especially height, but that even average-looking men -- a group of which incels do not see themselves as a part -- can get women on Tinder.

Dating Apps in General

Another large portion of the data collected relates to incels' perceptions of dating apps in general. This data is valuable not only in reference to the question of this paper, but also for the purposes of any improvements that could be made in the format of dating apps in the future. Some conclusions falling within this theme relate specifically to Tinder, while others are about dating apps more generally. Within this category, one assertion stood out far beyond the rest in popularity: that Tinder is hopeless for incels. There were 36 instances of this sentiment logged in the data, making up 6% of the total data collected. No other conclusions in this category reached six or more instances, but they generally supported the ideas that Tinder and other dating apps are difficult for incels and/or men in general, that being unattractive makes dating on apps even harder, and that using these platforms is fodder for humiliation, depression, frustration, and even suicide.

Race

Comments about race in the context of dating apps made up 12.39% of the data, but there was very little consensus within this category. The only two conclusions with six or more instances were that if you're white, you'll have no problem with women and that Southeast Asian women are sexually promiscuous. The former statement is also referred to as "JBW," or "just be white" in incel communities, and means exactly that: just be white and you'll be sexually successful, as whiteness is the most desirable race.⁵⁸ The latter is often found in the context of "SEAmassing," or the idea that someone who is sexually unsuccessful in their own country might go to Southeast Asia and lose their virginity to a woman there who is more

⁵⁸ Ruxandra M. Gheorghe, "'Just Be White (JBW)': Incels, Race and the Violence of Whiteness," *Affilia* 39, no. 1 (February 1, 2024): 59–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08861099221144275>.

promiscuous. This category of data also included mentions of Black men, Indian men, and Asian men, with people claiming these groups were either more or less sexually successful than white men were, with no definitive trend in either direction. Overall, there seemed to be some hesitation for white men surrounding the idea of going after a woman of color, and the only common theme throughout this category was that race matters in dating.

Dating Culture in Society and Real-Life Dating

Because this section and the following sections made up only small percentages of the data, none of the individual conclusions logged reached six or more instances. There were still some overarching trends, however, including one echoed in almost every conclusion: that Tinder has changed the dating market for the worse. Some people believed that Tinder has made the dating market in general worse, others highlighted that dating app culture has spread to other social media apps (such as Instagram, etc.), and still others argued that Tinder has made women less amenable to dating in person. Overall, users expressed bitterness toward the online dating world, claiming that it has only made things worse for unattractive people like incels.

Generalizations About Incels

Interestingly, in spite of many incels voicing despair surrounding the use of dating apps throughout these various themes, some users argued that some incels could be sexually successful on dating apps and that Tinder could be worth a try for incels. However, most of the responses in this category were less hopeful, and one even stated that experiencing online dating as an incel makes for violent inclinations.

Dating Abroad

The final and smallest theme within the data was the idea of dating abroad. While there were only nine total occurrences in this category, they made up a discrete and unique section with the most common idea being that many incels could be sexually successful in other countries. This idea aligns with many of those noted in the Race section, and is worth noting especially because many incels have documented actually using this strategy to try to obtain sex (often with success).⁵⁹

Data Analysis

The data discussed in the previous section informs two main conclusions: first, that incels believe that both Tinder and dating app culture as a whole hurt them; and that chadfishing is a serious threat to safety that arises from incel ideology's interaction with Tinder's appearance-forward design.

Dating Culture Hurts Incels

Though much of the data gathered in this study fell into relatively narrow categories, data reaching across multiple categories supports the conclusion that incels believe themselves to be the victims of harms perpetrated by Tinder and by the dating culture that dating apps have heightened in society. A total of 181 responses spanning all but one of the data categories supported this conclusion, making up 30.3% of the total data collected. Given that this study collected mentions of Tinder and not of the phrase "dating apps" or any other more broad term, the true prevalence of these responses (which would likely encompass discussion of other dating apps and dating apps as a group) are likely much higher.

⁵⁹ Examples of this were observed multiple times during the data collection process.

These responses also vary in intensity, from some individuals simply lamenting the idea that women only like men above a certain height to others arguing that dating apps are humiliating and hopeless for incels -- or even that they inspire suicide. Though the former may seem innocuous, it is ideas like these that contribute to and perpetuate incel ideology as a whole. Many of the conclusions drawn in the data support the ideas that women have unreasonably high standards for men, standards which are then underscored by dating app algorithms and then mirrored in real-life dating culture. When the world of dating seems this hopeless, both on and off of dating apps, it seems unsurprising that people would resort to the only place where they can find community and/or sympathy: incel forums. In this way, incel experiences with dating apps could perpetuate their ideology or draw people who were not originally incels into the community.

But the more extreme responses trigger further alarm bells. Among the fairly limited data set gathered here, two comments explicitly mentioned an association between Tinder/online dating and violence or suicide. One user wrote, "I've never tried Tinder myself, but I've heard that it can serve as a significant source of motivation for individuals who are considering suicide, potentially encouraging them to take that step."⁶⁰ Another user said, "I'm not keen on trying online dating again. I strongly dislike the non-believers around me, and I want to methodically kill them with my knife." Within the data set, only these two comments mentioned violent or suicidal inclinations as directly linked with online dating experiences -- making up 0.3% of the total data. While this percentage may seem small, it is important to note that Incels.is logs (at time of writing) 25,147 members and makes up only a small fraction of incels and incel

⁶⁰ This and following quotes have been reworded via ChatGPT as mentioned in the Methodology section to avoid reverse-searchability.

communities online.⁶¹ Some users are hidden from public view on Incels.is (due to privacy settings) and others know to avoid sharing certain things online due to fears of law enforcement.⁶² Even a miniscule overall percentage of the incel community could still translate to a large absolute value of people who might feel the urge to commit suicide or violence against others. There is no way, of course, to accurately track the number of people who have these kinds of urges, and the only thing we can analyze is that which is publicly available. Given the instances of violence that incels have perpetrated in the past, there seems to be a clear and legitimate risk of violent inclinations that result from incels' dating experiences on Tinder and elsewhere.

The prevalence of mental health issues and suicidal ideation among the incel community is not only concerning because these factors make individuals more susceptible to radicalization, but also because perhaps the most substantial threat of violence posed by the incel community manifests as self-harm. Whether such harm materializes as suicide, attempted suicide, or even self-sabotage in parts of life unrelated to romantic or sexual relationships, it is harm that can be irreparable and that can exacerbate the issues incels already struggle with. Furthermore, some types of self-harm perpetrated by incels may fall into the category of gender-based violence. Though there are some women who identify as incels (and the term was originally created by a woman experiencing involuntary celibacy), the incel community today is made up of virtually only men and addresses issues specific to men. As a result, the self-harm perpetrated by incels is a cause for concern through a gender-based, human rights lens.

What Incels are Right About

⁶¹ "List of Incel Forums," Incel Wiki, January 27, 2023, https://incels.wiki/w/List_of_incel_forums.

⁶² In their posts on Incels.is, several users inserted in every post or comment they made a disclaimer saying that all content was meant as a joke, that they were referring to a video game, and/or that law enforcement should not take the content seriously.

It is clear from this data that incel perceptions of dating apps and of Tinder have negative impacts on incels' mental health and views of society as a whole -- but though some of their conclusions may seem extreme, there are significant points where incel ideology might actually have some merit. Many of the conclusions users draw in this data set are subjective ideas that will certainly vary from person to person (such as preferences in physical appearance, women's experiences on dating apps, race-based generalizations, etc.). However, incel users are likely correct about a few different observations: that incels get fewer matches on dating apps and that dating culture is spreading to all social media, not just platforms originally or specifically meant for dating.

Many Incels.is users mention that in spite of extended periods of time spent on dating apps, they received few or no matches. Users are quick to point to reasons for this issue, but there is virtually no way to know why someone did not match with them. However, some of the articles mentioned in this paper's *Incels and Dating* section show that incels' perceptions that they get fewer matches than non-incels do are actually correct. Though incels in these studies had lower minimum mate preferences and swiped right more frequently than did non-incels, they were six times less likely to match with others than were non-incels.⁶³

Incels also correctly argue that dating app culture has spread beyond dating apps to other platforms, as well. An article from Alecea Standlee demonstrates how, at least among college students, "Internet technologies have become deeply integrated within the most intimate elements of young adults' social relationships."⁶⁴ Standlee describes technology as a means for

⁶³ Sparks, Zidenberg, and Olver, "An Exploratory Study of Incels' Dating App Experiences, Mental Health, and Relational Well-Being."

⁶⁴ Alecea Standlee, "Sex, Romance, and Technology: Efficiency, Predictability, and Standardization in College Dating Cultures," *Qualitative Sociology Review* 19, no. 1 (January 31, 2023): 6–21, <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.19.1.01>.

efficiency in romantic and sexual relationships, with social media becoming part of the “getting to know you” process for prospective partners, serving as a “background check,” and even demarcating the stages of relationships through different actions (such as following and liking others’ posts and posting couple pictures).⁶⁵ The study particularly mentions Instagram and TikTok as common platforms for these kinds of behaviors, and one student in the study says that “Instagram is basically the number one dating app for college students.”⁶⁶ Because so many of the features of dating apps already frustrate incels, the migration of the dating world to other platforms is also frustrating, especially when these platforms are similarly appearance-centric. Even platforms that originally did not target the dating world have transitioned into incorporating dating features. Facebook, founded in 2004, added dating features in 2019, while the Roblox CEO announced in 2023 that Roblox would add dating experiences within the next five years.⁶⁷ For users who dread dating and seek an escape within platforms like these, the incorporation of dating features may feel like yet another rejection from society. In fact, when an Incels.is user made a post about the Roblox announcement, the response from other users was overwhelmingly negative, with one even writing, “They’ve encroached on all my places of safety. First they invaded the gym, then they invaded Roblox.” Given this feeling of having safe spaces taken away, it is understandable that incels who have grown to dislike online dating would begin to feel eschewed and increasingly embittered toward the rest of society.

While an increase in dating culture across different parts of society does not necessarily result from Tinder or other specific dating apps, it is true that Tinder and other dating apps

⁶⁵ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Facebook | Overview, History, & Facts | Britannica,” March 27, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Facebook>; “It’s Facebook Official, Dating Is Here,” *Meta* (blog), September 5, 2019, <https://about.fb.com/news/2019/09/facebook-dating/>; Jay Peters, “Roblox’s CEO Predicts ‘Thousands’ of Adults Will Meet in Roblox Dating Experiences,” *The Verge*, September 8, 2023, <https://www.theverge.com/2023/9/8/23864858/roblox-ceo-prediction-adults-dating-experiences-rdc-2023>.

frequently maintain a focus on physical appearance above all else, and that the spread of dating culture beyond dating apps may underscore this focus on other platforms, as well. That is, part of what incels believe about themselves is a result of low self-esteem and overestimating women's preferences for attractiveness; as dating culture moves to other platforms, including platforms like Roblox where one can feel more anonymous and equal to others regardless of real-life physical appearance, the major axes over which society functions may seem more and more disheartening and alienating to incels.⁶⁸

Chadfishing

Though the risk of incel violence in general appears to be relatively low, chadfishing is another major threat to safety that arises from incel ideology's interaction with Tinder's appearance-forward design. Not only did nearly one-third of the total data collected convey an approval of chadfishing, but there were also countless instances of users posting actual examples of chadfishing that they had personally done. While the majority of these examples came from User X, who documented over 80 instances of his chadfishing, plenty of other users expressed approval of these actions, asking User X for chadfishing strategies and planning to try using these strategies themselves.

As of now, there have been no recorded instances of chadfishing resulting in violence against women, but incels have proven themselves to be skilled at luring women to locations of their choice. User X was even interviewed by a news outlet to discuss his chadfishing hobby, boasting that he had stood up around 250 Australian women and 100 others overseas, with some even driving nearly 100 miles and/or booking hotels for these nonexistent dates.⁶⁹ Motivations

⁶⁸ Costello et al., "The Mating Psychology of Incels (Involuntary Celibates)."

⁶⁹ "Rob Has Stood up 350 Women on Dates. He Says Incels Are Taking Revenge," SBS News, accessed March 28, 2024,

for chadfishing may vary slightly, but the general idea seems to be that wasting women's time and energy is satisfying and worthwhile. More specifically, as User X says, the point is to "inflict psychological damage and self-doubt on them" -- he considers it revenge.⁷⁰ Neither in his posts on Incels.is nor in his interview for the news article did User X ever report physically going to the locations to which he lured women, nor did he imply any desire to do so. But what he does demonstrate is how easy it would be for people to do so, if they wanted to. With the multiple guides to chadfishing and threads full of tips that User X has posted on Incels.is, it would be relatively easy for someone to follow in User X's footsteps with the intention of physically and/or sexually assaulting the victim of the chadfishing scheme. Given the aforementioned high rates of chadfishing approval and the notable rates of previous incel violence and violent inclinations, it seems like only a matter of time until these two risk factors overlap and for a victim of chadfishing to get seriously hurt as a result.

Possible Solutions and Recommendations

Chadfishing

There are several strategies that might help dating apps prevent chadfishing from occurring: better account verification, a major overhaul of the way dating apps are set up, and raising awareness.

The first solution is better account verification. The foundational mechanism of chadfishing is creating a fake account. Thus, if incels were unable to verify the fake accounts they created on dating apps, it would be much easier for the apps to ban such accounts and for

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/the-feed/article/rob-has-stood-up-350-women-on-dates-he-says-incels-are-getting-revenge/zwooc61rr>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

others on the sites to identify fake accounts. However, this is a strategy that dating apps already attempt to use, to relatively no avail. User X describes a multitude of ways to get around verification requirements, and he continually seems to have no problem using fake accounts on Tinder and other apps, even if doing so might require some effort. Therefore, it seems like without major upgrades in account verification beyond those seen today, this approach would not be sufficient.

The second potential solution to chadfishing is a major change in how the majority of dating apps work. Most dating apps feature a photo-forward layout that makes appearance the first or most important aspect of a profile that others see. By using photos of highly attractive men, incels who are chadfishing rely on this layout to entice women, with some barely even putting any effort into the ensuing conversation.⁷¹ Reducing the ability of incels to utilize fake photos to entrap women, then, would likely require rethinking the photo-centric design philosophy of these apps entirely. Perhaps creating a mechanism wherein users' desires on the app are at the forefront, where people need to have chat conversations of a certain length prior to seeing photos, etc. would help. Granted, implementing these sorts of solutions would be difficult, as the shift would be a dramatic one, and there would probably always remain some dating app that kept its appearance-forward design that people would flock to for casual encounters. But even if this method did not lead to incels receiving any more matches, it would at least serve to undermine a foundational aspect of their ideology (that physical appearance is all that matters to women) and make it harder for people to fall for chadfishes. Urging the companies that create these apps to redesign their interfaces or funding new dating platforms that prioritize personality over appearance could be effective ways to tackle this issue. Several new dating apps focus on

⁷¹ This is frequently also in order to prove the point that all women care about is appearance, and even if a "Chad" treats a woman poorly or insults her in the conversation, she will still want to go out with him.

personality over appearance, blurring photos until users have had significant interactions with each other, choosing if and when to share photos after an initial interaction, and even omitting photos altogether.⁷² A shift to dating apps such as these could have promising implications for the effect appearance-focused dating platforms have on users' mental health, while also potentially creating a more auspicious future for real relationships.

The third and simplest potential solution to chad fishing is simply raising awareness of the phenomenon. Many people have not even heard of incels, much less of chad fishing. In one news article, a woman reported being lied to repeatedly and was stood up twice by someone she met on Bumble. She was initially not suspicious, but when she eventually shared her story, others pointed out that she may have been chad fished.⁷³ By raising public awareness about chad fishing and fake accounts on dating apps in general, it is possible that in scenarios like this one the victim would realize sooner that they were being manipulated. This kind of awareness-raising campaign might take shape through notices on dating apps and/or advertisements in the media. It is in the dating app companies' best interest to reduce instances of chad fishing and fake accounts as much as possible, especially if these problems drive people away from the apps. The woman mentioned in the article later announced that she was officially "done with online dating," something that may not have happened without her negative chad fishing experience.⁷⁴

⁷² Erin Carson, "New Dating App S' More Blurs Profile Pics, You Shallow Monsters," CNET, accessed April 25, 2024, <https://www.cnet.com/culture/new-dating-app-smore-blurs-profile-pics-you-shallow-monsters/>; Maya Rhodan, "Meet Willow, The Dating App That Won't Judge You By Your Looks," TIME, February 11, 2015, <https://time.com/3705332/meet-willow-the-dating-app-that-wont-judge-you-by-your-looks/>; Mark Travers, "Compatibility Before Photos? A New Dating App Takes A Personality-First Approach To Online Dating," Forbes, accessed April 25, 2024, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/traversmark/2021/01/19/compatibility-before-photos-a-new-dating-app-takes-a-personality-first-approach-to-online-dating/>.

⁷³ "A Bloke Catfished Me before Standing Me Up Twice - It's a New Dating Trend," *Daily Star (Online)*, December 19, 2023, <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/bloke-catfished-me-before-standing-up-twice-new/docview/2903726655/se-2>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Dating Culture and Incel Risk Factor Interventions

Although the solutions mentioned above may help to reduce chadfishing, they are not enough to address its root cause: the perceptions incels have about women and about dating culture as a whole. Tackling these issues is a more difficult task, especially as these perceptions span across virtually every aspect of society, not just the dating world. Dating apps that are less appearance-forward are a good start, but other solutions must dive more deeply into emotional support and resources from a young age. Some incels reported that being bullied or rejected by women from a young age spurred them in a misogynistic direction, and research shows that participation in incel forums only serves to further exacerbate these sentiments.⁷⁵ Other risk factors for incels that may indicate an “increased propensity toward violence” include exposure to extreme violence, deliberate disconnection from others, low self-esteem, under-achievement, functioning in a low-security environment, feeling a personal responsibility to act, and traveling for or engaging in extremist trainings and events.⁷⁶ Research has also shown that misogyny and extreme views of masculinity have been linked to certain violent video game communities and video game forums.⁷⁷

While incels also harbor negative feelings toward sexually successful men, “Chads,” it is misogyny that ensures incel violence, harassment, and chadfishing are predominantly directed toward women. Incels believe that Chads receive and partake in a disproportionate amount of sex

⁷⁵ United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, “Hot Yoga Tallahassee: A Case Study of Misogynistic Extremism” (Washington, D.C., March 2022), https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2022-03/NTAC%20Case%20Study%20-%20Hot%20Yoga%20Tallahassee_0.pdf; Heather Saul, “Elliot Rodger Manifesto: Monette Moio ‘devastated’ at Being Named as a ‘Bully’ by Isla Vista Killer | The Independent,” *The Independent*, May 27, 2014, sec. News, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/elliott-rodger-manifesto-model-devastated-at-being-named-as-a-bully-by-isis-killer-9438581.html>; Sparks, Zidenberg, and Olver, “An Exploratory Study of Incels’ Dating App Experiences, Mental Health, and Relational Well-Being.”

⁷⁶ Tomkinson, Harper, and Attwell, “Confronting Incel.”

⁷⁷ Stijelja and Mishara, “Characteristics of Incel Forum Users.”

and relationships -- some argue that the most attractive 80% of women are competing for the top 20% of men, while the remaining 80% of men are left to compete for the least attractive 20% of women.⁷⁸ Incels have regularly expressed frustration with and anger toward Chads, and some incel attacks have even included intent to target heterosexual couples.⁷⁹ But what this study has found is that incels put in effort to waste women's time, not men's, and that they engage in more generalizations and negative assumptions surrounding women than they do with men. The difference, then, comes from the deeply seated misogyny that incels consistently express, and the resulting conclusion is that any interventions must start with a goal of preventing or reversing misogynistic ideology.

Because there are defined lists of factors shown to make individuals vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups and extreme ideology, a key part of combating these ideologies and the occasional resultant violence is putting together interventions. Interventions will be most valuable when implemented from a young age and could be employed in school or community environments. Such interventions might include therapy; counseling and support groups; trainings for leaders within communities aimed at identifying red flags for isolation, mental health struggles, and potential extremism; and even dedicated deradicalization programs.⁸⁰ According to a report by the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST), negative family relationships typically preceded extremist onset.⁸¹ The report recommended behavioral training programs to be offered as part of a “universal” prevention strategy and/or

⁷⁸ Stephane J. Baele, Lewys Brace, and Travis G. Coan, “From ‘Incel’ to ‘Saint’: Analyzing the Violent Worldview behind the 2018 Toronto Attack,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 33, no. 8 (November 17, 2021): 1667–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1638256>.

⁷⁹ Brzuskiewicz, “Incel Radical Milieu and External Locus of Control.”

⁸⁰ Stijelja and Mishara, “Characteristics of Incel Forum Users”; Tomkinson, Harper, and Attwell, “Confronting Incel.”

⁸¹ “Trauma, Extremism and Criminology,” accessed March 28, 2024, <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/comment/trauma-extremism-and-criminology/>.

targeted more specifically to at-risk groups.” CREST especially highlighted the importance of therapy and counseling following abuse and effective response from family members and school officials following any indicators of extremism (even seemingly innocent ones). In cases of the latter, the report recommends taking the opportunity to engage with the child at hand, rather than ignoring, minimizing, or punishing.

Interventions can still be vital even after childhood years. The British government has created a multi-agency program called Prevent, designed to prevent vulnerable people from being drawn into criminal behavior.⁸² Individuals may be referred to Prevent, and the result can range from health, forensic mental health, housing, or education services to police action. According to one article, Prevent reported a substantial increase in the number of young men referred to the program due to association with incel communities over the past several years, an increase from 3 to 77 referrals from 2021 to 2022.⁸³ While the increase in the number of incels is concerning, it is a good sign that Prevent’s system is actually taking note of these individuals and working to address their issues through a multi-faceted lens. Similar interventions could be implemented elsewhere, too, whether through governmental or non-governmental organizations.

Existing deradicalization programs have proved to be effective in reducing extremism, and they have been used to target multiple extremist ideologies while providing support and resources for those enrolled in the programs.⁸⁴ One of the most important aspects of such programs, though, is that they are run by or co-organized by former members of such groups; it

⁸² “Prevent,” *Counter Terrorism Policing* (blog), accessed March 28, 2024, <https://www.counterterrorism.police.uk/what-we-do/prevent/>.

⁸³ Vikram Dodd, “Large Rise in Men Referred to Prevent over Women-Hating Incel Ideology,” *The Guardian*, January 26, 2023, sec. UK news, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jan/26/large-rise-in-men-referred-to-prevent-over-women-hating-incel-ideology>.

⁸⁴ Tomkinson, Harper, and Attwell, “Confronting Incel.”

is much easier to leave a toxic community when those supporting you know what being a part of that community is like.⁸⁵ Programs such as EXIT Sweden, EXIT Deutschland, Life After Hate, and more have successfully encouraged people to deradicalize through these strategies.

Additionally, a forum on Reddit, r/IncelExit, is dedicated to those who were previously in the incel community and decided to leave it for any reason. The forum serves as a sort of support group for these individuals to share their experiences and/or ongoing struggles in dating, etc. in a positive and helpful way. The group has over 18,000 members, which is an encouraging sign for other similar programs.⁸⁶

Finally, the predominance of mental health issues among incels contributes to perhaps the most substantial risk of incel ideology: violence through self-harm and suicide. The fact that online dating exacerbates these mental health issues is deeply concerning, and this risk should be taken seriously as a human rights, gender-based violence threat. This risk is a challenging one to combat, especially because mental health issues and suicidal ideation can be triggered and exacerbated by a wide array of experiences and situations. It is important, however, to control for the factors that are manipulable. Implementing interventions such as the aforementioned school and community resources could be valuable, and rethinking the design of dating apps could be another helpful strategy. Tinder essentially gamifies dating, making the swiping process addictive through its primary focus on appearance.⁸⁷ Many other dating apps also ascribe to this methodology, and while it succeeds in keeping users engaged, it could simultaneously be contributing to the same mental health issues that put incels at risk.

Limitations

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ “IncelExit,” accessed March 28, 2024, <https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelExit/>.

⁸⁷ “Inside Tinder: Meet the Guys Who Turned Dating Into an Addiction,” TIME, February 6, 2014, <https://time.com/4837/tinder-meet-the-guys-who-turned-dating-into-an-addiction/>.

Although the data collected in this study provides a new perspective on incel content online in relation to human rights in a context not found in research to date, it was not without limitations.

First, not all accounts on Incels.is are publicly visible; some users have privacy settings that only allow Incels.is account holders to view their posts, comments, and profiles. For the purposes of this study, only publicly available data was collected, so there is likely significantly more relevant data that exists than could be gathered here. The regulations of Incels.is are such that creating an account for the purposes of this study would break the rules of the site and fall into an ethically questionable position, especially considering that many incels use the platform as a place of community and safety and likely would not have consented to their posts being made available to the public through the lens of this study. As a result, there are likely many relevant comments and posts that were not counted here. However, while the lack of this data is unfortunate, it is not of substantial concern given the high volume of data that was still able to be collected.

Second, some users post more frequently than others do. While this study accounted for the vastly disproportionate number of posts and comments by User X, other users also had multiple posts that were collected as data. There is a potential concern that the results of the data analysis could be skewed if enough posts from the same users were repeatedly collected. For instance, if one user mentions a single topic many times, that sentiment could seem more widespread than it really is. In this data set, after the removal of some of User X's posts, there were no users whose posts were quite so repeated or revolving around a single issue. Thus, given the large amount of data present, the remaining data was allowed to remain.

Finally, every person is different, and it is difficult to extrapolate to large groups. In this study, a small sample of the incel community has been used to gain a greater understanding of the community as a whole and to estimate the risk of violence posed by incel individuals. We cannot know, however, to what extent this data can be extrapolated to the greater, amorphous incel community that exists all around the world. Some incels may have violent inclinations, others might only be seeking a sympathetic community, and still more might be looking for ways to waste women's time without causing any serious harm. There is no single, clear motivation for all incels, nor for all users on Incels.is. While there have been documented instances of incel violence and the issue remains a concern for the upholding of human rights -- particularly through the prevention of gender-based violence -- there is no way of knowing how present and/or imminent the threat of violence really is. As such, the best we can do is to make general estimates, as this study has done, to attempt to understand the broad risk potential, and to provide resources and support however we can to try to mitigate that risk.

Conclusion

Through the process of gathering data from Incels.is, this study has noted several findings that are both relevant to and go beyond its initial research questions.

First, this study has shown that online dating does reinforce incels' beliefs, both about society and about themselves. Not only do incels' experiences on Tinder and other dating apps confirm their negative stereotypes about others -- from believing that women only care about appearance to assuming that attractive men only ever see women as expendable to claiming that women deserve to have their time and energy wasted -- but these experiences also confirm incels' beliefs that finding romantic or sexual partners is hopeless for them and that dating apps

and dating culture as a whole are pointless for incels. These beliefs often incite a vicious circle wherein the less success incels find on Tinder, the more frustrated and more likely they become to express misogynistic beliefs, thus facing even more difficulties the next time a door opens for a potential sexual encounter. These romantic and sexual failures also confirm incels' negative beliefs about themselves, contributing to negative mental health and hopelessness on an expedited timeline due to the instantaneous and voluminous potential for rejection on dating apps.

Second, we see that chadfishing is a widespread and widely condoned phenomenon within the incel community. Given that incels' experiences on dating apps reinforce incel ideology and reinforce their negative beliefs about others, society, and themselves, the risks of chadfishing must be taken seriously and with those sentiments in mind. While chadfishing does not necessarily correlate with violence, it clearly poses a safety and privacy risk, and it could very easily result in violence. Incels, especially User X, have shown that luring women to locations of their choice is something they are able to regularly do, and all it takes is for someone with violent inclinations to do so for chadfishing to become much more than a frustrating inconvenience.

Though previous instances of incel violence have affected men and women almost equally, chadfishing is a tactic that essentially only targets women, clearly defining its potential risks as gender-based violence. When we look back at the frameworks for combating gender-based violence mentioned earlier in this paper, we see that several strategies rely on addressing human rights violations through state-implemented human rights frameworks and/or international human rights fora. But these strategies do not necessarily go beyond the laws already in place around the world surrounding crimes like sexual assault, harassment, stalking,

etc. that are possible with chadfishing. Instead, the solution likely lies in the root of the problem of gender-based violence toward women: ideology surrounding the subordination of women. Therefore, the methods suggested by Mergaert et al., the “7P model” that includes prevention and shifts in social and cultural norms, are the most promising pathways to preventing and combating incel violence.

Though Tinder and other dating apps may seem relatively innocuous, they are part of a process that can exacerbate incels’ states of mind when it comes to themselves, to women, and to society as a whole, making these apps convenient mechanisms by which incels can express their misogyny, should they want to do so. Past instances of incel violence, whether through self-harm and suicide or attacks of mass violence, tell us that there is a real risk of future repetitions, especially as the dating world continues to exist predominantly through dating apps and dating app culture continues to extend beyond dating apps into other aspects of society. While we cannot predict if or when this violence will occur, we can see that the risk of gender-based violence may be bolstered by dating app culture. Instances of incel violence have sometimes been considered to be one-offs, unusual incidents that come from unique circumstances; but it is clear that the way dating apps are set up today consistently reinforces incel ideology and the resulting misogyny, paving the way for acts of gender-based violence to repeat themselves in the future.

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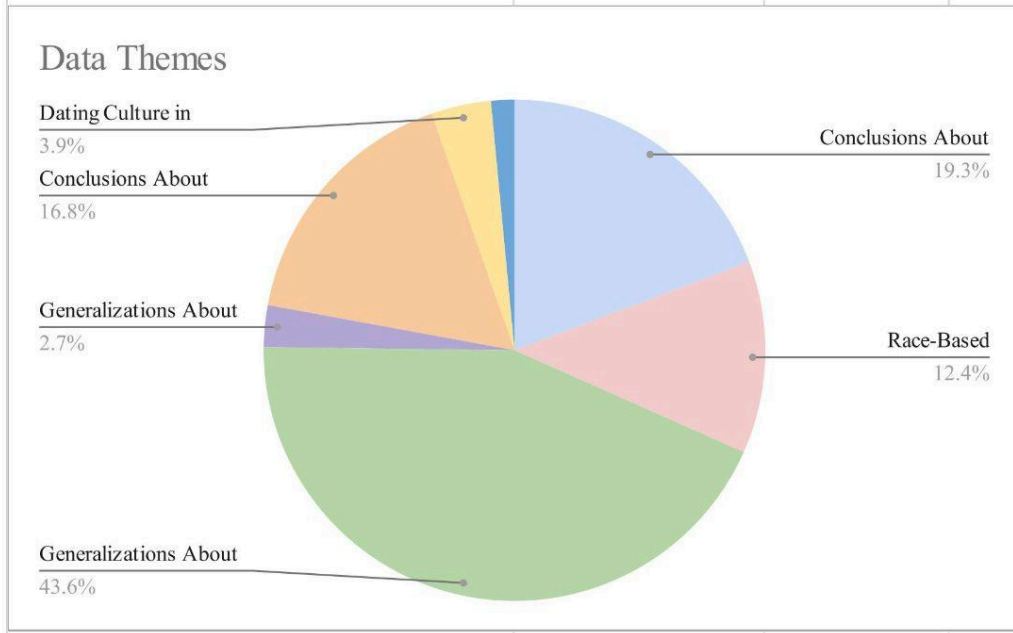
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Appendix A:

Key	Total Occurrences	Prevalence
Conclusions About Physical Appearance (excluding race) and Dating Apps	115	19.26%
Race-Based Conclusions	74	12.39%
Generalizations About Women	260	43.55%
Generalizations About Incels	16	2.68%
Conclusions About Dating Apps	100	16.75%
Dating Culture in Society/Real-Life Dating	23	3.85%
Dating Abroad	9	1.51%
Total:	597	



Appendix B:

Theme or Conclusion	Number of Occurrences
Good physique will help in getting women's attention	7
Good physique isn't enough on its own to get women's attention	1
Height is important to women	6
Men need to be tall and good-looking to get attention from women	4
Women have arbitrary/unreasonable standards for men's height	2
Women only care about appearance	19
Attractive men see women as expendable means to ends	1
It's reassuring to know that physique can help on dating apps	2
The most attractive men use Tinder for hookups, and less attractive men use other apps	1
Losing weight can help get women's attention	1
Only attractive men get matches on Tinder	6
Even average-looking men can get women on Tinder	20
Men have to conform to high beauty standards but women don't like having similar standards imposed	1
Even average/good-looking men don't always do well on Tinder	5
If you're not a chad, you won't ever be one	1
Women do anything for an attractive man	4
Only attractive men use Tinder	1
If you have pink cheeks, women won't go for you on Tinder	1
An attractive man would normally only match with attractive women	1
Even attractive men have to settle	1
Women care more about facial appearance than anything else	3
Women only want very attractive men	9
It's difficult for short or unattractive men to get matches on Tinder	3
Attractive men can get any women/Being good-looking is enough to get women	14
Women see any men other than really attractive ones as creepy	1
Tinder is hopeless for anyone who isn't white and attractive	1
If you're white, you'll have no problem with women	9
Only white women are worth pursuing	1
Those who use Tinder in India only match with people of their own race	1
Women of color are more likely to date less attractive men than white women are	1
Asian men do well with women	5
Asian men do worse with women than white men do	4
White men do better than others with women	4
It's easy for white men to get matches with women of color	1
Being of a certain race doesn't mean you'll do well with women	2

Theme or Conclusion	Number of Occurrences
White men don't have it any easier than others do	1
Korean men get more women than others do	1
Asian men do better than white men when women have many options	1
Indian men do worse with women than white men do	1
Indian men can't get the most attractive women	1
Indian men can get attractive women	1
Indian men cannot be very attractive	2
Black men do well on Tinder in the UK	4
Some Black men do well on Tinder in the UK, others don't	1
Southeast Asian women are sexually promiscuous	10
Racial mixing is bad	1
Attractive men of color don't do as well as worse-looking white men on Tinder	3
Indian men should date within their race	1
An attractive Indian man will be successful among Indian women but not among white women	1
Black men do better on Tinder than white men do	3
Black men don't necessarily get women	1
An attractive white man getting matches doesn't mean all white men will do well on Tinder	2
White men have better luck with women than men of color do	2
Indian women only like attractive white men	1
Race is important on Tinder	2
You can have a hard time with women even if you're white	2
Being tall and white isn't enough for women	3
Women have endless options on Tinder	13
Women will never go for unattractive men	2
It's fun to see women treated poorly by men	2
Making women feel bad is deserved and satisfying	7
Women think incels can find success on Tinder	1
Women look for followers and not to date on dating apps	1
When women wear makeup they're being deceptive	1
Women have an easier time getting attention on dating apps than men do	2
Women have unreasonably high standards on Tinder	6
Women are deceitful	3
Women often have so many matches that they don't talk to any of them	1
Women don't deserve attention	1
Women on Tinder are sexually promiscuous	14
Even unattractive women can easily get men on Tinder	1
Women feel entitled to attractive men	3

Theme or Conclusion	Number of Occurrences
Women can't identify chadfishing as well as incels can	1
Women deserve to have their time and energy wasted and it is satisfying to do so (chadfishing)	268
Especially fat women deserve to have their time and energy wasted	3
Some incels could be sexually successful on dating apps	3
Most incels are neurodivergent and therefore believe that Tinder is hopeless	1
Online dating for incels makes for rage/violent inclinations	1
Tinder is difficult/intimidating/overwhelming for incels	2
Tinder is difficult for incels but worth a try	4
Others don't understand how hard it is for incels to meet women	2
Having just one sexual encounter makes you not an incel	1
Some incels with mental illnesses can still get Tinder matches	1
Some incels like to see other men as more attractive to feel better about their own sexual failures	1
It's difficult to get legitimate matches on Tinder	2
Tinder instates shadowbans on users	1
It's difficult to get matches on dating apps	1
Tinder is good for motivating suicide	1
Tinder is hopeless for incels	36
Chadfishing is pointless and depressing	3
There are more men than women on dating apps	1
Dating apps are humiliating for incels	3
You can do better or worse on tinder depending on your location	2
Tinder is only good for incels for finding paid sex	1
You need to be at least somewhat attractive to succeed at online dating	3
Dating apps are hopeless for men	1
Online dating features make for pranking opportunities	1
Users exposed to the dating world will become blackpilled	1
Tinder is known for being tough to get dates on	2
Tinder is low-quality	1
Some dating apps don't have enough people on them	1
It's difficult for men to get matches on Tinder	2
Being neurodivergent prevents success on dating apps	1
Being social, neurotypical, and attractive are important in online dating	2
It's not worth paying for a premium Tinder account	5
It could be worth paying a lot for Tinder	2
It's only worth paying a lot for Tinder if you're really attractive	1
It's only worth paying a lot for Tinder if you're guaranteed matches	1
Dating apps filter out men women don't want	1

Theme or Conclusion	Number of Occurrences
Tinder only has unattractive women looking for attractive men	1
Tinder only has exceptionally attractive men and anyone else is considered unattractive	1
Tinder isn't good for most people	1
Putting in effort on Tinder is more frustrating than just paying a prostitute	1
People on Tinder are bad	2
The dating world feels unsafe	2
You need to be a paid member on Tinder to get matches	1
If you don't do well on Tinder in your home country dating is hopeless	1
Incels hate Tinder and also Jews because they created Tinder	2
Heterosexual couples shouldn't be allowed to look for a third on dating apps	1
The new Tinder regulations are good	1
It's stupid to use tinder if you're not super attractive	2
Factors other than the profile-holder's appearance can influence Tinder success	1
Tinder is hopeless if you're not a woman or an attractive man	1
Tinder is meant for lonely men	1
Most people of a certain age use dating apps	1
Older men looking for young women on Tinder would be weird, so it makes sense to pay for escorts	1
Even putting effort into appearances doesn't guarantee matches	1
The new Tinder regulations aren't enforced	1
People should only be able to have one match at a time on Tinder	1
Dating culture has made mediocre looks seem worse	1
Tinder creates a much higher standard for men than they face in real life	2
Feminism reduces men's sexual success	1
If you can't get women in real life, you can't get them on Tinder	1
Society prioritizes women over men	3
Because women use Tinder they no longer date in the physical world	1
It's equally difficult to get women in real life and on Tinder	1
Adding dating features to more social spaces would be bad	1
Society is biased against incels and Tinder has made it worse	1
Dating app culture has spread to other social media platforms	3
Social media is only about looks	1
Tinder has made the dating market in general worse	5
If you try your luck enough with sex, eventually you'll get some	1
Tinder is difficult but works better than real life	1
Many incels could get women in other countries	5
Going to Southeast Asia to get women is more difficult than it used to be	1

Theme or Conclusion	Number of Occurrences
Tinder is used somewhat in India	1
Tinder is popular in India	1
Women in Delhi are sexually promiscuous	1