

Male Supremacy Online

An Investigation of Incel Ideology through Qualitative Content
Analysis and Active Machine Learning

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Abstract

The study scrutinizes the incel ideology on the online forum Incels.is. The online incel communities are arguably the most infamous antifeminist group within the larger manosphere, especially since terror attacks committed by incels have garnered public attention. Notable instances of violence perpetrated by individuals associated with incel ideology, such as the 2018 attack by Alek Minassian and the 2018 Toronto van attack, further underscore the gravity of misogynistic ideologies online.

The study investigates the incel ideology based on a data set containing 4,79,428 posts on Incels.is, in a time range from November 2017 until October 2022. The study aims to scrutinize incel ideology within its (sub-)dimensions and its interconnectedness between dimensions, as well as the evolution of the ideology in its complete comprehensiveness. Therefore, using the CALM framework, bridging qualitative content analysis and machine learning for a holistic understanding of the underlying social concept of the misogynistic ideology. Methodically, the study argues in favor of mixed-method approaches between qualitative social research and machine learning to fill the informational gaps, such as interpretational ambiguities and arbitrary analytical choices caused by the architecture of machine learning models, leading to more robust measurements than an exclusive machine learning approach. The study is a unique contribution to a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of online misogynistic ideologies using traditional social research methods and innovative machine-learning approaches.

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