



# The Incel Revolution

An analysis of misogyny and the lack of definitions  
of crimes that should be categorized as incel terrorism

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# Abstract

## Incel Revolutionen

En analys av misogyni och bristen på definitioner i brott som bör kategoriseras som terrorism

Attacker utförda av Incels är ett växande problem i västerländska länder, dock räknas inte dessa attacker som terrorism. Syftet med uppsatsen är att få en klarare bild över varför attacker utförda av incels inte räknas som terrorism. Den här uppsatsen försöker svara på om anledningen är misogyni, definitioner eller något annat. För att svara på frågorna använder jag mig av domar, manifest och Mannes teori om vad misogyni egentligen är. Jag lägger också fram ett alternativ till hur begreppen terrorism, hatbrott och ideologi definieras utifrån de vanligaste definitionerna. Jag använder mig av fem terroristfall utförda av fyra högerextremister och en incel för att skapa ett mönster av precedensfall. Jag undersöker sedan fem incel fall som inte är definierade som terrorism. Utifrån prejudikatet och 8 stegs metoden av Jack Ågren har jag kommit fram till att av de fem Incel fallen kan tre fall bli kategoriserad som terrorism, ett fall är hatbrott och ett av fallen inte har tillräcklig information för att avgöra om det är ett terroristbrott, även om informationen indikerar på att det är det. Jag har även kommit fram till att misogyni och brist på klara definitioner är en del av anledningen till att dessa brott inte utreds som terrorism utifrån mina definitioner av begreppen och Mannes teori, men jag kan inte få fram en slutsats om ifall det endast är på grund av dessa anledningar. Det krävs mer forskning med olika infallsvinklar för att kunna avgöra varför dessa brott inte klassificeras som terrorism.

**Nyckelord:** Incel, Terrorism, Högerextremism, Misogyni, Kvinnohat, Våld mot kvinnor, Rasism

# Abstract

Although attacks carried out by incels are a growing problem in Western countries, these attacks do not count as terrorism. The purpose of this thesis is to gain a clearer understanding of why attacks carried out by incels are not considered acts of terrorism. The thesis attempts to answer this question by determining whether misogyny, definitions of critical components, or other factors account for the categorization of incel attacks. To investigate this question, I draw on court verdicts, manifestoes, and Manne's theory of misogyny. I also present an alternative to the current definitions of "terrorism," "hate crime," and "ideology," based on the definitions most commonly used by various countries and organizations. To establish a precedent, I use five terrorist crimes committed by four far-right perpetrators and one incel. I then investigate five incel cases that have not been defined as terrorism. Based on precedent and Jack Ågren's 8-step method, I conclude that, of the five incel cases discussed, three can be categorized as terrorism, and one can be categorized as a hate crime. I do not have enough information about the last case to determine whether it was a terrorist crime, although there appear to have been preparations for a terrorist crime. Based on my own definitions of key concepts and Manne's theory, I also conclude that misogyny is one reason why these crimes are not categorized as terrorism, although it may not be the only reason. There is a need for more research, carried out using different approaches, to determine why these crimes are not classified as terrorism.

**Keywords:** incel, terrorism, far-right, misogyny, hatred of women, violence against women, racism

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# 1 Introduction

“This is only the beginning. The Beta Rebellion has begun.  
Soon, more of our brothers will take up arms to become martyrs to this revolution.”  
- 4chan-thread October 1st, 2015<sup>1</sup>

This revolution is for men who feel entitled to access women’s bodies. Men who consider women to be objects. Men who want to reduce women’s rights and freedom. Men who want to subordinate women through political action. Men who want women to fear them. Men who believe that women deserve to be raped and murdered. Men who murder other men just for being sexually active. Men who murder women simply because they are women. These are just a few examples of crimes inspired by incel ideology; they have all the same theme: misogyny.

Incels have become a significant threat to Western security in recent years. Increased activity online and the ability to remain anonymous have helped the incel ideology spread more quickly. Incels have carried out several attacks in the name of their ideology. However, despite increased incel activity, no significant measures have been put in place to deal with violent acts motivated by this ideology. Although many similarities can be found in incel and extreme far-right ideologies, incels are not considered a terrorist threat, while the far-right is.

Globally, we have a problem with misogyny, especially in the West. This threat is increasing as feminism spreads and women’s rights increase. Sweden has the highest proportion of registered incels per capita in the world. According to F.O.I., (Swedish Defence Research Agency) Sweden has 240 users on incel forums per million inhabitants. The U.S. has 43 users per million inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> This threat, which puts women in particular at risk, is not taken seriously. The question is, why not?

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<sup>1</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, *Understanding and Treating Incels: Case Studies, Guidance, and Treatment of Violence Risk in the Involuntary Celibate Community*, 2021, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut. *Kvinnohat och våldshyllningar i digitala Incelmiljöer*. <https://www.foi.se/nyheter-och-press/nyheter/2020-03-04-kvinnohat-och-valdshyllningar-i-digitala-Incelmiljoer.html>.

## 1.1 Problems and aims

As the incel movement grows larger and larger, more attacks are being carried out in its name. However, few of these attacks are categorized as terrorism. In this paper, I want to investigate why far-right attacks are treated as terrorism, while incel attacks are not.

This paper considers the following questions:

- Are patriarchy and misogyny so widespread in society that attacks on women are taken less seriously than other types of attacks?
- Can incel attacks be categorized as terrorism?
- Is the problem misogyny—or the lack of an adequate definition of terrorism?

Why is it important to define incel crimes as terrorism? If a crime is categorized as terrorism, there are more available resources and a stronger focus on stopping it. Terrorist crimes get more attention from the media and law enforcement than “mere” killing sprees, leading to more preventive actions. When a crime is seen as a mass killing, school shooting, or killing spree, there is no focus on systematic violence. Instead, it is viewed as a single incident. In terrorism cases, the individual is part of a larger context. Furthermore, if a crime is defined as terrorism, the punishment is more severe.

## 1.2 Materials and limitations

This thesis has two limitations: the limitations inherent in writing a concise analysis and the limited available materials. Many of the cases I refer to are not well documented and the definitions I am figuring out are vague and limited. I will describe these limitations and the materials I have used below.

### 1.2.1 Limitations

To analyze these concepts, this paper looks at definitions from wordbooks, states, unions, and the counter-terrorism action plans produced by prominent organizations. Many countries and organizations do not define the terms “hate crime” or “ideology” in their criminal codes or official documents. The lack of any agreed definitions makes it hard to collect information. I have chosen to take only one definition of terrorism from the U.S, even

though there are at least five different definitions. I have chosen the one that includes the most common components, drawn from all of the U.S. definitions.

I have chosen to analyze six attacks carried out by incels and four attacks carried out by far-right terrorists. I have selected these cases based on their similarities, approaches, and the amount of attention they have received. I have deliberately chosen far-right attacks described as acts of terrorism in order to analyze why they are referred to as terrorist attacks, while incel cases are not. Little research has been done on some cases, either because they involved few or no fatalities, or because they were categorized as mass shootings or killing sprees. Two of the incel cases are new and largely unresearched. I have included these because they stand out. I have not chosen attacks based on which country the crimes were committed in. However, since most known incel attacks have taken place in the U.S. or Canada, the incel cases are from those countries. The far-right attacks occurred in New Zealand, Norway, the U.K., and the U.S. The fact that they took place in different countries does not invalidate this analysis. Although anti-terrorism laws are diffuse, they do not differ much from country to country, with the exception of Canada's new statutory statutes. All of the cases are 21<sup>st</sup> century crimes.

For the final analysis, I have chosen a Swedish method that I consider universal. I have not analyzed the cases from other points of view, due to time and space constraints.

### 1.2.2 Primary and secondary material

I have chosen two different types of source materials for these analyses. For the first analysis, the primary materials include scientific articles, dictionaries, laws, and official terrorist-action plans from both countries and organizations. Ideology is a frequently used concept, but has no official definition in the law. I have therefore chosen to use dictionaries to understand the meaning of ideology. As the concepts are fluid, with various definitions, I have drawn on several sources to arrive at the most widely used definitions.

The second analysis is based on cases and the primary sources are a collection of verdicts and manifestos. Since many perpetrators of lone-wolf attacks want fame and martyrdom, I have not used their names in this essay. Names are not necessary for the analysis, and I do not want to give these individuals more attention than they have already received. Instead, I note which perpetrators the analysis concerns, and then refer to them as P (perpetrator), with ascending numbers, from the earliest to the latest. The first attacker is thus referred to as P1.

The perpetrators discussed in this paper are George Sodini (P1), Anders Behring Breivik (P2), Pavlo Lapshyn (P3), Elliot Rodger (P4), Chris Harper-Mercer (P5), James Jackson (P6), Alek Minassian (P7), Brenton Tarrant (P8), a 17-year-old boy (P9), and Cole Carini (P10). I use P9 and P10 in my analysis, even though there is not much information about them. P9 was a minor at the time of the crime, and the P10 case has not been significantly researched because the crime happened recently and the verdict is not yet finalized. Nevertheless, I think it is crucial to refer to these cases because one involves the first incel to be convicted of terrorism, and the other has an interesting verdict. I use Jack Ågren's book *Brott och Straff—en grundbok i straffrät*<sup>3</sup> to figure out if incel attacks are terrorist crimes.

### 1.3 Whom does this thesis discuss?

This paper focuses on people who carry out violence, inspired by the incel movement. These individuals do not represent the whole incel community. They have been radicalized and resort to extreme violence to solve their problems. Not all incels are violent or hate women; I would even say that most incels condemn violence. However, there is a difference between the incel ideology and people who are incels. Not all incels adopt the ideology, but everyone who believes in the ideology is an incel. This paper focuses on both the ideology and incels who hate women enough to believe that they deserve to die or be subjected to violence. So when I mention “incels” in this essay, I am referring to people who accept the violent, extremist incel ideology.

As for the far-right, the people discussed in this paper are far-right extremists. Some people with far-right views are radical, but not extremist. Here, “far-right” refers to people in the movement who are extremists and terrorists. The paper also deals with attacks aimed primarily at cis women, carried out by cis men. For this reason, I use binary language. I am not ruling out the possibility that trans women could be among the victims. However, since incel attacks are directed at cis women, I have defined the target as cis women. Transphobia exists in both the incel and far-right extremist movements and it must be addressed. However, it is not the main focus of this analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> J. Ågren, *Brott och Straff—en grundbok i straffrät*, 2018.

## 2 Theory and method

I have used several different methods in this thesis. In this chapter, I explain how these methods are used in the analyses. I also describe Kate Manne's theory of misogyny, which I keep in mind throughout the analyses, digging into this deeper in the reflection section.

### 2.1 Theory

As this thesis examines misogynist attacks, I have used Kate Manne's theory, which defines misogyny and explains how it affects society. Manne argues that earlier uses of the term "misogyny" are outdated and should be reconsidered. She provides an alternative definition of the term. Her theory makes it easier to analyze actual verdicts and statements to determine whether the difference between incels and the far-right is misogyny. Her theory also helps to explain how misogyny and patriarchal laws and norms work and protect misogynistic perpetrators.

#### 2.1.1 What is Manne's definition of misogyny?

In Manne's definition, misogyny is a way of upholding the patriarchy and men's right to make decisions about issues that concern women. Manne identifies two types of misogyny: the naïve concept and ameliorating misogyny. She describes naïve misogyny as: "primarily a property of individual agents (typically, although not necessarily, men) who are prone to feel hatred, hostility, or other similar emotions toward any and every woman, or at least women generally, *simply because they are women.*"<sup>4</sup> By offering a new understanding of what misogyny is and how it effects society, her theory can help to ameliorate misogyny. She describes misogyny as the law enforcement of the patriarchy. Misogynists are the element in society that maintains the patriarchal order and punishes women who

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<sup>4</sup> K. Manne, *Down Girl* (2019) p. 33.

oppose this order.<sup>5</sup> Manne claims that sexism and misogyny are different things, which are often confused. Misogyny is an aspect of the patriarchy that enforces patriarchal laws, while sexism is an aspect that justifies misogyny and the patriarchy.<sup>6</sup> This is a crucial argument here, as these terms are not interchangeable. The thesis discusses misogyny, not sexism, although the two go hand in hand. Both sexism and misogyny are aspects of incel ideology.

Manne also argues that misogyny is not a standalone factor. It is a comparative term,<sup>7</sup> which reflects the way in which women are treated differently from and worse than men in the same categories (e.g., career, race, sexuality). According to Manne, misogyny is not just hating women; it also involves maintaining patriarchal norms. These norms can be maintained through violence, punishment, and policing, but also through rewards and confirmed gender stereotypes.<sup>8</sup>

According to Manne, our understanding of misogyny is flawed because it is wrong to see misogynists as bad individuals in groups of good people. Misogyny is not always institutionalized.<sup>9</sup> It is involved in every aspect of society, including law, politics, and social expectations.<sup>10</sup> According to Manne, misogyny is “women in a *man’s world*... rather than [...] women in a *man’s mind*.”<sup>11</sup> A misogynist society is a man’s world, which keeps the patriarchy and misogynist attitudes afloat. In individuals, misogyny is an attitude in the mind of an individual man. Although individual actors exist, misogyny is rooted in a historical patriarchal world.<sup>12</sup> Manne argues that misogyny is primarily political and can only exist in societies that have a history of being patriarchal.<sup>13</sup> If a woman is fulfilling her role as a loving and caring mother and wife, there is no reason for men to resent her or feel angry. However, as soon as one woman questions her role, men can be provoked by all women.<sup>14</sup> Although it is not unusual for men to be provoked by all women in general, some men are provoked only by women who step outside their traditional roles.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 79, 80.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 64, 67.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 71, 72.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 48, 50.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

### 2.1.2 How does Manne's theory apply to this thesis?

Manne argues that there is too much focus on psychology and why men are misogynists, and too little focus on the consequences of their misogynist views. It is essential to consider the reactive aspect.<sup>16</sup> She argues that attitudes towards misogynistic violence must change, as people tend to think that misogyny is about the women being targeted. She draws a parallel with Hitler and the fact that people never question whether he was really anti-Semitic. We should view misogynistic attacks as acts that express hatred of women, just as we view Hitler's actions as expressing a hatred of Jews and other groups.<sup>17</sup>

Manne points out that women are saddled with certain expectations. When those expectations are not fulfilled (according to society or individual men) these women are seen as outside the patriarchy, and must therefore be punished. She argues that each woman represents all women, particularly when challenging patriarchal norms. Women who do not adhere to patriarchal norms can act as representatives. For this reason, violence targets women as a group, instead of individual women.<sup>18</sup> However, she also points out that misogynists only become physically violent when they believe that patriarchal norms are at risk or not being upheld.<sup>19</sup>

She makes an important point about the way her theory should be applied: misogyny does not have to be directed towards women. Misogynists are often angry with men who may or may not support patriarchal norms. She cites the example of P4 (discussed later in this thesis)<sup>20</sup> and questions the claim that P4 was mentally ill (i.e., not misogynist), loved women too much, and killed more men than women.<sup>21</sup> Applying Manne's definition of misogyny makes it clear that such arguments have no basis in reality.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 58, 59, 69.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 41, 42.

## 2.2 Method

I use three different methods in this thesis: a comparison analysis; a content analysis; and the 8-step method. The section below explains how these methods are used to develop this argument.

### 2.2.1 Terrorism, hate crimes, and ideology

The first analysis defines three concepts: “terrorism,” “hate crime,” and “ideology.” For each case, I have gathered definitions from different countries, organizations, and dictionaries. I compare the definitions to discover their common aspects. The comparison makes it possible to define all three concepts, based on how they are defined around the world. To arrive at a definition of “terrorism,” I compare eleven different definitions. I also compare seven definitions of “hate crime,” and five definitions of ideology. Although these concepts are widely used, there are few agreed definitions. The definitions are similar, but not the same. There is no universal definition.

### 2.2.2 The legal precedent in terrorism cases

To ascertain the legal precedents for terrorism and hate-crime cases, I review all of the case studies with terrorist or/and hate-crime verdicts and look at the judges’ orders. Examining all of the verdicts reveals common themes. I also note the features that judges used to determine whether the crimes were terrorist acts.

For this part of the analysis, I began by reading all of the verdicts to gain a general view of how they were organized. I then read all of the verdicts again, noting common themes. Another review of the verdicts helped me determine the most important aspects of the different themes. These analyses showed how the themes could provide a precedent for other cases.

## 2.3 The incel cases

The third analysis applies Jack Ågren's 8-step method. The tools provided by this method are used to determine whether a crime meets the objective and subjective requirements for conviction. The first four steps represent the objective prerequisite, and the last four steps represent the subjective prerequisite. The eight steps are as follows:

1. Which crime or crimes bring to the fore the actual act, i.e., what crime are we investigating?
2. Test whether the conditions set out in the crime description for one or more crimes are met or not.
3. Examine whether the act is permitted based on any objective discharge, i.e., any objective circumstance that prevents the offense or offenses from being unlawful.
4. Based on the above objective prerequisite, is the act permissible or unlawful?
5. Determine whether there is a requirement in the crime description for intent or negligence, i.e., does it require that the perpetrator had intent for the crime for it to be unlawful.
6. Examine whether the perpetrator's intent or negligence covers the objective prerequisite, i.e., the perpetrators' intention to commit the crimes in the objective prerequisite.
7. Determine whether the offender should be excused based on any subjective discharge, i.e., any circumstance on the offender that prevents the offense or offenses from being unlawful.
8. Based on all of the above steps, has the perpetrator committed the crime?<sup>22</sup>

I have used this method to determine whether each case meets the prerequisites, definitions, and precedents. Although there are different laws in different countries, terrorism laws are so similar that a general definition can apply to all cases. The same applies to the research method, which is based on the Swedish system of rights. This is only a method of investigating, not a prerequisite for investigating a crime.

Usually, in determining what constitutes a crime, motive is not considered a prerequisite.<sup>23</sup> Terrorism and hate crimes have different prerequisites. Based on the definitions of hate crime and terrorism, the prerequisites are the motive and effect of the crime.

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<sup>22</sup> J. Ågren, 2018, p. 39.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

## 3 Background information about the cases

This chapter describes the cases and provides key information about the various attacks. In many cases, there is little information to be found. The amount of information available depends on how many people were killed, how brutal the attack was, and whether the attack was considered a terrorist attack or just a killing spree.

### 3.1 The Case of P1

P1, 48, attacked an aerobics class in 2009. He planned to kill women and succeeded in killing three women and injuring nine others. He then shot himself. In his blog, he described his hatred of women, the sexual rejections he had experienced, and how he planned to carry out the attack.<sup>24</sup> P1 had the blog for nine months before the attack; he also used it to express his frustration with young and attractive white women who had sex with black men. There were notes in the bag he was carrying at the time of the attack, in which he expressed his hatred of and frustration with women.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.2 The Case of P2

P2, 32, detonated a bomb in Oslo before going out to a youth camp on an island in 2011. He planted the bomb near government buildings, killing eight people. He then went out to the Social Democratic Youth Party camp, where he dressed up as a police officer and killed 69 people in an attack that lasted more than one hour. Before the attack, he wrote a manifesto in which he claimed that Islam and Marxism were destroying society. In his manifesto, P2 said that he wanted a society in which women were subordinate to men; he

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<sup>24</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, p. 203.

<sup>25</sup> L. Bates, 2020, p. 43.

also expressed a hatred of women.<sup>26</sup> P2 was convicted of two counts of terrorism for 77 murders.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.3 The Case of P3

P3, 25, killed a man who was on his way home from a mosque in 2013. He then planted homemade bombs outside several mosques. He did not kill any people with the bombs because he misestimated the time for prayers. He had a great hatred of Muslims and wanted to start a race war. P3's total death toll was one person; no one else was injured.<sup>28</sup> He was convicted of murder, causing an explosion with intent to endanger life, and engaging in conduct in preparation for terrorist acts.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.4 The Case of P4

P4 is probably the most researched incel ever to have carried out an attack. Many consider this attack to be the first committed by an incel. In 2014, the 22-year-old man killed his three roommates and then recorded a video on YouTube. In the video, he explained that his life was worthless because of women. He then went to a sorority house and tried to enter. When that did not work, he drove around the city, mowing people down with his car and shooting as many people as he could. P4 killed six people and injured 14 before killing himself. Before the attack, he sent a manifesto to several people describing everything that had gone wrong in his life and how much he despised women.<sup>30</sup> In the YouTube video he posted during the attack, he blamed his lack of a sexual debut on women and said that he was much kinder than most guys and therefore deserved to have sex. In both the video and the manifesto, P4 expressed a hatred of women and men who had relationships. Allegedly, he also searched the Internet for information about P1 before the attack.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> F. Hartleb, *Lone Wolves—The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors*, 2020, pp. 80–84.

<sup>27</sup> Oslo Tingrett, Case No. TOSLO-2011 188627-24—RG-2012-1153 [08/24/12].

<sup>28</sup> F. Hartleb, 2020, pp. 93–94.

<sup>29</sup> Judiciary of England and Wales, *The Queen v. Pavlo Lapshyn* [10/25/13].

<sup>30</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, p. 205.

<sup>31</sup> L. Bates, 2020, pp. 40–42.

### 3.5 The Case of P5

P5, 26, attacked people in a school in 2015. Before the attack, he wrote a manifesto about how he had no friends and women did not want to be with him. He had strong links to the incel movement and referred to P4. His manifesto claimed that women chose black men instead of friendly, kind white men. In the attack, he killed 9 people, injured 7, and then shot himself.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.6 The Case of P6

P6, 30, went to New York in 2017 to kill a black man. He searched for the perfect victim for three days and then killed a 66-year-old man. He wanted to kill a black man in order to start a race war. Before the attack, P6 wrote a manifesto in which he expressed hatred of black people.<sup>33</sup> According to *The Independent*, P6 was training himself through the attack to kill young black men because he thought they took white men's women.<sup>34</sup> P6 was convicted of one count of "murder in the first degree in furtherance of an act of terrorism," one count of "murder in the second degree as a crime of terrorism," one count of "murder in the second degree as a hate crime," and three counts of "criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree."<sup>35</sup> Despite the massive verdict, little has been written about P6. The interesting thing, in this case, is that P6 was charged with both hate crimes and terrorism. To understand why he was charged with both, the district attorney of New York City wrote:

By his own admission, he was doing this because he wanted to kill black men, planned to kill black men, and then did kill a black man, in – and I quote – “a declaration of total war on negroes.” So, this isn't a regular murder case. This isn't a case where the defendant simply wanted to kill Mr. Caughman. And this isn't merely a hate crimes case. It's not a case where a defendant targeted a single victim on the basis of his race. By targeting Mr. Caughman, he was launching an attack against all

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<sup>32</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021. p. 208; L. Bates, 2020, p. 44.

<sup>33</sup> Manhattan District Attorney's Office. *James Jackson Indicted on Charges of Murder in the First and Second Degree as a Hate Crime* [03/27/17].; Manhattan District Attorney's Office, *D.A. Vance Secures Domestic Terrorism Conviction of James Jackson For White Supremacist Murder of Timothy Caughman*. [01/23/19].

<sup>34</sup> J. Ransom, "White supremacist James Jackson pleads guilty to killing black man with sword to start 'race war.'" *The Independent* [01/24/19].

<sup>35</sup> Manhattan District Attorney's Office, *DA Vance: James Jackson Sentenced to Life Without Parole For Murdering Timothy Caughman to Incite a "Race War"* [02/13/19].

African-Americans. Thus, this was also – as defined by our legislature and as admitted by the defendant – an act of domestic terrorism.<sup>36</sup>

### 3.7 The Case of P7

P7, 25, rented a car and drove into people on a Toronto pedestrian street in 2018. P7 killed 10 people (8 of whom were women), and injured 16. He then attempted to commit suicide by cop, but the police managed to arrest him instead of shooting him. There was a verdict and an interrogation. Under interrogation, he expressed his hatred of women and chads<sup>37</sup> because they were the people who prevented him from having sex. P7 explicitly stated that he was an incel and a member of the incel movement, acting in the name of that ideology. He said that he had been in contact with P4 and P5 before carrying out the attacks.<sup>38</sup> According to the verdict, his statements were inconsistent; it is therefore hard to know when he was telling lies or speaking the truth. He was convicted of 10 counts of murder and 16 counts of attempted murder.<sup>39</sup>

### 3.8 The Case of P8

In 2019, P8 attacked people in two mosques. The 29-year-old man live-streamed most of the attacks, in which he killed 51 people and injured 40. Before the attack, P8 wrote a manifesto about the problem of mass immigration and Islamic terrorism. The manifesto also mentioned the importance of traditional family views, for example, that women should be stay-at-home moms and men should provide for their families.<sup>40</sup> He was convicted of 51 counts of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder, and 1 count of committing a terrorist attack.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Manhattan District Attorney's Office, *DA Vance: James Jackson Sentenced to Life Without Parole For Murdering Timothy Caughman to Incite a "Race War"* [02/13/19].

<sup>37</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, "Chads are "(a)n ideal male specimen; Chads can attract nearly all women easily," 2021, p. 262.

<sup>38</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021. p. 212; L. Bates, 2020. pp. 45–46.

<sup>39</sup> Ontario Superior Court of Justice. *Between: Her Majesty the Queen and Alek Minassian*. Case No. CR-18-00000612-0000 [03/03/21].

<sup>40</sup> F. Hartleb, 2020, pp. 85–90.

<sup>41</sup> High Court of New Zealand. *The Queen v. Brenton Harrison Tarrant*. Case No. CRI-2019-009-2468 (2020) NZHC 2192 [08/27/20].

### 3.9 The Case of P9

P9 was the first and—and so far the only—perpetrator to be convicted of terrorism because of his links to the incel movement. He killed one person and injured another by attacking them with a machete in a massage parlor in 2020.<sup>42</sup> P9's identity is unknown because he was 17 years old and therefore a minor at the time of the attack. For this reason, there is not much official information about him. He was convicted of one count of “murder in the first degree as a crime of terrorism” and one count of “attempted murder as a crime of terrorism.” He was charged with terrorism because of his evident hatred of women and connection to the incel ideology.<sup>43</sup>

### 3.10 The Case of P10

P10, 23, is an interesting case because of the way he was convicted. He blew off one hand while making bombs at his house in 2020. He told the hospital and the F.B.I. that it was a lawnmower accident. The F.B.I. searched P10's home and found bomb-making materials and letters saying that he wanted to carry out a suicide bombing to kill as many hot cheerleaders as possible. Although he was not an outspoken incel, many aspects of his profile fit the incel ideology. He referred to P4, expressed a hatred of women, and said that he wanted to kill hot women.<sup>44</sup> He was convicted of making a fictitious or fraudulent statement or representation to the U.S. government.<sup>45</sup> He has since pleaded guilty to one count of possessing and manufacturing an unregistered explosive device. However, this new verdict is not official at the time of writing.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, p. 217.

<sup>43</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police. *Updated Charge, Young Person Charged with First-Degree Murder and Attempted Murder, Updated to First-Degree Murder—Terrorist Activity and Attempted Murder—Terrorist Activity, Homicide #12/2020, Dufferin and Wilson Avenue*; L. Bates, 2020, p. 47.

<sup>44</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, p. 218; L. Bates, 2020, pp. 47–48.

<sup>45</sup> United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia. *United States of America v. Cole Carini*. Case No. 1:20MJ84 [06/05/20]; L. Bates, 2020, p. 187.

<sup>46</sup> The United States Attorney's Office Western District of Virginia, *Richlands Man Pleads Guilty to Possessing and Manufacturing An Unregistered Explosive Device* [01/11/21].

## 4 Literature Review and Previous Studies

The literature section includes six different articles and books, selected for their relevance to the subsequent analysis. Five of the sources date from 2020–2021, while the sixth was written in 2018. All of these studies were published during the last couple of years, reflecting how fast research is changing in this field.

### 4.1 Literature Review

*An Exploration of the Involuntary Celibate (incel) Subculture Online* by O’Malley, Holt, and Holt provides an overview of incel norms and the way in which incels talk online. The authors researched the core values in two different forums, consisting of 8000 posts in 452 threads, contributed by 703 different users. They analyzed posts to identify common thoughts, and used a qualitative analysis to search for ideas mentioned in two or more posts. They then identified the words most frequently used by participants. These comments allowed them to identify the most common themes and norms.<sup>47</sup>

*Assessing the Threat of Violence* by Hoffman, Ware, and Shapiro asks whether incels represent a terrorist threat. Their study explores incel ideology, the methods used in incel attacks, and how incels react to women. They have researched these themes by looking at how other scholars and various organizations have described incels. They are very clear about the lack of research on this subject.<sup>48</sup>

*Understanding and Treating Incels: Case Studies, Guidance, and Treatment of Violence Risk in the Involuntary Celibate Community* by Van Brunt and Taylor is a treatment guide, designed to help psychologists identify incel traits. The authors have conducted several case studies and constructed a model of the most common incel

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<sup>47</sup> R. L O’Malley, K. Holt, and T. J. Holt, *An Exploration of the Involuntary Celibate (Incel) Subculture Online*, 2020.

<sup>48</sup> B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, *Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence*, 2020.

characteristics. The model assesses the risk presented by incels, and how likely they are to carry out an attack.<sup>49</sup>

Even though *Men who Hate Women* is a journalistic book, I have included it in this literature review because the author, Laura Bates, has an excellent knowledge of the subject. She has written other books on the subject and launched a project to stop everyday sexism. As most research in this field is non-academic, it is essential to show what people outside the academic field have written. I am aware that journalistic books can be biased and have read this book critically. It examines men who hate women from several different points of view, asking whether incel attacks constitute terrorism.<sup>50</sup>

*Confronting Incel: Exploring Possible Policy Responses to Misogynistic Violent Extremism* by Tomkinson, Harper, and Attwell, investigates how states should respond to violence against women. The authors argue that states should acknowledge that incel violence is a real threat and develop plans of action to prevent future attacks.<sup>51</sup>

*Online Misogyny and the Alternative Right: Debating the Undebatable* by Koulouris is a study of the way in which far-right extremists are increasingly entering politics and contributing to more misogynistic thinking in politics. He draws examples from a debate he participated in with a far-right, anti-feminist journalist.<sup>52</sup>

## 4.2 Previous studies

The previous studies are discussed in different sections, based on the way they explain incels and far-right extremists. These sections aim to understand how the studies are connected and where they differ

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<sup>49</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, *Understanding and Treating Incels: Case Studies, Guidance, and Treatment of Violence Risk in the Involuntary Celibate Community*, 2021.

<sup>50</sup> L. Bates, *Men Who Hate Women—From Incels to Pickup Artists, The Truth About Extreme Misogyny and How It Affects Us All*, 2020.

<sup>51</sup> S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, *Confronting Incel: exploring possible policy responses to misogynistic violent extremism*, 2020.

<sup>52</sup> T. Koulouris, *Online Misogyny and the Alternative Right: Debating the Undebatable*, 2018.

### 4.2.1 What is an incel?

A woman began the incel movement in 1997 to create a support group for men and women who could not find love or intimacy.<sup>53</sup> Hoffman et al. note that the incel movement initially included both men and women, brought together by the fact that they were lonely. However, according to these authors, two different orientations have emerged among incels. The first group remains a community of people who show support for each other. The second group has become more misogynistic, excluding women. Its members believe that their problems are caused by the advance of feminism.<sup>54</sup>

According to Van Brunt and Taylor, an incel is simply a person who has not had intimate or romantic relations with another person, with consent. However, understanding incels is not that simple. They have a strong conviction that the world is set up to benefit women and that men have lost their superiority. They believe that fixed biological characteristics attract women. A person who lacks these physical advantages is doomed to live without a partner. According to several authors, it is important to note that the movement consists mainly of white, heterosexual men, primarily from North America and Europe.<sup>55</sup>

According to O'Malley et al. and Tomkinson et al., to be an incel is to be involuntarily celibate, i.e., unable to persuade another person to have sex. Incels want to have sex but cannot find a sexual partner. Some incels try to find partners, but most have given up, believing that they will never find anyone.<sup>56</sup> O'Malley et al. note that most incels are men between 18 and 25, the age when most people are active on Internet forums. They define an incel as someone who has been without intimacy for at least six months, despite wanting and trying to find a partner.<sup>57</sup> According to Bates, most people do not know what an incel is because the media do not use the term when reporting attacks by incels. For this reason, the ideology is still unfamiliar to most people.<sup>58</sup>

All of the authors agree that most incels who carry out attacks have some sort of mental illness. However, researchers disagree on how much weight to attach to mental

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<sup>53</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, pp. 10, 26; B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, 2020, p. 566.

<sup>54</sup> B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, 2020, p. 566.

<sup>55</sup> B. Van Brunt, C. Taylor (2021); B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro (2020) 568; S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, p. 153; L. Bates, 2020, p. 20.

<sup>56</sup> S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, p. 153; R. L. O'Malley, K. Holt, and T. J. Holt, 2020, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 2020, pp. 3, 6.

<sup>58</sup> L. Bates, 2020, p. 11.

illness when analyzing incel behavior. Although Van Brunt and Taylor accept that mental illness is very prevalent among incels who carry out acts of terrorism, they believe there is too much focus on that factor alone. They argue that the media focuses only on mental illness, forgetting that having a mental illness does not, in itself, make people violent. They even state that mentally ill people are more likely to be the victims than the perpetrators of violence.<sup>59</sup> Bates similarly argues that mental illness should not be the main focus and compares incels with jihadi terrorists. In the case of jihadi terrorists, people and the media rarely talk about mental illness. She argues that focusing on mental illness takes the focus away from the real problem, which is misogyny. Like Van Brunt and Taylor, Bates argues that mental illness does not in itself create violent men.<sup>60</sup> However, Tomkinson et al. argue that it is crucial to focus on incels' mental health when creating action plans. For an action plan to work, mental illness among incels must be treated as a social problem. They argue that discussing mental illness more broadly can prevent incels from feeling singled out as the problem.<sup>61</sup> Hoffman et al. agree, arguing that more resources should be put into male mental illness to prevent incel attacks.<sup>62</sup>

#### 4.2.2 What is incel ideology?

According to Van Brunt and Taylor, violence based on the incel ideology has three main components: misogyny, jealousy, and entitlement. All three components are needed for an incel to carry out an attack. These components provide incels with the justification for becoming violent.<sup>63</sup>

O'Malley et al. have identified five norms in incel forums: The Sexual Market, Women as a Natural Evil, the Legitimization of Masculinity, Male Oppression, and the Legitimization of Violence and Revenge. They note that there has been little research on the nature of incel ideology, although they believe they can show links to other extremist groups.<sup>64</sup>

*The Sexual Market* describes a situation in which women have sexual privileges and the power to decide who is allowed to have sex. Incels often link this theory to biological

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<sup>59</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, p. 75.

<sup>60</sup> L. Bates, 2020, pp. 50, 51, 53.

<sup>61</sup> S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, p. 160.

<sup>62</sup> B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, 2020, p. 580.

<sup>63</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, pp. 16–20.

<sup>64</sup> R. L. O'Malley, K. Holt, and T. J. Holt, 2020, pp. 1, 3.

factors and natural selection, claiming that women create incels by choosing not to have sex with them. According to incels, there is a pattern of natural selection, which focuses on the looks a perfect man should have. A lot of the rhetoric has to do with appearance. On the forums, people often express the idea that the most important goal of a person's life is to reproduce; if incels cannot find a partner to have a child with, there is no need for them to exist.<sup>65</sup> Hoffman et al. address their view of women, noting that a typical preconceived opinion among incels is that women are superficial and only care about appearance. This means that women actively opt out of dating incels because they do not fit their preferences for how a man should look. The authors explain that incels blame women for their own lack of sexual life.<sup>66</sup> According to Bates, incels believe that women judge only by appearance, condemning normatively ugly men. However, she also explains that the sexual market expresses even greater hatred of chads than women, since chads are the only men able to enjoy the sexual market.<sup>67</sup>

The claim that *women are naturally evil* is another common theme on the forums. Users describe women as manipulative, dishonest, and evil. Here, incels use evolution and biology to explain these personality traits. They believe that women's only focus is to have children and that they are only kind to men who can give them children. Women are cruel to those from whom they cannot gain anything. Thus, women use manipulation to get their way.<sup>68</sup> Tomkinson et al. point out that this rhetoric uses biology to prove that women are evil and manipulative by nature.<sup>69</sup>

By *legitimizing masculinity*, incels argue that men are meant to be aggressive—they sexualize women because women want to be sexualized. Incels use biology to claim that men are naturally superior to women because women give birth. They also use biology to argue that the legal age of consent is an unnatural phenomenon. Girls who have had their first periods and can therefore become pregnant should be allowed to have sex. O'Malley et al. cite an incel who wrote on a forum that the most attractive girls were 13–14 years old; this is a commonly held view among incels. Some consider women older than 25 unattractive and old because they have begun to lose their fertility. On the forums, they express a desire to go back to a more biology-based society, where men and women are

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 10–12.

<sup>66</sup> B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, 2020, p. 567.

<sup>67</sup> L. Bates, 2020, pp. 19, 28.

<sup>68</sup> R. L. O'Malley, K. Holt, and T.J. Holt, 2020, pp. 13,14.

<sup>69</sup> S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, p. 154.

acknowledged to have natural differences.<sup>70</sup> Bates also brings up the phenomenon of incels being attracted to young girls for biological reasons. She points out that the term “jailbait,” which is often used to refer to such girls, means that they are underaged and a man would go to prison for having sex with them.<sup>71</sup>

*Male oppression* exists throughout society, according to incels. Society is built on oppressing men’s instincts. Incels believe that society gives them no rights and that women are better off in life. The authors address incels’ hatred of feminism, which they blame for having created a society in which men are no longer superior. There is also an extensive discussion about what men should look like and how incels can change their appearance and behavior to have intercourse.<sup>72</sup>

According to O’Malley et al., the four points mentioned above lead to the last, the *legitimization of violence and revenge*. They find many men on the forums who glorify violence against women and men who have sex. However, men who have sex, despite also deserving to die, according to incels, do not receive as much hate as women. Members of the community consistently refer to actual past attacks, either praising the perpetrators or mocking them for not killing enough people or for killing more men than women. Incels believe that women are naturally evil and therefore deserve to be killed or subjected to violence. Although many of the forums condemn these actions, some users say that, although they would not commit a violent act themselves, they would not intervene if they saw a woman being violently attacked by a man. One consistent theme involves praising attacks that kill as many people as possible and referring to previous attacks. Past perpetrators are often praised on the forums as heroes, saints, and martyrs.<sup>73</sup> According to Bates, one common political position among incels is the view that women deserve to have their freedom restricted. Society would be better off if rape were legal, and women were not independent of men. She sees this as proof of their thoughts of revenge. However, she also points out that some people on the forums oppose the legalization of rape because it would make the act of rape less revenge-filled and fun.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> R. L. O’Malley, K. Holt, and T. J. Holt, 2020, pp. 14, 15.

<sup>71</sup> L. Bates, 2020, p. 37.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 17.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.

<sup>74</sup> L. Bates, 2020, pp. 28, 29, 34, 38.

### 4.2.3 Incels, the Internet, and the far-right

O'Malley et al. argue that the Internet and technology have increased the risk of violent incel movements. It is easier for like-minded people to find each other online and become radicalized by each other's views. They argue that the Internet has contributed to a common language among incels. The anonymity of the Internet allows people to share opinions that they probably would not share otherwise.<sup>75</sup> Hoffman et al. support this view, arguing that it is easier to become self-radicalized over the Internet and to carry out terrorist acts without any connection to an organization.<sup>76</sup>

According to Hoffman et al., the incel movement on the famous forum Reddit had approximately 40,000 members before Reddit shut the subreddit down. Although Reddit posts about incels have been removed, there are still several thousand incels on other forums.<sup>77</sup> Like the other authors, Tomkinson et al. claim that the Internet has increased opportunities for radicalization, which takes place on various forums, including some that cater specifically for incels and others that have more general audiences. Tomkinson et al. argue that there are about 60,000 active members on the largest incel forums.<sup>78</sup> By contrast, Bates believes that there are no more than 20,000 active incels, although she points out that forums have many hidden members: incels who are not members, but who read the posts. It is difficult to make an accurate estimate, since many members are active on more than one forum.<sup>79</sup>

Van Brunt and Taylor address the collective term "manosphere," which connects parts of the Internet that cater primarily to men. Groups that are part of the manosphere include incels, anti-feminist groups, far-right groups, and pick-up artists.<sup>80</sup> O'Malley et al. describe the concept in a similar way, including far-right extremists, incels, and other misogynistic groups.<sup>81</sup> However, Hoffman et al. believe that the manosphere includes only four categories: pick up artists, men's rights activists, "men going their own way," and incels.<sup>82</sup> Tomkinson et al. cite the same categories as Hoffman et al. but add Christian conservatives and men who use drugs and sex to make themselves feel more masculine.

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<sup>75</sup> R. L. O'Malley, K. Holt, and T. J. Holt, 2020, pp. 2, 5.

<sup>76</sup> B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, 2020, p. 576.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 566, 577.

<sup>78</sup> S. Tomkinson, S., T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, pp. 154, 155.

<sup>79</sup> L. Bates, 2020, p. 36.

<sup>80</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, pp. 29, 30.

<sup>81</sup> L. Bates, 2020, p. 182.

<sup>82</sup> B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, 2020, p. 567.

They argue that groups such as “wise old men,” “alpha dads,” and “old married guys” also fit the criteria for being in the manosphere. However, they believe that incel hatred of women and men is larger than the rest of the manosphere.<sup>83</sup> Although the last two articles do not include far-right groups within the manosphere, the first three do. The term “manosphere” is fluid and has no clear definition.

Van Brunt and Taylor argue that racism is an incel characteristic that should be evaluated. According to their surveys, explicit racism occurs in 22% of cases of violence carried out by incels.<sup>84</sup> Hoffman et al. find a strong link between the far-right and incels; there is clear racist discourse on incel forums. However, Hoffman et al. note that many incel attacks have been carried out by men who are not white. These men express anti-Semitic views and reason that they are incels because they are not white.<sup>85</sup> However, I would like to make a point that none of these authors bring up. Most of the cases they discuss in their studies involve perpetrators who are white-passing. In other words, they could be seen as white and thus possess certain privileges that white people have. It is essential to consider white-passing when assessing whether the perpetrators’ race plays a part in how they are viewed by society.

According to Hoffman et al., a belief shared by incels and the far-right is a hatred of feminism and the idea that feminism has created a society that oppresses men. Both ideologies want society to return to the way it used to be, when women needed men to exist in society. Both ideologies argue that women’s right to be independent makes it more difficult for men to find wives. Hoffman et al. believe that the dialogue goes both ways; incels have opinions that fit into far-right views, while the far-right has opinions that fit into the incel movement.<sup>86</sup>

Bates argues that the far-right, like incels, wants politics to change so that women have less power, both in public and in private.<sup>87</sup> O’Malley et al. explain that many incels want society to become even more patriarchal and that incels focus a lot on biology,<sup>88</sup> a common theme among far-right groups. Tomkinson et al. note that the far-right is also prone to misogyny. They argue that misogynistic views and a tendency towards violence

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<sup>83</sup> S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, pp. 153, 154.

<sup>84</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, pp. 48, 57.

<sup>85</sup> B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, 2020, pp. 572, 573.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 573.

<sup>87</sup> L. Bates, 2020, p. 23.

<sup>88</sup> R. L. O’Malley, K. Holt, and T. J. Holt, 2020, p. 15.

are linked.<sup>89</sup> In his article, Koulouris argues that far-right views are founded on misogyny, as much of the discourse within right-wing extremism is about how women should be more feminine and are too dumb to make reasonable arguments. Koulouris believes that the far-right wants to control women and believes that radical feminists are in charge of society.<sup>90</sup>

Bates raises an essential point in discussing how incels resemble the far-right. In both ideologies, she says, young men feel that life and society are against them. These two ideologies give the individual someone else to blame: either people of color or women. They tell such people that it's not their fault they feel betrayed by life. She also believes that misogyny in far-right circles and racism in incel culture are not given enough attention.<sup>91</sup>

Koulouris provides several examples of the rhetoric used in far-right contexts, which is also found in incel ideology: women exploit their sexuality; women are subordinate to men; women are objects; men are sexual predators by nature; and men create the world. Interestingly, Koulouri's article also mentions certain statements expressed by debate opponents, including the argument that men are afraid of being falsely accused of rape and of being laughed at.<sup>92</sup>

#### 4.2.4 What does the threat look like?

Opinions differ on how many incel attacks have occurred and how many people have been killed. According to Hoffman et al., the incel community has inspired 12 attacks, which have killed around 50 people; the first attack was in 2014.<sup>93</sup> Bates claims that the first attack took place around 10 years ago and that 50 people have been killed since then.<sup>94</sup> Tomkinson et al. agree that approximately 50 people have died in incel attacks but believe that the first attack was in 2009. They point out that there have probably been many unreported attacks, carried out by people radicalized by the incel movement.<sup>95</sup> Van Brunt & Taylor believe there have been around 50 attacks involving various levels of

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<sup>89</sup> S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, p. 162.

<sup>90</sup> T. Koulouris, 2018, pp. 751, 752.

<sup>91</sup> L. Bates, 2020, p. 22.

<sup>92</sup> T. Koulouris, 2018, pp. 752–754.

<sup>93</sup> B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, 2020, p. 569.

<sup>94</sup> L. Bates, 2020, pp. 11, 48.

<sup>95</sup> S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, pp. 154, 156.

violence, with a death toll of around 800 people. They claim that the first incel attack took place in 1938.<sup>96</sup> According to Hoffman et al., most of the studies on this topic are journalistic works; there has been little academic research on what the threat looks like or what counts as an incel attack.<sup>97</sup> This lack of research helps to explain the wide variety of results seen in these studies.

Tomkinson et al. argue that the failure to recognize incels as a security threat can lead to incel attacks being classified as individual crimes. Such crimes are thought to relate to the perpetrators' personalities and personal experiences, rather than to a radicalized ideology. These authors argue that society's reaction to incel crimes is similar to its reaction to rape cases, i.e., telling women to be vigilant instead of addressing the real problem. They see this as characteristic of gender-based violence, which is typically seen as a private problem, not a societal problem.<sup>98</sup>

Koulouris points out that the classification of misogynistic violence reflects political changes. As far-right politics emerge in the West, they create misogynistic policies. He argues that far-right extremism is misogynistic and political decisions are made accordingly; in turn, misogynistic views allow far-right politics to grow.<sup>99</sup> According to Bates, outspoken incels have built careers in politics and are trying to reintroduce the law that women should always have a male guardian.<sup>100</sup> Tomkinson et al. argue that incels carry out violence for political reasons. The general response to incel attacks shows that governments do not take violent attacks on women as a population seriously. These authors argue that the failure to categorize incel attacks as a threat to security is in line with the failure to see other types of misogynistic violence as a security threat. They point out that incel attacks are increasing; although incels are a relatively small group, they are responsible for a high death rate.<sup>101</sup>

Hoffman et al. believe that the threat from incels is politically based and should therefore be dealt with as a terrorist crime. However, they also argue that incel attacks can be divided into four categories: clear incel-motivated terrorist attacks; attacks with mixed motives that evidence the influence of incel ideology; acts of targeted violence perpetrated by self-professed involuntary celibates; and ex-post-facto incelism. Only

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<sup>96</sup> B. Van Brunt, C. Taylor, 2021, pp. 193–218.

<sup>97</sup> B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, 2020, p. 579.

<sup>98</sup> S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, pp. 156, 157.

<sup>99</sup> T. Koulouris, 2018, pp. 752, 756, 757.

<sup>100</sup> L. Bates, 2020, pp. 38, 39.

<sup>101</sup> S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, pp. 152–154, 156.

three of these categories fit the description of terrorism. Some people carry out attacks to make a political statement or to change something, while others do so only to take revenge.<sup>102</sup>

According to Tomkinson et al., incel attacks fall under the heading of violent extremism with ideological motives, which became a concept during the late 2000s. They claim that incels have a political agenda; what distinguishes incel attacks from other misogynistic violence is the fact that incels target both men and women.<sup>103</sup> However, incels always express a misogynistic ideology, even when they attack men. For this reason, incel violence should be classified as a threat to the security of society. Classifying this violence as a security threat, rather than gender-based violence, will cause it to be taken more seriously.<sup>104</sup> This rhetoric is very similar to the arguments generally made about gender-based violence: if violence does not affect men, it is not considered important to introduce serious measures. Bates believes that incel attacks are not considered terrorism because many people are afraid to upset men or to lump all white men together. She argues that attacks carried out by incels should count as terrorism. She also claims that the vast majority of mass murderers and terrorists have a history of violence against women.<sup>105</sup>

### 4.3 Summary

Incels, as both a phenomenon and a security threat, have attracted many different research approaches. Few of the articles described in this chapter reach the same conclusion. There are various different views on the factors that make incels a security threat. Some researchers argue that incels are a security threat because they target women; others say it is because they put the whole population at risk. There are also various views on how many attacks have been carried out by incels. Some people categorize an attack as an incel attack if it is carried out by someone who has previously called himself an incel; others call any attack an incel attack if it is carried out by a person with incel traits. As a result, some people think the first attack occurred in 2014, while others think it was 1938. Some say there have been only a handful of incel attacks, while others say there have

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<sup>102</sup> B. Hoffman, J. Ware, and E. Shapiro, 2020, pp. 568, 569, 577.

<sup>103</sup> S. Tomkinson, T. Harper, and K. Attwell, 2020, pp. 154, 155.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157, 158.

<sup>105</sup> L. Bates, 2020, pp. 2, 3, 48, 49, 186.

been 50 or more. The one thing that all of these researchers agree on is the fact that most incel perpetrators have some form of mental illness. Even here, views differ on how or whether this information is essential. In addition, most scholars have concluded that the far-right and incels have solid links and similar ideologies.

# 5 Analysis

*“Men are afraid that women will laugh at them.  
Women are afraid that men will kill them.”  
– Margaret Atwood<sup>106</sup>*

The analysis contains three steps. First, I will define the terms used in the following analyses. After that, I will use the terrorist cases to create a precedent. Finally, I will use the 8-step method to determine whether the other crimes count as terrorism or/and hate crimes.

## 5.1 Definitions of *terrorism*, *hate crime*, and *ideology*

When I reviewed previous research, I found no consistent definitions of the relevant concepts. To understand whether a crime is a terrorist crime, we need to understand various related concepts. There is no universal definition of terrorism, and those that exist are vague. As terrorist and hate crimes are similar, it is essential to know what a hate crime is to better understand terrorism. To know whether a terrorist crime is ideology-driven, we must understand what an ideology is. In this paper, I will try to work out the most common definitions of “terrorism,” “hate crime,” and “ideology.”

### 5.1.1 Terrorism

Although it is difficult to find agreed definitions of these terms, I have gathered information on how different governments and organizations define them. “Terrorism” is the most ambiguous term, but it has some standard components. I have read through 11 different sources that define terrorism. Table 1 lists the most common components of

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<sup>106</sup> M. Atwood, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/188039-men-are-afraid-that-women-will-laugh-at-them-women>.

terrorist crimes. Using the standard components and the way they are categorized in the definitions, I conclude that a fair definition of terrorism (used in this thesis) is as follows:

- Violating criminal laws; and
  - Compelling a government or an organization to perform or abstain from performing any act; or
  - Causing fear in a population or part of a population by
    - Endangering a person’s life or freedom, or causing death or serious bodily harm, with violence or threat of violence;
    - Seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic, or social structures of a country or an organization;
    - Having political, religious, ideological, or racial motives, among others; or
    - Causing damage to property, natural resources, the environment, or cultural heritage

**Table 1. Common components in terrorism definitions**<sup>107</sup>

Compelling a government or an organization to perform or abstain from performing any act	11
Causing fear in a population or part of a population	10
Endangering a person’s life or freedom, or causing death or serious bodily harm, with violence or the threat of violence	10
Seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic, or social structures of a country or an international organization	9
Having political, religious, ideological, or racial motives, among others	8
Damaging property, whether public or private property, natural resources, the environment, or cultural heritage	5
Violating criminal laws	4

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<sup>107</sup> Council of Europe. Article 6. *Guidelines on Human Rights and the Fight Against Terrorism*. 804<sup>th</sup> meeting [07/11/02]; Minister of Justice of Canada, Criminal Code R.S.C. [1985], c. C-46; 83.01 (1) (B); United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1566*, Point 3. 5053<sup>rd</sup> meeting [10/08/04]; UK Government, *Code of Practice*, Terrorism Act 2000, Article 2.2; Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigations, U.S. Code, Article 18 U.S.C 2331(5) *Domestic terrorism: Definitions, Terminology, and Methodology* [2020]; Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigations, Homeland Security Act, Article 6 U.S.C. 101(18), *Domestic terrorism: Definitions, Terminology, and Methodology* [2020]; Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, *Terrorism* [2021] 215; The Arab Convention for The Suppression of Terrorism. Article 1 (2) [1998]; Organization of African Unity. *OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism*, Article 1(3); Parliament of Australia; *Chapter 5 International Terrorism, Division 100–102 of the Criminal Code*, Article 5.5; Global Terrorism Database, *Defining Terrorism*; G. A. Ackerman and M. Burnham, *Towards a Definition of Terrorist Ideology*, 2019, p. 12.

### 5.1.2 Hate crimes

I have arrived at a definition of hate crimes in a similar way. Although defining hate crimes is fairly straightforward, the people covered under the hate-crime laws differ from country to country. Table 2 presents the groups of people most commonly included in definitions of hate crimes. To construct a definition for this paper, I have chosen the biases most frequently included in hate-crime definitions.

A hate crime is defined in this thesis as follows: *an illegal act that expresses a bias against a race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, nationality, or gender.*

**Table 2. Common biases in hate crime definitions.**<sup>108</sup>

Race	7
Religion	7
Sexual orientation	7
Ethnicity	6
Gender identity	5
Disability	4
Nationality	4
Gender	3

Interestingly, gender is not usually included in definitions of hate crimes. As hate crimes and terrorism are closely related, gender-based groups may not be given serious consideration as groups that could potentially be targeted by terrorists.

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<sup>108</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Hate Crime*, The Hate Crime Statistics Act (28 U.S.C. § 534); Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Hate Crime*, The National Crime Victimization Survey; Bureau of Justice Assistance, *A Policymaker's Guide to Hate Crimes*. 1999; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Hate Crimes*; The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *What is Hate Crime*, Hate Crime Reporting; The Crown Prosecution Service, *Hate Crime*; Svenska Polismyndigheten. *Hatbrott—lagar och fakta*; The University of Sydney Law School; the *Australian Hate Crime Network*.

### 5.1.3 Ideology

Most governments and organizations use the word “ideology,” without defining what an ideology is. The definitions used in this part of the analysis are therefore drawn primarily from dictionaries. The common ground among definitions of ideology is a mindset involving something specific. I argue that an ideology consists of three features:

1. **Theory:** an ideology is a set of theories about what the world, individual groups, society, or politics are like. An ideology is structured; it makes use of what its adherents consider to be scientific and objective truths.
2. **Beliefs:** an ideology is a system of mental beliefs that motivate and justify the faith of adherents. An ideology is a mixture of norms, values, opinions, and the belief that they represent the only right set of theories and beliefs.
3. **Change:** An ideology intends to change the world, based on ideas of how things are and how they should be. Ideologies try to explain the world and divide society and individuals into groups, based on the characteristics of “bad” groups that need to change.<sup>109</sup>

## 5.2 Precedents of terrorist crimes

By reading the verdicts in terrorist cases, I was able to identify some common themes. In 5/5 of the terrorist cases (P2, P3, P6, P8, and P9), the perpetrator had a clear ideological position. In 4/5 cases, there was a political connection or/and motive. Of the perpetrators, 4/5 referred to their actions as acts of war; 5/5 wanted to invoke fear and/or did invoke fear in the population or part of the population. In addition, 2/5 of the perpetrators had an apparent mental illness, although it was not severe enough to reduce the sentence. Overall, 5/5 of the perpetrators had clear target groups, while 1/5 sought revenge. In 4/5 cases, the perpetrators planned their attacks carefully, over a long period of time. The case of P9 has no official verdict, due to the perpetrator’s youth. As this case was hard to gather information on, some of the themes do not apply to this perpetrator.

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<sup>109</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, “*Ideology*,” Merriam-Webster, “*Ideology*,” Oxford Reference, “*Ideology*,” H. M., Johnson, D. Kellner, W. L., McBride, J. W., See, and E. Shils. “*Ideology*,” Encyclopedia.com.; G. A. Ackerman and M. Burnham, *Towards a Definition of Terrorist Ideology*, 2019, p. 7.

## **Ideology**

As mentioned before, an “ideology” is a set of theories about the world and how to change it. Through ideology, people motivate themselves and justify their actions and thoughts. In all five cases, the perpetrators had a clear ideological motivation. P2 was a far-right nationalist and a follower of the Knights Templar ideology. Although P2 committed his attack in the name of this ideology,<sup>110</sup> the Knights Templar ideology may not have any other adherents. P3 was a far-right white supremacist, who used ideology to motivate and justify his attacks.<sup>111</sup> P6 attacked an African American man, motivated by a belief in far-right white supremacy.<sup>112</sup> P8 wrote a manifesto to explain his ideology and showcase his far-right beliefs.<sup>113</sup> P10 was convicted of terrorism, based primarily on his ideology. He was an outspoken incel, motivated to carry out his attack by the incel ideology.<sup>114</sup>

## **Politics**

Politics and ideology are essential factors to consider when determining whether an attack should be categorized as a terrorist crime. P2, P3, P6, and P8 committed terrorist crimes with clear political motives and the desire to make politicians change their policies. All of them wanted to change immigration policies in some way.<sup>115</sup> P2 also destroyed actual political structures by bombing government buildings.<sup>116</sup> P9’s verdict and hearing transcripts are not available, so it is difficult to know whether his motives were political.<sup>117</sup> As this information is unavailable, I will not speculate.

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<sup>110</sup> Oslo Tingrett, Case No. TOSLO-2011 188627-24—RG-2012-1153 [08/24/12]

<sup>111</sup> Judiciary of England and Wales, *The Queen v. Pavlo Lapshyn* [10/25/13].

<sup>112</sup> Manhattan District Attorney’s Office, *D.A. Vance Secures Domestic Terrorism Conviction of James Jackson For White Supremacist Murder of Timothy Caughman* [01/23/19]

<sup>113</sup> High Court of New Zealand, *The Queen v. Brenton Harrison Tarrant*. Case No. CRI-2019-009-2468 (2020) NZHC 2192 [08/27/20].

<sup>114</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Updated Charge, Young Person Charged with First-Degree Murder and Attempted Murder, Updated to First-Degree Murder—Terrorist Activity and Attempted Murder—Terrorist Activity, Homicide #12/2020, Dufferin and Wilson Avenue*.

<sup>115</sup> Oslo Tingrett, Case No. TOSLO-2011 188627-24—RG-2012-1153 [08/24/12]; Judiciary of England and Wales, *The Queen v. Pavlo Lapshyn* [10/25/13]; Manhattan District Attorney’s Office, *D.A. Vance Secures Domestic Terrorism Conviction of James Jackson For White Supremacist Murder of Timothy Caughman*; High Court of New Zealand, *The Queen v. Brenton Harrison Tarrant*. Case No. CRI-2019-009-2468 (2020) NZHC 2192 [08/27/20].

<sup>116</sup> Oslo Tingrett. Case No. TOSLO-2011 188627-24—RG-2012-1153 [08/24/12].

<sup>117</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Updated Charge, Young Person Charged with First-Degree Murder and Attempted Murder, Updated to First-Degree Murder—Terrorist Activity and Attempted Murder—Terrorist Activity, Homicide #12/2020, Dufferin and Wilson Avenue*.

## War

Although the use of war as a metaphor for action is not part of the definition of terrorism, war metaphors can be used to identify rhetorical similarities between cases. P9 did not refer to his attacks as acts of war.<sup>118</sup> P2 called his attack a political act of war and used the words “knight” and “soldier” to describe himself.<sup>119</sup> Both P3 and P6 described their attacks as the start of a race war, which they hoped to inspire other people to join.<sup>120</sup> P8 described his attack as part of a war on refugees and immigrants.<sup>121</sup>

## Fear

Invoking fear in a population or part of a population is an essential element of terrorism. P2, P3, P6, and P8 all said explicitly that they wanted to cause fear in society. Their verdicts show that they all succeeded.<sup>122</sup> Although there is little information about P9, the official statements emphasize that his crime was a one-off event and that no one should fear further attacks.<sup>123</sup> This statement suggests that P9 intended to frighten part of the population, and the officials hoped to play that down.

## Mental illness/under the influence of drugs

A diagnosis of mental illness can lead to non-conviction. In many cases, the question is where to draw the line when defining mental illness. Some mental-health conditions, such as psychoses or paranoid schizophrenia, can affect the crime. Other mental-health conditions can affect how the perpetrator thinks about the crime; for example, severe autism often makes it difficult for people to understand other peoples’ feelings or to tell right from wrong. Other mental-health conditions, such as mild autism, depression, and narcissism, do not affect perpetrators’ intentions. In the verdicts on P3 and P6, there was no

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Oslo Tingrett, Case No. TOSLO-2011 188627-24—RG-2012-1153 [08/24/12].

<sup>120</sup> Judiciary of England and Wales, *The Queen v. Pavlo Lapshyn* [10/25/13]. Manhattan District Attorney’s Office, *DA Vance: James Jackson Sentenced to Life Without Parole For Murdering Timothy Caughman to Incite a “Race War.”*

<sup>121</sup> High Court of New Zealand, *The Queen v. Brenton Harrison Tarrant*. Case No. CRI-2019-009-2468 (2020) NZHC 2192 [08/27/20].

<sup>122</sup> Oslo Tingrett, Case No. TOSLO-2011 188627-24—RG-2012-1153 [08/24/12]; Judiciary of England and Wales, *The Queen v. Pavlo Lapshyn* [10/25/13]; Manhattan District Attorney’s Office, *James Jackson Indicted on Charges of Murder in the First and Second Degree as a Hate Crime*; High Court of New Zealand, *The Queen v. Brenton Harrison Tarrant*, Case No. CRI-2019-009-2468 (2020) NZHC 2192 [08/27/20].

<sup>123</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Updated Charge, Young Person Charged with First-Degree Murder and Attempted Murder, Updated to First-Degree Murder—Terrorist Activity and Attempted Murder—Terrorist Activity, Homicide #12/2020, Dufferin and Wilson Avenue.*

official discussion of the perpetrator's mental state.<sup>124</sup> P2 was evaluated to determine whether he was psychotic or a paranoid schizophrenic. The court concluded that he did not have either condition during the attack, although he was using steroids. He also had grandiose and narcissistic characteristics.<sup>125</sup> P8's mental state was also discussed; as in the case of P2, the court concluded that he had no mental illness that would impact the verdict. Although he was autistic, his autism did not affect the verdict because the court concluded that he knew what he was doing. They also noted his grandiose and narcissistic characteristics.<sup>126</sup> There is no information about P9's mental health.<sup>127</sup>

### **Specific target group**

Analyzing the groups targeted in attacks can show whether terrorist acts should also be considered hate crimes, based on perpetrator intent. All of the perpetrators studied here targeted specific groups. P2 targeted people connected to the leading Norwegian political party because he hated its immigration policies.<sup>128</sup> P6 targeted black people and was convicted of hate crimes as well as terrorism.<sup>129</sup> P3 and P8 targeted Muslims and P9 targeted women.<sup>130</sup> The definition of hate crime in this thesis includes religion and gender; P3, P8, and P9 could also have been convicted of hate crimes. The group targeted by P2 was political, even though he was driven by racial hatred. Therefore, this crime is not covered by hate-crime law.

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<sup>124</sup> Judiciary of England and Wales, *The Queen v. Pavlo Lapshyn* [10/25/13]; Manhattan District Attorney's Office, *D.A. Vance Secures Domestic Terrorism Conviction of James Jackson For White Supremacist Murder of Timothy Caughman*; Manhattan District Attorney's Office, *DA Vance: James Jackson Sentenced to Life Without Parole For Murdering Timothy Caughman to Incite a "Race War;"* Manhattan District Attorney's Office, *James Jackson Indicted on Charges of Murder in the First and Second Degree as a Hate Crime*.

<sup>125</sup> Oslo Tingrett, Case No. TOSLO-2011 188627-24—RG-2012-1153 [08/24/12].

<sup>126</sup> High Court of New Zealand, *The Queen v. Brenton Harrison Tarrant*. Case No. CRI-2019-009-2468 (2020) NZHC 2192 [08/27/20].

<sup>127</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Updated Charge, Young Person Charged with First-Degree Murder and Attempted Murder, Updated to First-Degree Murder-Terrorist Activity and Attempted Murder-Terrorist Activity, Homicide #12/2020, Dufferin and Wilson Avenue*.

<sup>128</sup> Oslo Tingrett, Case No. TOSLO-2011 188627-24—RG-2012-1153 [08/24/12].

<sup>129</sup> Manhattan District Attorney's Office, *James Jackson Indicted on Charges of Murder in the First and Second Degree as a Hate Crime*.

<sup>130</sup> Judiciary of England and Wales, *The Queen v. Pavlo Lapshyn* [10/25/13]; High Court of New Zealand, *The Queen v. Brenton Harrison Tarrant*, Case No. CRI-2019-009-2468 (2020) NZHC 2192 [08/27/20]; Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Updated Charge, Young Person Charged with First-Degree Murder and Attempted Murder, Updated to First-Degree Murder-Terrorist Activity and Attempted Murder-Terrorist Activity, Homicide #12/2020, Dufferin and Wilson Avenue*.

## Revenge

Although revenge was discussed in the verdict/statements of only one case, this factor is worth bringing up because incels are often described as revenge-driven. P8 said that he was motivated by revenge in the attack.<sup>131</sup>

## 5.3 Using the 8-step method to investigate incel cases

This section investigates incel cases using the 8-step method. It uses precedents set in previous cases to better understand which themes are prerequisites. As discussed above, motive and effect are prerequisites for terrorism. For this reason, motive is part of the objective prerequisite in this 8-step method.

### Step 1: What crimes are investigated?

P1, P4, P5, and P7 committed murder and attempted murder through terrorist and hate crimes. In the case of P10, the investigation identified preparations for terrorism and hate crimes.

### Step 2: Are the crime-description prerequisites fulfilled?<sup>132</sup>

Based on precedent and the definition of terrorism, an ideology or political motive is generally involved. Many of these perpetrators described their crimes as acts of war. They aimed to invoke fear and had a clear target group.

P1 did not have a clear ideological or political purpose. Although his blog suggests that he shared the incel ideology, he lacked a clear ideological or political purpose. He did not write about invoking fear or describe his crime as an act a war. He did have a clear target group: women.<sup>133</sup> Based on this information, I conclude that he did not meet the criteria for terrorism, although he did meet the hate-crime criteria.

P4 had a clear ideology and a political agenda. His manifesto included a political plan and he had a strong revenge motive. He wrote about wanting women to fear him and clearly targeted women and chads.<sup>134</sup> As his target group included both women and men,

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<sup>131</sup> High Court of New Zealand, *The Queen v. Brenton Harrison Tarrant*. Case No. CRI-2019-009-2468 (2020) NZHC 2192 [08/27/20].

<sup>132</sup> J. Ågren, 2018, pp. 33–36.

<sup>133</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, pp. 219–227.

<sup>134</sup> E. Rodger, *My Twisted World—The Story of Elliot Rodger*

his act does not fit the definition of a hate crime. I therefore argue that his act has the objective prerequisites for terrorism but not for a hate crime.

P5 did not mention incels specifically. However, he used the same language and referred to other incel attacks. It is clear from his manifesto that he was inspired by the incel ideology. So, although the word “incel” does not appear in his manifesto, his views reflect incel ideology. Although he had no political motives, he encouraged other people to join the “war” and take up arms. By asking people to continue the fight after he was gone, he tried to invoke fear in society by claiming that more attacks would follow. Although his manifesto expressed a hatred of women and black men, his shooting did not specifically target those groups. He therefore meets the conditions for terrorism but not for hate crimes.<sup>135</sup>

The case of P7 is difficult to analyze, due to his inconsistent statements. In the hearings, it was clear that he sometimes lied; however, it was hard to tell when he was lying and when he was telling the truth. The court concluded that he was not an incel, but that he referred to P4 and incel ideology to invoke more fear in society. The court also found that he lacked classic incel traits. Sometimes P7 claimed to believe in incel ideology; at other times, he said that he only used it to become more famous. He hit people with his car at random, but later said that he wished he had killed more women. He referred to the military and rebellion and said that he wanted an incel war. He also claimed that he wanted to become a martyr. The general conclusion is that he was not an incel himself, but used the group and its ideology to invoke fear and start a war. As he did not have a clear target group, the case fulfills the conditions for terrorism but not for hate crimes.<sup>136</sup>

To date, P10 has only been sentenced for making false statements to the F.B.I. For this reason, there is little information about his motives. However, the notes found next to his homemade bombs have been released. He is now charged with creating explosive devices, but has not yet been convicted. P10 prepared for an attack, but did not carry it out. He made bombs in order to commit a suicide bombing in a mall; he intended to explode himself close to “hot cheerleaders.” He does not seem to have had a clear political motive. Although he did not mention incels, he did mention P4, a well-known incel attacker. P10 also had a connection to the incel ideology. He planned to bomb the mall to

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<sup>135</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, pp. 230–234.

<sup>136</sup> Ontario Superior Court of Justice, *Between: Her Majesty the Queen and Alek Minassian*, Case No. CR-18-00000612-0000 [03/03/21].

create as much damage as possible. Although he did not talk about wanting to create fear, a suicide bombing in a mall would inevitably invoke fear. He had a clear target group: hot cheerleaders. However, he did not target women in general, and cheerleaders do not count as a protected group under hate-crime legislation.<sup>137</sup> For these reasons, his attack does not meet the conditions for a hate crime. Although it may meet the conditions for terrorism, I do not have enough information to assess that.

### **Step 3 Can these crimes be permitted with an objective discharge?**

An objective discharge means that the perpetrator acted in self-defense or distress, had legal authority or consent, followed orders from an authority figure, or acted in social adequacy.<sup>138</sup> None of the crimes discussed above have warranted such a discharge.

### **Step 4: Based on the objective prerequisite, are these crimes permitted or unlawful?**

Based on the objective prerequisite, P4, P5, and P7 committed unlawful acts of terrorism, while P10 probably committed an unlawful terrorist act. P1 also committed an unlawful hate crime.

### **Step 5: Does the crime description require intent or negligence?**

The definitions of terrorism and hate crimes require intent. No perpetrator can be sentenced for these crimes, based on negligence alone.

### **Step 6: Does the perpetrator's intent cover objective props?**

The criminal intent in these cases differs from that in other crimes. As previously discussed, the perpetrator's intent goes beyond the intended outcome to include effect and motive. This step is linked to Step 2.

Generally speaking, intent indicates that the perpetrator carried out the illegal act with knowledge of what he or she was doing.<sup>139</sup> There are three types of intent: premeditated intent, indirect intent, and intentional indifference. According to Jack Ågren, intent is premediated when the perpetrator intends to commit a specific crime and wants an expected outcome. Intent is indirect when the crime is carried out with an understanding

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<sup>137</sup> United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, *United States of America v. Cole Carini*, Case No. 1:20MJ84 [06/05/20].

<sup>138</sup> J. Ågren, 2018, Chapter 4.

<sup>139</sup> J. Ågren, 2018, p. 57.

of its potential outcome. Intentional indifference indicates that the perpetrator does not know the outcome or care whether it is achieved.<sup>140</sup>

P1's blog reveals a clear intention underpinning his action. He planned the attack carefully for several months and understood the consequences if he managed to pull it off.<sup>141</sup> P4 also understood the consequences of his action. Among other things, he wanted to instill fear and to start a war against women and chads. He had terrorist intent, even though he did not use the term "terrorism."<sup>142</sup> P5 intended to kill people and hoped that his attack would influence more people to undertake similar attacks.<sup>143</sup> In precedent cases, the courts discussed whether the perpetrator had a mental illness that made him unable to understand what he was doing. In the case of P7, the court discussed whether he understood what his actions could lead to and the meaning of his crimes. It concluded that he intended to kill people and knew what his action would do.<sup>144</sup> P10 intended to commit a suicide bombing, although he was caught before the attack. He had clear intent to kill people and evoke fear.<sup>145</sup> In all cases, the perpetrators' intent constituted an objective prerequisite.

### **Step 7: Should the perpetrator be excused through a subjective discharge?**

A subjective discharge requires one of the following three situations: 1. The perpetrator thought that he/she was in a situation that required self-defense, although the situation did not actually require it. Alternatively, the perpetrator got so worked up in the situation that he/she committed the crime out of fear. 2. The perpetrator thought that what he/she did was legal and the evidence showed that he/she could not have known it was illegal. 3. The perpetrator withdrew from the crime because he/she no longer wanted to commit it. As Jack Ågren points out, for the last discharge to be considered, it must be clear that the perpetrator withdrew by choice and not because he/she was afraid of being caught.<sup>146</sup> None of the cases above can be excused on subjective grounds.

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<sup>140</sup> J. Ågren, 2018, pp. 57, 58.

<sup>141</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, pp. 219–227.

<sup>142</sup> E. Rodger, *My Twisted World—The Story of Elliot Rodger*

<sup>143</sup> B. Van Brunt and C. Taylor, 2021, pp. 230–234.

<sup>144</sup> Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Between: *Her Majesty the Queen and Alek Minassian*, Case No. CR-18-00000612-0000 [03/03/21].

<sup>145</sup> United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, *United States of America v. Cole Carini*, Case No. 1:20MJ84 [Date: 06/05/20].

<sup>146</sup> J. Ågren, 2018, pp. 63–65.

**Step 8: Based on the objective and subjective prerequisites, has the perpetrator committed the crime?**

Considering both the objective and subjective prerequisites, P4, P5, and P7 committed terrorist crimes, while P1 committed a hate crime. There is insufficient information on P10 to reach a fair conclusion.

## 6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reflect on the questions I asked at the beginning of the thesis. I connect the analyses with the theory, and discuss my findings. I also discuss the limitations of this thesis and areas that need to be further researched. I start this chapter by summarizing the key findings from the analyses.

### 6.1 Summary of the analyses

The first section suggested definitions of the concepts of “terrorism,” “hate crime,” and “ideology.” In collating these, I realized that even the smallest difference could make a significant difference in the definitions. Although definitions from various sources were similar, they differed too much to be universal. I also concluded that gender was not included within the hate-crime criteria in many definitions, indicating that gender-based groups are not considered targets in many definitions of terrorism.

The precedent analysis showed that the following characteristics were found in almost every verdict: ideological connection, political connection, referring to war, wanting to invoke fear or/and having invoked fear, and planning the attack over a long period of time. In some cases, revenge and mental illness were also discussed. However, revenge and mental illness were not major factors in these cases. The Case of P9 was hard to analyze because the verdict had not yet been released.

Using the 8-step method, I argued that P4, P5, and P7 committed terrorist crimes and that P1 committed a hate crime. I could not find enough information about P10 to reach a final conclusion, but existing information indicates that he should be convicted of preparation of terrorism.

## 6.2 Reflections

The questions I had at the beginning of the thesis were as follows:

- Are patriarchy and misogyny so widespread in society that attacks on women are taken less seriously than other types of attacks?
- Can incel attacks be categorized as terrorism?
- Is the problem misogyny or the lack of an adequate definition of terrorism?

According to Manne and noted above, misogyny works as a way to uphold the patriarchy.<sup>147</sup> Manne argues that misogyny exists in several aspects of the law, and that it is a common misinterpretation to assume that crimes and biases against men cannot be misogynistic.<sup>148</sup> Since many of the perpetrators targeted both men and women, with hatred of women as a motive, these crimes can be categorized as misogyny, according to Manne's theory.

She also points out that misogyny cannot exist in societies without a patriarchal order. In other words, citizens, law enforcement, politicians, and judges need to have a patriarchal order for misogyny to thrive.<sup>149</sup> The fact that incels are motivated by misogyny indicates that society has a patriarchal order. Even though the discussion about the patriarchy increases and measures are taken to counteract the system, I argue that the patriarchy still are thriving. There are indicators in the law that society is beneficial for men and reduces women's freedom. Misogyny in the law is not a new phenomenon. For example, there is currently a debate in Sweden about changing specific laws to protect women; this indicates that the original laws were not beneficial for women. Even though the women's movement continues to move forward in some aspects, there are still debates on women's liberty, involving issues such as abortion. A law that prevents women from having abortions has the same spirit as the incel ideology, which argues that women should not be allowed to make decisions about their own bodies and sexuality. For example, Texas signed a bill in late May this year to stop abortion after week six. The consequences of this are that many women who get pregnant do not have the opportunity to choose to do

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<sup>147</sup> K. Manne, *Down Girl*, 2019, p. 64.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 65, 68, 75, 76.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

an abortion as they might not even know that they are pregnant in week six.<sup>150</sup> The right to make decisions about women's bodies is institutionalized.

This thesis is about some men's view that they have the right to decide what happens to women's bodies. The pattern of being convinced to decide over women is shown in several aspects, whether a man kills several people because he thinks women should not be able to control their own sexuality; women's credibility is questioned in rape cases, as if they do not know what has been done to their bodies; or a woman's right to decide what happens in her own uterus is questioned. It seems clear that higher levels of law enforcement uphold the patriarchal order. If the patriarchal order did not exist at higher levels of society, there would not be anything for misogyny to uphold.

Manne argues that misogyny cannot stand alone; it is also recognized in relation to something or someone else.<sup>151</sup> The comparison in Chapter 5.2 shows that misogynistic attacks resemble similar crimes but do not share the same target group. There is support for the theory that misogynistic attacks are not taken as seriously as other crimes. The conclusion I have drawn is that these misogynistic crimes have been investigated from a patriarchal point of view; this leads to the question of whether patriarchal interpretations of crime can fairly assess whether misogynistic crimes are acts of terrorism.

I have shown that some incel crimes fit the legal definition of terrorism, although others do not, and some specific cases lack sufficient information. As mentioned above, hate-crime definitions do not include biases against women. If hate crimes do not cover women, do legal definitions of terrorism cover them? The research above suggests that terrorist laws cover women as a target group in theory. However, terrorist crimes against women (or committed in the name of misogyny) still do not count as terrorism in practice.

Definitions of the terms, "hate crime," "terrorism," and "ideology" have been an essential part of this thesis. The incel perpetrators discussed above are mentioned in the various books and articles cited in this thesis. However, they have all been described as "mass killers" or criminals on a "killing spree." Even in incel research, there is little mention of terrorism. In the case of P7, there was no mention of terrorism in the verdict, even though he had a clear intention to create fear. He drove a car into people; had he been Muslim or a member of the far-right, this act would surely have created a discussion about terrorism, but not in his case. P7 claimed to have acted in the name of the incel ideology

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<sup>150</sup> C. Kelly. *Texas governor signs "heartbeat" abortion ban into law*. CNN Politics. 2021

<sup>151</sup> K. Manne, *Down Girl*, 2019, pp. 64, 67.

and, by extension, against women.<sup>152</sup> This case clearly shows that the law does not consider an attack perpetrated by someone with a misogynistic motive to be a terrorist act. However, based on the definition in this thesis, it should not matter what group the perpetrator targets. As long as the crime fits the criteria for terrorism, it should be categorized as such. The exception to this thesis is the case of P9,<sup>153</sup> who was convicted as a terrorist, but only because Canada changed its action plan after the case of P7. Canadian law now explicitly says that incels have an extremist ideology and can therefore be considered terrorists.<sup>154</sup> As we can see from cases P7 and P9, it is crucial for countries to have an unequivocal legal definition of terrorism that covers every eventuality, especially when lone-wolf actors are becoming a more significant threat. As this thesis has noted many times, there is no clear definition of terrorism worldwide. It is therefore up to organizations, countries, states, and even judges and attorneys to clearly define what constitutes a terrorist crime. As every case can involve a new interpretation of the law, there can be a considerable difference between cases. The lack of clear definitions contributes to the general confusion over what terrorism is and what it is not.

In this paper, I have gathered enough information to argue that misogyny and the lack of an agreed definition are a significant part of why incel attacks are not categorized as terrorist attacks. However, I do not have enough information to conclude that these factors are entirely responsible. There are several different reasons why gender-based terrorism is not categorized as such, and further research are needed to determine why.

### 6.3 Further research

Men's violence against women is not a new thing in society. It is a global pandemic that is not exclusive to a specific country or culture. The rise in misogynistic attacks in Western countries has a solid connection to the increase in feminist movements. For this thesis, I chose a narrow field and focused on an even narrower theme. I could not address all of

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<sup>152</sup> Ontario Superior Court of Justice, *Between: Her Majesty the Queen and Alek Minassian*, Case No. CR-18-00000612-0000 [03/03/21].

<sup>153</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Updated Charge, Young Person Charged with First-Degree Murder and Attempted Murder, Updated to First-Degree Murder—Terrorist Activity and Attempted Murder—Terrorist Activity, Homicide #12/2020, Dufferin and Wilson Avenue*.

<sup>154</sup> Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *CSIS Public Report 2019*, 2020. pp. 11, 13.

the issues associated with gender-based terrorism. I think it is essential to do further research in this field, as gender-based terrorism is an increasing problem.

To fairly assess why incel cases are not categorized as terrorism, I would have needed more cases, in which the perpetrators were alive and had received verdicts. Further studies should compare other aspects of society to determine whether misogyny is part of every event that occurs in society. They should also include other crimes committed by men against women to see how they relate to gender-based terrorism. Another aspect of the topic, which I discussed only briefly, is the connection between misogyny and racism. There needs to be an intersectional analysis of these crimes.

There is also a lack of research on why mental illness is often discussed in misogynistic attacks when mental illness is rarely discussed in terrorist cases committed by jihadis or far-right. I think this is a noteworthy aspect as discussing mental illness minimizes the systematic problem with misogyny.

As I carried out research for this thesis, I realized that misogyny features in all kinds of terrorist attacks, whether they are committed by jihadis, incels, or the far-right. Few studies have investigated how misogyny affects terrorism in general.

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