

James Madison University

## JMU Scholarly Commons

---

Dissertations, 2020-current

The Graduate School

---

6-25-2021

# Virtual manhood acts within social networks: The enactment of toxic masculinity on Reddit

Christian D. Haase

*James Madison University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/diss202029>



Part of the [Clinical Psychology Commons](#), [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), and the [Science and Technology Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Haase, Christian D., "Virtual manhood acts within social networks: The enactment of toxic masculinity on Reddit" (2021). *Dissertations, 2020-current*. 39.

<https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/diss202029/39>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, 2020-current by an authorized administrator of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [dc\\_admin@jmu.edu](mailto:dc_admin@jmu.edu).

Virtual Manhood Acts within Social Networks: The Enactment of  
Toxic Masculinity on Reddit

Christian Dieter Haase

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Psy.D. in Combined Clinical & School Psychology

Department of Graduate Psychology

August 2021

---

FACULTY COMMITTEE:

Committee Chair: Anne Stewart, Ph.D.

Committee Members/ Readers:

Robin Anderson, Psy.D.

Kenneth Critchfield, Ph.D.

Matthew Ezzell, Ph.D.

Kathleen Moore, Ph.D.

## Dedication

This project is dedicated to the victims, survivors, and their loved ones of the Toronto and Tallahassee attacks, as well as to all those impacted by gender-based violence of all forms.

## Acknowledgments

Anne Stewart: Thank you for always believing in my potential and giving me a home at JMU. Your wisdom, patience, guidance, sanctuary, and care have been a secure base for me. I will forever be grateful for our relationship and am honored to be a branch in the grand tree that is your life.

Ken Critchfield: I admire who you are as a person and a clinician so deeply. Thank you for being a safe haven at JMU, for sharing in your deep wisdom, and nerding out with me about music. Your punk rock spirit has given me permission to let mine shine!

Robin Anderson: Your leadership style is what I hope to embody someday. You lead with conviction and care. These qualities are rare in the leaders I have encountered. Thank you for always reminding me to care for myself throughout this project.

Matt Ezzell: You are a superstar! To me, you embody, live, and breathe manhood in its most wonderful form. I see in you and your work, strength, accountability, tenderness, and connection. Thank you for modeling these things deeply. I'm so glad you were a part of my experience at JMU.

Kathleen Moore: You are a radical bad a\*\*! Your energy and spirit for this work sustained me, inspired me, and pushed me. Thank you for being the force you were during this project, and all the insight you provided into worlds we would not have come to know as deeply without you.

Coding team: Shelly-Ann and Hannah, thank you for your enduring wisdom, motivation, and patience. The way you two showed up for this project, considering all the things happening in your grad school lives, was inspirational. I am so grateful for you both.

Jason Cha: The moment you encouraged me to apply to JMU over coffee at Northside Social, when I had already decided I wasn't going to, that brief but important moment, forever changed my life. I am so grateful for your words of wisdom then, and your friendship now.

UConn Colleagues: To my Husky family: Jenn, Sam, Carlos, my cohort, and so many others, thank you for the support this year during internship. I am so grateful for you and the time spent (mostly virtual) in Storrs.

Smith, Olivia, and Amos: You three have brought me so much joy and playfulness. You bring out all of my favorite parts. I love you all so much.

Oma and Opa: You are enduring symbols of hard work, faith, loyalty, and love. You have been a protective safety net in literal and metaphorical ways all my life. Thank you for caring for me, I hope I've made you proud. I love you both so much!

Andrea, Paul, Sofia, and Derek: Over the course of this project you have brought me into your family with open arms and sustained me in ways I will forever be thankful for. I am immensely grateful for each of you collectively and individually, and for reminding me to “be sweet!” I love you all!

Teresa: My dearest Aunt. You are truly my guardian angel. Thank you for believing in me during times when I felt there were few that did. I would truly not be where I am today without your omnipresent care. You have always been there wondering how I am and what I need. This alone has slowly changed the tides of the shadow parts within me. I not only now have been able to ask myself these questions more frequently, I can now with presence, ask these questions deeply to others. That is your doing. I love you very much.

My friends and family: Laughter is one of my most favorite parts of life. Thank you for bringing this to me. It connects us, which is also one of my favorite things in life. I could not have survived grad school without so many of you. I love you all very much.

Julia: My partner, my love, my grounding, my shelter, my light, my sweet way. The inspiration for this project. During grad school, and certainly while completing this dissertation, you frequently invited me to play, to go into nature, to take breaks, to step away and connect. Although half the time I begrudgingly obliged (and sometimes didn’t oblige at all), you protected my spirit. That is who you are, a goddess protector spirit, that I am grateful to be forever connected to. I look forward to the years ahead in which we can spend time connected to all the wonderful things in the world, free from the constraints of grad school. We did it! I love you so very much!

## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Figures.....	viii
Abstract.....	ix
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Literature Review.....	8
Toxic Masculinity.....	8
Social Networks.....	16
Toxic Masculinity Online.....	25
Virtual Manhood Acts.....	32
Reinforcement of Toxic Masculinity in Virtual Social Spaces.....	34
Web-Scraping.....	40
Summary of the Literature Review.....	42
III. Methods.....	45
Research Design.....	46
Qualitative Data Analyses.....	54
Data Analysis and Interpretation Considerations.....	59
Conclusion.....	62
IV. Results.....	64
Data Obtained.....	64
Virtual Manhood Acts.....	67
Inductive Analyses Results.....	76
Shared Themes Across the Communities.....	97
Memos.....	98
Conclusion.....	103
V. Discussion.....	105
Key Findings.....	105
Implications.....	116

Research Reflections.....	131
Researchers Reflections.....	137
Appendix A: Developing the Study.....	140
Appendix B: Incel Lexicon.....	143
Appendix C: Men’s Rights and Pick-Up Artist Lexicon.....	160
Endnotes.....	175
References.....	177

## List of Tables

Table 1: Qualitative Data Overview.....	66
Table 2: VMA Coded Occurrences Between Groups Totals.....	68
Table 3: VMA Coded Occurrences Within Groups Totals.....	68
Table 4: Inductive Themes Identified within r/IncelsWithoutHate.....	77
Table 5: Inductive Themes Identified within r/MensRights.....	88



List of Figures

Figure 1: Reddit Discussion Board Example.....18

Figure 2: Keyword Matrix.....51

Figure 3: Modified Constructivist Grounded Theory Used for This Study.....55

## Abstract

Toxic masculinity (TM) has emerged as a label for the western hegemonic masculine ideal, which is generally defined by the pressure for boys and men to be aggressive and dominant, restrict emotional expression, and marginalize women and others that do not adhere to these values (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kupers, 2005). This phenomenon increases the risk for male identified individuals to engage in general acts of bigotry, especially gender-based violence (APA, 2018; Baugher & Gazmararian, 2015; FBI, 2007; Feder, Levant, & Dean, 2010). A contemporary touchpoint associated with proliferating TM ideologies is participation in online anonymous “toxic technoculture” social network communities (Massanari, 2017; Salter, 2018). A timely investigation was conducted by Moloney and Love (2018) that explored the enactments of masculinity in virtual online spaces. They subsequently introduced the concept of Virtual Manhood Acts (VMA) which provides a framework to understand how masculinity is observed online. VMA were characterized as behaviors enacted to maintain a heterosexist environment and to oppress women and others in virtual social spaces. Prior to this study there was limited empirical understanding of how problematic and toxic enactments of masculinity, evident in society, are also enacted in virtual spaces. This study addresses the call to investigate enactments of VMA on other online social platforms. This qualitative investigation of the enactment of VMA was conducted on Reddit, the most popular social network website and seventh most trafficked website in North America (Hardwick, 2020, May 9). Data was captured before and after two publicized mass femicide events from two Manosphere connected Reddit community forums (r/IncelsWithoutHate & r/MensRights). The identified forums have been implicated as featuring misogynistic and

bigoted ideological posts. Data was analyzed utilizing the a priori concept of VMA and a modified constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014). This hybrid deductive and inductive approach allowed for identifiable, novel, and divergent themes of manhood enactments to emerge. The results and implications of this study are discussed with select psychological frameworks and other fields of study in mind.

*Keywords: Virtual Manhood Acts, Toxic Masculinity, Reddit*

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

A groundbreaking study conducted by Moloney and Love (2018) directly explored the enactments of masculinity on the social media platform Twitter during the highly publicized celebrity nude photo leak in 2014 known as “The Fappening.” The study was done in effort to contribute to developing a deeper understanding of manhood acts performed in virtual social spaces. Their qualitative analyses revealed four “virtual manhood acts” (VMA) commonly used to enforce gender inequality and establish status in a heterosexist hierarchy. This included (1) Creation of a homosocial, heterosexist space; (2) Sexualization of women; (3) Signaling possession of a heterosexual, male body; and (4) Humor as a tool of oppression. Their work forwarded an empirically-informed framework for understanding online enactments of masculinity. At the conclusion of their study, Moloney and Love called for future research to examine the enactment of masculinity in other online spaces.

Moloney and Love’s (2018) research explores enactments of masculinity in the context of The Fappening, an online event in 2014 involving the release of almost 500 stolen, private images of celebrities, mostly women. The researchers analyzed data from Twitter using an approach informed by grounded theory, and as they describe it, was a multi-staged deductive and inductive process. As noted, a result of the analysis was the identification of four types of VMA. The researchers signify that their data demonstrates “...the ways in which homosocial space, collective action, and gender identity intersect to reify power hierarchies” (p.618). The reality that many Fappening commentators in their study choose to embody a masculine persona demonstrates that deeply embedded and

problematic societal gender dynamics also happen in virtual spaces. Moloney and Love have begun to bridge the divide between masculinity as a theoretical construct and the problematic and real practices of men online.

The Fapping was a significant but also limited event that may have only revealed a small scope of how masculinity is enacted online. Thus, responding to the call to study VMA in other virtual social spaces to determine how enactments of masculinity look in different settings and circumstances, our attention is turned towards social networks. Social networks such as Reddit are different from social media applications like Facebook or Instagram. Social networks are generally anonymous community message board environments that are used for social, entertainment, and education purposes. While social networks can host tame and friendly spaces, they have also been implicated in harboring toxic communities that align with bigoted beliefs and values across the spectrum of hateful ideologies (Massanari, 2017; Salter, 2018). Before social networks are explored it is important to offer some historical context regarding the problematic perceptions and enactments of masculinity to fully understand how this has infiltrated online social environments.

Toxic masculinity (TM) is a hegemonic conceptualization of manhood that legitimizes men's dominant and aggressive position in society, denial of a range of intrapersonal (i.e. self-love & care) and interpersonal (i.e. empathy & compassion) emotional expressions, while also justifying the marginalization of women and the population of others who do not adhere to these values (Ging, 2019; Wall & Kristjanson, 2005). Although the contours and specific features of TM shift across time and place, toxic expressions of masculinity have been pervasive across centuries of time and

observed in many cultures and contexts (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). TM is recognized as a prevalent and legitimate contributing factor in acts of misogyny and bigotry in society (Baugher & Gazmararian, 2015; FBI, 2007; Feder, Levant, & Dean, 2010). Further, TM increases the risk for boys and men to engage in general acts of violence (APA, 2018). These acts include bullying, physical and/or verbal aggression, and assault. Despite the modern societal progress made towards gender equality and the dismantling of problematic patriarchal structures in modern society, TM remains a prevalent problem amongst men (Kimmel, 2013).

A particular modern touchpoint that has been identified in harboring and perpetuating TM is the activity that occurs on anonymous social network forums (Habib, 2019; Jane, 2016; Massanari, 2017; Stein, 2016). Reddit, and other social networking sites (i.e. 4Chan), have been implicated in hosting “toxic technoculture” communities (Massanari, 2017; Salter, 2018). Reddit is the seventh most trafficked website and the most popular social networking website in the United States (Hardwick, 2020, May 9). Remarkably notable are enactments of bigotry in these online spaces, with misogyny being a significant mainstay. Misogyny is defined as the dislike of, hatred for, or inherent prejudice against women. Online misogyny is believed to impact “25% to 41%” of women and includes sexual harassment, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion, and gender harassment (Barak, 2005). Other forms of online misogyny have been captured and catalogued including acts such as gender trolling, e-bile (spewing anger & vitriol online), and disciplinary rhetoric towards women and others (Mantilla, 2013; Jane, 2014; Cole, 2015). The process of misogyny and domination is certainly seen in other studies of

online racism, classism, and xenophobia, as well (Aosved & Long, 2006; Farrell, Fernández, Novotny, & Alani, 2019; Nakamura, 2008).

A directly related web-based phenomena that has entered the mainstream consciousness over the past decade is the emergence of the “Manosphere.” The Manosphere is a term used to label a variety of semi-related online communities whose ideologies are misogynistic in nature and associated with politically and socially radical conservative values (Farrell, Fernández, Novotny, & Alani, 2019). The Manosphere has been linked to a variety of misogynistic and hate based events. The Manosphere was highly active during The Fappening<sup>1</sup> and GamerGate<sup>2</sup> events in 2014, which are both generally defined as containing heavy sexist and hateful discourse towards women. A significant amount of pro-misogyny discussion and information sharing was occurring on websites including Reddit, 4Chan, Twitter, and various blogs during this time. Recently there has been renewed awareness of the Manosphere influence due to the linkage of real-world violent acts that have been perpetrated by individuals belonging to involuntary celibate (incel)<sup>3</sup> and other related virtual communities (Ellis, 2019; Farrell, Fernández, Novotny, & Alani, 2019).

---

<sup>1</sup> “‘The Fappening,’ centered on illegally acquired nudes of celebrities distributed and discussed via anonymous image-board 4chan and Reddit.com” (Massanari, 2017, p. 329-330).

<sup>2</sup> “#Gamergate (GG), ostensibly a hashtag “movement” spawned by individuals who purported to be frustrated by a perceived lack of ethics within gaming journalism became a campaign of systematic harassment of female and minority game developers, journalists, and critics and their allies” (Massanari, 2017, p. 330).

<sup>3</sup> “...notorious for its libertarian invocation of free speech principles to defend unfettered misogyny, racism, and “niche” pornography. Calling themselves “betafags” and “incels” (involuntary celibates), and claiming to applaud Isla Vista killer Elliot Rodger, contributors to these boards appeared to be using social media to organize a campaign of revenge against women, “social justice warriors” and the “alpha males” who had deprived them of sexual success.” (Ging, 2019, p.3)

Within Reddit communities related to the Manosphere it is common to find individuals sharing hateful information and/or engaging in corresponding rhetoric. There are frequently trending news articles, information, and discussions that contain implicit or explicit misogynistic and bigoted themes on specific community forums<sup>4</sup> (Massanari, 2017; Reddit, 2019; Statt, 2018). Reddit and other social network sites that host incel and other Manosphere related communities have been virtual spaces that identified mass violence perpetrators have expressed participating in personally (Bogost, 2019, March 15). Most notably, the men involved in the 2018 Toronto Van Attack (Toronto van attack, n.d.) and 2018 Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting (Tallahassee shooting, n.d.). Both of the perpetrators involved in these events engaged with online incel social network communities. Further, both individuals from these incidents were sympathizers of or inspired by Elliot Rodgers, the perpetrator of the infamous femicide Isla Vista Killings in 2014. The Isla Vista violence spree involved 22-year-old Rodgers attacking women outside of a university sorority house as well as pedestrians with a knife, gun, and vehicle on the evening of May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 leaving seven dead and fourteen injured (Isla Vista killings, n.d.). The Isla Vista attack was one of the first highly publicized cases that implicated the connection between the influence of the web based Manosphere and real-world violence.

A possible influential risk factor within these hate-based communities is the high presence of men participating within social networking platforms, and the subsequent enactments of masculinity/manhood. It is believed that young men (18-29 year-old),

---

<sup>4</sup> Reddit communities implicated in spreading various forms of bigotry: r/Incels (banned 2017), r/Braincels (banned 2019), r/MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way), r/MensRights, r/IncelsWithoutHate, r/IncelsInAction, r/KotakuInAction, r/TheRedPill)



mostly white, make up a significant percentage of social network's user bases (Pew Research Center, 2016). Social network platforms are also inherently solitary, anonymous, and deindividualized which may facilitate environments for users to uninhibitedly externalize feelings of shame, anger, sadness, and loneliness. Social network use and TM also have been associated with higher rates of depression in men (Parent, Gobble, & Rochlen, 2018). There is clearly much to understand about the intersections of gender, race, culture, and individual factors within virtual social spaces, yet there is limited empirical research directly exploring the psychological and social impacts of these interweaving themes.

Considering the intersections between enactments of masculinity, social network forums, and violence previously discussed, a gap in scholarly literature has been identified by this researcher. There is a significant amount of commentary (i.e. news articles, antidotal evaluations, op eds.) on the existence and problematic nature of TM in virtual social spaces. However, there appears to be limited scholarly resources, excluding that from Moloney and Love's (2018) study, that explore how masculinity is enacted on social network forums. There is little discussion on the implications of TM in online spaces as evidenced by the notable lack of academic resources in the field of psychology regarding the individual impacts of TM and participation in online virtual social spaces.

This qualitative study examined evidence of the manifestation of Moloney and Love's (2018) concept of VMA on the social network platform Reddit, while also engaging in a concurrent emergent coding process to allow novel or divergent themes to arise. Data from Reddit message boards was gathered five days before, and three days after, two identified mass murder events. The events chosen for this study were the

Toronto Van Massacre on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 and Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. The events were selected due to the following characteristics: (1) male gender of the perpetrator; (2) stated misogynistic motives for violence; and (3) the connection to incel online social network communities. The Reddit posts gathered within the identified time period were coded using an modified constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014) in addition to the a priori VMA concept. The team of researchers also engaged in a memo writing process (Birks et al, 2008) to offer a more robust and explicit narrative of the analyses, track reactions, and to clarify the coding rationale. An analysis of the results was conducted and a discussion regarding the practical implications of this research for the field of psychology and other related fields is explored.

The following literature review will offer an overview of key constructs that are the at the foundation of this study. This will include an examination of masculinity, an analysis of Moloney and Love's (2018) sociological concept of VMA, and a discussion of how masculinity and bigotry is enacted online. Throughout the review, an interdisciplinary approach is centered. Literature from the fields of psychology, sociology, communications, and other relevant fields provides a foundation to support the need for and importance of this study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

This section will provide a broad review of the identified phenomena and constructs that intersect regarding the issues of gender, technology, bigotry, and violence. This will include an overview of the hegemonic enactment of manhood known as toxic masculinity (TM), social networks and their role in harboring and perpetuating TM, a summary of Moloney and Love's (2018) groundbreaking study that offers a frame of understanding manhood within virtual social spaces, and in conclusion a comprehensive background will be provided for the methodologies that have been selected for this study. This systematic review is intended to clarify the rationale and motivations for this study.

#### **Toxic Masculinity**

There are a variety of theories that explain the binary gender differences in traits between women and men. The two most prominent theories are the essentialist and sociocultural perspectives that offer broad explanations on the differences in gendered expression. The essentialist theory posits that observable differences in genders are due to biological determinants (i.e. anatomy, chromosomes, hormones) that suggests traits are inherent. The sociocultural theory posits that gender and gender roles are a result of socialization. Further, it is understood that culture and context exert significant influence on the understanding, definition, interpretation, and expression of our gendered ways of being (Fivush & Buckner, 2003). The "nature vs nurture" debate regarding gender socialization is on-going, while it is important to note that the sociocultural theory is widely accepted by social scientists (as cited in Fulton, 2017) and by this researcher.

Historically gender has been seen as binary, and with this has come societal expectations and prescribed gender roles based on one's assigned sex at birth (internal and external genitalia). As a result hegemonic views of masculine and feminine gender traits and roles have emerged. While there are widely embraced and healthy physical and trait-based expressions associated with gender, there are also significant societal and individual issues related to hegemonic gendered traits and roles. For example, presently women identified individuals face significant oppression and pressures (i.e. body image, sexual expression, attitudes) regarding feminine gender roles. Further, transgender women and those who do not to adhere to the hegemonic gender binary (i.e. gender non-binary identifying individuals) are faced with discrimination and oppression as well. Male identified individuals also face similar and unique challenges that are explored and examined more in depth here.

Healthy examples of masculinity include expressing a wide range of emotions (i.e. tenderness, fear, sadness), showing vulnerability, developing healthy relationship skills (i.e. asking for and giving consent, communication, active listening), asking for help when needed, comfort in emotionally nurturing roles, and calling out others who engage in hurtful behaviors, especially other men who are aggressive and/or disrespectful (MAVRIC Project, 2020). However, this description of manhood is not considered the hegemonic form of masculinity boys and men are largely socialized to enact and uphold.

The hegemonic form of masculinity that men and boys are largely socialized to enact, also referred to secularly as "toxic masculinity", strays considerably from the healthy examples of masculinity and alternatively is maladaptive and harmful (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Socialization of masculinity is detrimental when it is

communicated that boys and men must privilege qualities such as control, dominance, competitiveness, level-headedness, aggression, toughness, logic, coercion, decisiveness, autonomy, and the ability to govern any emotion that may get in the way of these values (i.e. vulnerability). Further, to be a “real man,” both boys and men must abide by these values or face shame, ridicule, and/or exclusion (Johnson, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In contrast, qualities that are culturally considered feminine or subordinately masculine are devalued, such as collaboration, equality, sharing, empathy, compassion, kindness, vulnerability, compromise, emotional insight and intelligence, and instinctive and other nonlinear ways of thinking (Johnson, 2005).

TM is largely the result of historical and societal patriarchal oppression. Male dominated societies that have prevailed over the course of modern human existence have largely been ruled and governed through values of dominance, aggression, and the subordination of women and others that are perceived as inferior. However, Historian Gerda Lerner (1986) argued that patriarchy is an organizing principle of social life that is around 10,000 years old, but there was a much, much longer pre-patriarchal past that stretched long before that. Recorded modern history (“HIS” Story) is largely influenced from the male point of view and patriarchy. Archeological evidence, though, points to a pre-patriarchal and more egalitarian past (Eisler, 1988; Lerner, 1986).

A modern western society is patriarchal to the degree that it promotes male privilege. Specifically, values of male-domination, male-centeredness, and male-identification are central to patriarchal societies. Patriarchal masculinity can loosely be understood as the qualities, characteristics, and values associated with “being a man” or “enacting manhood” within these cultures. The successful enactment and signification of

manhood within the hierarchal systems of patriarchy yield social, economic, and political benefits to the group of men, in what Connell (1987) calls the “patriarchal dividend.”

Patriarchy isn’t just about men, though. Men, women, and others on the gender spectrum are impacted by and then participate in the acceptance, perpetration, and proliferation of patriarchy and the dominant forms of manhood associated with TM. For many women in particular, abiding by, accommodating, or identifying with toxic masculine values can be a coping strategy, an attempt to survive, get ahead, and/or manage the realities of sexist oppression under patriarchy (Johnson, 2005).

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) offered that there are a number of expressions of masculinity possible within a given culture and between cultures. According to these researchers, a variety of masculine expressions have been discovered in different cultures, countries, and institutional settings. Depending on the context, certain expressions of masculinity are more or less socially central, and some are more associated with power and authority than others. Although they acknowledge the existence of a spectrum of masculine expression, they argued that within a given place and time one constellation of meanings and enactments of manhood (a configuration of practice) would be dominant or hegemonic. Hegemonic masculinity, in their conception, is the “configuration of practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy” (p.836). As there is a configuration that is hegemonic, there will exist other forms and expressions of masculinity that are subordinated. It is notable that, as Connell and Messerschmidt wrote, hegemonic masculinity is not a common communication in boys and men’s everyday lives today, but rather, it is believed to primarily be conveyed through exemplars (i.e. men in movies,

sports and music stars, online figures). Indeed, the hegemonic ideal is, in practice, impossible to attain or accomplish. Hegemonic masculinity is proliferated in large part due to how symbols of authority convey manhood. Even though most boys and men do not live up to these standards, there remains a glorification of toxic masculine displays (i.e. dominance, indifference, toughness) because of those cultural examples. This leads to the assertion that because many men, women, and children are constantly striving to achieve these standards of masculinity that are both harmful and unachievable, the emotional outcome is often disappointment, shame, and fear.

TM has also been implicated in the justification of marginalizing women and others that do not abide by the values of physical and emotional toughness, coercion and domination, and also normalizes misogyny, homophobia, and other performances of bigotry (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Wall & Kristjanson, 2005). Within modern Western cultures, for boys and men, the primary acceptable way to be (in alignment with hegemonic patriarchal values) is to only communicate emotions through aggression and violence (APA, 2018; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Emotions such as sadness, disappointment, hurt, fear, and other vulnerable emotions are considered unacceptable and “weak.” Indeed, expressions of violence are not just a resource of hegemonic masculinity, they are often *the* resource. When men have been socialized to value and approach the hegemonic ideal in the attempt to secure the patriarchal dividend, and when they internalize feelings of disappointment and shame in the face of the impossible attainment of that ideal, they may resort to expressions of real and/or symbolic violence in an attempt to compensate. Research has also shown that this conceptualization of manhood increases the risk for boys and men to engage in various acts of violence

including bullying, hazing, fighting, abuse, and intimate partner violence (APA, 2018; Berke & Zeichner, 2016). A snapshot of intimate partner violence statistics provided by the APA (2018) shows the alarming impact of male expressions of violence rather than vulnerability:

An annual report by the Violence Policy Center (2017), “When Men Murder Women,” uses recent data to show the effect IPV [intimate partner violence] perpetrated by men has on women in the U.S.: 1,686 murders included female victims and male perpetrators and 93 percent of the victims were murdered by a male they knew. In addition, according to the World Health Organization (2017), worldwide, 38 percent of murders of women are perpetrated by a male intimate partner. Also, in the U.S., men represent more than 90 percent of perpetrators of criminal violence and 78 percent of the victims (FBI, 2007).

These statistics illuminate the connection between negative male socialization, via TM, and violence. The impact of negative male socialization is expansive. Beyond the microsystems (i.e. family, peers, person communities) and larger society, the individual impacts are enormous. For example, studies have shown correlations between TM and rates of depression (Parent, Gobble, & Rochlen, 2018; Wong et al., 2017), suicide and addiction (Braswell & Kushner, 2012; Hunt & Antin, 2019), decreased likelihood to seek mental health treatment (Kupers, 2005), decreased likelihood to engage in bystander interventions (Ingram et al., 2019), and higher rates of death due to COVID-19 (Frackowiak-Sochanska, 2021). As this all highlights, TM is a harmful performance of manhood that is historically rooted, pervasive, and widespread at every level. These realities are particularly relevant for practitioners, administrators, policy makers, and



every role of leadership. Understanding the historical, cultural, individual and societal impacts related to TM can provide important insights into these influential gender dynamics and inform important responsibility and change.

### ***Race and Gender Dynamics***

American white men played the primary role in constructing, upholding, and perpetrating TM (Kimmel, 2013). Kimmel (2013) wrote about the expansive economic, social, and personal privileges tied to living as a white man. For example, white men typically take home an income that is 25 percent more than any other gender or racial group. White men in this country have historically had the lion's share of success, largely through their unique access to the "American Dream." Recently, this American Dream is becoming less achievable to white men. In the past, white privilege and adherence to the traditional ideals of masculinity (i.e. TM) would entitle white men to this dream. Kimmel stated, "Middle class white American men were the nation's first, and remain the most fervent, believers in the American Dream: that anyone can rise as high as their aspirations, talents, discipline, and dedicated hard work can take them" (p.14). White men have lived under the misperception that their hard work led them to their American Dream; in more recent history, the veil has been lifted to reveal that a key ingredient to this is white privilege (i.e. oppression of racial and gender minorities) and the resulting "aggrieved entitlement" to reinstate this sense of privilege. The dynamics of TM and white privilege are important to recognize, as men and women of other races may align with this power but do not benefit from these dynamics in the way that white men do.

The intersections of masculinity, white supremacy, and capitalism are also historical companions that cannot be ignored. In issues of race and class, it's important to

recognize that male-identified individuals do not all receive the same privileges that white men do. All men reap social privileges by virtue of being men, but non-white men's access to the patriarchal dividend may well be blocked or impeded by virtues of other aspects of identity and social location. In the quest to signify a masculine self, social beings known as men draw on situationally available resources. Some of those resources will be valued, and others may be liabilities (i.e. ethnicity & socioeconomic status). It's not a coincidence that Black sanitation workers in the Civil Rights movement lead a campaign with the slogan, "I Am a Man!" This was a declaration of human rights, but it was made through the lens of patriarchal claims to dignity and respect. They were seeking to affirm their humanity, but it's telling that they did so through a claim to manhood. Steve Estes (2005) wrote a book about this particular campaign, looking at it through the lens of intersectionality. Particularly, that black men in America must go to great lengths to achieve dignity and respect, whereas for white men this comes naturally to them.

As was highlighted, this pervasive and damaging conceptualization of manhood has historical roots dating back as long as patriarchal societies have existed and has impacted people of all genders, races, and creeds. A modern convention that has been implicated in perpetuating TM is the internet, and the emergence of virtual social spaces. The same patriarchal hierarchies that are seen in the real world are also evident online. It is presumed that the perception, performance, and enforcement of TM has infiltrated online spaces because it is incredibly pervasive in our real-world societies. Users online are mimicking and upholding the patriarchal values that have been socialized in humans for as long as patriarchal societies have existed. With a more thorough understanding of

the dynamics and issues relating to TM, we now turn to examine a specific corner of the internet where this performance of masculinity thrives online, social networks.

### **Social Networks**

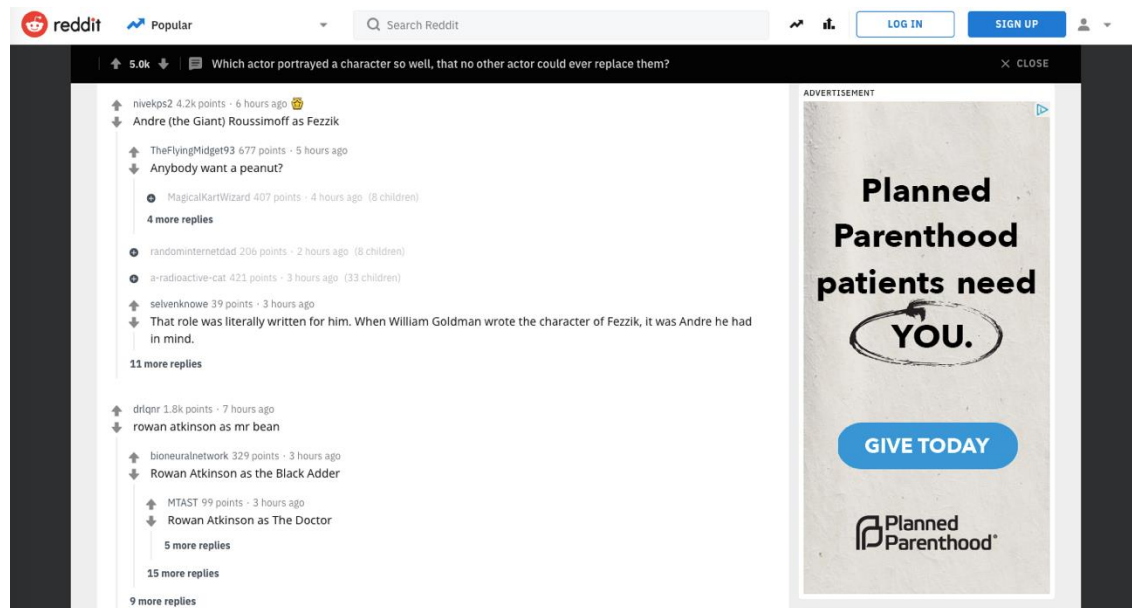
Social network forums are organized differently than social media websites and applications like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok in both design and format. The design of social network forums is similar to basic HTML in that it has a simplistic “bare bones” layout. The websites are centered primarily around content and discussion. Although social networking sites are inherently social and many people use these sites to connect with others, this is not their primary purpose. Because of the anonymous and deidentified nature of these sites, unlike Facebook where your picture and personal information is shared, social network forums offer little to no information about the user themselves. Although this varies based on the website, to sign up a person is only required to provide an unverified email and personalized username.

Social networking forums house smaller communities, which are referred to as ‘subcommunities’, that have specific interests ranging from informative, fun, controversial and innocuous. A range of topics are often discussed within various social network subcommunities (i.e. puppies, memes, auto restoration, psychology graduate students). Users can post their own content which can either be text, a weblink, or a picture. Content often is in the form of questions, statements, links to online articles, or a picture of an event/person/thing. In response to the content posts, other users can submit comments and interact with other user submissions.

The comments within the forums have an upside-down pyramid like structure regarding how they are organized, called ‘threads’ (*Figure 1*). The comments from users

range from helpful, quirky, odd, nonsensical, humorous, opinionated, argumentative, and, at times, angry, hateful, and/or threatening. Users vote on posted content and “up-vote” if they like the content, or “down-vote” if they dislike the content. The more up-votes content receives the higher the post will be placed at the top of the communities’ main message board. Based on these votes, website algorithms determine how popular the content is compared to other content. Votes determine popularity, which impacts the order of content from the top of the page to the bottom. At the top of the message board is where content is most visible and where users are more likely to have the opportunity to interact with the more popular posts. Specific to the social networking site Reddit, posts from every subcommunity on the “front page” ([www.reddit.com](http://www.reddit.com)) are aggregated and this is where you can see the most popular posts at the present moment. Users also have the opportunity to personalize what they see or don’t see from subcommunities and/or specific content on Reddit through various control settings. Additionally, posts that users or moderators consider more adult in nature (i.e. violence, nudity, and in some cases for humorous purposes) is labeled ‘NSFW’ (Not safe for work) and are not as easily accessible. Lastly, each community has one or more moderators that evaluate the content to ensure that posts and comments meet the standards and rules for participation in their community. Moderators also determine the rules of each community, and the enforcement of the rules depends on the moderator’s involvement and diligence in the community.

## Reddit Discussion Board Example

*Figure 1 (Retrieved October 20, 2019 at 5:11pm EST)***Reddit**

The most widely used social networking site is Reddit. Considered “The front page of the internet,” Reddit boasts 330 million monthly users and is the seventh most trafficked website in the United States (Hardwick, 2020, May 9). Other communities less frequented, though still highly visited and/or notorious, are 4chan, Gab, Hacker News, and many others. Reddit has been a significant mainstay for many people around the world who search the internet for entertainment, news, support, and a multitude of other reasons. Reddit communities have also made philanthropic efforts for people in the real world, including raising eighty thousand dollars for a Kenyan orphanage in 2012 almost overnight (Associated Press, 2012). However, Reddit has been implicated in harboring communities that are problematic, hateful, and/or violent in nature. Communities and users are generally not quarantined from one another. In some cases, subcommunities have been identified as toxic, and are either quarantined (isolated from the collective

Reddit community) or shutdown. Even in the more popular mainstream communities, users can and do engage in sexist, racist, and/or hateful dialogue that may not have any connection to the original content posted. Particular events such as the emergence of the ‘Manosphere<sup>5</sup>,’ #GamerGate and The Fappening online events in 2014, and the identification of mass shooting perpetrators participation on identified subcommunities has illuminated the public’s awareness regarding the toxic underbelly existing on Reddit and other social network forums.

**Reddit and Toxic Masculinity.** A review by Massanari (2017) explored two significant anti-feminist-based events that happened online and used these occurrences to show how Reddit’s design, algorithms and platform politics support “toxic technocultures.” Massanari highlighted the #GamerGate and “The Fappening” events, both occurring in 2014, demonstrating evidence of how masculinity and other dynamics implicitly support anti-feminist ideologies on Reddit. The #GamerGate movement in 2014 was a campaign directed at women and their allies in the video game industry. The movement was motivated by gamers who did not appreciate the increasing feminist influence emerging in the gaming industry, while also believing specific prominent women in the industry were using their gender and sexual influence for power and privilege they were not rightfully afforded. The second controversy was the aforementioned “The Fappening” event, also occurring in 2014. Both of these events flourished on Reddit. Hundreds of posts and discussions were held following the beginning of these events. It was well documented that the resulting discourse within

---

<sup>5</sup> The Manosphere is a collection of loosely associated websites and communities where sexism, misogyny, and general bigotry is widespread, normalized, and encouraged.

Manosphere based communities were crude, sexist, misogynistic, and hateful (i.e. death threats) in nature (Ellis, 2019; Farrell, Fernández, Novotny, & Alani, 2019; Ging, 2019).

Massanari concluded that #GamerGate and The Fappening events were indicative of a larger issue of sexism and misogyny that happens regularly within Reddit and other online social network communities. By evaluating these incidences, Massanari confronted the culture, governance, and design of social networks like Reddit, and how these factors contribute to the proliferation of problematic ideologies. The existence of toxic technocultures online is a prevailing cultural phenomenon that was identified as a significant contributor to a larger issue of exclusion and bigotry occurring on social networks. Massanari stated that users often "...demonstrate retrograde ideas of gender, sexual identity, sexuality, and race and push against issues of diversity, multiculturalism, and progressivism (p. 333)". Massanari points to toxic technoculture largely reflecting the ideals of "geek masculinity," which both rejects and reifies hegemonic masculinity.

In an expansive study (Habib et al., 2019) regarding online community moderation, especially in hate-based communities, the authors shared their moderate hopelessness regarding direct action (i.e. bans and quarantines) with users. They have found that these types of consequences do not have an impact on the civility of the intended users. It seems that mainly punitive interventions have been explored, where users are punished for violating rules or engaging in toxic behavior. This demonstrates that the direct punitive action hardly curbs toxic behavior within these virtual spaces, and the platforms are limited in what they can, or are willing to do. This affirms Massanari's assertions that part of the issue regarding bigotry online is the platforms themselves.

Offering a unique and important contribution to the understanding of internet forums and communities, Massanari masterfully used her analysis of both #GamerGate and The Fapping to expose and highlight the toxic culture that exists on social networks, specifically Reddit. These events demonstrated that bigotry, and especially misogyny, are accepted and even celebrated on Reddit. With these considerations in mind, the study exhibited how young white men are drawn to these online communities because of their interests, and because of problematic cultural issues (i.e. limited rules and governance & pervasive TM), some individuals are more vulnerable to developing or deepening hateful ideologies because of what is considered normal or acceptable in these spaces. Further, attention was shed on how the anonymous nature of Reddit and similar platforms can encourage and advance hateful ideologies.

Massanari's evaluation of Reddit's platform and cultural issues within social network spaces is, at no fault of the author, limited in scope. The ethnographic study in question was conducted through communications and sociological lenses and only touches on the broad issues (i.e. platform design & culture) of TM within virtual social spaces. In her research, Massanari points out important phenomena related to the toxicity that occurs during (and likely not during) particular online events. However, the phenomena that Massanari highlights appears to be secondary to what might be at the heart of the problem, TM.

### ***Anonymity and Deindividuation***

Social network websites like Reddit allow users to create profiles with very little information. For most websites all you need to create a user account is an unverified email and unique username. Unlike other websites that require more identifying



information such as Facebook and Twitter, it is relatively simple to either limit or restrict public identifying information on social network personal profiles. It is also relatively easy to create several profiles that contain either no information or misleading information about the account holder. As a result of this and many other features of virtual social spaces, Massanari (2017) believes that these dynamics are what has led to the creation and proliferation of “toxic technocultures.” Toxic technocultures, similar and also connected to the Manosphere, represent the general normalization and proliferation of insensitive and harmful information and interactions that take place anywhere there are social communities online. Massanari indicates that toxic technocultures have always thrived in environments where there is little to no accountability and anonymity.

With anonymity online there can be less social pressure that comes with in person interactions, thus, people’s inhibitions may be lowered when interacting with others in a virtual space. As a result, anonymity lowers vulnerability to the social desirability bias (Hipp et al., 2017). The social desirability bias occurs when individuals respond to others in a way that may be seen as more favorable. In online virtual social spaces where everyone is anonymous, the need and desire for human connection is lessened, resulting in decreased pressure to gain acceptance and appreciation from others. Further, according to Choudhury and De (2014), because of the anonymous nature of Reddit and other similar social spaces, users experience less social pressure and are more vulnerable to the disinhibition effect. The disinhibition effect is a term that describes the phenomena when individuals feel less social or moral restraint when communicating with others. Overall, the anonymous nature of these virtual social spaces limits or eliminates the social and cognitive civilities of face-to-face interactions. The psychological effects of anonymity

and disinhibition provide deeper awareness of the likely factors involved in what cultivates toxic cultures online to exist and thrive.

Fox, Tang, and Gilbert (2018) highlight a particularly poignant psychological effect in relation to anonymity within toxic technocultures: The deindividuation effect. The deindividuation effect occurs when an individual within a group is not seen as a whole being with thoughts, feelings, and experiences deserving of acknowledgement or compassion (Zimbardo et al., 1969). Fox, Tang, and Gilbert (2018) further underscore how the deindividuation effect negatively impacts users' behaviors:

Due to anonymity and limited nonverbal cues, online users experience deindividuation, or a loss of a sense of self. Similarly, others are depersonalized. With fewer cues to our humanity and a diminished sense of accountability, the anonymous user feels disinhibited and may engage in deviant or antisocial behavior online (Lea and Spears, 1991; Suler, 2004).

The deindividuation effect offers an explanation regarding how users can dehumanize other users based on their perceived identity, beliefs, and values. With fewer cues to other users' humanity, a triggered and angry user is left to potentially project their worst imagined versions on to others that upset them. As we see, anonymity in toxic spaces can dehumanize both the user and others online, but it also leads to the wonder about how this dynamic impacts users' perceptions of others in the real world. Researchers Parent, Gobble, and Rochlen (2018) highlighted the cyclical pattern that those who engage in negative interactions online are more likely to get negative responses from others, which in turn leads to more negative interactions. For users that are constantly experiencing emotions of aggression, fear, hatred, and mistrust of others

while online, how does this impact the person in the real world? This question turns attention back towards the concept of TM, and how the perception of masculinity impacts individuals' experiences online and in the real world.

Hipp et al. (2017) offered another perspective regarding the anonymous nature of Reddit, and how this contributed to users providing more candid responses. In discussing the results of their study, which explored the narratives of anonymous users' experiences of perpetrating sexual assault, the authors shared that they were surprised to see that rather than "showing off," many of the participants expressed remorse or confusion regarding their incidents of perpetration. This lends validity to the idea that because of the anonymous nature of social networks, people are more likely to share information deemed shameful that they would otherwise be too afraid to in public. The study did not intend to analyze participants' reasons for why they wanted to participate, but the researchers found that many users stated, "I just want to get this off my chest" (p.86), believed their story would help someone else, were wondering if their story qualified as sexual assault, and other sentiments of shame and remorse.

Within Manosphere connected communities there have been a variety of psychological phenomena explored and uncovered. Concepts such as attention, perception, online lexical language, and virtual discourse have been implicated in what makes these environments especially vulnerable places to toxic dynamics. Participation in these hate-based virtual spaces has also shown to increase the risk for a variety of personal mental health issues, distrust and hatred towards different others, and to entrench toxic ideological values (Berger & Strathearn, 2013; Massanari, 2017; Parent, Gobble, & Rochlen, 2018).

### **Toxic Masculinity Online**

Virtual social spaces, including social network websites such as Reddit, have been implicated in harboring online communities that subscribe to a range of bigoted ideologies connected with TM (Massanari, 2017; Salter, 2018). Larger cultural events online such as identification of the Manosphere, #GamerGate, The Fapping, and most notably, recent connections to mass shooting perpetrators have exposed the problematic and widespread occurrences online that are sexist, misogynistic, and hateful in nature. Many virtual social spaces (i.e. social networks & online gaming) are purportedly dominated by male users. This connection has many wondering how masculinity and enactments of masculinity play a role in the problematic occurrences happening online (Anderson, 2015; Krasnova, Veltri, Eling, & Buxmann, 2017).

### ***Manosphere***

Over the past decade, a communal online phenomenon, where TM is identifiably rampant, has been labeled the “Manosphere” (Farrell, Fernández, Novotny, & Alani, 2019). The Manosphere is a collection of loosely associated websites and communities where sexism, misogyny, and general bigotry is widespread, normalized, and encouraged. An exemplar of a Manosphere associated website is the men’s rights community<sup>6</sup> on Reddit, whose self-description states, “At the most basic level, men's rights are the legal rights that are granted to men. However, any issue that pertains to men's relationship to society is also a topic suitable for this subreddit. Men's rights are influenced by the way men are perceived by others.” Marche (2016) describes these communities from an outsider’s perspective stating, “The rabbit hole, in this case, is the ‘reality’ that women

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.reddit.com/r/MensRights/>

run the world without taking responsibility for it, and that their male victims are not permitted to complain.” The opposing sentiment about men’s right groups online is that they exist in an echo chamber of disdain for women and feminist ideologies, and reject discussion and critique of patriarchal domination and the legitimacy of TM.

### ***#GamerGate and The Fapping***

The Manosphere gained a significant amount of notoriety in 2014 when the “#GamerGate” and “The Fapping” events occurred. Both events centered around the exploitation, discrimination, and hatred of women online. The #GamerGate event started as perceived lack of ethics in the gaming journalism industry from many individuals, which turned into an eventual systematic attack on female and other minority gaming journalists, critics, developers, and anyone who allied with these groups. Attacks towards these groups from disgruntled individuals ranged from hateful responses, doxing (publicly sharing an individuals’ private information), and death threats. The Fapping event was spurred by a significant data dump of leaked nude photos of several high-profile celebrities whose personal iCloud accounts were hacked. On virtual social spaces like Twitter, blogs, and social network websites like Reddit, there were a disconcerting number of discussions and comments containing misogynistic and violent rhetoric directed towards women and or anyone that supported pro-feminist ideologies (Massanari, 2017). These events highlight again the undercurrent of anti-feminist ideologies held in many virtual online spaces.

### ***Mass Violence and The Manosphere***

The connection between the Manosphere and perpetrators of mass violence who have been implicated in participating in these spaces is concerning. Both the male

perpetrators from the Toronto Van Attack and Tallahassee Hot Yoga Studio Shooting in 2018 personally stated that they participated on Manosphere connected involuntary celibate (incel) social forums online (Dickson, 2019; Hendrix, 2019). On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, Alek Minassian, a twenty-five-year-old white man, drove an express van into a crowd of people in Toronto Canada, injuring sixteen and killing ten. Prior to this deadly attack, Minassian participated regularly on social networking sites like Reddit, particularly within incel communities. In a Rolling Stone news article, Dickson (2019), shared that Minassian called for a “beta uprising” (beta is a term for disaffected young men) online to engage in acts of violence towards women. Minassian stated in an interview with police: “I was thinking that I would inspire future masses to join me.” Minassian’s primary way of “inspiring” others was through his act of violence, but also in his various involvements in virtual online Manosphere connected spaces.

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018, Scott Paul Beierle, a forty-year-old white man, entered a hot yoga studio in Tallahassee Florida and shot students who attended class that evening, primarily women. He injured five people, killed three women, and then shot and killed himself. Beierle spent much of his life lamenting his romantic failures with women, and several times was reprimanded by his workplace and law enforcement for inappropriate interactions with women. He took to social networking communities, primarily incel communities, where he discussed his disdain for women and minorities. Beierle seemed to find a clan of likeminded individuals within incel communities who praised and encouraged acts of violence in the real world. After the attack, users from incel communities praised Beierle for his femicide actions, for example calling him “St. Yogacel,” calling his victims “spandex wearing yoga whores,” and one poster stated:

“This guy is a hero. Women belong in the house, taking care of family. Not going round yoga studios to fine tune their bodies for the pleasure of random strangers” (Hendrix, 2019).

Other incidences of mass violence and the perpetrators have been associated with participating on social networking sites like Reddit (Bogost, 2019, March 15). Most notably, the men involved in the 2018 Pittsburg Synagogue shooting, 2019 Christchurch New Zealand Mosque shooting, 2019 San Diego Poway Synagogue shooting, and 2019 El Paso Texas Walmart shooting posted their manifestos on social networking websites shortly before they set off to harm others (Arango, Bogel-Burroughs, & Benner, 2019, Aug 3). The identification of the toxic Manosphere, its influences in perpetuating toxic masculine values, and the implications it has on highly publicized real-world incidences (i.e. mass murders) is alarming.

### *Toxic Masculinity in Other Virtual Spaces*

A study done by Fox, Gilbert, and Tang (2018) pointed to the problematic experiences online gamers create and face in regard to TM in virtual social spaces. The authors highlight the longstanding epidemic of harassment and cyberbullying in online gaming worlds and explore this through a qualitative analysis. In this study, TM is examined by participants who entered online gaming environments and were asked to journal their experiences. Results showed that the participants experienced an overwhelming display of behaviors aligning with TM. Specifically, research participants noted various interactions with other players who expressed various misogynic, homophobic, and racist comments (Fox, Gilbert, & Tang, 2018). For example, one female participant quoted in their study shared that other players directed attacks towards

her such as, “go back to the kitchen” and, “take it, you slut” (p. 4066). A male participant in the study summarized the content of what he most often heard, described as “Typical mom jokes. Bashing. Talking about dick size. Really immature stuff” (p. 4066). This users report is seen as a common experience in the online gaming world, regardless of what game is being played, highlighting how players are often “talking trash,” “trolling,” or ridiculing one another. The online gaming infrastructure is similar to the social network frame where users can interact with one another anonymously with little consequence, where it is hard to determine if users are serious or if they are trolling. These anonymous and male centric circumstances are ideal for what Massanari (2017) calls “toxic technoculture” and TM to thrive.

Fox, Gilbert, and Tang (2018) offered relevant points about TM and the related phenomena that happen in online spaces. However, the scope of their project was limited due to the small sample population, a lack of information provided on how their research methods were conducted (which inhibits replicability), and missed opportunities to explore the problematic dynamics between participants and users. The study was conducted by researchers in the communications field, so understandably the identification and sophisticated understanding of psychological dynamics was not the focus of their evaluation. There was a lack of discussion on the emotional impact on users. For example, a study done by Parent, Gobble, & Rochlen (2018) showed that when users were confronted with emotionally charged online interactions a common response was to return passive or overt aggression with aggression. An expression of hurt or shame online would likely be perceived as weak and/or the user would anticipate ridicule. Thus, in this cycle it appears aggression feeds aggression and serves to normalize and



strengthen TM ideologies online. These dynamics and their implications on individuals will be important to consider in future studies.

Hipp et al. (2017) qualitatively explored the description and justification narratives of sexual assault perpetrators by surveying anonymous participants on Reddit. The authors contextualized their research from the empirical literature on sexual assault, and their philosophical approach was grounded in feminist theory. The researchers administered a survey on Reddit which asked users who had perpetrated sexual assault to share an explanation. Of the twelve thousand comments, a total of sixty-eight responses were selected based on a strict set of qualifiers. The narratives selected highlighted a thorough first-person account of sexual assault perpetration. The results showed emerging themes such as hostile sexism, biological essentialism, objectification, and victim blaming. Although the authors do not make a direct connection, these ideologies directly align with aspects of TM.

The justification narratives of the participants are problematic, and there is an apparent effect of TM. The larger contribution of this article, especially for the sake of this research, is that it further confirms the challenge TM presents men who need support but are not sure how to seek it. While anonymous virtual social environments create a “safe space” for individuals to share and express their feelings and opinions without legal consequence, it also reinforces a negative way of seeking help, and likely prevents many individuals from getting the support from caring others and/or professionals that they need. For example, an individual may feel as though their only way to seek support is through an anonymous discussion board, rather than through other social supports, mental health treatment, and or family and friends. This epidemic of feeling unable to

seek help, this researcher believes, is also the product of TM. One of the primary limitations of this study, while simultaneously being the most inherently compelling aspects of it, is that the data was from anonymous participants. While this data provided insight regarding the power of anonymity online, it also makes it challenging to apply this data to any specific populations.

### *Geek Masculinity*

Individuals self-identified as “geeky,” define themselves as outsiders of mainstream ideologies and culture (Salter & Blodgett, 2017). Many of these individuals display an outward rejection regarding values of TM or being a “Chad” (a stereotypical alpha male). However, individuals that align with the geek identity also engage in the dissonance of being an outsider while simultaneously presuming white male centrality, celebrating intellect over emotional and social intelligence, harassing and marginalizing others, and maintaining an unwillingness to recognize their own privilege.

As a result of Reddit’s exclusionary and aggressive culture and the relative lack of diversity within its largest user base, the site implicitly allows racist and anti-feminist activist communities to thrive (Massanari, 2017). This phenomenon is especially seen on Reddit and other similar platforms (i.e., 4Chan, Twitter, and online gaming) that aggregate interests like technology, news, gaming, and other “geek interests” which appeals to a particular demographic of mostly cis-gender, heterosexual, young, white males. These communities have thrived in these arenas largely because they are geek oriented and anonymous, where means there is low to no accountability (Bernstein et al., 2011; Pfaffenberger, 1996, as cited in Massanari, 2017).

All of the phenomena highlighted throughout this review demonstrates the pervasive issues related to masculinity and manhood as it occurs within virtual social spaces. Further, as we have seen a common connecting theme between issues of rampant bigotry, hate, and other social and cultural challenges (i.e. real-world violence & deepening political/ideological divides) is how TM is enacted online. Thus, understanding the masculine gendered performances happening within virtual social spaces is imperative. Fortunately, Moloney and Love (2018) have developed a frame to begin to understand and capture how TM is enacted in online virtual social spaces.

### **Virtual Manhood Acts**

According to Ezzell (2016), definitions of masculinity across academic literature have varied widely, are often contradictory, and are frequently reified, making it difficult to define what is “a” masculinity and what is not. In this context, some scholars have called for a shift away from attempting to define the broad concept of masculinity (Moloney & Love, 2018; Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). Rather, due to the understanding that masculinity is defined in many ways based on the context and culture (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), the focus instead should be on *enactments of manhood*. By focusing on “manhood acts” instead of masculinity, this distinguishes acts of manhood as not inherent to all individuals who identify as men but instead looks at how gender is situationally performed. This understanding aligns with the interactionist approach of gender as an action, and that masculinity, particularly TM, is socialized and is not an inborn trait of all men (Ezzell, 2016). Gender is demonstrated not by showing one’s anatomical features, but by performing a particular socially prescribed script about what it means to appear like a woman or man. Further, because of patriarchal values in society,

masculinity provides the more dominant, and as a result more preferred, way of being (Johnson, 2005; Koenig, 2002). A focus on “manhood acts” allows scholars to focus on the things that social beings known as men do in the service of dominance.

Moloney and Love (2018) argue that in order to more accurately explore masculinity online researchers should focus on the “manhood acts” of users. In their study of masculine enactment online they developed the sociological concept termed “virtual manhood acts” (VMA). VMA was defined through a rigorous qualitative analysis of Twitter, where researchers evaluated 9,750 individual tweets during The Fappening event. VMA is described generally as virtual acts that affirm privilege of manhood while oppressing and debasing women. The definition encompasses four areas of action. (1) Creation of a homosocial, heterosexist space; (2) Sexualization of women; (3) Signaling possession of a heterosexual, male body; and (4) Humor as a tool of oppression. According to the authors, each act signals claims to manhood, the status of manhood, and the accompanying power and privilege. The authors have revealed a particular performance of manhood that happens online, and it aligns with the definition of TM which promotes male dominance, control, and power (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Wall & Kristjanson, 2005).

The study revealed how enactments of manhood happen in virtual online spaces, primarily in relation to sexist events like The Fappening. Further, it likely revealed the underlying dynamics that have occurred across the Manosphere for a very long time now. However, The Fappening was only one event in time, and as a result it may have only revealed a limited scope of how manhood is enacted online. Thus, to heed the call of the authors to explore VMA in other virtual social spaces, and to determine how enactments

of masculinity look under different settings and circumstances, our attention is now directed towards social networks. Reddit and other social networking websites have been implicated in harboring toxic technocultures that purport bigoted beliefs and values across the spectrum (Massanari, 2017; Salter, 2018), which are factors that make this environment a potentially valuable and instructive virtual space to explore.

### ***Masculine Personas***

To address the concern that has arisen in the exploration of masculinity in virtual social spaces without knowing the identified gender of anonymous users, Moloney and Love (2018) introduced the term “Masculine Persona” (MP). MP is defined by the user’s performance of the masculinity online, where the physical body of the user does not matter as much as the behaviors they enact through posts and comments. For example, if user signifies that they are in possession of a male body, claim or perpetrate any of the recompenses that come from being a man, or engage in TM or VMA, then these users can be defined as “men.” MP allow users to benefit from the enactments of masculinity that come from possessing a male body in the real world. Regardless of the user’s gender, if they are enacting and perpetrating TM online, then they are inhabiting a persona that is masculine.

### **Reinforcement of Toxic Masculinity in Virtual Social Spaces**

The current perceived state of masculinity by some men, particularly white men, is the belief that their peak position on the societal totem pole is in peril. Kimmel (2008) has labeled this alleged state of manhood “the crisis of masculinity.” This crisis of masculinity encapsulates the belief that the general tenets of being a man are threatened in modern times. Ideals such as sexual prowess, domination, strength, homophobia, and

the inherent higher status of men (Orenstein, 2019) are believed to be deconstructed by the astronomic rise of equality movements like feminism. Until recently, the patriarchal norms of our society have abided by and enforced toxic masculine standards. These standards are essentially that heterosexual cisgender white men are dominant, and their rightful place in society is at the top of societal hierarchy (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2013). According to Moloney and Love (2018), they suggest that there is evidence that these same masculine ideals and enforcement of ideals exists in virtual social spaces, and that the crisis of masculinity lends itself to the elitist interactions and indirect attempt to re-traditionalized gender roles similar to real life.

Hegemonic masculinity is what many perceive as the ideal or inherent way men are supposed to act (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This specific performance of manhood is upheld by men and others through dominance, shame, and even violence (APA, 2018). According to Levant and Wilmer (2011), masculinity and other gender roles are not a biological phenomena, they are a psychological and social construction that is fluid and complex. The negative effects that come from TM are when they are strictly upheld by others and by society as though they are inherent (Levant et al., 2003). The emergence and infiltration of TM online has come from real world patriarchal values that have been enforced for centuries. Thus, it is important to explore the psychological perceptions and resulting impacts on individuals due to the obligatory performances of masculinity now online.

In modern times we are seeing a toxic perception of masculinity enacted frequently in virtual social spaces. We see this in the vitriol between people in online comment sections, it was evident during the massively publicized #GamerGate and The

Fapping events, and we have also seen it in connection with male perpetrators of mass violence who had ties with toxic online forums (Dickson, 2019; Hendrix, 2019). This reality is alarming to say the least and is pervasive and disturbingly problematic. If men could take heed that masculinity does not need to be enacted in prescribed toxic ways, and that other perceptions of masculinity could be invited (i.e. embracing vulnerability, interconnectedness, tenderness, compassion), then we could potentially move towards more harmony in the world and online.

### *Reddit Subcommunities*

Now that this review has examined the history, culture, and phenomena related to TM within virtual social spaces, specifically Reddit, the next rational place to turn is to examine the spectrum of subcommunities within the Reddit Manosphere to explore VMA. Groups within the Reddit Manosphere range from pick-up artists, men's rights activists, male separatists, anti-feminists, incels, and women's hate groups. Many of these groups hold intersectional beliefs, mainly misogyny, but there are key disparate ideologies that separate these communities from one another and make each one particularly unique (Khan & Golab, 2020).

Two particular camps within the Reddit Manosphere, specifically on Reddit, stand out for a multitude of reasons to be identified. The incel community (via [r/IncelsWithoutHate](#)) and the men's rights community (via [r/MensRights](#)) are both publicly known for their openly misogynistic members and their large number of subscribers (Khan & Golab, 2020; Farrell, 2019). Most importantly, these communities represent two of the most popular misogynistic camps within the Manosphere and their differences and similarities likely provide valuable insight into how manhood is enacted

within virtual social spaces. Further, the communities would be ideal environments to explore the occurrence of VMA. In the following section the individual communities will be explored, and explanations on why insight into their brand of TM could be valuable.

**r/IncelsWithoutHate.** Incel communities online represent mostly heterosexual male identifying individuals that are seeking support from others with shared experiences that feel isolated and alienated by society, especially in relation to how heterosexual women experience them. Further, there is pervasive sense of helplessness, hopelessness, self-hatred, and a misattribution as to who it to blame for their mental health and social challenges (Baele et al., 2019). In a study (Scaptura & Boyle, 2020) conducted to better understand the connection between incel's and violent fantasies related to masculinity threats, 18-30-year-old heterosexual identifying men were surveyed about "incel traits." The results confirmed psychological themes related to this community including stress in one's ability to live up to masculine norms, the presence of violent fantasies about rape, and "using weapons against enemies."

In the Farrell's et al. (2019) study, which examined the flow of extreme language within communities that that have openly misogynistic members, the r/IncelsWithoutHate community showed the highest percentage of stoicism (endurance of hardship or emotional pain without the display of feeling) and misogyny in comparison to the other six bigoted Manosphere related communities they evaluated. Additionally, this community also showed a high percentage of hostility and personal violence. Other subcommunities related to incel ideologies have either been quarantined or banned from Reddit over the last several years, including the most active incel sub-Reddit r/incels which was banned in 2017. r/IncelsWithoutHate appears to be the largest and most active



incel community presently on Reddit. Although this subcommunity promotes non-violence, problematic, bigoted, and toxic themes do frequently emerge (Farrell, Fernández, Novotny, & Alani, 2019).

Two identified overarching reasons can explain why the exploration of VMA within the r/IncelsWithoutHate community would be prudent. First, the incel community rallies around misogynistic ideologies that are gender based, specifically related to masculinity. It is believed based on what is known about the incel community and its alignment with TM, combined with self-loathing, that an exploration into this community could provide valuable information about the intrapersonal and interpersonal psychological factors that drive how VMA are enacted on Reddit. Second, multiple high profile mass violence events have been perpetrated by individuals who align with incel communities on Reddit or elsewhere within the Manosphere (Dickson, 2019; Hendrix, 2019). It has been estimated that over the past decade about seven individuals with connections to online incel communities have perpetrated mass violence events (Hines, 2019). Two specific and recent events include the 2018 Toronto Van Attack and Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting. Insight into the enactments of manhood within this virtual community could be salient for many health and public health reasons.

**r/MensRights.** The men's rights community has been cited in perpetuating misogynistic bigoted language, TM, and discourse that reinforces alt-right beliefs and values (LaViolette & Hogan, 2019). This community describes itself as "A place for those who wish to discuss men's rights and the ways said rights are infringed upon." However, upon further exploration of the r/MenRights home page, the resources provided by this community include topics implying that feminism perpetrates legalized bigotry

and misandry, and how this is observed specifically in relation to child support and custody, differential treatment concerning sexual assault, false rape accusations, and domestic violence issues. Kimmel (2013) goes even further to state that there is a sense of “aggrieved entitlement” within men’s right activists communities, referring to the growing anger and rage men have about rising equality movements.

In an analytical study (Kahn & Golab, 2020) researchers cross-compared commenting activity in gender-oriented Reddit forums, including r/MensRights, to other related and non-related forums. The study found that r/MensRights comment topics and frequency were significantly related to other communities such as neo-conservative, misogynistic, and racist communities (e.g. r/The\_Donald, r/sjwhate, r/Libertarian, r/HilaryForPrison, r/altright, r/PussyPassDenied, r/conspiracy). The men’s rights community members both in the real world and online have historically possessed strong anti-feminist sentiments and general disdain for most perceived progressive waves of change that promote societal equitability. For developers of the VMA concept Moloney and Love (2018), the 2014 The Fappening event was the basis for exploring VMA, specifically on twitter. Most pertinently, The Fappening was significantly discussed within various Manosphere connected communities (Massanari, 2017; LaViolette & Hogan, 2019). Jon Stone (2014) of the Guardian news source went as far as to draw parallels between #Gamergate event participants and men’s rights activists highlighting that there is rampant sexist beliefs and misaligned victimhood within both groups. An exploration of the concept of VMA within the r/MensRights community could provide insight to the degree manhood is enacted for individuals whose plights are associated with larger perceived systemic issues, and much more.

## Web-Scraping

In order to obtain public web-based data from virtual social spaces for the purposes of social science research, there is important information and considerations that are vital to review. The following section provides an overview of the most prominent factors regarding web-based data extraction and web-scraping, and also what was most pertinent from the purposes of this study.

According to Landers et al. (2016), the biggest advantage to come from the big data movement<sup>7</sup>, specifically for psychologists, is the data extraction approach known as web-scraping. Web-scraping, also known as web-harvesting, web-data extraction, or web-content mining is the automated process of collecting information stored on a web page (Marres & Weltvrede, 2013). In Moloney and Love's (2018) study, the foundational research for this study, web-scraping was utilized to collect data from Twitter. This approach led to the collection of data that was analyzed in the development of the sociological concept VMA.

Landers et al. (2016) outlines the many potential advantages web-scraping offers to social science research. First, internet based data extraction is behavioral in nature and is more representative of natural observations than of data that is collected specifically for research (e.g. surveys). Second, a challenge in social science research is often small sample sizes. Web-scraping enables researchers to potentially collect millions of datasets with minimal effort. Third, the time to conduct data collection is drastically reduced because of the automated nature of web-scraping. Fourth, the researcher is invisible to the

---

<sup>7</sup> The term *big data* encompasses a wide range of approaches of collecting and analyzing data in ways that were not possible before the era of modern personal computing (Landers et al., 2016, p.475).

participants which eliminates the risk of researcher contamination. Lastly, with the globalization of the internet and more individuals from all over the world having access to the web, researchers can now reach populations beyond western educated industrialized nations and communities much easier.

Weaknesses of the web scraping approach are also acknowledged by Landers et al. (2016). First, external validity may be limited due to the fact that the results from the data may only be representative of the web-scraped sample. However, this is true of all behavioral research data from the internet and/or non-internet traditional data sources. Second, researchers may not have access to all of the data. For example, some websites may limit the availability of their data and/or may not achieve all historical data. This reality can create internal validity threats because the data may not fully be a true representation of the subject being captured. This can also be a challenge with non-internet traditional data sources. Third, as with other approaches like observational and archival research designs, data that is obtained from web-scraping cannot be used to make inferences about causality if using a correlational design. Web-scraped data can allow researchers to look for trends over time. However, valid inferences about causation are questionable due to many confounding unmeasurable variables. Lastly, the web scraping technique alone offers many advantages, as well as similar disadvantages seen in most other non-internet data collection techniques. The most robust approach to obtaining valid and reliable results, as is consistent with best practices in social science research, is using a multimethod approach with web-scraping and other data collection techniques in conjunction.

### ***Guidelines for Web-Scraping***

Landers et al. (2016) provides guidelines for web scraping in psychology research that is informed by psychometrics and data science literature. Some data scientists prompt researchers to utilize an a priori approach to ensure more meaningfulness and value for web-scraping investigations. Further, it is important for researchers to articulate the problem early, then to develop a method and analytical plan to address the problem, and finally to use this approach to drive web-scraping data extraction (Herman et al., 2013, as cited in Landers et al., 2016). Thus, these guidelines must first start with a guiding a prior research inquiry which includes a stated replication hypothesis and research question(s).

The guidelines developed by Landers et. al (2016) allow data extraction to be executed with more intention and rigor. The guidelines include four steps (1) Identify potential sources of information; (2) Develop a coding system; (3) Code a scraper and crawler and then collect the data; (4) Clean the data and revise the source theory. The Landers et al. (2016) guidelines 1-4 guide research hypothesizes and questions specifically for this study, and are implemented in detail throughout the methods section.

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

The literature in this review offers a glimpse into the historical and cultural background of hegemonic forms of masculinity, TM, toxic occurrences happening in virtual social spaces, how masculinity can be enacted online, and how unhealthy enactments of masculinity contributes to a variety of harmful psychological and societal issues. The review highlights the Moloney and Love (2018) definition of VMA that offers a frame to explore enactments of masculinity online which can provide a deeper

understanding of the underlying psychological and societal dynamics of TM in virtual social spaces. As this literature review demonstrates, a significant amount of thorough research studies and investigations have been done on this topic. There is also a growing base of literature from a multitude of fields that is focused on the complexities of TM online, toxic online communities, and how people become radicalized or entrenched in problematic beliefs through their involvements online. However, manhood enactments within social networks have not been examined, and the evidence of this information could yield important health and public health implications.

### ***Purpose of The Study***

The purpose of this study was to heed the call from Moloney and Love (2018) in which they state “As human interaction continues to migrate to virtual social spaces, the reproduction - or disruption - of inequality in these spaces must become the central focus for social scientists. Future work should consider examination of other online spaces, and the gender identities and hierarchies present” (p.619). In their work, Moloney and Love have helped bridge the gap between the theoretical construct of virtual masculinity and the real-life problematic practices of men by developing the definition of VMA. This study strove to answer this call by expanding on the understanding of VMA, specifically in regard to how they occur on the social network forum, Reddit.

The current study explored the intersections of enactments of masculinity online, social network spaces, and violence. Moloney and Love’s (2018) definition of VMA was mobilized to explore enactments of masculinity on Reddit. Historical data from Reddit was gathered directly before and after two mass violence incidents occurring in 2018 (The Toronto Van Attack & Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting). The qualitative data

obtained was coded and analyzed using the modified constructivist grounded theory approach in conjunction with a deductive process utilizing the a priori concept of VMA. This examination was done in effort to see if the enactment of VMA occurs within Reddit subcommunities. The study overall offers deeper insight into the enactments of manhood online and can guide professionals from various fields to develop and guide clinical, prevention, and research efforts.

## Chapter Three

### Methods

The primary research questions for the presented study were: (1) *How are the dimensions of the concept of Virtual Manhood Acts manifested on Reddit?* (2) *Are there other similar, novel, or divergent enactments of manhood that appear on Reddit?* The research methods developed to examine these questions is reviewed in the following section.

Qualitative data from two Reddit subcommunities were gathered five days before and three days after two identified mass murder events. The two events, The Toronto Van Massacre (April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018) & The Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting (November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018), were selected for containing the following characteristics: The male gender of the perpetrator, the perpetrators connection to incel or other “Manosphere” related online social network communities, and the perpetrators stated misogynistic motives for violence. The Reddit communities selected for analyses are r/IncelsWithoutHate and r/MensRights.

Analyses of the Reddit posts gathered within the identified time period were examined using a modified constructivist grounded theory (CGT) frame. The a priori concept of Virtual Manhood Acts (VMA) (Moloney & Love, 2018) was used to deductively examine evidence of this concept in the data, while the inductive nature of the CGT frame allowed for novel and/or deviant themes to emerge. While not included in the analyses phase, researchers also engaged in a memo writing process to capture the meta processes related to interactions with the data and coding decision making to provide a more robust understanding of the results.



## Research Design

### *Web-Scraping*

Web scraping for this study was conducted in collaboration with a James Madison University Computer Science Department undergraduate student utilizing Python<sup>8</sup> to develop a unique web-scraping programming script. The source code for this project can be found on Github<sup>9</sup>. The web-scraping program allowed the researcher to gather data from Reddit based on a variety of flexible parameters. This process is described in more detail in the following sections.

### *Web-Scraping Ethical and Legal Considerations*

An exempt approval was granted for this study through James Madison University's institutional review board (IRB). The IRB exemption status was conferred because the data was scraped from a public website (Reddit) and public subcommunities (r/IncelsWithoutHate & r/MensRights) which did not require user consent to collect data. Further, this study is in accordance with Landers et al. (2016) guidance on using the ethical guidelines from the American Psychological Association's *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Ethics* (APA, 2017) to broadly apply to web-scraping related issues such as research and reporting, record keeping, and confidentiality.

In order to use the code-based program developed specifically for this study to scrape data from Reddit, this researcher was required to first review and agree to Reddit's Application Programming Interface (API) terms of use<sup>10</sup>. By agreeing to the API terms of

---

<sup>8</sup> Python is a high-level programming language known for fast, simple programming and short, easy-to-read code (Wentworth, Elkner, Downey, & Meyers, 2012, as cited in Landers et al., 2016, p. 485).

<sup>9</sup> [https://github.com/jmupysch21/Reddit\\_Scraper](https://github.com/jmupysch21/Reddit_Scraper)

<sup>10</sup> <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezNdDNK1-P8mSpSbmtC2r86Ee9ZRbC66u929cG2GX0T9UMyw/viewform?fbzx=7887534925239058672>

use Reddit grants users license to collect and utilize the databased information on their website for a variety of uses, which for this study was qualitative research purposes. A Reddit account was created for the purposes of this study and the API terms of use were completed under this pseudonym.

### *Obtaining Data for this Study*

The web-scraping program developed for this study had the capability to gather data based on a variety of desired parameters. These parameter categories include date range, subcommunity, and keywords contained in post titles. Based on these parameters the scraping tool gathered the comments from the posts containing the identified subcommunity, date range, and keywords in the post title. For example, if our parameters included collecting data from the r/TheRedPill [subcommunity], between June 12, 2018 to June 20, 2018 [date range], for posts containing the words “misogyny” and “misandry” [keywords], then the program will collect all of the posts and related comments contained within those parameters into a spreadsheet.

The parameters chosen for this study included: 1. Subcommunities: r/IncelsWithoutHate and r/MensRights. 2. Date range: 04/19/2018 to 04/26/2018 and 10/29/2018 to 11/05/2018. 3: Keywords (24 total): alpha, beta, chad, stacy, stacie, becky, hole, incel, gymcel, cel, cuck, mogger, rice, curry, [beta] rebellion, [beta] uprising, Elliot, Rodgers, ER, Scott, Paul, Beierle, Alek, Minassian. The parameters that were chosen for this study, guided by the established research hypothesis and questions, are explained in detail in the following sections.

### *Parameters*

**Subcommunities.** In order to gain a sense of how VMA (Moloney & Love, 2018) are enacted on Reddit, two Manosphere connected online communities were identified. The incel community (via r/IncelsWithoutHate) and the men's rights community (via r/MensRights) were chosen because they are both publicly known for their openly misogynistic members and their large number of subscribers (Khan & Golab, 2020; Farrell, 2019). Most importantly, these communities were chosen because they represent two important misogynistic camps within the Manosphere and their differences and similarities provided valuable information regarding how VMA occur on Reddit.

***r/IncelsWithoutHate.*** The r/IncelsWithoutHate Reddit subcommunity, representative of the incel community for this study, boasts over 28.1 thousand subscribers as of November 16, 2020. The r/IncelsWithoutHate community promotes itself as a place for identified incels to engage while also banning hateful interactions. This "hate free" community was created in response to the largely identified problematic hateful and bigoted dialogue that occurs in almost all other incel related subcommunities. Although members are not permitted to engage in hate of any kind within r/IncelsWithoutHate, problematic themes do still emerge within this community. Other subcommunities related to incel ideologies were not considered for this study because they were quarantined or banned (i.e. r/incels & r/braincels) and data from these message boards was no longer available.

***r/MensRights.*** The sub-Reddit r/MensRights, representing the men's right community for this study, is a subcommunity that boasts over 284,000 subscribers as of November 16, 2020. The r/MensRights community was chosen for this study for the

reason that the source of their misogynistic beliefs are focused on external societal factors, mainly feminism and how this ideology has eroded the perceived natural balance of a patriarchal society. In comparison to the incel community, where misogynistic ideologies are more interpersonal, the men's rights community, although there being some overlap with the incel community (i.e. TM), focus more on the professed societal inequities facing men that has ultimately led to what Kimmel (2013) calls "a crisis of masculinity." For this study, exploration of the men's rights community could provide insight into the external factors that drive VMA within virtual communities.

**Date Range.** To explore the Moloney and Love's (2018) concept of VMA on Reddit, two events and associated time periods, were identified to capture data. The two specific mass murder events that been identified for this study include: (1) Toronto Van Attack occurring on April 23, 2018; (2) Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting occurring on November 2, 2018. These events were selected for the following identifying reasons: (1) The perpetrator is a cis-gender identifying man; (2) Each perpetrator was identified as having participated or was affiliated with an incel social network forum; (3) The motive of the violence included a references to gender based misogynistic motive and a hostile narrative towards women. Reddit posts were captured that contain identified keywords five days before and three days after the events within the r/IncelsWithoutHate and r/MensRights community. The date ranges include: (1) Toronto Van Attack which occurred on 4/23/2018 is from 04/19/2018 to 04/26/2018; (2) Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting occurred on 11/2/2018 is from 10/29/2018 to 11/05/2018. The date ranges selected are surmised to provide insight into the discourse that happens within the incel and men's rights communities before and after a mass violence events.

**Keywords.** The selection of the keywords chosen for this study focus on the four components of VMA. The four components include: (1) creation of homosocial, heterosexist space; (2) sexualization of women; (3) signaling possession of a heterosexual, male body; and (4) humor as a tool of oppression. Keywords chosen for this study underwent a rigorous consensus agreement process using the four components of VMA as guiding pillars. It has been recognized that keywords chosen for this study must both be representative of the four components of VMA and also representative of language used by individuals within the incel and men's rights communities. A lexicon of terms used by incel and men's rights communities was obtained through dissertation committee member Kathleen Moore Ph.D., who is an intelligence analyst and has developed a lexicon for professional purposes (*Appendix B*). In addition, a fifth category was included to capture the researcher's informed interest in interpersonal violence, which is not a category acknowledged in the four components of VMA. This category included terms that are contained in the lexicon and/or are related to the identified Toronto Van Attack and Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting attacks. The matrix of keywords used for this study can be seen in *Figure 2-1 through 3*. Keywords in *Figure 2-1* and *2-2* were developed based on the afore mentioned lexicon in *Appendix B*. Keywords in *Figure 2-3* were developed using the lexicon (Beta Rebellion, Beta Uprising, Elliot Rodgers, ER) and by this researcher (Scott Paul Beierle, Alek Missanian, Toronto, Tallahassee). A total of 24 keywords were identified, including: alpha, beta, chad, stacy, stacie, becky, hole, incel, gymcel, cel, cuck, mogger, rice, curry, [beta] rebellion, [beta] uprising, Elliot, Rodgers, ER, Scott, Paul, Beierle, Alek, Minassian.

Keyword Matrix

Figure 2-1

(1) creation of homosocial, heterosexist space		(2) sexualization of women	
<b>Alpha</b>	Men who are able to get the sex and affection that they desire, because according to incels, they display traits of being popular and dominating, and are usually tall and athletic. Incels believe women cannot resist being attracted to men like this. The opposite of a beta male. Takes on risk and confrontation. Confident and a leader.	<b>Stacy/Stacie</b>	catch-all phrase for women who incels consider to be the top tier of attractiveness — and thus are a huge target for their rage. Generally, they are described as athletic, blonde, and sexually experienced. Hot, popular woman. Presumably does "the sex"
<b>Beta</b>	Any man who is not confident, who is submissive, and is not especially physically virile. Some Betas might occasionally have sex, but they aren't nearly as successful as Alphas. An unremarkable, careful man who avoids risk and confrontation. Beta males lack the physical presence, charisma, and confidence of the Alpha male	<b>Becky</b>	Average Females
<b>Chad</b>	catch-all phrase for men who incels consider to be the top tier of attractiveness — and thus are a huge target for their rage. Generally, they are described as athletic, blonde, and sexually experienced.	<b>Hole</b>	Females

Figure 2-2

(3) signaling possession of a heterosexual, male body		(4) humor as a tool of oppression	
<b>Incel</b>	A self-described involuntary celibate. Incels believe they're undesirable to women because society has stacked the cards against them. They believe that they are not good looking enough, are too small in stature, and are generally physically weaker than other men.	<b>Cuck</b>	Originally referred to 'cuckold', more specifically a fetish where a man watches his wife being plowed by another man. Now used as an adjective for everything incels dislike. Originating from an idea that all left-wing men are cuckolds, which in term arose from Karl Marx describing "class traitors". Used by more groups than just incels.
<b>Gymcel</b>	An incel who works out.	<b>Mogger</b>	A racist term deriving from "n*****", when a black man "mogs" another race. Also, Mig-Mog in the same vein of nig-nog.
<b>Cel</b>	Specific reason one is in a Incel: height, weight, wieners, ethnic background are common, Can also mean an Incel who is X	<b>Rice</b>	Relating to someone from Asia.
		<b>Curry</b>	Someone from India

Figure 2-3

<b>TERMS RELATED TO VIOLENCE</b>	
<b>Beta Rebellion</b>	men’s rights term that refers to the uprising of beta males against alpha males and females, and possibly all normies, depending on who you ask. On top of Minassian’s own post citing an “incel rebellion,” the term beta rebellion was used by posters on 4chan to describe Chris Harper Mercer’s shooting rampage that killed nine at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon in 2015. Warnings about the shooting had circulated on 4chan the night before the event, leading many to speculate that Harper-Mercer was a 4chan user. A manifesto penned by Harper-Mercer before the attack stated, “Here I am, 26, with no friends, no job, no girlfriend, a virgin. I long ago realized that society likes to deny people like me these things.”
<b>Beta Uprising</b>	men’s rights term that refers to the uprising of beta males against alpha males and females, and possibly all normies, depending on who you ask. On top of Minassian’s own post citing an “incel rebellion,” the term beta rebellion was used by posters on 4chan to describe Chris Harper Mercer’s shooting rampage that killed nine at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon in 2015. Warnings about the shooting had circulated on 4chan the night before the event, leading many to speculate that Harper-Mercer was a 4chan user. A manifesto penned by Harper-Mercer before the attack stated, “Here I am, 26, with no friends, no job, no girlfriend, a virgin. I long ago realized that society likes to deny people like me these things.”
<b>Elliot Rodgers/ER</b>	The short form for Elliot Rodgers, who within the darker parts of the incel community is viewed as a martyr for the incel cause. In 2014, Rodger killed six people and injured 14 others near the University of California, Santa Barbara. In a video posted to YouTube before embarking on a shooting spree, Rodger explained that he intended to punish women for never having sex with him, calling himself “the perfect gentleman,” and lamenting the fact that he was still a virgin at 22. Referred to sometimes as Saint Elliot, The Cut writes: “His likeness has inspired countless memes that straddle the line between lulzy irony and utter sincerity (one widely circulated picture depicts him as a literal saint, his face Photoshopped into a religious painting).”
<b>Scott Paul Beierle</b>	Perpetrator of the Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting
<b>Alek Minassian</b>	Perpetrator of the Toronto Van Attack
<b>Toronto</b>	City the Toronto Van Attack took place
<b>Tallahassee</b>	City the Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting took place



### *Participants*

Participants were comprised of anonymous Reddit users who participated on the r/IncelsWithoutHate and r/MensRights subcommunities during the identified time periods for this study. Data was captured from users' contributions available in these public forums. Individual usernames were not gathered, and all indirect user information obtained was deidentified.

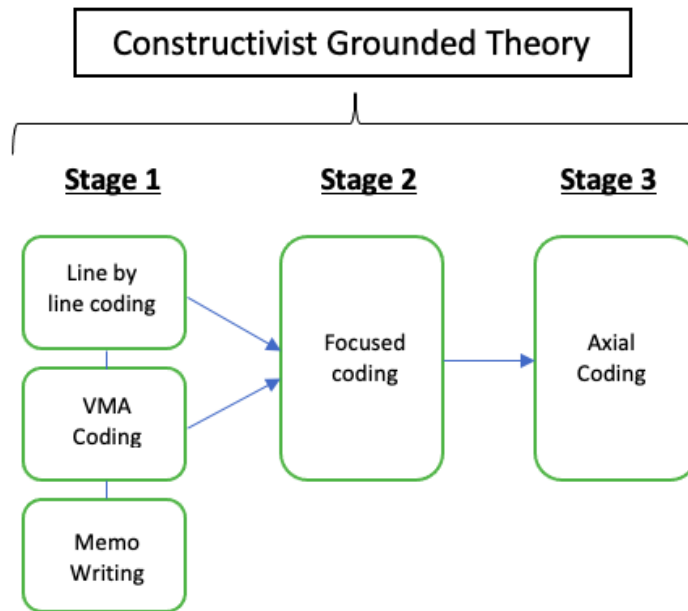
### **Qualitative Data Analyses**

Data analyses for this qualitative research project used a concurrently occurring, top-down deductive and bottom-up inductive coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Swain, 2018). This process, also known as a "hybrid" approach, was guided by the constructivist grounded theory paradigm (CGT) (Charmaz, 2017) which provides opportunities for examining emergent phenomenological data as well as acknowledging the researchers own analytic positioning. For this study the methodological hybrid approach, (1) Used the a priori sociological concept of Virtual Manhood Acts (VMA) (Moloney & Love, 2018) to identify dimensions of the construct of VMA namely, the creation of a homosocial heterosexist space, the sexualization of women, signaling possession of a heterosexual male body, and humor used as a tool of oppression; (2) Facilitated an emergent consensus coding process to allow other themes to be identified. Researchers also participated in a concurrent memo writing task to capture individual experiences and interactions with the data (Birks et al, 2008; Kleinman & Copp, 1993). The results from the memo writing process that researchers were engaged in was not central to the thematic analyses for this study. However, the memos did serve to provide context and understanding of the in-vivo process researchers

experienced while coding and interacting with the data. See *Figure 3* for a model representation of the analysis. The results from the hybrid analysis were then synthesized for prominent themes.

Modified Constructivist Grounded Theory Used for This Study

*Figure 3*



The hybrid approach utilized in the analysis of the data for this study is grounded in other research studies that implemented a similar qualitative research methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Swain, 2018). The theoretical underpinnings for the chosen philosophical paradigm will be highlighted in the following section.

***Rational and Description for Qualitative Approach***

The CGT paradigm informed the data analysis process. According to Mills, Bonner, and Francis (2006), CGT is a methodology that seeks to construct theory from data about issues that are important in people’s lives, and an active repositioning of the

researcher “as the author of a reconstruction of experience and meaning” (p.26). Further, Charmaz (2017) defines CGT as an inductive, emergent, comparative and open-ended process that seeks logic abductively. CGT is a contemporary revision of the classical grounded theory. In classical grounded theory it is assumed that the data holds all the answers, while the framework guides the researcher to develop an abstract theory from what is contained in the data (Denscombe, 2014). However, Charmaz (2014) asserts the CGT paradigm acknowledges that the researcher is not fully able to be impartial to their own values and biases, therefore the data analyses is shaped by the one examining it. This paradigm was chosen for its wisdom in regard to analyzing qualitative data, as well as its understanding of the importance in acknowledging the researchers’ worldview and assumptions as being inevitably integrated in the process as well.

Ezzell (2009; 2012) establishes a philosophical and value-based frame that resonates ideally with this researcher’s identity and stance for this study. For this study, the researcher is informed by long-term participant-observation, ethnographic exploration of Reddit’s culture, and radical feminist perspective. In the article titled *"I'm in Control": Compensatory Manhood in a Therapeutic Community* (2012), Ezzell states “As a white, male, middle-class, (pro)feminist (Schacht 2003) ethnographer, I strive to connect interactionist (Blumer 1969; Mead 1934) concerns to issues such as the reproduction of race, class, and gender inequality in an attempt to highlight strategies of resistance.” This statement resonates well with the primary researcher. The primary researcher for this study is a white, cis-gender male, feminist, doctoral clinical psychologist in training, and is concerned with the reproduction of gender inequality, racism, and classism especially within virtual social spaces. Overall, this researcher is attempting to provide insight into

the social (i.e. gender socialization and enactments) and psychological factors (i.e. intrapersonal & interpersonal issues) that are involved in perpetuating bigotry within virtual social spaces.

Throughout the analyses this researcher is committed to mindful awareness and reflection of how their philosophical position and values influence data exploration and interpretation. The reflective process will be upheld through consistent dialogue with the dissertation chair, committee, and research team members, as well as through memoing during data coding.

**Hybrid Analyses.** With the conceptual frame established for this study, an overview of the hybrid CGT informed coding process will now be provided. The hybrid analyses occurred in two concurrently occurring parts. While examining the data the coding team inspected posts for evidence of information reflecting VMA constructs. Simultaneously, coders engaged in an inductive emergent process to allow for other themes to arise. The following section provides more in-depth rationale regarding the chosen hybrid approach for this study.

***Deductive: Virtual Manhood Acts.*** The deductive approach for this study used the four defining characteristics of VMA to code themes in the data. These characteristics include (1) creating a homosocial, heterosexist space; (2) sexualizing women; (3) signaling possession of a heterosexual, male body; and (4) using humor as a tool of oppression. For guidance on how to integrate the VMA concept into this hybrid analyses Crabtree and Miller's (1999) template approach provided helpful insight. This approach has been cited by other studies that have used hybrid deductive and inductive qualitative analyses (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Swain, 2018). In observing how other

researchers implemented a hybrid approach, this allowed the implementation of the hybrid approach for this study to be grounded in support and ultimately increased assuredness in the methods chosen.

***Inductive: Emergent Themes.*** Data that was not captured under the umbrella of VMA was subject to an open emergent analysis. In this CGT method, Charmaz (2014) outlines a coding process that allows researchers to name and categorize data that optimally describes the participants view. The qualitative data obtained for this study was subject to three levels of analyses by the team of researchers. (1) Initial Coding defined by line-by-line analyses to develop a variety of meaningful codes; (2) Focused Coding was conducted to synthesize the initial codes and develop main categories; and (3) Axial Coding defined by relating subcategories to larger categories and to sort, synthesize, and organize. During the Focused Coding stage, the coding team engaged in a consensus agreement process regarding the line-by-line analyses codes and established sub-categorical themes. In the final Axial Coding stage, the primary researcher sorted the subcategories into larger categories to determine the overall themes identified. Concurrently during this process, the research team participated in consistent team dialogue to process the personal and intellectual experiences related to interactions with the data.

***Memo Writing.*** During the first stage of analyses, the team of coders participated in an “in the field” memo writing process. Specifically, coders were instructed to provide short reflections about their personal experiences of the data and also their intellectual processes related to coding. According to Birks et al (2008) “Data exploration is enhanced, continuity of conception and contemplation is enabled and communication is

facilitated through the use of memoing” (p.68). For this study, the process of memoing was done to make visible to the primary researcher the intellectual, emotional, and overall personal processes involved in the coding procedure and interactions coders had with the data. Following the analyses phase, the memos the coders volunteered to share were compiled and significant reflections were explored in debriefing meetings.

**Final Analyses.** In the final phase the qualitative hybrid deductive and inductive data was formally discussed with the coding team, outlined, and organized. A table provided the following information from the hybrid coding process: (1) The frequency the tenets of VMA occurred; (2) a posteriori codes developed by the research team; and (3) an examination of the relevance of collapsing of a prior codes and a posteriori codes into a combination of themes. This information was provided with rich descriptions from the data to highlight findings. After the analyses, relevant memos from the coding team that were deduced to be salient and unique were included to offer a more robust understanding of the results. Following this process, the primary researcher engaged in a phenomenological analysis of the results. Particular attention was given to how VMA occurs on the social network platform Reddit as well as divergent, newly emerging, and/or additions that are found in regard to the VMA definition. Overall, this process was guided by the rigorous analytical process that CGT provides to ensure a thorough and trustworthy process that respects the phenomenological experience of the participants.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation Considerations**

#### ***Coding Team***

The coding team consisted of three individuals who were trained to evaluate and code the data obtained for this study. The coding team consisted of three graduate

students, including (1) the primary researcher of this study, a clinical psychology doctoral student in their fourth year of training and participating in their clinical internship training year; (2) a clinical psychology doctoral student in their first year of training; and (3) a clinical mental health master's student in their first year of training. Each individual that was a part of the team was thoroughly trained and regularly supervised throughout the coding process. The primary researcher captured the data, and the coding team, including the primary researcher, coded all of the data. The results were then compared and a consensus process involving all coders was conducted.

The coding team developed exceptional knowledge of the subcommunities idiosyncratic language, as evidenced by the efficiency in which they worked, the open and ongoing communication and collaboration between coders, and the overall themes identified. It is important to note that the preparation and acclimation to the data analyses was challenging for the coding team. Most difficult was the assimilation process the coders were subjected to related to the online incel and men's rights communities' "culture." The primary researcher was prepared to navigate the cultural and lexical nuances of the two communities studied for this research, mainly due to their in-depth familiarity with the major themes of this study and their own personal use of social networks platforms. However, the two coding team members were much less familiar with the themes of the research, and both had never used the Reddit social network platform. The noticeable disadvantage of this was the time and effort needed to acclimate the two coders. The acclimation of coders was done through frequent meeting to respond to questions and provide information related to the relevant context for the posted comments. Of course, significant learning occurred through in vivo exposure while the

coders were immersed in the data. The advantage was the outsider position and perspective that the coding team had in analyzing the data. The gender identities of the coding team were one cis-gender male, and two cis-gender identified females. This was also a potential strength of the coding team, as these identity markers offered varying perspectives of the data.

### ***Evaluating Modern Digital Rhetorical Text***

A particular challenge with evaluating modern digital rhetorical text are the cultural nuances that exist. Social network users are notorious for using esoteric nuanced language (i.e. cultural references and inside jokes) which presents a steep learning curve for those who are not familiar with this kind of lingo. This could lead to missing important data that could inform this study deeper. Rhetorical scholars have implemented ethnographic approaches to studying the underlying cultural meanings behind text (Dunn, 2016), and through a participatory epistemological approach meaning can be made through on-going engagement. Particular attention was given to understanding and defining some of the language used by users on social network forums for this study. Existing literature and lexicons (*Appendix B*) were sought and consulted for guidance on navigating and understanding the niche lingo used by users within the virtual subcommunities of interest. Additionally, the coding team addressed challenges related to modern rhetorical text in training and consensus coding meetings.

### ***Trustworthiness and Rigor***

To ensure trustworthiness of this research the following qualitative design criteria and tools were employed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985): (1) Credibility – Efforts were made to ensure that credible sources were used to inform and guide this study. For example,



thorough and careful investigation of the data and results were made by this researcher and research team (i.e. coding team members and committee members) grounded in seminal literature from multiple fields; (2) Transferability – Thorough documentation and description of research efforts were made to explore the extent to which the findings are transferable to a variety of contexts and situations, as well as examine the limitations of the transferability of this study; (3) Confirmability – Researchers documented the research process throughout to ensure the phenomenological experience of the users is accurately represented and respected; (4) Dependability – Significant efforts were made to document and outline the methodology used for this study so that others can follow, audit, or critique this research project in the future.

Specific methods that were particularly important in regard to this project included using multiple coders to analyze qualitative strands because of the complex discourse that takes place within social network message boards, as well as the nuanced lingo users employ. Additionally, check-ins for the primary researcher and the coding team recruited for this study were tracked throughout the process. For example, due of the sensitivity of the material, regular “emotional check-ins” were privileged to reduce the occurrence of possible vicarious trauma for all researchers involved. Overall, adhering to these principles increased the overall rigor and trustworthiness of this study.

### **Conclusion**

This section was intended to provide a thorough outline for the methodological design, analyses, and rigor of this study. It is important to note that the results were explored with openness to all outcomes by this researcher. The findings are provided in

the next section, followed by a discussion of the psychological and sociological implications of this study.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Results**

In this section a review of the multidimensional data gathering process will be provided, along with the overall analyses of the results. Specifically, what will follow is a descriptive overview of the in data that was obtained for this study, a summary of the deductive process using the a prior concept of VMA, as well as a summary of the inductive process that examined the data for other novel and divergent themes. In the end, a brief overview of the memo writing process that the coding team engaged in during the analyses phase of this study will be shared.

#### **Data Obtained**

Four separate qualitative datasets were obtained in total. The web scraping tool obtained data from the r/IncelsWithoutHate and r/MensRights subcommunities from the associated time periods for the Toronto Van Massacre (04/19/2018-04/26/2018) and Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting (10/29/2018-11/05/2018). Overall, 74 posts, containing 1267 comments, with a total of 76274 words was obtained. This calculation was tallied after duplicate posts were removed. Duplicate posts were obtained due to the reason that some posts contained multiple keywords used to identify and capture data.

For the r/IncelsWithoutHate community, 48 posts, containing 982 comments, with a total of 59662 words was obtained. During the Toronto Van Massacre time period 10 posts, containing 158 comments, with a total of 9784 words was obtained. During the Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting time period 38 posts, containing 824 comments, with a total of 49878 words was obtained. This time period provided significantly more data than the other datasets. The data that was obtained during this time period was averaged

with the other datasets to provide similar data sizes for analyses. The reduced data from the Tallahassee time period contained 10 posts, 278 comments, with a total of 14725 words. Due to the reduction, keywords that were not captured in this dataset were “cuck,” “curry,” “ER,” “gymcel,” “incel,” and “Tallahassee.” In total, 20 posts, containing 436 comments, with a total of 24509 words was analyzed from this community.

For the r/MensRights community, 26 posts, containing 285 comments, with a total of 16612 words was obtained. During the Toronto Van Massacre time period 16 posts, containing 142 comments, with a total of 7136 words was obtained. During the Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting time period 10 posts, containing 143 comments, with a total of 9476 words was obtained. In total, 26 posts, containing 285 comments, with a total of 16612 words was analyzed from this community. This data and additional related quantitative variables related to the qualitative data can be seen in *Table 1 (See p.66)*.

## Qualitative Data Overview

Table 1

	IWH Toronto	IWH Tallah*	IWH Tallah (Reduced)	MR Toronto	MR Tallah	IWH Total (Reduced)	MR Total	Overall Total (Reduced)
# of posts	10	38	10	16	10	20	26	46
# of comments	158	824	278	142	143	436	285	721
Avg # of comments per post	15.8	21.7	27.8	8.9	14.3	21.8	11.6	15.7
Total WORDS	9784	49878	14725	7136	9476	24509	16612	41121
# of posts BEFORE date of event	6	24	6	1	4	12	5	17
# of posts AFTER date of event	4	7	2	11	5	6	16	22
# of posts on day of BEFORE event	0	5	0	0	1	0	1	1
# of posts on day of AFTER event	0	2	2	4	0	2	4	6
Lowest/highest # of comments within posts	0/72	0/90	0/74	0/41	0/100	--	--	--

*\*Information for the IWH Tallah (Tallahassee) dataset before it was reduced for analyses*

### **Virtual Manhood Acts**

The following section will provide an overview of the deductive qualitative analyses results using the a prior concept of VMA (Moloney & Love, 2018). The data was analyzed by the research team and evidence of the four components of VMA were consensually agreed upon. The four components of VMA are the creation of homosocial, heterosexist space (HS), sexualization of women (WS), signaling possession of a heterosexual male body (MB), and humor as a tool of oppression (OH). Overall, VMA were identified within both communities to varying levels and some more frequently than others (HS: 60, WS: 29, MB: 10, OH: 47). The occurrence of VMA was more prevalently coded after the events in question (Toronto & Tallahassee attacks). Within communities, VMA were coded at a higher rate within the r/IncelsWithoutHate community in all but one category (HS: 36, WS: 23, MB: 10, OH: 23), compared to the r/MensRights community (HS: 24, WS: 6, MB: 0, OH: 24). All occurrences of the VMA MB were coded within the r/IncelsWithoutHate community. The coded occurrence of VMA between groups can be seen in *Table 2*, and within groups in *Table 3*. The following sections are an examination of the coded evidence results of VMA within each subcommunity, along with a examples of the occurrences of each VMA component.

VMA Coded Occurrences Between Groups Totals

Table 2

	Overall Between Groups			
	HS	WS	OH	MB
Before Event	17	7	17	5
Day of Event	6	1	3	1
After Event	37	21	27	4
<b>Sum Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>10</b>

VMA Coded Occurrences Within Groups Totals

Table 3

	r/IncelsWithoutHate				r/MensRights			
	HS	WS	OH	MB	HS	WS	OH	MB
<b>Before Event</b>								
Toronto	5	2	4	3	0	1	0	0
Tallahassee	10	4	6	2	2	0	7	0
<b>Day of Event</b>								
Toronto	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tallahassee	6	1	3	1	0	0	0	0
<b>After Event</b>								
Toronto	4	4	1	1	11	0	9	0
Tallahassee	11	12	9	3	11	5	8	0
<b>Overall Total</b>								
Before Event	15	6	10	5	2	1	7	0
Day of Event	6	1	3	1	0	0	0	0
After Event	15	16	10	4	22	5	17	0
<b>Sum Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>

*r/IncelsWithoutHate*

The four components of VMA varied within this community. Overall HS was the highest occurring (36), followed by WS (23), OH (23), and MB (10). There was a higher concentration of VMA overall within the Tallahassee dataset (HS: 27, WS: 17, MB: 6, OH: 18) compared with the Toronto dataset (HS: 9, WS: 6, MB: 4, OH: 5). There was a relative even spread of occurrences of all four VMA before and after the incidents for both time periods. The following is an overview of the evidence of the four VMA components within the *r/IncelsWithoutHate* Reddit community.

**Homosocial/Heterosexual Space.** Moloney and Love (2018) define a thriving homosocial space as conforming to gendered performance expectations. Further, users must not engage in any acts that align with femineity (i.e. weakness), and must adhere to scripts of misogyny, homophobia, and in essence, bullying. Examples of this were evident, especially users sharing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences of these problematic themes. Misogyny was prevalent within this virtual space in many ways. From sarcastic examples such as “Yeah- so many women who say "wow, look at that guy over there...too timid to make eye contact, won't speak up for themselves and have you seen his handshake? Wow!...it looked like the other guy was trying to hold a dead salmon...God I AM SO WET just looking at him." To more overt and concerning example such as “I feel my emotionally abusive behavior will help me in the long run with maintaining a girlfriend” in which another user responded “Sure, might work for a girlfriend. But if you ever want a wife and partner in life, that shit aint gonna fly son. Not in this day and age.”



Other elements of data that were identified as aligning with VMA HS, specifically related to misogyny, were the ways in which users spoke of women in derogatory and/or demeaning ways. For example, a user stated “if you DO get a girlfriend, you need to be prepared to buy her things, for her to cheat on you, for her to be disinterested in you and her acting like a total bitch to you. If you want an LTR and you’re not good looking this is the only way.” Others, apparent non-identified incels, would contribute to the misogynist discourse, such as “Who cares but I still have no strings sex with feminist women, they dont know they are sleeping with the enemy, because we are not like vegans and feminists we dont talk about it.”

Homophobia was not significantly evident in this community, although it was present. One user proclaimed “If you are lonely, you need friends, you need a life. And your friends must be dudes, not females. Only gay guys like female friends.” Another user used a homophobic slur, and although this was not common, it was nonetheless alarming. They stated “Fag, ive been divorced twice. Im a 34 year old with my own factory.”

Most evident within this community regarding VMA HS was the level of bullying that occurred. The level of this ranged from insults such as “Son, I have neither the time, patience, nor crayons to explain how fucked up on so many levels you are that start with your assumptions of me to your assumptions of other cultures and God knows what else you're fucked up on in between” and “Hahahahaha fucking loser , an incel schooled you hahahahahahahahaha.” There were insults targeting outsiders “Lmao. Triggered feminist. Even incels that live miserable lives are happier than you.” In addition to comments like this were insults targeting identified incels “You have no charm, you couldnt talk to a

woman if i paid you to do it” and “Almost as if you all create excuses custom fit to your life situations on why it's pointless to try to better yourselves because you won't get laid so why bother doing anything other than rotting and being miserable?” Overall, HS was the primary VMA component coded in this community.

**Sexualization of Women.** This category is defined by the users’ intentional efforts to reduce women to sexual objects. By implying sexual potency, the user differentiate themselves from the femineity, and signal domination over women (Moloney & Love, 2018). Evidence of this was present within this community. For example, while providing advice, one user stated “Good luck homie and just work on making yourself better and more confident for a bit then go get a girl man. The coffee shop the office the gym beautiful women are everywhere go find her and fuck her.” This and many other comments within this component were bathed in misogyny. For example, one user body shamed his first sexual partner, while sexualizing her in the process. “I'm 6'5" and I didn't lose my virginity till I was 20 and it was to a fat chick.” Other non-identified incel users would boast about their sexual experiences, such as “I got oral and a handy but not p in v.” There was also a general theme of users discussing whether or not to engage with sex workers. One user stated to another “Tell me where you live i send you 150\$, and you have to go bang an escort tonight.” Another user stated, “With only 500\$ i can go to Romania and come back and bang 9's and 10's, and i still have change, and i might also bang local women for free, and if i didnt bang anyone it was a cool time anyways.” One user both sexualizes and disparaged all the women they have had sex with, stating “I already have STDs, and i didnt get them from hookers. Hookers are 18-20 years old, and they are certainly cleaner than some of the women i came accross that i

banged. Your average that is way more dirty, and unlike the escort that is doing constant medical checkups and protects herself and knows what she is doing, the average that will have unprotected sex.”

**Signaling Possession of a Male Body.** Within this data we are unable to know the gender of the user. However, users find “unambiguous ways to signify a masculine self and suggest possession of a heterosexual male body” (Moloney & Love, 2018 p.612). This VMA component was the least evident within this community during the analyses. There were few references to signifying a masculine self, or possession of a male body or genitalia. When there was, it was often not in reference to the body or genitalia that the user possess personally. However, there was evidence in the comments from users referencing their masculine bodies. For example, one user stated “Its so frustrating, im not a beta cuck, i consider myself pretty masculine: i work out, have strong character and determination but always is about looks.” Lastly, one user posted that they were “Incel + Small penis”.

**Humor as a Tool of Oppression.** Moloney and Love (2018) define this VMA as multi-dimensional. They state that humor typically acts in several ways to aid users in oppressing others. It can be used as a diversion for oppressive discourse, as a nullification technique for conflicting self-evaluations, and humorous insults can be used not only to affect the individual it is directed at, but it can also serve the larger purpose of social control and boundary maintenance. Subtle examples of this include “Aren’t you incel? How are you supposed to get a girl in the first place lol?” Another user, a non-identified incel confronting an identified incel stated “Youre an incel, you arent going any way, you are INVOLUNTARILY ostracized by women.” Oppressive insults also ranged in

creativity and intensity. For example, One user corrected another users grammar, stating “\*\*\*beleive\*\* is actually spelled \*\*believe\*\*”. You can remember it by \*\*i before e\*\*.” In rebuttal, the corrected user replied “Go die. Oh look another i before e.” Then were just outright darkly humorous and cruel insults, for example, one user that proclaimed at the conclusion of a dispute, “I wouldn't piss in your mouth if your teeth were on fire.”

### *r/MensRights*

The four components of VMA varied within this community. Overall HS was the highest occurring (24), followed by WS (5), OH (17), and there were no occurrences of MB (0). There was a higher concentration of VMA overall within the Tallahassee time period dataset (HS: 13, WS: 5, MB: 0, OH: 15) compared with the Toronto time period dataset (HS: 11, WS: 1, MB: 0, OH: 9). There was a noticeable lack of VMA coded in the days before the incidents, as well as the day of the incidents. Primarily, most of the VMA that were coded in the two men's rights datasets occurred in the days after the incidents in question. The following is an overview of the evidence of the four VMA components within the r/MensRights Reddit community.

**Homosocial/Hetrosexist Space.** The three major elements of the VMA HS were analyzed within this community: misogyny, homophobia, and bullying. Misogyny within this subcommunity was subversively noticeable, although users in the community were more likely point to feminism and society at large to blame for their woes. Specific references to overt misogyny, such as this example, attack a prominent female celebrity, stating “Amy Schumer belongs in the zoo.” Another example is when users were discussing an alleged incident of a woman who killed eight people by driving a truck into a crowd. One user replied, “Any bets she's portrayed as a victim?” To more broad

sweeping misogynistic diatribes, where another user stated “To destroy a man's life, a malicious woman has a tremendous range of tools, from the net, to "victim" advocates, to ludicrous uni procedures and kangaroo courts, to offended decorum (cf. Ansari), to false accusations of rape, false accusations of harassment, of spousal abuse, etc, etc.”

Overt homophobia was not observed in this subcommunity. One user, who appeared to distance themselves from being a men’s rights activist, identified themselves as gay. This user stated “(and by the way, you Mra and Mgtow use incel as an insult to anyone who has a different opinion to you. I've even had the insult thrown at me and as a gay guy over 50 have done well over 4000 other men).” In following discussions with this user, no other users mentioned the gay-identified users sexuality or identity. Another user made a loose association to many identities of men who are at the perceived mercy of the “feminist media” and should be included in the men’s rights movement, including gay men. They stated “They're going after all men one group at a time. Nerds, nice guys, gay men, and now virgins/men with long dry spells.”

The most noticed themes of the HS VMA was the evidence of bullying. The range of bullying occurred at many levels. A significantly noticeable level of bullying occurred between users that were engaged in heated debates about various issues. Some users would subtly challenge users intellectual abilities, for example one user stated, “Do you even know what the men's rights movement is?” To users scrutinizing one another’s attitudes about the men’s rights movement, for example “Your attitude is exactly the kind of cowardly crap I'm talking about, you don't care about any of this, you just care about what feminists are saying about you.” Or users asserting their dominance through demands and/or insults. For instance, “You should be apologizing to me now that I've

proved you wrong. Instead you're...well I don't know what exactly. Do you think I singlehandedly control the entire Western media apparatus or something? Are you a paranoid schizophrenic?" To outright disagreements with no apparent intent from users to engage in on-going dialogue, for example "Here I disagree, they're all just bitter flags. Sack up or shut up." As well as users accusing other users of either being feminists or feminist sympathizers, such as "No. Unlike menslib apologists like yourself I don't pretend to be a nice guy and I don't compromise on issues. You're a moderate middle-of-the-road pussy that's terrified of looking bad to bad people."

**Sexualization of Women.** The occurrence of users sexualizing women within this subcommunity was observed limitedly. The few examples of this VMA occurring in the data included users sexually objectifying women to make a point, for example "LOL, for real. Imagine being angry at injustices. Grow a fucking pair and slam some pussy, yo. I don't give platforms to these losers or nazis," "Men are committing suicide, fathers can't see their kids, babies are being mutilated,.... How else to deal with this other than going balls deep in some chick whom you have no legal defense against if she withdraws Consent? Betas, I don't know what your problem is," or "Because the way I see it, unless they've gone and gotten rejected by the fattest, ugliest chick and the cheapest prostitute.... They're voluntary celibate....." It is also important to note that the majority of these comments were in response to discussions about the incel communities and their known difficulties with connecting and forming relationships with women.

**Signaling Possession of a Male Body.** Interestingly, there was no occurrences of the MB VMA coded in both datasets for the r/MensRights Toronto and Tallahassee time periods.

**Humor as a Tool of Oppression.** Humor used in a way to oppress others was observed in a variety of ways within this community. A sarcastic tone used in insults was noticeably enacted from users, for example, “Ooooh you caught me lol, I'm a super sekret feminist agent. People who aren't idiots can check my post history and judge for themselves” or “what's it like to use the worst font?” Insults were also elaborate and appeared crafted to hurt other users as creatively as possible. Examples seen such as “What the hell kind of butt fucking sorcery is this? What are you even trying to sell? You sound like a Juggalo high on glue after their first Eastern Philosophy 101 lecture” or “I made an account to use with the Reddit app, figured I'd stop lurking. Your abortion of English was so stupid and confusing it was one of the first things I took the time to comment on.” When humor was used as an insult, it was often in effort to infantilize other users and call into question their intelligence and/or their perceived understanding of the issues being discussed. One user, in explaining their belief that incels are just as a part of the men’s rights movement with another user who didn’t, stated “How many hours is your shift gatekeeping? You breath oxygen and so do moose so you're a moose I guess, INEXCUSABLE! /s.”

### **Inductive Analyses Results**

Results from the inductive qualitative analyses will be highlighted in this section. The inductive process was adopted to allow similar, novel, or divergent themes related to VMA and/or masculinity to emerge. These themes for both the r/IncelsWithoutHate and r/MensRights communities will be provided separately, as well as a brief review of the thematic differences and similarities between communities will be reviewed.

*r/IncelsWithoutHate*

During the inductive analyses consistent themes emerged in the r/IncelsWithoutHate community that appeared within both time period datasets, in addition to themes that were seen uniquely to each time period dataset. Overall the qualitative data captured between both dataset time periods held consistent themes that ranged in content. Discourse within the data primarily centered on intrapersonal (i.e. self-loathing) and interpersonal (i.e. difficulties relating to women) issues related to identifying as an incel, as well as notable but limited dialogue regarding how users were impacted by perceived external factors (i.e. feminism). There was limited discourse between users about the Toronto Van Attack, and there was no discussion from users about the Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting. The themes that were identified by the research team (*Table 4*) during the inductive analyses will be discussed in the following section.

## Inductive Themes Identified within r/IncelsWithoutHate

*Table 4*

<b>Themes Identified</b>
1. Self-Loathing
2. Difficulties Navigating Relationships with Women
3. Misogyny
4. Maladaptive Advice Giving and Support
5. Inceldom
6. Violence
7. Conversations About the Femicide Attacks

**Self-Loathing.** A significant theme that emerged during this phase of the analyses for this community was the level of self-loathing and self-hate users engaged in. Some users pointed to their experiences in public and with close others, and how this impacted their self-esteem. Some users shared specific instances. For example, “I have my whole



life at least a few times a year, just this weekend I was at a pumpkin patch and some kid said to his mom "why's that man so ugly?" Another user shared, "also people stare at me, points their finger at me, laughs at me. 3 times also people took photo of me with their phone." Another user shared how a school teacher commented on their appearance, stating "teachers in high school also commented on my ugly ass face." Various users shared how others went as far as demonizing them based on their appearance. A few users shared about these experiences, specifically stating "From middle school up through my mid-20s, I got it constantly, mostly from girls and women. I was in a grocery store one night and this little boy went wide-eyed and said to his father, "Daddy, it's the boogeyman!" Another user shared how others thought that they resembled an active shooter. "Well in High School, apparently all the popular people had a vote and crowned me 'most likely to shoot up the school' based on my looks. Of course in those days school shootings were practically unheard of, nothing like nowadays." Many users would also share in the belief that there was little to nothing they could do to change their circumstances or how they felt about themselves. "i feel bad life is shit and uncontrollable and as of yet there isnt much we can do about our genetics yet".

A general dislike, disdain, and hate for oneself was starkly observed in this community. One user lamented, "I literally wouldn't know what to talk about now. Hate talking about myself cos I'm boring and hate my life." They went on to say, "...I know I'm never getting anywhere with it so why not just sack it off and resign myself to a lifetime of takeaways or cooking for 1 and getting round the economy of scale problem by cooking for 2 then putting half in tupperware for the next day. I have so much tupperware. It's a plastic testament to what a pathetic loser I am." This general sense of

self-loathing was seen frequently. There was also a common theme discovered in which users who identified as “brown” or India South Asian, colloquially known as “currycels”, would express disdain for their skin color and perceived lack of desire women have for people of similar race and ethnicity. One user stated “It's over for currycels...”

The theme of suicide was starkly prevalent in this community. Many users would detail either their wish to die and/or the means in which they would end their lives. For example, “What's the point in living when I know chad exists and that I'll never be him? Knowing I'll never know what it's like to be desired, much less loved? Seeing all the women that worship him, that go to his frat to get drugged and insulted, what choice do I have beyond getting drunk, taking my belt, and hanging myself?” or “High on death, I'd say it's worth it as a incel. I wasn't meant for life anyway.” Some users went as far as to mention exactly how they would take their lives. For example, “My method of death would be a silent overdose. Morphine combined with Oxycontin/heroin, feel so high for a few hours before death. Imagine the adrenaline rush.” In reference to a hopeless situation one user imagined themselves in, stated “That's when I buy a gun and splatter my brains on a livestream.” One user offered a bleak take on the perceived reality of being an identified incel and the desire to die, stating “Sorry, but life wasn't meant to be fair. The weird thing is that the society won't even let you die painlessly. They don't want you to live but they don't want you to off yourself either. They'd rather have you in a psych ward where medication will keep you groggy throughout your pathetic life.”

**Difficulties Navigating Relationships with Women.** The theme of users expressing difficulties navigating relationships both romantically and sexually with women was seen significantly throughout the data for both time periods. Users would

often be seen lamenting about their difficulties with generally interacting, dating, or engaging in sexual intercourse with women. Specifically, users would often share their difficulties related to their appearances. One user stated, "If I were better looking...that interaction would have gone differently." Another user stated, "Then it really just depends on the amount of prejudice you're forced to face. Not getting some of the perks that hot people do - yeah, that's something that can be overlooked. If you're in an environment that actively harasses and punishes you for the way you look, then no, it's neither possible nor healthy to try to overlook that." One user shared their dissatisfaction with their looks and why this negatively impacts their ability to successfully connect with women "People see me and laugh on site, women either ignore me, laugh at me, or give me the dirtiest look they can. There is no one who is as much of a pure Incel as me." This same user went on to share that their difficulties and desperation have resorted them to anti-social behaviors, stating "I will never get hot women so I've resorted to grabbing their ass on the subway and trying to hide that it was me."

Users also shared their disappointment and vulnerabilities related to their difficulties connecting with women. One user shared "Yes. I was told "I look like a creep" by a girl I had a huge crush on. She didn't say it to my face, I heard her talking about it with her friends. Haven't been the same since." Another went on to share "I've probably been dumped more times than anyone on the planet. I'm far from a "normie" then sharing, "I've honestly been in the same place you are now. Contemplating suicide, convincing myself something was wrong with me, hating myself cause I couldn't get or keep a girlfriend."

There was also heated discourse about what women want and/or desire in a partner. Specifically, there was frequent debates about the degree of masculinity one should possess to find success dating women. One user stated, “In reality it’s the skinny “effeminate” pretty boy types that do so well because of their presence in music and media for girls, men who lean this way do well with women because they are more in line with what women want, it’s not programming it’s just all the popular musician and pop culture figures have the same aesthetic, every girls room in the west is going to have pictures of beiber and one direction all over it, not Schwarzenegger.” Most seemed to agree that personality features were important, and that hypermasculinity was not appealing to most women. However, there were also many contributing voices that believed lifting weights and other means to increase their masculine features would lead to success.

Additionally, the level of frustration was noticeable for many users regarding their difficulties connecting with women. One user proclaimed, “They are obviously not phisically atracted to me, sorry if im being rude but i havent come here looking for help but to rant and reading the same advice for the 1818345 time doesnt make any difference. I know its o v e r.” A general sense of hopelessness was noticed in users that their circumstances would not improve, and they would never find success in their dating endeavors. Further, users expressed frustration towards non-incel identified men and their successes dating and strategies in which helped them be successful. For example, one user stated “They’re not fucking chad because he’s strong or masculine, it’s because he’s good looking” or “Yea. Unfortunately im 3/10 so looks only do me harm owing to the halo/devil effect. Normies usually get into relationships with loving gfs.” Another user

was frustrated that couples can publicly display affection (i.e. hand holding or kissing), but others could not engage in public displays of sexual behavior (i.e. masturbating), stating ““It's over. Watching porn is a crime because it makes normies uncomfortable, and yet couples showing PDA isn't. Fuck this society”

**Misogyny.** The theme of misogyny was prevalent within this community. An aspect of the VMA HS was acts of misogyny in the context of maintaining a heterosexist space. However, there were divergent themes of misogyny separate from the VMA HS that the research team identified. One divergent theme of misogyny seen in this community was the general distrust in women and/or the belief that many women hold insidious motives. For example, “I don't just mean an intimate relationship, even platonically, women can easily dispose of their male friends and feel nothing at all”, “All these cherry picked stories about women dying alone and marrying themselves is propaganda and not representative of women at all, women all love their new positions in society”, or “Unattractive men are expected to work for as little as possible without complaining. Only women are allowed to whine about how hard life is”.

Another divergent theme of misogyny was the problematic beliefs users held about women's motives in dating and relationship realms. One user shared “Nowadays we have things like tinder and so on. And some men are getting sex that way, but would you commit to a woman you met on tinder? Modern times made all women whores, and all men potential slaves of whores.” Another stated, “The others could be easily bribed, because women follows money, and simps follow women.” This user offered a litany of reasons why they believe women should not be trusted, stating “Seriously, any woman not known as mom, 9 times out of 10 doesn't care about you even remotely. And I don't

just mean strangers, friends, lovers, \*partners\*, they could all easily cut you out of their life forever and feel absolutely nothing having done so. Not even rage, not even malice, just nothing, an apathy so deep and piercing it seems like a greater cruelty than any other.”

There were also noticeable misogynistic comments made about women often without context or prompting. One user shared a cruel reflection of one woman he had a perceived romantic connection with, stating “She was a cute Mexican girl who was kinda dumb. She was cute but she was too dumb and I didn’t care for her much.” One user, in discussing his pain after a hurtful interaction with a woman stated “The worst part was she was a 3/10 max and has a severe underbite and jacked teeth. She’s now like 300 lbs and dating some Chad.” There was also a noticeable number of discussions about using sex services (i.e. porn) or sex workers. Within the discussions about these services, users often spoke of women as a product to be used for their sexual desires, and/or in ways that dehumanized women. In this example, the user exemplifies the objectifying language many users engaged in when speaking about sexually engaging with women. “The average 16 year old gets to fuck his hot high school girlfriend, yet we have to fly around the world to some shithole and then pay for a used up whore, how can a man have any self confidence after seeing this clear difference in lifestyle?”

**Maladaptive Advice Giving and Support.** Users offering advice and providing support was also significant theme within this community. Some users offered empathetic words of support for other users struggling with various issues, including “That just sucks. I’m sorry some people are just nasty. Wish I could erase that comment from your mind for you. 😞” or “Please don’t kill/hurt yourself.” Some users even made efforts to

lessen tensions and offer hope when discussions became tenuous. Once specifically stated “Just some things to think about. Less hate more kindness, guys. There's a saying that goes like this: "you can't drive away darkness with darkness, only light can do that". So get up and shine on!” Although kind and diplomatic discourse from users was seen limitedly.

Other users would offer advice about how to either improve their efforts with dating and engaging with women, and/or advice about how to improve their overall wellbeing. For example, one user shared “You can't do anything about the height, but you can do things to make yourself more confident. There are things that can be done to touch up hair/weight/skin issues. Also look around at the mall tons of ugly people paired up.” Or, users offered optimism about engaging in seemingly healthy activities, “Hobbies are great and can keep you mind off relationships for the first couple months after that it's smooth sailing.” Others gave advice that seemed to be community specific, and overall not apparent adaptive strategies like the previous users mentioned. Specifically, users suggested strategies to increase their masculinity by working out, also known as “gymcel/gymceling” or refraining from masturbating also known as “nofap.” For example, “Sure, I lifted for a year and a chick hit on me at a bar before I went back to her place and I lost half my v card”, “Gymceling got me out, have you tried it? People like to say face is everything but working out has the potential to improve it, and at least make your body look the best it could possibly be naturally”, or “Have you guys tried nofap?”

**Inceldom.** The theme related to “Inceldom”, a term used to describe the typical lifestyle related to being an identified incel, was noticed as a prevailing theme. The topics ranged in this category. Some users would share how they are coping with this lifestyle,

for example, “Anyway Im coping My incel life with weed, games comics, book and most of all, long bicycle rides around My region.” Others discussed how they did not publicly share with others what they talk about within incel virtual social spaces. This user shared “First of all i would rather be incel than beig what is considered a "beta cuck", secondly i dont talk about what i think about the incel world in public so thats a huge no for your question.”

Others shared their assessments of the perceived general demographics that make up most people within the incel community, for example “People on here are going to devote me but I believe that most incels suffer from Aspergers, mild autism, society anxiety, and depression. Combine all that with years of getting rejected you get body dysphoria, thus thinking you are ugly.” Other incels and non-identified incels offered analyses regarding how incels could “ascend” [date or have sex with a woman] from the incel lifestyle. One user, in reference to dating, stated “I believe being an incel exists but I would bet a big percentage of us wouldn't exist if we just lowered our standards and didn't try to date the "perfect" person or what the media portrays as attractive.”

Additionally, there were a significant number of comments from non-incel identified users that harshly criticized incels and their lifestyles. These users offered comments like, “If you’re browsing this subreddit, you’re almost certainly a subhuman reject who is never going to do much, there’s no point in deluding yourself into thinking otherwise” or “Almost as if you all create excuses custom fit to your life situations on why it's pointless to try to better yourselves because you won't get laid so why bother doing anything other than rotting and being miserable?” Others called out what they perceived as problematic behaviors from this community, including “Incels have posted



right here on reddit that women should be rounded up, farmed like cattle and distributed to lonely incels to rape. Literally. Right. Here. I'm not sure how much worse than that you can get.” One user, in good spirit, attempted to offer a solution to the problems incels and other Manosphere identified participants could experience away from these communities “Once you get away from the Manosphere men really are happy, all this pessimism doesn't exist in reality and most guys don't care about anything this community talks about because they have it so good with women and everything else.” However, mostly outsiders would offer critical appraisals of incels and incelism like this users comment, “The only reason some incels get shit upon is because of their self-declared views like "all women are used up, emotionless whores" and "lack of sex is worse than cancer and the Holocaust combined.””

**Violence.** Direct references to violence were not observed frequently within this community. However, there were vague statements that were alarming such as this assessment by one individual stating “There isn't a point to life at all. We are not here for a reason, existence doesn't have some broad goal or motivation.” They went on to alarmingly state “...no one has a legacy unless they make one.” Another users use of a racial slur was a notable hateful/violent act, in which they stated “Do you think you look dignified or strong at all behaving like a poor n\*\*\*\*\* [word redacted]?” Lastly, one concerning reference to violence did surface in the data, and although not overtly direct, was ominous. The user stated, “Cucks need to be eradicated.”

**Conversations About Femicide Attacks.** Within the two datasets there was limited conversation about the Toronto attack, and no conversation about the Tallahassee attack. The limited discourse that did take place was mainly about the individual

experiences of the users in relation to the event, and/or the individual perception of the perpetrator.

*Toronto.* The conversations about the Toronto Van Attack within this community occurred exclusively within the dataset during this time period. Users reactions were limited to their personal experiences and/or users offered sarcastic or callous comments about the attack. Some users shared how the event impacted them directly, for example “I’m sorry. This whole news just left me feeling upset and like literal human garbage” or “This whole Toronto bullshit left me feeling like shit and snarky. But since you’re being civil, I’ll give you that.” Another user expressed disappointment with the parallel the Toronto femicide event shared with the notorious Elliot Rodgers Isla Vista rampage, stating “Just what we need. Another ER /s”. Another user, indifferent to the suffering and carnage caused by this event stated, “I hope he at least has an interesting manifesto.” One user posted “Toronto killer what a piece of shit.” To which another user, almost in defense of the Toronto perpetrator, stated “That’s **\*\*your\*\*** opinion. Useless post with no context.”

*Tallahassee.* No direct data or themes were analyzed regarding the Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting, the perpetrator Scott Paul Beierle, or anything related to this event.

### *r/MensRights*

During the inductive analyses consistent themes emerged in the r/MensRights community that appeared within both time period datasets, in addition to themes that were seen uniquely to each time period dataset. Overall the content in both dataset time periods primarily contained discourse between users about the Toronto Van Attack and Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting. Discussions touched on other topics (i.e. justice system

issues, etc.), but the content mostly centered on the incidences at the center of this study. This was different from the r/IncelsWithoutHate datasets in which there was little discussion about the two incidents in question. On an individual level within the r/MenRights datasets, participation from users typically focused on their woes related to external factors (i.e. feminism or media), and little about their intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences. The themes that were identified by the research team (*Table 5*) during the inductive analyses will be discussed in the following section.

#### Inductive Themes Identified within r/MensRights

*Table 5*

<b>Themes Identified</b>
1. Oppression from Feminism, Media, and Society
2. Perception of Men's Rights Movements
3. Toxic Masculinity
4. Conversations About the Femicide Attacks

**Oppression from Feminism, Media, and Society.** A significant theme noticed within this community was the discourse centered on the perceived oppressive forces imposed on men and boys by feminism, the media, and society. For many users within this community, feminism was seen as the “enemy” and at the root cause of many modern issues male-identified individuals face. Users proclaimed statements such as “Feminism is cancer”, “This is why I'm often of the opinion that feminists don't just want to take everything for themselves, they also want complete supremacy over men as a gender”, or “It's about power (ironically enough) attractive women have power through controlling men, unattractive ones still want that power, it's at the heart of feminism.”

There was a sense from many users that feminism was a radicalized movement that was actively trying to oppress men. For example, “Are you kidding? The narrative is

already out there, the brush is already on the canvas: we can either make our mark or let the feminists make it for us.” Other users would demonize and discredit feminists, like in this one example “for some of the more radical feminist i would gladly label them as insane due to the severe lack of internal locus of control and hugely overblown external locus of control, causing them to unable to distinguish right from wrong”

Even more concerning was the belief that feminism and feminists were actively attempting to murder men. There were many examples of this within the data, including some of these snippets: “Feminism is a female supremacy organization run by terrorists”, “It's not an opinion that feminists want to murder men, it's a fact”, or “You do realise that Feminists invented the mail bomb right, along with attempting to assassinate a sitting Prime Minister of the UK.” In discussions about the Toronto and Tallahassee attacks, some users would outright claim that feminists wanted the murders to happen and/or claimed they have done worse. For example, “They wanted this to happen, I mean, they're a bunch of mentally disturbed and violent morons to begin with but they seem to have waited for this moment as a renewed push with their propaganda towards anybody that won't go along with their bullshit”, and “Famous manifestos of hate taught in many gatherings who were written by females who tried to murder and hate men, such as that by Valerie Solanas.” There were few users that challenged these discriminatory and hateful notions within the discussions. However, there were occasional opposing voices that would offer a more reality-based position, such as this users comment “Almost all murders committed in the United States are committed by men, regardless of the gender of the victim. Being concerned about the possibility of being murdered by a woman is like being worried about being trampled to death by a zebra.”

Users took to the message boards to also share in their frustrations regarding the media, especially in their assessments of the Toronto and Tallahassee attacks. Users would lament about specific media sources and their coverage of the events. One user, in discussing CNN, commented “Media sure is great. 20 years ago the publication in question was by far the most outstanding and trustworthy media outlet in our country. Nowadays it's a soap box for feminism, and it shows.” Another stated “CNN is already on this and labelling the perp as an MRA> disgusting.” Others were outraged by the coverage from other media sources, including the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) “Not saying it should be a regular topic for discussion but the fact remains that feminists have repeatedly lied about MRA's by falsely equating us with pickup artists and now, "Incels." As mentioned, the CBC recently broadcast this disinformation to millions of people.” In what might be an accurate assessment, many users were frustrated with some journalists lack of understanding about the men’s rights movement and/or the differences between Manosphere related communities (i.e. incels, MGTOW, etc). This frustration was exemplified in this one comment, “I'll tell you what, give it a week and we'll see who was right and wrong: I anticipate that a bunch of media outlets will attempt to conflate incels with MRA's.” In what seemed representative of the overall sentiment in this community, one user lamented about the perceived smear campaigns men’s right activists face from the media, stating “In all seriousness, if you aren't prepared to have your reputation smeared by the media and deal with feminists personally targeting you, you aren't cut out for this.” In other discussions, there appeared to be a general dislike, distrust, and/or hate of other “liberal” media sources such as the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, and MSNBC. There was a conservative ideological essence overt within this

community. It was most prevalent when users lamented about how the Toronto and Tallahassee attacks would be projected as fault of Donald Trump, the US president at the time of the murders. One user stated, “More likely the media will use this to attack trump's base.”

Regarding the Toronto and Tallahassee attacks, users generally shared the belief that the “feminist media” was proportionally inflating the seriousness of these incidents. For example, one user stated “Really, that's all their is to it, not only has this group been blown completely out of proportion. It's just like with Charlottesville where a pathetic number of neo-nazis showed up but the media decided to go completely apeshit.” Another user, in response to the perceived limited occurrences of mass murder events, stated “I think the numbers are so fucking small it may as well be a figment of feminists' imagination.”

All of these themes seemed to be connected to a larger sense that feminism and the media are impacting societies sentiment towards men. Many users shared in the belief that society is “fucked” and that the tides of progressive race and gender movements have made an impact already too significant to reverse. One user summed up this sentiment quiet well when they stated “MRA = neofacist. meanwhile Feminism = women's rights = human rights. I guess men aren't human and are just lockstep Nazis.” Another user, in the same vein, stated “So why is it that society bothers so little to help men with problems? Don't male lives matter?”

**Perception of Men’s Rights Movements.** Another significant theme within this community was the discourse users engaged in regarding their opinion, frustrations, and/or paranoias about the larger perception media and society has of the men’s rights

movement. Much of the discussions were related to the media's coverage of the Toronto and Tallahassee attacks, and how the men's rights community at large should or should not separate themselves from the incel community. One user stated "It almost feels like they're deliberately coming for US posters here. How is it right that the actions of ONE random person are enough to be used by hateful people with an agenda to destroy all the men's rights movement posters on Reddit." Many other users would offer solutions to managing the perceptions of their movement, captured by this user's comment "I've been reading a bunch of coverage of Scott Beierle and I want to give my take on the situation. His motivations are directly threatening to our movement..."

Other users were more optimistic about the impacts the coverage of the attacks might have on their movement. For example, one user stated "The thing is; people keep mentioning MRAs in smears, people will get curious and start looking online about it. This subreddit, this one right here, will be one of the top results on Google. People will come here, get to see that we're at worst benign and at best oppressed and crying out, unheard either way. MRA is a used term now, and people will slowly learn the what and why of it." Other users, possibly recognizing the progress media is making in understanding the differences between Manosphere communities stated "Interestingly, they don't mention MRAs at all in this story. Perhaps they're starting to learn the difference."

There was a general effort from users to address how to approach managing the perceptions of their community. Some were more rigid and steadfast in their approach to managing perceptions, for example "If you did not do anything wrong, do not apologize."

While others, mostly moderators<sup>11</sup> in community, offered voices of reason to managing perceptions. However, these voices were not often representative of the communities more problematic behaviors and ideologies. One moderator offered “We should handle incidents of violence by any members exactly the way most human rights movements (including at times civil rights, black lives matter, feminism, etc) handle violent incidents...” This user went on to list a variety of approaches these groups have implemented to achieve perceived success with media and larger swaths of society. Another moderator posted a list of denouements in response to the violence in Tallahassee, stating “We do not sympathize with Scott Beierle, Elliot Rodger or violent misogynists in any way; Misogynist murderers are the monsters of the worst kind” However, this post only received one response.

Overall, there was no data analyzed that identified users discussing other aspects of the attacks such as the impact on the victims and families, what proactive efforts would be made to prevent these attacks from happening, and/or how their community is potentially accountable in some way or another for these kinds of tragic events.

**Toxic Masculinity.** TM, arguably pervasive throughout every theme analyzed within this community, was a notable standalone theme. Because of the high prevalence of overt and noticeable enactments of TM from users, this warranted its own category. Within the data, TM ranged in expression and context for this community. From general sentiments of misogyny, such as this comment from one user in the context of discussion about how the legal system favors women “Of course it isn't a good idea, which is why

---

<sup>11</sup> How moderators are appointed is unique to each Reddit community. It's not clear how moderators were appointed for the r/IncelsWithoutHate and r/MensRights community. Notably, other than the original founding members of any given Reddit community, the moderators are never self-appointed.



it's foolish to dole out pussy passes like this to women who knowingly pervert justice.” To emotionally aloof comments about the impacts of rape accusations by this user “I'd rather be raped than falsely accused.” To general broad sweeping misrepresentations of women as a gender from users “...women today are terrorized by everything.” Then there were just outright misogynistic comments made by some users about the plight of incels and how, as one user subtly stated, could fix their involuntary celibate lifestyle by engaging with a sex worker, stating “No man with \$200 is an incel, he's just arrogant.”

There was also a commonly observed theme of users engaged in attempts to dominate and control one another. This was witnessed in users when generally responding to one another in harsh and critical ways. Most frequently users would deliver short and sharp statements such as “What are you talking about? Are you high?” or “So on top of being a coward scared for your own reputation you're lazy, got it.” It was often seen in almost every post where users would generally engage in open discourse to begin, and by the end the post threads would devolve into users criticizing and/or attacking one another. The level of infighting within this community was significant, to the point that one user commented “We have, in your comment and this thread generally, an illustration of one of the profound reasons why men's rights (vis-a-vis feminism and gynocentrism) have not advanced in centuries: \* Emphasising internecine squabbling (“we need to condemn incels”) over unity and advancement.”

It was also noticeable that there were several references to Jordan Peterson, a Canadian psychologist who holds archaic ideologies about race, gender, and social issues. Peterson appeared to be viewed as a heroic figure by many users in this community, and the references seemed to signal that he is a central figure in their movement. This is

highlighted best in the following comment from one user “The first time I ever heard of the term MRA was from angry feminists like this claiming it was a hate movement and that all advocates for men's rights secretly hate women somehow. So my hope is that by doing this, she is going to end up introducing more people out there who were like me to the men's rights movement and to Jordan Peterson as well for that matter.”

**Conversations About Femicide Attacks.** Compared to the r/IncelsWithoutHate community that discussed the Toronto attack limitedly and did not discuss the Tallahassee attack at all, there was significant discourse within the r/MensRights community about these two events, particularly in relation to incels and incel culture.

*Toronto.* Some users condemned the attack and the actions of Alek Minassian, the Toronto attack perpetrator. One user stated “If you want to die, die, but don't take other people along for the ride. That's just wrong and evil.” However, most users engaged in assessments of incels and incel culture. For example, one user stated, “Did you know the killer has serious mental disabilities? He is not representative of any group. But that doesn't stop news broadcasters and feminists from trying to link him first to Incels, then to us here in the MRA.” Others disparaged identified incels, offering comments such as this one “I told you all this is what they'd do, it's ridiculous how predictable they are.”

Some empathized with the violence that identified incels have engaged in. One user offered compassion, albeit dark, for incels who are “pushed over the edge”, stating “Having read recently the posts made on certain incel threads, I can see how vulnerable men, who might be feeling depressed, alone, and hopeless, could move towards anger and hate towards others in society.” Other users pointed to the cause of violence being a combination of incel lifestyles and mental illness, for example “I think most people who

engage in attacks on the populace, regardless of their background, are very likely to have some form of mental illness.” However, this same user also went on to say “That doesn't mean their actions are a result of ONLY that.”

This user, speaking of incel virtual social spaces made a statement devoid of any self-awareness about the echo chamber r/MensRights can be. They stated, “Echo chambers that allow for no dissenting opinions or more moderate, nuanced debates of a given scenario, are not healthy for the individuals involved.”

### *Tallahassee.*

Similar themes emerged in the Tallahassee dataset compared to the Toronto dataset regarding the discourse on the attacks. For example, assessments were offered regarding the mental health of the attacker, for example “You can bet your bottom dollar this guy was on some form of anti-depressants and/or some pharmaceutical. Just like the Toronto Van Attack. A fact the main stream media \*always\* seems to avoid” Another user offered that the media’s coverage was no different than that of the Toronto Van Attack, stating “This is similar to the media's handling of the Toronto van attack.”

Largely, users discussed their displeasure or disgust with the incel community. There were many examples of this, such as this example positioning incels as lesser than, for example “Pushing down the misogynist ladder on lower levels incels the violence of deranged individuals will not help MRM cause”, “Incels are just socially inept, angry, lonely men”, or “Guys who can't get laid are fine but Incels are a whole super toxic culture.” Another user went on to relate to identified incels, offering “I have no disdain for lonely men whatsoever, mostly sympathy as I've frequently been one.” However, this same user went on to distance themselves by stating “But incels are another breed

entirely- instead of just "lonely men", they are a dark-web affiliated self-branded group of angry men whose general attitude and views are poisonous. There are far more lonely men in the world than the self-proclaimed incels, and the majority of those tend to be far less destructive in ideals than the incels”.

Lastly, one user offered this grim and satirical take on the attack that happened in Tallahassee, and why the attacker likely chose a yoga studio as their intended destination to enact violence. They stated “It is sort of satirical. Some incels have a thing about yoga pants and other revealing clothing being inconsiderate because it is metaphorically rubbing in their face that which they can't have literally rubbed in their face. Possibly the choice of a yoga studio to attack had symbolic significance.”

### **Shared Themes Across the Communities**

The following section is a brief overview of the shared themes that were identified between the r/IncelsWthoutHate and r/MensRights community.

#### ***Toxic Masculinity***

Within both communities there was rampant heterosexism, male centrality, attempts to dominate, control, and subjugate others. There was also no evidence of users engaged in discourse about emotional expression or instances of vulnerability. Many of the users in these spaces did not engage in adaptive, collaborative, and/or healthy communication with one another, but rather, were engaged in disconnected and/or aggressive dialogue. This type of interaction was evident at every level of analyses and theme found within each community.

### *Misogyny and Feminism*

Also prevalently seen between the two communities was overt and covert misogyny, as well as signaling feminists and feminism being at the crux of their plights. The overall misogynistic attitudes seen within both of these communities was the sense that women's dispositions are generally malicious, insidious, manipulative, and/or unpredictable. Further, there was overlying attitudes that sexualized and objectified women, which was often seen in comments dehumanizing the opposite gender, viewing them as outlets for their own personal and sexual frustrations and/or gratifications. Also for users, feminism was most often to blame for their personal and societal challenges. Further, feminism was generally blamed for subverting women's traditional roles in society. The belief was prevalent that women's power and societal progress has not benefited many men, and now the demands for progress from women and other gender and racial minorities is out of control. Lastly, there was a rejection of progressive movements related to gender, race, and other social issues that, from their perspective, do not benefit men, are asking too much of men, and even more so, subjugating men.

### **Memos**

Each researcher involved in the qualitative analyses phase of this study participated in a concurrently occurring memo writing task to capture individual analytical and personal processes while engaging with the data. The following section will highlight themes from the memos. Specifically, a review will be provided of the researchers' processes coding the data, while also highlighting some of the personal reaction's researchers had to the data.

### *Coding Process*

Themes within the memos regarding the coding process held many elements. The themes ranged from noticing challenges, confusions, interpretations, and tracking the themes related to the coding process. The process of coding offered the coding team unique challenges, especially in the early stages of the line-by-line coding stage. This was reflected in the memos in a variety of ways, for example, researchers stated “Not sure how to code this. It's sarcasm mocking incels/themselves?” or “this comment thread has a lot of terminology that make it difficult to follow- I'm afraid I'm not following the heart of the story here.” As the coding process continued, the coding team continued to reflect on the larger frameworks guiding the coding processes. One coder reflected “Trying to decide what in this comment should be coded. I referred to the Coding Tips Slide citing Glaser- "what is the data a study of". Reflecting on this, I decided to code what I thought related to Toxic Masculinity.” Other challenges arose related to the semantics and unique lexical styles of users. One of the coders reflected on how to define a term in the data, and what, if any, is the relevance to this study. They stated, “I am not sure about the term "hoodrat" and wondered if it might be racist language and whether that is meaningful to this study.”

The researchers also offered reflections on the themes that were emerging throughout the coding process. This was reflected frequently in the memos. For example, several researchers reflected “Theme - policing where a person is an incel or not "who really gets it"”, “this whole thread (and possible theme) is stories of how others have hurt/wronged the users”, and “Important codes here!! I imagine that a sense of oppression might be a large theme. Especially by "feminists" and women.” Researchers also

commented on the process of analyzing the data for VMA, and the challenges and successes that came as a result, evidenced by this comment “I felt like this needed its own VMA category. I wondered whether I understood HS enough in coding it this way.”

Memos were also offered at the level of the interactions within the data, noticing how users were interacting with one another and so forth, such as “Conversation up to this point is about strategies some think will work to turn their misfortunes with dating (i.e. not masturbating). Then there are people who are outright shaming/confronting these people about their incel ideologies (i.e. self-loathing, defeatist attitudes)” or “This is humorous, but also a reflection of the how there are users in different camps here that are either here to get support or argue with/attack incels. This will be harder to differentiate in the future when coding at other levels.” By the end the coding team developed a keen eye for all kinds of complex dynamics within the communities, which was evidenced in these codes “clearly a moderator comment. Moderators are more diplomatic and not representative of the community I think” and “I'm noticing comments about taking \_\_\_\_\_ elsewhere. Seems to signify that some are not welcome in this space.”

The coding process was complex and time consuming. However, along with the regular weekly coding meeting, the memos facilitated a process of the analyses that likely could not have been captured in any other format. The memos also contained a significant number of reactions to the posting content from the research team. Overall was a helpful tool offering insight into the in-vivo process of coding. This will be highlighted in the following section.

*Coders Reactions*

The research team was well prepared to engage in the highly sensitive data and anticipated that the prevailing toxic themes that these communities are known for would not be easy to engage with overall. Coders interactions with this challenging data can be witnessed in many ways through the memos. The themes in the memos demonstrated the coders confusion, shock, frustration, and a bit of humor while participating in the many hours of coding the data. The confusion from coders was evident in the memos, for example, one bluntly stated “This was confusing to read through.” Coders also had a difficult time initially feeling as though any themes would emerge at all, for example “Sometimes I wondered how someone reading my codes would be able to understand the back-and-forth nature of the dialogue and how they would be able to interpret my codes without the context of the discussion.”

Coders also expressed feeling perplexed by the users behaviors, as evidenced by these memos “People here both enforce TM while complaining about the downfalls of it” or “I didn’t know what to expect in these spaces, but I’ve been surprised by the number of references to suicide/self harm/ overdosing.” Coders also reacted the users problematic beliefs and values they were seeing within the communities. For example, “talking about women as though they have these supernatural powers or senses (they do in a wonderful way btw) but some of these users speak of women as though they are these mysterious beings with insidious powers just as much as they devalue them” or “There seems to be no sense of what a healthy committed relationship could or does look like. There’s just this sense that everything and everyone is fucked up.” Some memos contained shock, such as “Yikes, these insults are graphically elaborate.” Other memos reflected



frustration with the users themselves “this person is blaming all these global issues... on feminism. I would argue it's TM!”

Coders also shared their personal emotional reactions to the users and their worldviews. For example, one researcher reflected on how in one moment it became vividly real regarding Charmaz's (2014) recognition that a constructivist grounded analyst cannot remove oneself from the data analyses. This coder stated specifically, “I am noticing myself viscerally reacting to the widespread blaming and hatred of feminism. Do they even know what feminism is? Constructivist Grounded Theory is certainly accurate that we cannot separate ourselves from the data. I am bothered by what I perceive as widespread ignorance/misunderstanding in this community.” Another coder echoed a similar sentiment, stating “It's challenging to keep my personal reactions out of the coding sometimes. I feel like writing, "belittling/misrepresenting some of the small gains women's rights has made as 'new positions in society'". The reactions coders experienced during the coding phases led some to express varying levels of exhaustion too. The intensity of reactions varied from mild, for example, “\*\*eye roll.” to more intense reactions like, “Ugh. This shit is burning me out. Took a break.”

There were also moments of excitement and humor in the memos. For example, one coder exclaimed “CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO EVENTS WE'RE STUDYING!.” While another noted a moment laughter, “LOL this comment”, and another moment of dark humor, stating “I actually laughed at ‘...nor the crayons’”. While the data for this study was harrowing to analyze, these moments in the memos signify that there were also brief moments of humor and lightheartedness as well.

### *Value of the Memoing Process*

Overall, the memoing process coders engaged in added intellectual and personal value to the process of coding. The personal reactions and experiences of the coders were captured frequently, whereas they would not have been without the memos. The memos, that were created in-vivo, demonstrated authentic and visceral reactions from coders that was instructive to review. Further, one coder reflected that the memoing process allowed “unconscious processes” to become more “explicit”. Without the process of memoing, there may not have been as much insight into how the coding team interacted with the data while analyzing it. Reviewing the memos in hindsight shows that individual coders noticed themes before they were formally identified during the consensus analysis. The memos also demonstrate the evolution of the coding process for the individuals and for the team. Earlier memos from coders reflect more uncertainty and confusion, while memos later on in the coding process demonstrate more complex ideas and mastery. While the memos were helpful, coding team members also expressed that writing them was at times tedious and disruptive to the flow of coding. However, this was limitedly expressed, and overall it appeared that memoing was an important addition to the coding process for both its personal and intellectual facilitative properties.

### **Conclusion**

The results overall in the data obtained for this study reflect what Massanari (2017) dubbed “toxic technocultures” that are endemic within Manosphere virtual social spaces. TM, as reflected by VMA and other identified themes, was observed within the data. However, the frequency VMA’s were observed was low, especially for some tenets of VMA (i.e. VMA WS and VMA MB) which lends some question to the applicability of

the VMA construct. Further, while there were limited overt themes of violence identified in the data, poignant assertions can be made regarding how participation in either of the spaces observed in this study could facilitate ideological radicalization and real-life misogyny, bigotry, hate, and even violence. The themes of maladaptive enactments of masculinity were radiating within this data, and appeared to be at the heart of it all. The following discussion section will highlight the major findings, as well as how this all connects to the larger themes discussed throughout this study.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine two Manosphere connected communities on Reddit for evidence of the sociological concept VMA (Moloney & Love, 2018), and to explore the content of the posted comments for novel, divergent, and/or oppositional themes related to VMA within the two identified virtual social spaces. The hybrid deductive and inductive analysis of the data showed evidence of VMA within the r/IncelsWithoutHate and r/MensRights communities, while also indicating that there were additional and expansive themes related to masculinity both within and between the two communities. Further, themes highlighted throughout this study (i.e. TM, patriarchal systems, anonymity, the Manosphere) were highly prevalent within the qualitative data examined. The following discussion will highlight the key findings identified in the data analyses, the implications of the findings, and provide reflections on the limitations, strengths, and future directions related to this study.

### **Key Findings**

The key findings in this study were important for several reasons. Notably, this study contained two Reddit subcommunities (Incel's & men's rights identified users). The two subcommunities are different in their identities and plights, but are similar in many ways as well, mainly in that they are both Manosphere connected spaces. The methodological hybrid inductive and deductive analyses used in this study allowed for supporting, novel, and divergent themes to emerge which ultimately offered insight directly into the similarities and differences of how manhood is enacted in these communities. Overall, the findings and forthcoming discussion highlight how the results

are relevant across different topics and fields of study related to men, manhood acts, and masculinity. Remarkably, there were no themes that emerged from the data during the analysis that contradicted or were opposed to the research questions or academic literature explored throughout this study. The following sections are a review of the findings identified within the analysis.

### *Subcommunity Reflections*

VMA were identified throughout the data within both the r/IncelsWithoutHate and r/MensRights communities. However, there were some notable phenomena related to the occurrences of VMA related to specific components (i.e. signifying a male body), as well as unique differences between the two communities as well. The identified phenomena related to VMA will be explored in detail in the following section.

**r/IncelsWithoutHate.** Within the r/IncelsWithoutHate community, the deductive and inductive analyses revealed pertinent information to this studies research questions. Overall, there were occurrences of VMA with important caveats, while the inductive analyses revealed significant behaviors related to masculinity as well. The findings of this study are in line with assessments of the r/IncelsWithoutHate and other incel connected communities that identify pervasive self-loathing, relational difficulties with women, misogyny, and a preoccupation with the perceived obligatory incel lifestyle, are common (Baele et al., 2019; Farrell et al., 2019). The following section will both highlight the phenomena's observed in this community, while also reflecting the possible origins of these observed behaviors.

***Virtual Manhood Acts Reflections.*** VMA within this community were observed and identified. However, the evidence of the occurrences of VMA in its entirety was not

as present as initially believed they might be. Of the four components of VMA (maintenance of a heterosexist space, humor used as a tool of oppression, signifying possessing of a male body, and the sexualization of women), some were more prevalent than others. Specifically, the presence of users maintaining a heterosexist space (VMA HS) and using humor as a tool of oppression (VMA OH) was more evident than of users sexualizing women (VMA WS) and signifying possession of a male body (VMA MB).

The noticeable differences regarding these findings points to several possibilities according to the assessments of this researcher. First, a major possible contribution to this finding is the source data from the original VMA study (Moloney & Love, 2018). The data analyzed for the 2018 VMA study was sourced from Twitter posts that centered on The Fappening, the infamous 2014 celebrity nude photo leak. The conversations surrounding The Fappening Twitter posts were steeped in sexual content (i.e. discussion about the nude photos), and as a result the concept of VMA was constructed with this theme most central. In contrast to the data obtained in this study, the central themes of discussion were related to the two mass femicide events or specifically related to the overall community topic (Incel lifestyle or men's rights). Thus, the VMA concept may be limited as a result of this assessment. Discourse themes related to sex are overt within Manosphere communities, but perhaps not to the high frequency they were during The Fappening event. This overall lends support for the idea that the VMA components VMA WS (sexualization of women) and VMA MB (signifying a male body) were not as significant to manhood enactments in this study as Moloney and Love (2018) identified in their study.

However, VMA WS was evident in this study, but it was not as overtly evident as it was within the Moloney and Love (2018) study. Users within the r/IncelsWithoutHate community were more likely to sexualize women in reference to a variety of circumstances. These included hopes regarding their unfulfilled sexual desires, objectifying female sex workers, and users inferring how other users should sexually engage with women. Because there did not appear to be a high prevalence of the VMA WS, users were predictably less likely to refer to their bodies, mainly genitalia. This is likely there was not a high prevalence of the VMA MB. The results from this study appeared different in some ways from what was found in the initial VMA study that identified a high rate of users discussing their physical and emotional arousal, as well as framing women primarily as sex objects. However, in both Moloney and Love's study and this study, users were frequently observed disregarding women's humanity in the context of sexual relationships.

VMA HS (maintaining a heterosexist/homosocial space) and VMA OH (humor used as a tool of oppression) were both identified as the most prevalently seen VMA within this data. Both of these enactments align significantly with more broad enactments of TM, specifically domination. Users were observed more frequently arguing and/or attempting to assert their superiority over others users within impassioned conversations. As a result, there was as noticeable lack of adaptive, meaningful, and/or fruitful conversations between users. Ideally, users could be engaged in conversations about their challenges and opinions, where others are open, receptive, vulnerable, and collaborative. However, this is seen very little, and what attempts are made to engage in these adaptive ways of being are frequently met with criticisms or outright rejection. According to the

data, the r/IncelsWithoutHate community is not a place for users to find understanding and support, but rather often times evidences more postings related to rejection and conflict.

*Inductive Analyses Reflections.* The inductive analyses confirmed what many already have noted about the culture and behaviors of incel identified communities, and their connections to manhood and masculinity. Specifically, the themes of self-loathing, relational difficulties with women, misogyny, maladaptive advice giving, and a preoccupation with the perceived obligatory incel lifestyle reinforced what many have already observed (Baele et al., 2019; Farrell et al., 2019). There were some divergent minor themes that were notable, including those of overt references to violence and specific conversations about the Toronto and Tallahassee femicide attacks. The minor theme of violence revealed that there are users within these spaces that make references to seeking retribution for their perceived woes. For example, users' comments ranged from more vague statements such as "...no one has a legacy unless they make one.", to the more direct statements like "Cucks need to be eradicated." The r/IncelsWithoutHate community touts itself as a group that promotes non-violence, which appears to be moderately accurate based on what was observed during the analyses. However, there were still instances of violence noticed within this community, and this reality raises the question: What do themes of violence look like in incel communities that are not overtly anti-hate and non-violent?

Along with these more direct references to violence, this researcher also ascertained that these spaces can potentially perpetuate a deepening of mental health issues and/or aggrievement. As discussed previously, the data analyses indicated that the



r/IncelsWithoutHate community is not an adaptive place for men and others to share in their difficulties. This community is laden with individuals that seem to be more ready to dominate and argue, rather than support and collaborate. Further, for those that are looking for support are often ignored, shamed, and ridiculed. Even users who divulged their desire to die would often be met with comments from other users sharing similar thoughts and feelings of hopelessness, rather than an outpouring of support or resources. These individual observed behaviors are likely a reflective micro example of the larger underlying and pervasive toxic culture of this subcommunity.

These observations alone are cause for concern because it can indicate that some users are not getting the support they need, while also potentially leaving more psychologically vulnerable than when they entered these spaces. These dynamics could also potentially lead to aggrieved individuals leaving more aggrieved than when they came as well. Not only are users not receiving support, they are put in positions of defending themselves emotionally and ideologically. Further, the pervasive sentiments observed within this virtual space were hopeless, sexist, and aggrieved in nature. This appears to be related to TM. If it were more acceptable for users to express their emotional vulnerabilities, ask for help, admit when they were wrong, and/or collaborate, then perhaps many users would not be so entrenched in their mental health challenges and desire for some level of retribution as was witnessed in this data.

The inductive analyses also revealed themes related to how this community responded to the Toronto and Tallahassee femicide attacks, especially concerning individuals who are connected to similar incels communities. Users in the data expressed the news of the attacks either impacted their self-perception or mood (i.e. "I'm sorry. This

whole news just left me feeling upset and like literal human garbage”), indifference, or vaguely in defense of the perpetrator. There was also no conversations directly about the Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting within this data. A few assumptions could be made as to why the community responded to the femicide events in these distinct ways. As TM reinforces, shame, anger, sadness, and other distressing emotions are only acceptably responded to with silence or retaliation. Perhaps many incel identified individuals experienced a range of emotions, but did not take to the messages boards to discuss their complex feelings related to the incidents. Further, the users that did take to the message boards mainly expressed their self-loathing and/or alignment with the perpetrator. This research cannot fully ascertain what the limited range of responses means within this data, but perhaps the silence speaks louder than what can be seen.

**r/MensRights.** Within the r/MensRights community, similar to the r/IncelsWithoutHate community, the deductive and inductive analyses revealed pertinent information to this studies research questions. Overall, there were notable occurrences of VMA with important caveats, while the inductive analyses revealed significant behaviors related to masculinity as well. The findings of this study are in line with the other assessments of the r/MensRights community which identified a pervasive sense of oppression from opposing external forces (i.e. feminism & the media), preoccupation with the perceptions of the men’s rights movement, and a broad span of displays of TM (Kahn & Golab, 2020).

***Virtual Manhood Acts Reflections.*** VMA within the r/MensRights community were also identified. As with the r/IncelsWithoutHate community, the evidence of the occurrences of VMA in its entirety was not as evident as initially believed they might be.

Of the four components of VMA, VMA HS and VMA OH were most prevalent. Further, there was little evidence of VMA WS and there was no coded evidence of VMA MB. An analysis of these results will be reviewed in this section.

Similar to what was noticed within the r/IncelsWithoutHate community, the r/MensRights community appeared to significantly engage in toxic masculine displays, as noted by the prevalence of VMA HS and VMA OH. Users were often engaged in attempts to dominate and subjugate other users with whom they disagreed or saw as less than (i.e. incels). This was observed in users upholding and maintaining a heterosexist “tough guy” only space. For example, as seen by one user “No. Unlike menslib apologists like yourself I don't pretend to be a nice guy and I don't compromise on issues.” Additionally, users would do this by engaging in oppressive tactics, sometimes humorously. For example, “Ooooh you caught me lol, I'm a super sekret feminist agent. People who aren't idiots can check my post history and judge for themselves”. This aligns with Kimmel's (2013) assessment of Men's Right Activists and their generally observed ways of managing and engaging in conflict. In his book *Angry White Men* (2013), Kimmel identified humiliation at the heart of these exchanges, both in the attempt to humiliate others and the responses to their own perceived humiliations.

VMA WS was seen limitedly within this community, however there were notable and pervasive moments in which users were observed sexualizing women. For example, one user stated “Grow a fucking pair and slam some pussy, yo.” Enactments of VMA WS in this study, similar to what was observed within the Moloney and Love (2018) study, highlighted how users degraded and objectified women sexually. However, a possible contributing factors as to why this was not coded as frequently within the r/MensRight

community was the general aggrievement towards women and feminists. This could explain why much of the VMA WS were aggressive in nature. This was pertinently highlighted by this one users comment, “How else to deal with this other than going balls deep in some chick...”. Another possible explanatory factor is that to a certain degree sex contains some level of intimacy. Perhaps some users avoid sexualizing women, with exception to violent references to sex, because if they did this would be far too dissonant from their aggrievement towards women. Simply put, maybe men’s rights users can’t reconcile their hate for women with their desire to be intimate with them.

Within the r/MensRights community there were no occurrences of VMA MB, which is notable considering the significant amount of data that was analyzed for this study. Many users enacted a “masculine persona”, as Moloney and Love (2018) refer to it, where users behaviorally engaged in TM ways that allow them to reap the benefits and privileges that societally come from being a male-identified individual in real life. However, there were no coded observations of users referring to their masculine bodies. This again may be a result of the source data evaluated in the original VMA study (Moloney & Love, 2018) in which discourse was specifically centered on The Fapping and nude photos of women. This may indicate, as mentioned in earlier sections, that Moloney & Loves (2018) VMA concept is applicably relevant within Manosphere communities, but has limited external validity because not all of the components were evident in both communities evaluated for this study.

***Inductive Analyses Reflections.*** TM was seen pervasively throughout this community in more overt and direct ways compared to the r/IncelsWithoutHate community. The positioning of many users within this community were focused on the

aggrieved slights, attacks, and perceived plots to destroy men and manhood from feminists, media, and society. This might be best understood from what Michael Kimmel (2013) calls “Aggrieved entitlement.” Kimmel identified that men’s rights activists can variably possess a significant amount of anger and rage, and that this stems from the sense that men’s once dominant position in society is lessening as social and economic equality grows for historically marginalized groups (i.e. gender, sexual, & racial minorities). As is seen in the data for this study, users in r/MenRights were frequently observed expressing a strong sense of aggrievement and blame towards modern equality movements, mainly feminism.

While there are no themes of violence identifiably consistent throughout the data obtained within this community, there are potential arbiters that are important to acknowledge that could influence violent attitudes and/or actions. For one, a large theme identified within the r/MensRights community was the sense from users that there are larger insidious systemic syndicates (i.e. feminism) intent on oppressing and/or destroying men. This pervasive belief was promoted throughout this community, and largely went unchallenged and was echoed by many other users. The implications of this are broad. Specifically related to violence, this toxic phenomena is consistent with Berger and Strathearn’s (2013) work on online extremism in which he identified the high level of influence extremist users within virtual social spaces can have on others. The toxic extremist behaviors observed by users in this study could serve to entrench and radicalize users who participate in these spaces. Potentially, for a select few, participation in these spaces is a clarion call to take the problem into their own hands. In the worst case scenarios for those that interact in these virtual spaces, it could potentially influence

users, unable to turn adaptively for help to decide instead to violently act out towards close others and/or other unsuspecting victims. It is known that the perpetrators of the Toronto Van Attack and Tallahassee Hot Yoga Shooting participated in incel virtual social spaces. While there are many unaccountable factors that increased the risk for these individuals to act out violently, the fact remains that participation in toxic social network spaces was part of their experience and may have been influential in the development and/or radicalization of their hateful ideologies. The need to conduct studies to explicitly examine connections between virtual group participation and acts of violence, both on individual and societal levels, is imperative and would be helpful in answering these urgent questions.

Within the r/MensRights data the conversations about the Toronto and Tallahassee femicide attacks primarily demonstrated users vehemently differentiating themselves from incels, defending the perceptions larger society has of the men's rights movements, and complete obliviousness and/or dissonance regarding how their community and similar communities such as theirs could potentially be contributing to the occurrence of these incidences. The observed response to the attacks were the epitome of TM enactments. Users within this community exercised a degree of self-importance and narcissism that was astounding. There were no discussions from users about their personal reactions (i.e. fear, hurt, or anger that the attack happened), concern for those impacted (i.e. the victims and their families), or how efforts could be made to prevent these incidents from happening again (i.e. accountability within their community, suggested policy changes). The users within this data were observed mainly engaging in unproductive and aggressive discourse and infighting. It was clear from the vantage point

of this researcher that the users behaviors were toxic and problematic, yet it was clear that the users could not see this for themselves.

### **Implications**

From the vantage point of this researcher, the implications of this study are deep and broad. The following section will provide an overview of the identified implications of this study in the fields of psychology, sociology, information technology, and communications. In the spirit of Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory epistemological framework adopted for this study, it is also hoped and anticipated that the implications of this study will be constructed by the readers as well.

#### ***Implications for the Field of Psychology***

The psychological experiences of the individual user who participates in anonymous virtual social spaces, including the Manosphere, is an exploration that is underacknowledged and understudied. While it makes logical sense that due to the anonymous nature of these spaces, access to users is limited. There may be restricted access to users, however, efforts to directly examine and understand the psychological factors influencing the intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions in Manosphere connected communities can be made. Specifically, in the following section, an exploration will be offered that clinically conceptualizes the emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal factors potentially occurring for individual users, in addition to discussing what should be considered regarding prevention and intervention efforts.

**Clinical Conceptualization Reflections.** There are a number of psychology based theoretical and clinical lens in which the results of this study could be conceptually examined. The theoretical frameworks that were chosen reflect the primary researchers

approaches to their clinical work as a therapist and psychologist in training. In this section, an overview of the themes within the data will be examined through Attachment Theory (AT) and Interpersonal Reconstructive Therapy (IRT)/the Structural Analyses of Behavior (SASB) theoretical frameworks.

*Attachment Theory.* John Bowlby (1988), a pioneer of AT, proposed that evolutionarily infants are innately programmed to form attachments to caregivers for survival. AT asserts that the early and on-going relationship between a child and their caregiver is critical, and has long-term impacts on the child's development. Bowlby describes that as a result of these early caregiving experiences, people develop what he calls an Internal Working Model. Through these early experiences with the primary caregiver, a mental representation is formed, and this schema influences how the child builds relationships as they grow. Research has shown that poor caregiving (i.e. emotional & physical neglect, abuse, abandonment) can have vast impacts on a child's development including interpersonal functioning (Benjamin, 2003/2006), long term health outcomes from adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) research (Felitti et al., 1998), and a variety of mental health issues (i.e. suicide) (Fuller-Thomson, 2016).

Modern attachment research has revealed the true depth of parental/care giver bonds, and the influence they have on human development. Specifically, authors Cassidy and Shaver (2016), provide research, theoretical perspectives, and important updates related to the attachment field. Specifically, they explore the role of the biological and evolutionary perspectives, reinforcing the foundational work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, another foundational figure in attachment. Highlighted are the decades of research since these seminal works that has made more evident how humans deeply



depend on attachment for survival and how attachment bonds impact the brain and body. The implications of these important modern understandings of attachment span far and wide, including how parent-child relationships and romantic bonds are understood, along with other significant tide changing influences on the mental health, psychotherapy, and many other fields. Most notably, modern understandings of attachment acknowledge that the impacts of early care-giver experiences are not deterministic, and individuals can change over the lifespan both in adaptive and maladaptive ways though the quality of relationships and events/experiences (i.e. trauma).

Utilizing what is understood about AT and applying it to the data from this study conceptually, offers a frame of understanding the root relational factors regarding the toxic behaviors seen within the virtual social spaces examined. Within the data, users were often observed engaging in maladaptive behaviors that range from rejecting, lashing out, withdrawing (seen in users not continuing to engage in the discourse), and many other interpersonal interactions that limit connection with others rather than facilitate connection. This raises the question from the perspective of AT: What were these users early caregiving relationships like? What are their corresponding developed internal working models? What has been the trajectories of their developmental experiences? How have their early and current models of relationship impacted how they interact with others in these virtual spaces? Understanding the users' early and current attachment experiences could lend some insight into what influences their ways of relating to themselves and others.

Users that engage in these spaces, and participate and/or perpetuate toxic online behaviors, may potentially have experienced and/or are experiencing poor relationships

with their caregivers and others. For example, if users had fathers or masculine caregivers that modeled TM (i.e., emotionally withdrawn, domineering, responding frequently to vulnerabilities with anger), then their internal working models will reflect this potentially within different facets of their lives, including how they participate in virtual social spaces. This example is one of the many examples of how maladaptive caregivers can foster a range of maladaptive behaviors in the children they care for. Users that were observed in this study may potentially be enacting a range of maladaptive behaviors they themselves were exposed to within their developmental and subsequent environments

*Interpersonal Reconstructive Theory/SASB*. While AT offered an evolutionary and developmental perspective, IRT and Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB) can offer direct insight into the intrapersonal and interpersonal phenomena happening for users within these virtual social spaces examined in this study. IRT is an integrative psychotherapy modality that interweaves perspectives from AT and interpersonal theories (Benjamin, 2003/2006). This approach is used to conceptually understand and treat a range of mental health issues, especially chronic and personality-based psychopathology.

Within the frame of IRT, current presenting clinical issues are understood as maladaptive copy processes of interpersonal and intrapsychic patterns, and corresponding rules and values, that were learned from early caregivers (Benjamin, 2003/2006). IRT asserts that many maladaptive patterns are resistant to change because individuals inadvertently remain loyal to internalized attachment figures. These dynamics can occur in three ways: copying actions of important others (identification), acting as if the important others are still present (recapitulation), and treating oneself the way important others treated you (introjection). IRT calls patterns that reflect maladaptive behaviors

“Red Patterns”, and healthy adaptive behaviors “Green Patterns.” Further, according to Benjamin (2003/2006), the reason why individuals maintain and continuously reenact Red Patterns, also called “copy process,” is explained within IRT in the concept called the “Gift of Love.” This concept explains how individuals continue to reenact learned old ways of being to remain close to caregivers in an attempt to receive their approval.

The Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB) model is a circumplex model of interpersonal behavior. This model is a rigorous, empirically-validated framework for defining interactive relational patterns with self and others (Benjamin, 2000; Benjamin, Rothweiler, & Critchfield 2006). The SASB model<sup>12</sup> can be utilized to assess and conceptualize self and other interactions. Understanding this model is integral to IRT. There are three dimensions to the SASB model: (1) Focus, (2) Affiliation, and (3) Interdependence/independence. The focus of attention can be on the self, on others, and on the introject (behaviors directed inwards towards self).

Healthy self, other, and introjected patterns conceptualized by the SASB model can be identified on the right side of the circumplex, and maladaptive patterns on the left. Adaptive patterns, according to SASB, are associated with healthy internalized caregivers, and vice versa. Within the data for this study, there were a variety of behaviors observed that would fall within the left side of the circumplex. Within the r/IncelsWithoutHate community the behaviors seen most frequently were focus on self, specifically self-attack, self-blame, self-sulk, self-neglect. For example, this user demonstrated an instance of self-attack and other-attack, “What's the point in living when I know chad exists... Seeing all the women that worship him, that go to his frat to get

---

<sup>12</sup> A visual representation of the SASB model can be seen at: <https://lornasmithbenjamin.com/sasb/>

drugged and insulted, what choice do I have beyond getting drunk, taking my belt, and hanging myself?” Within the r/MensRights community, the SASB identified maladaptive behaviors were more focused on others, specifically other-blame, other-attack, other-control. A major theme contained in the results was the evidence of other-blame and other-attack, specifically towards feminism and feminists, as seen in this example “It's about power (ironically enough) attractive women have power through controlling men, unattractive ones still want that power, it's at the heart of feminism.” These instances, and many others observed in the data that fall on the left side of the circumplex overtly exhibit the maladaptive behaviors observed in the virtual social spaces examined in this study.

VMA and TM are maladaptive (Red) patterns of relating, and would align with the left side of the SASB model. The toxic behaviors largely observed by users within this study, specifically related to gender, fall within what is understood about maladaptive enactments of manhood. These models further reinforce the notion that TM aligns with maladaptive ways of being, and prevents users from making more adaptive choices for themselves (i.e. seek help, avoid these types of toxic virtual spaces). The absence of behaviors that would fall on the right side of the SASB model (i.e. self-love, other-trust, other-protect) was also indicative of the pathological behaviors that are frequently enacted within these spaces.

What IRT identifies as Red Patterns (maladaptive ways of relating) were often enacted by the users within these virtual social spaces. Specifically, users that enacted VMA, TM, and/or many of the other themes observed within the inductive analyses (i.e., misogyny & self-loathing) would be identified as Red Patterns within the IRT model. For

example, when one user stated “I literally wouldn't know what to talk about now [Referring to difficulties connecting with women]. Hate talking about myself cos I'm boring and hate my life.” This user is engaged in the maladaptive Red Pattern act of self-loathing. Within an IRT frame, it would be helpful for this individual to identify what the origins of this pattern are (i.e., an early caregiver that neglected and/or criticized). Further, the Gift of Love formulation would help elucidate how the self-loathing behaviors is an old way of relating that once served to protect them. For example, perhaps the caregiver experienced low self-worth themselves and projected this onto the user early on. Therefore, by maintaining a low sense of self-worth, the Gift of Love is enacted by the user never allowing themselves to explore their own worthiness and/or ability to seek happiness in their life. The maladaptive behavior is maintained when the user feels it would be a betrayal in some way if they were to seek more “Green” adaptive ways of being. Rather than potentially seek help, the user in this example has sought to share in their despair and self-loathing within an anonymous virtual social space, which from an IRT frame we can understand as a maladaptive Red Pattern behavior.

The SASB model applied to the data can also offer insight into the norms of the groups and associated users' patterns of relating. Noticeably, behaviors from users were often mixed on the SASB circumplex, where users would both exhibit behaviors that fall on the right side of the model (Aligning with Green Patterns) and also on the left side of the model (Aligning with Red Patterns). For example, users were often observed disclosing personal information on the virtual message boards, while also sulking rather than seeking help. Users were also often seen affirming some, while blaming others. As the SASB model highlights, these mixed reactions are maladaptive patterns and keep

users from effectively identifying and understanding core personal and interpersonal needs. Attachment theory would predict that users engage in these same behaviors in their everyday lives and learned these patterns with key caregivers. These patterns are then enacted and reinforced when participating in virtual spaces. This model further elucidates the TM patterns and norms that have been highlighted throughout this study. For future research, case studies with users who participate in toxic Manosphere communities in which results could further elucidate community patterns and behaviors, and models like IRT and SASB could then offer explanatory conceptualizations for the users' toxic behaviors.

AT, IRT, and SASB offer helpful frames for conceptualizing the behaviors observed from users in this study. While the modalities chosen for discussion in this section offer helpful insight, it is also important to acknowledge there are many other theoretical frameworks that could examine the vast phenomenological dynamics of what is happening for the users observed in this study. Overall, by understanding the psychology at the heart of the users' behaviors, this can offer a lens that could foster curiosity and empathy for the individuals that participate in these virtual social spaces, rather than completely rejecting their toxic behaviors. In understanding the behaviors of users it is not condoning the harmful enactments that take places within these communities, but instead it can lead to helping professionals support clients they encounter who engage in these spaces. Overall, the implications of this study can encourage future professionals and clinicians to consider the psychological factors that are at the heart of the observed challenges and suffering users are facing.

**Social and Cognitive Psychology Reflections.** The specific phenomena related to the anonymous nature of these online spaces, topics examined by the fields of social and cognitive psychology, were certainly present in the data. The presence of anonymity within the communities explored in this study likely contributed to the level of vitriol, personal disclosure, and overall toxic engagement observed. Other research on anonymity confirms what was seen in this study regarding the power of anonymity and the significant negative influence it had on virtual social spaces (Hipp et al., 2017; Suler, 2004). The implication of the findings in this study possesses stark reminders of the pitfalls of anonymity within these virtual spaces. A specific component of anonymity noticed within these spaces was the deidentification effect. Users in this study were observed within these spaces frequently hurling personal attacks. In this example, one user attacked another user, stating “Do you think I singlehandedly control the entire Western media apparatus or something? Are you a paranoid schizophrenic?” In this instance, the commenting user attacked another user, both questioning their mental health status and disparaging those that are diagnosed with “paranoid schizophrenia.” This raises questions as to whether or not this user would have made this attack if they were able to possess more identifying information about the user they were attempting to insult.

Finding ways to curtail the problematic dynamics within these virtual spaces, where users dissociate from the humanity of other users, is critical. Suggested efforts include having website administrators limit anonymity or educate users about the hazards of anonymity. While anonymity creates pitfalls within virtual social spaces, it also offers advantages as well (i.e. safety in many forms: identity, personal, emotional) which has

become vital in establishing our modern virtual lives. The nuances of anonymity should continue to be explored by platform moderators, policy makers, and leaders in the information technology field in all that it offers, good and challenging.

**Prevention and Intervention Reflections.** The implications of this study regarding intervention and prevention are expansive, while also complicated. Different levels of intervention and prevention should potentially be enacted for individuals, groups, and communities. When conducting a web search for interventions for identified incel, men's rights, and/or Manosphere connected individuals, the results obtained were limited. The results that did come up were opinion editorials or collections of mental health resources. No scholarly research appears to have been done on how to intervene or provide direct interventions. Since this study was initially developed and purposed in 2018, the internet has since erupted with more awareness and coverage of Manosphere connected communities, especially of the incel and men's rights communities explored in this study. However, it appears to be time now for this awareness to turn into action. Studies like this, and others examining the various phenomena within Manosphere connected virtual spaces, should be used to inform targeted prevention and intervention efforts.

Direct and targeted prevention efforts should also be developed to reach the most at-risk populations. For example, the realities of toxic virtual social spaces should be integrated into high school curriculums, especially courses that focus on life skills and mental health and well-being. Curricula can focus on the warning signs and risks of toxic spaces, and overall facilitate open and affirming conversations for students to talk about their virtual experiences. Fear based prevention curriculum is not ideal and has shown



poor outcomes (West & O’Neal, 2004). Curricula focused on education, facilitating discourse, and providing resources for individuals to get support or offer support to others they know that may be participating in toxic virtual spaces. This approach could be used in other settings as well (i.e. workforces, higher education, men’s mental health programing). Education systems should be keeping pace with the increasing challenges young people face related to technology. By ignoring these issues and failing to provide any level of prevention or intervention, the ramifications could be significant to the health and well-being of this generation’s youth.

For clinicians, the implications of this study may support and motivate practitioners to assess clients’ engagement in virtual spaces and their potential participation in toxic virtual communities. This assessment can be completed as client’s enter treatment by including relevant questions on intake forms. Questions can ask directly about client’s virtual lives. For example, “What applications or websites do you use to socialize and/or communicate with others?” or “Do you spend a significant amount of time in one or several virtual spaces? If so, what is the topic(s) or theme(s) of these spaces?”. Questions can ask directly about participation in toxic spaces as well. For example, “Do you engage in or see any of these behaviors in the online spaces you participate in: arguing, bullying, threatening, bigotry (i.e. racism, sexism, xenophobia)?” The clients answer to these questions can be further discussed in treatment sessions to assess the frequency, depth, and impact of their participation in toxic spaces. Inquiring about participation in toxic virtual spaces should and could also be asked about throughout treatment, especially for clients who fall in higher risk categories (i.e. young

teenage and adult men). Identifying and addressing these issues in treatment could potentially improve outcomes significantly.

The implications of this research for caregivers (i.e. parents, non-biological care takers) and broader society are also important to review. For caregivers the implications are multi-leveled. First, it is important for caregivers to monitor and ask about their child's use and participation in virtual social spaces. Open, direct, honest, and affirming discussions about technology use as well as the pitfalls can be a significant protective factor. Second, caregivers have the responsibility of modeling adaptive healthy intrapersonal and interpersonal habits. How caregivers rear children in real life, most likely correlates with how their children behave both in real life and virtually. Continued mental health programing (prevention and interventions), resources, and education should be implemented to help teach good parenting skills and should now include the recognition that quality parenting also impacts how children behave in virtual social spaces. The implications of this study for broader society are that more awareness and intervention is needed. As it stands presently, it appears that there is little prevention and intervention resources addressing participation in toxic spaces. If these issues continue to go limitedly addressed, the impacts could be significant on the collective mental health and well-being of many individuals. To address this, prevention on every level should be enacted, including on individual, microsystems (parents, family, school, church), exosystems (media, politics), and the macrosystem (attitudes and ideologies of the larger culture) (Bronfenbrenner, 2009).

The implications of this study can also influence prevention efforts such as information dissemination, policy and platform changes within Reddit and other virtual

social hosting sites, and other unique interventions. Prevention and treatment efforts need to address the individual mental health and public health issues related to virtual toxic spaces to combat its contributions to the continued and growing epidemic of gender-based violence.

### *Implication for the Field of Sociology*

The field of sociology has contributed most to revealing and understanding the phenomena that happen within Manosphere connected communities. For instance, the VMA study (Moloney & Love, 2018) was conducted and published by prominent sociological scholars. The implication of this study from the vantage point of this researcher is to continue exploring manhood and masculinity within virtual spaces, while also finding ways to bridge the gap between understanding the phenomena and intervening within these spaces. While the insight that research like Moloney and Love (2018; 2018) have conducted has been critical to the academic field, more efforts should be made within this field to integrate other bodies of knowledge as this study has aspired to do. In collaborating with other fields of expertise, potentially more complex academic and applied research can be conducted to address pervasive toxic virtual spaces on the internet.

The work of sociologist Dr. Matthew Ezzell on the intersections of masculinity, pornography, and violence are important to consider here as well. Ezzell's work has identified linkages between pornography consumption and aggressive, degrading, and irresponsible sexual behaviors (2014; 2020). The implications of this study are vast in relation to Ezzell's work, especially the degree in which objectification and sexualization behaviors were observed within incel and men's rights communities. As is noted, Ezzell

has identified some of the deep connections between negative attitudes about women and pornography use. Many of the users in this study cited their own use of pornography and/or encouraged others to utilize it within the virtual social spaces where there was also a high prevalence of misogynistic attitudes. Future studies should closely examine the references to pornography used within Manosphere connected communities to further elucidate the influence pornography has on perpetuating the toxic attitudes and behaviors in these spaces.

### ***Implication for the Field of Information Technology***

The implications within the fields of information technology are numerous. One identified area within this field that the implications of this study can inform is countering extremism in online social networks. Berger and Strathearn (2013) conducted research measuring factors that perpetuate online extremism (i.e. the accounts followed on social media) and reported that the higher the influence, exposure, and interactivity of the extremist social media accounts, the more users interacted with these accounts and ultimately were likely to effect the beliefs of their followers. The results from this research on VMA and TM can influence and build upon this research. Specifically, data should be gathered and analyzed on aspects of highly active and influential users within social networks that enact masculine personas. It would be interesting to see how users interacted with these accounts and what influence they might have in swaying or even radicalizing individuals.

Additionally, efforts should be made to continue evaluating platform and social network website policies that uphold and perpetuate the toxic behaviors seen within Manosphere connected communities. Massanari (2017) pointed out that “toxic

technocultures” are reinforced by Reddit’s “karma point system, aggregation of material across subreddits, ease of subreddit and user account creation, governance structure, and policies around offensive” and that these factors “serve to provide fertile ground for anti-feminist and misogynistic activism” (p.329). Platforms and their policies need to continue to evolve to limit and/or prevent toxic behaviors from happening in these spaces. The impetus is largely on the shoulders of those that manage Reddit and other social network platforms. As long as the people managing these platforms do nothing to speak out against toxic subcultures on their websites, and do not take action to limit this activity on their websites, they are contributing to the issues equally if not worse.

### ***Implication for the Field of Communications***

Considering the significant amount of distrust and hatred observed towards media within the data of this study, the implications of the result related to the communications field are important to discuss. There were frequently witnessed comments from users in both subcommunities represented in this study expressing negative feeling towards the media. Users pointed to the perception that the media was heavily influenced by extreme feminists and feminism. There was also a commonly observed belief that users felt their communities (incels & men’s rights activists) were intentionally misrepresented. Additionally, there was also a general sense that the media was untrustworthy and/or there were intentional efforts to spread “fake news” about men and/or Manosphere connected communities. From this researchers’ vantage point, the users’ claims were not without merit. Over the course of this research study, the primary researcher occasionally came across news or opinion articles that conflated or misrepresented Manosphere communities and the differences between them. Logically, these journalistic mistakes

were likely not done in effort to subversively further the “feminist juggernaut”, but rather made in error. These errors are vital to address. Errors like these do not represent thorough and honorable journalist practices, not only because they are misrepresenting the communities they are covering, but also because it erodes the trust in the media from people within these communities. Journalists have contributed so much to understanding Manosphere communities online. Their voices and platforms are foundational to combatting the toxic spaces on the internet. However, members of the media must do a better job of knowing what they are writing about. Otherwise, they’re potentially contributing to the problems as well.

### **Research Reflections**

This section will provide an overview of the process reflections related to the perceived strengths, limitations, and future directions of this study.

#### ***Strengths of the Study***

The strengths of this study lay in various components adopted and achieved throughout the research process. Specifically, there were strengths in the methods, the overall research questions, web-scraping process, the constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014) chosen for analyses, and the integration of various fields of study both guiding and informing this research.

This research project is identifiably the first of its kind. There are no direct analyses of masculinity within social network spaces, aside from the VMA study (Moloney & Love, 2018) that this project was foundationally developed on. Further, the complex methodology that was adopted to explore VMA and masculinity within virtual Manosphere connected communities was considerate of a multitude of factors (i.e.

including different communities, centering mass femicide events). These methodological elements combined to facilitate data collection that held robust and significant results. The research questions and purpose of this study were a significant strength as well. The question and purpose heeded the call from Moloney and Love (2018) to explore evidence of VMA in other virtual social spaces, which was accomplished. Further, the results of this study provided important insight into VMA and masculinity on other platforms, which also indicates that this research is important and that exploration must be continued in other virtual spaces in complex ways.

The web-scraping process was also a notable element of this research. Unique programming code was developed specially for this study to obtain qualitative data from Reddit. The process in identifying and adopting a web-scraping tool was thoroughly participated in by the primary researcher, which ensured that the data was trustworthy and fully representative of the virtual social spaces it was obtained from.

The constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) qualitative analytic approach adopted for this study allowed data to be explored complexly so an array of results were able to emerge. The hybrid inductive and deductive approach allowed the data to be analyzed for the presence of VMA, but also allowed other significant themes to emerge. This process, along with the memo writing process that researchers engaged in, facilitated a robust and meaningful process that is believed to be true to the data.

Lastly, this study is conducted by individuals mainly in the field of psychology, with committee members with similar backgrounds, but also representing the fields of sociology and information technology. This factor, along with much of the data on masculinity within virtual social spaces being outside of the field of psychology made

this a difficult intellectual undertaking. However, this researcher was able to integrate expertise from a variety of fields of study through the multidisciplinary committee and the variety of diverse resources at their disposal. This was a particular identified strength, as it is believed from the vantage point of this researcher that there was a well-balanced honoring of each of the bodies of knowledge that contributed to this study.

### ***Limitations of the Study***

Identified limitations of this study are primarily contained within the methodological decisions and adjustments made during the qualitative data analysis. One challenge was gaining access to incel communities on Reddit. The largest and most notorious incel community on Reddit was r/Incels, which was banned (removal from Reddit) on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The ban was for inciting violence against women (Hauser, 2017). This community had forty-thousand subscribers at the time of the ban. When a community is banned or quarantined (isolated from the rest of the Reddit community), data from these communities becomes inaccessible. Other incel communities since the ban of r/Incel (i.e. r/Braincel) have also been banned. By the time this study began, the last remaining accessible incel community that also had a large subscriber base was r/IncelsWithoutHate. As has been mentioned, the r/IncelsWithoutHate community touts itself as a non-violent community. Being able to only obtain data from this community was a limitation, especially because an important factor in this study was examining these communities' violent attitudes. However, there was research indicating that there were still toxic and violent attitudes within this community (Farrell et al., 2019), which is why this community was still included in this study.



Another limitation is that there are a variety of other more radicalized and extreme virtual spaces on the internet (i.e. 4Chan, Gab), where many identified incels and men's rights activists congregate. What these spaces likely contain that Reddit does not is the lack or absence of moderators. Community moderators serve, among many other duties, to manage toxic user behaviors. Virtual spaces like Gab promote unmitigated "free speech" social network environments where users can largely say what they want without repercussion. Because of this reality, and because Reddit's imperfect but more proactive approach to siphoning out toxic communities, there is likely other spaces on the internet that are much more extreme and even more representative of toxic Manosphere communities not seen in this study.

Another limitation in this study were issues related to phases of the qualitative data analyses. The amount of data that was obtained for this study was significant, and qualitatively analyzing it was a large time-consuming process. The data obtained from the r/IncelsWithoutHate community during the Tallahassee time period yielded a significantly larger portion of data then compared to the three other web scraping ventures. To make this dataset more manageable, it was reduced in size by averaging it with the other datasets that were similar in size. There was no guiding literature found regarding how to navigate this unique issue. Literature on data saturation was sought (Saunders et al., 2018), and so the decision to average the dataset was determined based on these principals in addition to an executive decision made by the primary researcher. Even after the reduction in data, the Tallahassee r/IncelsWithoutHate dataset still possessed the most data analyzed compared to any other dataset. At the conclusion of the

data analyses the research team consensually agreed that saturation was achieved to the degree that they could subjectively purport.

### *Future Directions*

Future directions of this study can expand across the spectrum of professional fields that have been acknowledged throughout this study and beyond. The implications that have been acknowledged in this discussion section for psychology, sociology, communications, and information technology are limited to what the research team has identified. However, there are potentially other fields and directions that the results of this study can influence and inform. It is this researchers hope this that the findings from this study expand beyond what they have been able to measure and anticipate.

Specific directions identified for future studies are to heed the call of Moloney and Love (2018) to continue exploring the concept of VMA within other virtual spaces. Continued exploration of the concept of VMA within other spaces can contribute to honing the reliability and validity of this sociological concept. Other virtual spaces that should be explored include different Manosphere connected communities, racialized spaces (i.e. alt-right, conspiracy theory discussion boards), racist and bigoted communities, and also neutral spaces that have not been directly identified as toxic spaces to see if toxic masculine behavior are observed.

Also identified were the limited resources available to help individuals that participate in radicalized and toxic spaces, including identified incels and men's rights activists. Future studies and/or efforts that directly address this intervention gap are imperative to prevent a variety of issues, including mental health problems (i.e. serious mental illness, suicide, substance abuse) and potentially even acts of individual (i.e.

domestic abuse) and large scale (i.e. mass murder) violence. Unique interventions (i.e. ads, bots, trained individuals going into these virtual spaces) targeting and addressing men and their core vulnerabilities (i.e. hurt, shame, sadness) could potentially reach users in a way that other interventions may have failed (i.e. information dissemination, untargeted efforts).

The pathways in which people find themselves participating in toxic virtual social spaces is important to acknowledge as well. It is likely that many users that participate in incel, men's rights, and other Manosphere connected communities did not begin their participation on social networks in these spaces. It is more probable that users who participate in Manosphere connected and/or toxic spaces began in more general public spaces. It is likely users get entrapped in toxic communities through the intermingling and close proximity of non-toxic and toxic communities, and the alignment of certain risk factors in place (i.e. young aggrieved white men). There may be many other pathways that users take to connect to toxic social spaces, and future research on this topic could lend more insight into how this happens, and how this can potentially be prevented.

As mentioned, the hybrid inductive and deductive approach used to analyze data for themes of TM in this study should be applied to other virtual social spaces. Further, this approach could also be used to examine other connected Manosphere articles and resources. Specifically, it would be pertinent and instructive to apply this study's analyses to the manifestos left by perpetrators of mass violence to extrapolate specific themes connected to TM. While this study can offer a frame of analyses to explore other virtual social spaces and Manosphere connected articles, an alternative framework could also be used to analyze themes of manhood as well. One suggested alternative approach would to

be to use Schwalbe's (2015) definition of Manhood Acts, which he defines manhood as being essentially about exerting or resisting control. By examining manifestos or other spaces through the lens of how users/authors, using a masculine persona, are exerting or resisting control may provide insight that is pertinent and/or instructive to many fields of study. As has been mentioned throughout, the results from this study were community and event specific. Identifying other resources (ex., other Manosphere communities or documents, such as manifestos) and applying other methods of analysis (ex., the hybrid approach used in this study, Schwalbe's Manhood Acts definition) to are important suggested future directions.

Lastly, future efforts should be made to reach individuals who participate in these spaces not only to intervene, but also to have them participate in case study or participatory research efforts. In doing so, a deeper understanding of individuals motivations, values, histories, and core psychological experiences (i.e. emotions) could strengthen how various professional fields expand their abilities to support and help those entrenched in toxic Manosphere communities.

### **Researchers Reflections**

This study was an ambitious pursuit that was ultimately done in an effort to understand the influence of masculinity within toxic virtual social spaces. In the opinion of this researcher, the study was able to contribute to these efforts. This qualitative exploration deepens the understanding of the sociological concept of VMA while also elucidating the other ways in which TM is enacted in incel and men's rights virtual communities. Overall, it demonstrated that TM is an important factor in what happens within toxic virtual social spaces and contributes to the perpetuation of gender-based

violence. The time now is for a continued pursuit of research, like this study, that provides insight directly into virtual gender based phenomena. Most of all, what is needed now is action. Action is needed in the form of interventions at many levels that target what is at the heart of this study – men online who are experiencing deep vulnerabilities and emotional wounds that have no safe outlet or sanctuary for support. If we can find ways to target this at a multitude of levels, we may see the virtual zeitgeist evolve.

However, antiquated ideas about gender, gender roles, and gender systems continue to be perpetuated within virtual social spaces. From Facebook to Reddit to 4Chan to the dark web, it is undeniable that patriarchal systems of male dominance and subjugation are the primary forms of communication users engage in. You do not have to venture far on internet social spaces to observe users engaged in toxic masculine behaviors. There appear to be very few safe social spaces to congregate in on the internet. These toxic gendered ways of being seen within virtual spaces is pervasive and problematic, and unless there is more done about it, then many signs point to the continued degradation of collective mental health, political and cultural divisions, and the continued perpetration of violence we see virtually and in the real world. The real-world violence has occurred in Isla Vista, in Charleston, in Toronto, in Tallahassee, in San Bernardino, in Sandy Hook, in San Antonio, in Minneapolis, and in so many other US and Western countries. It is the hope of this researcher that the information from this study and others like it, along with a rise in interventions, can shift the tides of toxic gendered behaviors online. My hope lays most of all within the growing modern racial (Black Lives Matter), sexual identity, and gender equality movements that call out toxic

behaviors, hold people accountable, push back against systemic oppression, and that are ultimately inspired to deconstruct what bell hooks names “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (hooks, 2004). I believe that these movements will not only reciprocally influence our in-person lives positively, but our virtual lives as well.

## Appendix A

## Developing the Study

The primary researcher has been a regular Reddit user for many years, and has noticed persistent problematic dynamics (male domination, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, threats of violence) happening subtly and overtly on social network forums. Further, it was noticed how these problematic dynamics were rampant and there was little to no evident intervention from users, the community moderators, or Reddit employed administrators. These issues were noticed even in seemingly mild and friendly communities (i.e. cute animal or comedy communities). In congruence with this personal experience, the primary researcher noticed that heightened media attention was becoming more focused on events of virtual sexism, hate, and white nationalism. Further, significant attention was given to social networking sites due to the fact that several mass shooting perpetrators were identified in using these platforms. Attention was specifically given to how male perpetrators engaged in forums that proliferate misogyny, hate, bigotry, and violence.

In becoming aware of these intensely emerging issues, it was noticed that there was little to no empirically based research attention given to the dynamics of masculinity on social network forums. However, this changed once the research of Moloney and Love (2018) on VMA was introduced to the primary researcher by dissertation committee member Matthew Ezzell, PhD. The researcher article titled *#TheFappening: Virtual Manhood Acts in (Homo)Social Media* provided an evidence supported frame that defined how acts of masculinity are engaged in virtual social spaces. Thus, the research inquiry that was developed for this study was inspired by the personal experiences of the

researcher, the growing media attention given to specific social networks communities involvement in proliferating bigotry, and was ultimately guided by the call from Moloney and Love to deepen the understanding of VMA on other virtual platforms. In response, this qualitative study was developed to explore VMA on Reddit and to discuss their implications.

I [the primary researcher] noticed that throughout developing this study and conducting the literature review would find myself often succumbing to the very concepts discussed in this study. This realization shows on some level just how subversive and powerful these psychological dynamics can be. For example, I became activated by a user's comment on Reddit and felt compelled to engage in discussion about their opinion on a certain controversial topic. Here were some dynamics I noticed within this interaction: (1) I am particularly attuned to bigoted comments online, especially lately due to my dissertation work, which demonstrates affect biased attention. (2) Because of the anonymous nature of Reddit, I felt especially bold and uninhibited to respond in a more abrasive and inharmonious way. (3) Lastly, as a cis-gender man, I am certainly prone to the pitfalls of TM and believe in some unconscious way wanted to prove to the person online that they were misguided and ill-informed. I believe I was drawn to respond in part to show dominance by conveying that they were inferior because of my more "superior" feminist and progressive point of view. I would catch myself and choose not to respond most times, but I did notice how I am both aware of the vulnerabilities related to engaging in virtual social arguments, but am still prone to engaging in problematic ways. Both my personal and academic realizations throughout this project has been this - The concepts of masculinity and patriarchy are deeply ingrained in our



personal and societal psyches, and there are some very complex cognitive phenomena behind them. Further, I find it fascinating and equally troubling that despite my personal and academic reflections of my own masculine identity, I still fall victim to enacting toxic masculinity in real life and virtually every day. The ways I am, and likely many men, are socialized via toxic masculinity is deeply imbedded within us, and this recognition incredibly motivates me to abolish patriarchy and white supremacy personally and politically.

## Appendix B

## Incel Lexicon

Term	Definition
Incel	A self-described involuntary celibate. Incels believe they're undesirable to women because society has stacked the cards against them. They believe that they are not good looking enough, are too small in stature, and are generally physically weaker than other men.
Alpha	Men who are able to get the sex and affection that they desire, because according to incels, they display traits of being popular and dominating, and are usually tall and athletic. Incels believe women cannot resist being attracted to men like this. The opposite of a beta male. Takes on risk and confrontation. Confident and a leader.
Beta	Any man who is not confident, who is submissive, and is not especially physically virile. Some Betas might occasionally have sex, but they aren't nearly as successful as Alphas. An unremarkable, careful man who avoids risk and confrontation. Beta males lack the

	physical presence, charisma, and confidence of the Alpha male
Omegas	A male lower than Betas in terms of their ability to interact with women and function in society. In incel terms, this person has zero ability to engage with the opposite sex. Some incels refer to themselves as Betas, some say they're Omegas. It's internet lingo; people use different terms in different ways.
Normie	Basically anyone who isn't an incel. To quote r/braincels, "many incels are generally hostile to normies."
Stacys	catch-all phrase for women who incels consider to be the top tier of attractiveness — and thus are a huge target for their rage. Generally, they are described as athletic, blonde, and sexually experienced.
Chads	The male equivalent of Stacys.

<p>Beta Rebellion</p>	<p>men’s rights termthat refers to the uprising of beta males against alpha males and females, and possibly all normies, depending on who you ask. On top of Minassian’s own post citing an “incel rebellion,” the term beta rebellion was used by posters on 4chan to describe Chris Harper Mercer’s shooting rampage that killed nine at at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon in 2015. Warnings about the shooting had circulated on 4chan the night before the event, leading many to speculate that Harper-Mercer was a 4chan user. A manifesto penned by Harper-Mercer before the attack stated, “Here I am, 26, with no friends, no job, no girlfriend, a virgin. I long ago realized that society likes to deny people like me these things.”</p>
<p>Beta Uprising</p>	<p>men’s rights termthat refers to the uprising of beta males against alpha males and females, and possibly all normies, depending on who you ask. On top of Minassian’s own post citing an “incel rebellion,” the term beta rebellion was used by posters on 4chan to describe Chris</p>

	<p>Harper Mercer’s shooting rampage that killed nine at at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon in 2015. Warnings about the shooting had circulated on 4chan the night before the event, leading many to speculate that Harper-Mercer was a 4chan user. A manifesto penned by Harper-Mercer before the attack stated, “Here I am, 26, with no friends, no job, no girlfriend, a virgin. I long ago realized that society likes to deny people like me these things.”</p>
<p>ER</p>	<p>The short form for Elliot Rodgers, who within the darker parts of the incel community is viewed as a martyr for the incel cause. In 2014, Rodger killed six people and injured 14 others near the University of California, Santa Barbara. In a video posted to YouTube before embarking on a shooting spree, Rodger explained that he intended to punish women for never having sex with him, calling himself “the perfect gentleman,” and lamenting the fact that he was still a virgin at 22. Referred to sometimes as Saint Elliot, The Cut writes:</p>

	<p>“His likeness has inspired countless memes that straddle the line between lulzy irony and utter sincerity (one widely circulated picture depicts him as a literal saint, his face Photoshopped into a religious painting).”</p>
<p>White Knight</p>	<p>More a Manosphere term than an incel one, but it provides more context about the way the community views women. Defined on the definitive men’s rights reddit forum r/RedPill as: A male who attempts to gain the favor of or engage in sexual relations with females, who treats these females as Innocent, Delicate, Beautiful Goddesses who are in constant need of Protection, Defense, and Social Support. Where the needs and pleasing of females is top priority in the male’s life. Needless to say, to incels and men’s rights activists, it’s a pejorative term. In the Manosphere, a lot of men profess to being guilty of “white knighting” at times, but it’s perceived as weak, or worse, a traitorous act towards the male gender.</p>

<p>Black Pill</p>	<p>An incel's brand of philosophy, becoming incel or sympathizing as a normie. Metaphorical term used to describe the moments when an incel either realizes or is reminded that they are an incel. When something happens in an incel's life that reminds them that they are undesirable, that's a black pill. This colloquialism stems from the red pill/blue pill cultural meme popular within the men's rights movement. Like in The Matrix, taking the red pill is supposed to signify truth, while the blue pill represents blissful ignorance.</p>
<p>Ascend</p>	<p>When an incel moves on to get laid or gain a relationship.</p>
<p>AWALT</p>	<p>All Women Are Like That</p>
<p>AMALT</p>	<p>Femcel version of All Men Are Like That or All Men Are Literal Trash</p>
<p>Becky</p>	<p>Average female</p>
<p>Betabux</p>	<p>A beta male when a girl takes advantage of him. He is chosen to be her significant other because he earns a decent wage to finance her lifestyle, etc. The girl he's with is past her prime youth, she has already ridden the Cock</p>

	<p>Carousel, and her value on the sexual market (See: SMV) has decreased.</p>
Babebux	<p>Femcel version of Betabux, but with less attached. A beta female when a man takes advantage of her. She is chosen to be his significant other because she earns a decent wage to finance his lifestyle, etc. "Cock Carousel" is exclusive to incels, so the last part of Betabux does not apply.</p>
Bluepill	<p>Used to describe someone who is blissfully and willfully ignorant. Used by more groups than just incels.</p>
BTFO	<p>Blown the fuck out. Meaning a certain comment is demoralizing or demotivating to a group/individual. It can also be used to say someone lost an argument or got verbally one-upped.</p>
Canthal Tilt	<p>the angle of the lateral canthus (outside corner of eye) in relation to the medial canthus (inside corner of eye).</p>



Cel	Specific reason one is in a Incel: height, weight, wieners, ethnic background are common, Can also mean an Incel who is X
Chads	Stereotypical alpha males. Manly, alpha, attractive - of various ethnicities, and often mogs Incels. AKA Tyrone, Jamaal, Chapreet, Chaddam, etc.
Chadlet	A manlet. A short Chad
Chadlite	Someone who is almost a Chad. Ranked above a normie in hierarchy
Cock Carousel	Describes the period in "all" woman lives when she's sleeping with many men, usually seen as a time in their life going from 16-25 (usually includes college) where they have many different sexual partners. Makes them less valuable afterward.
Cope	Pretty much anything anybody does to deal with their "incel-ness". Can also be used to indicate disagreement with a previously stated point.
Cuck/to be cucked	Originally referred to 'cuckold', more specifically a fetish where a man watches his wife being plowed by another man. Now used as an adjective for everything incels dislike.

	Originating from an idea that all left-wing men are cuckolds, which in term arose from Karl Marx describing "class traitors". Used by more groups than just incels.
Curry	Someone from India
Elliot Rodger	Often abbreviated to ER, who went on a killing spree because the sorority girls near him were throwing themselves at Chad (see above), and not him. Can be used as a verb to suggest a going on a killing spree.
Escortcel	An incel who uses the services of an escort to get laid.
Fakecel	A person who claims to be an incel, but isn't. Essentially, incel gatekeeping.
Femcel	Female incels, which "don't exist". (Yes they do)
Foid/Femoid	Abbreviated form of "female humanoid," used to dehumanize females.
Fuckzoned	When a femcel is used in a relationship for nothing other than sex. Think "friendzoned" but pertaining to sex.
Fuel	Motivation for something. ex. Lifefuel (Good for life)

FWHR	Face/width height ratio. Apparently this will stop you getting laid if it's not ideal. Like everything else.
GTFIH	Get The Fuck In Here i.e. read this post.
Gymcel	An incel who works out.
High IQ	Indicates agreement with a point previously stated.
Hole	Females
Hunter Eyes	The squinty, hooded shape a particular set of eyes.  Couple this with an aesthetic shape - when the outer corner is higher than the inner like so, also known as positive canthal tilt. Used by more groups than just incels.
Incel	Involuntary celibate.
Inkwell	Incel (Sarcastic).
IT	Reddit sub, IncelTears.
It's over	A general greeting. Answer with "It never began."
JBW	Used to imply that "just being white" can resolve all incel problems.
JBW	Jail bait
JFL	Just Fucking Lol
Jumping Bananas	Not mainstream in incel culture, but sometimes seen as a "clever" way to avoid saying "jail bait"

	when they talk about how much they want to have sex with barely pubescent girls.
KEK	From of LOL from World of Warcraft
Landwhale	A grossly obese woman, pejorative. Incels have a different definition of obese than most people.  Used by more groups than just incels.
Lanklet	Tall, skinny, and therefore unattractive man
LDAR	Lay down and rot, generally used to give up on a mental level.
Legit	Indicates agreement with a previously stated point.
Looksmatch	Looksmatches are of similar "attractiveness levels," both a 6/10 or such.
Low IQ	Indicates disagreement with a previously stated point.
Lowinhibmaxx	To get a low inhibition, to become someone with low inhibition. Presumably an effort to increase testosterone levels (Through NoFap & other methods), in order to be more confident when approaching/talking to the other gender.
Manlet	Short guys
Maxx/Maxxing/Max	An effort to improve an aspect of one's life to the fullest. "Maximize" it.
Mentalcel	Someone who is an incel because of mental illness-related reasons.

NMGTOW	Men going their own way, with a belief that women are toxic and detrimental to society. These men are sometimes incel, sometimes not.
Mog	To overshadow, especially in personal aesthetic attributes, often supplemented with a facial feature our characteristic descriptor to form a compound. Used by more groups than just incels.
Mogger	A racist term deriving from "n*****", when a black man "mogs" another race. Also, Mig-Mog in the same vein of nig-nog.
Moid	Femcel version of foid. "Male humanoid," used to dehumanize males.
Monkey Branching	When someone goes from one relationship (branch) to the next, often not letting go of the first one until securing a grip on another first. New branches are often disguised as "just a friend" or someone "easy to talk to about certain things" instead of the next branch the monkey is about to swing to.
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training.  Widespread, not specific to incels, but it

	comes up a lot in discussion about/with them and between themselves.
NW/Norwood	The Norwood scale is a measure of male pattern baldness. Obviously not unique to incels but they seem to like using it whenever they want to talk about baldness in the lookism community (e.g. "Norwoodcels").
Nice Guy	A guy who acts nice to women in an attempt to get laid. Proceeds to get angry and complain when it doesn't work. "Women go for assholes and ignore nice guys like me."
Noodlewhore	An Asian Woman.
Normie	Anyone besides incel or Chad/Stacy.
NPC	Someone who repeats group ideas, usually used to suggest someone has no original thought. Used by more groups than just incels.
NT	Short for neurotypical i.e. not on the autism spectrum. Not unique to incels but they use it all the time.
Numale	Nu-males are men lacking self-respect who are completely devoid of any masculinity and will jump at any moment to defend women online for feminist brownie points while

	falsely believing that in return, they'll receive sexual favors.
Oneitis	Somebody's one true love, often unrequited. Used by more groups than just incels.
Orbiter/Beta Orbiter	A guy that wants to sleep with his female friend. He "orbits" her (hangs out with in a needy way) in the hopes of getting sex someday.
Personality/Braincel Automod	Personality isn't really that important to most women. They often euphemize personality for good physical looks and social status.
Personality Detector	This term is used to mock women who stick with abusive significant others or women who enter relationships with someone who has a negative background. Personality detectors in reality tend to give people a weird feeling around those with negative/malicious intentions. Incels like to point out when this warning fails.
Pill	Can be used as a suffix for any incel "realization" e.g. racepill (discovering that "it never begun" if you're a "curry"), agepill (realising it's over because you're too old), etc.B80
Pilled	The act of accepting one of the "pills" as the truth.

Pinkpill	The femcel version of the blackpill. A femcel's brand of philosophy.
PSL Scale	Think it stands for "Puahate/Sluthate/Lookism" Scale. Basically the scale they use for rating attractiveness.
Redpill	A difficult to swallow truth that can't be unlearned. Relating to incels, this is a less intense version of the blackpill. Used by more groups than just incels.
Reee	Commonly referred to now as an "autistic screeching meme", this is an onomatopoeic expression of intense rage or frustration typically associated with the Angry Pepe character. It is meant to represent the unique croak produced by several species of frogs when agitated. Used by more groups than just incels.
Rice	Relating to someone from Asia.
Roastie:	Used to describe a woman who has had sex with more than one partner. An insult that combines body shaming and slut-shaming in one.
Rope	To suggest or commit suicide by hanging.
SMV	Sexual market value.



Sour Grapes	If I can't have it, then it wasn't any good anyway.
Soy	The official drink of IncelTears. There have been studies that suggest, but do not prove, that soy lowers testosterone. Incels use this to suggest someone is low testosterone, therefore less of a man.
St Blackops2cel	Random guy from gaming forum who has become a sort of god to them because he's gawky looking.
Stacy/Stacie	Hot, popular woman. Presumably does "the sex"
Sui	Suicide
Tallfag	Tall guy
TFL	True forced loneliness. Similar to volcel.
Truecel	The opposite of volcel and fakecel, used to indicate that there is no hope for them because they are truly involuntary celibate.
Turbo	An extreme case. (e.g. turbomanlet - a very short man)
Volcel	Used to indicate that the reason someone is celibate is a voluntary decision. Ex. "Fatcels are volcels."
Wage cuck	A wagecuck is someone who works a traditional job (a wageslave) while not being in a

	relationship and not having the potential for a relationship.
The Wall	After riding the cock carousel, this is the idea that a woman is used up and worthless. Specifically relates to age and how women lose their youthful looks as they get older.
White Knight	A male who takes things out of context to adamantly defend women's rights. White Knights tend to make an issue out of something when there is no issue present. Exhibits Nice Guy behavior when doing so.

## Appendix C

## Men's Rights and Pick-Up Artist Lexicon

<p>4chan: An anonymous and often graphic online forum; used by Gamergaters to strategize about revenge tactics and by hackers who posted stolen nude photos of celebrities, including Jennifer Lawrence.</p>
<p>8chan: An anonymous forum that Gamergaters started using after 4chan banned their threads.</p>
<p>Anti-Slut Defense (asd): Tactics that Pickup Artists believe women use to dodge responsibility for sex, such as offering “token resistance” or claiming afterward that they were too drunk to say no.</p>
<p>A Voice for Men: Founded in 2009 by truck driver Paul Elam to “expose misandry on all levels,” the site, now a hub of the movement, is aimed at those turned off by the fringe politics of other men's rights forums.</p>
<p>Alpha – Socially dominant. Somebody who displays high value, or traits that are sexually attractive to women. Alpha can refer to a man who exhibits alpha behaviors (more alpha tendencies than beta), but usually used to describe individual behaviors themselves.</p>

<p>Alpha Widow - A woman (typically but not necessarily post-wall) who has been abandoned by an Alpha male. No matter how great her new man is, she will perceive him as failing to meet the standard of the alpha she was previously associated with. Due to hypergamy, a woman cannot date backwards, once she gets say, a male 8, she cannot date below a male 8 and be happy with him. If she does, she is just using said man for resources (BB) and doesn't really love him. Essentially, a damaged woman accustomed to a tier of man she can no longer attract. See "Post-wall" and "Hypergamy."</p>
<p>AMOG – Alpha Male Of Group.</p>
<p>AF/BB - Alpha Fucks/Beta Bucks.</p>
<p>ASD - Anti-Slut Defense.</p>
<p>AWALT - All Women Are Like That. Often expressed after an example of hypergamy.</p>
<p>Beta – Traits of provision: either providing resources or validation to others, women (and perhaps men). Beta traits display low value to women if they are are put on too strong or too early in meeting- giving without equity. Beta can be used to describe individual behaviors, as well as people who have an overwhelming amount of beta properties (opposed to alpha).</p>

<p>Blue Pill – From The Matrix and its sequels. The path of conformity with Society’s expectations; the state of being unaware of the problems engendered by society. Compare with “Red Pill,” below.</p>
<p>CC, or Cock Carousel – The period of time in a woman's life where she successfully exploits her sexual value and maximizes her hypergamous tendencies by having sex with as many alphas as possible. Usually happens between ages 18 - 27. Often ends when the woman hits the wall.</p>
<p>CH - Chateau Heartiste.</p>
<p>Close - The apex of an interaction. Often preceded by an indication of the type of close, eg. f-close (full close or fuck close, the interaction led to sex), k-close (kiss), #close (receiving phone #).</p>
<p>Comfort Test - Similar to a Shit Test, but meant to gauge your level of Beta traits. Typically only encountered in LTRs. While not discussed as often as shit tests, a successful LTR requires that you pass these as well.</p>
<p>Covert Contract - An unspoken deal with terms the other party would never agree to. Most typically seen by orbiters trying to negotiate desire: "If I do a favor for her, she'll go out with me."</p>

<p>DT, or Dark Triad - A combination of three personality traits: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy. An effective short-term sexual strategy. More in-depth information here.</p>
<p>DHV – Display of Higher Value, the accomplishment, anything that improves your sexual market value in the eyes of another.</p>
<p>DLV - Display of lower value.</p>
<p>DQ - Disqualification. Used by women as an IOD. Used by PUAs as a method of disarming ASD by appearing to be disinterested.</p>
<p>Dread Game - Purposefully inciting jealousy in an LTR by openly getting attention from other women. Soft Dread is similar, but less open. With Soft Dread, the attention doesn't even need to be real. Creating the possibility for female attention is enough to get the hamster going. (If you develop a great body, she knows that other women will find that attractive without having to actually see other women displaying interest.) The purpose of using Dread is to get the target (wife, girlfriend, plate) to step up their game to compete with other interested women.</p>

<p>Fathers 4 Justice: A British paternal rights group that gained notoriety in the mid-2000s after activists, some dressed as superheroes, scaled public monuments, allegedly threatened to kidnap the prime minister's son, and defaced a portrait of the queen.</p>
<p>Fathers Manifesto: An early MRM website that combined calls for paternal custody rights with claims that blacks should be exiled and Catholic priests were sexually abusing children as part of a plot to spread AIDS.</p>
<p>Feminism – "A doctrine built on the pre-supposition of victimhood of women by men as a foundation of female identity. In its goals is always the utilization of the state to forcibly redress this claimed victimization. In other words, the proxy use of violence and wealth appropriation. In whatever flavor, and variation, these two basic features are common to every doctrine using the label feminism. Feminism is therefore, a doctrine of class hatred, and violence." (John The Other, "Why not date a feminist?" A Voice For Men, 4 June 2012.)</p>
<p>FR - Field Report.</p>
<p>Frame - The context in which something is perceived.</p> <p>Maintaining frame is often cited as the most important aspect of Alpha behavior. See Iron Rule of Tomassi #1</p>

Friendzone - See Orbiter.
Game – A loosely based set of behaviors specifically designed to increase attraction.
Gamergate: An ongoing conflict that pits “traditional” video game enthusiasts (mostly white males) against feminists and others who call for game culture to become more inclusive. Misogyny and violent threats are a hallmark of the online controversy.
Gaslighting - A form of mental abuse in which false information is presented with the intent of making victims doubt their own memory, perception, and sanity.
Hamster - Used to describe the way that women use rationalization to resolve mental conflict and avoid cognitive dissonance. The core mechanism that allows women to say one thing and do a different thing.
HB - Hot Babe (often followed by a number as an indication of ranking on a 1-10 scale).
Honey Badger Brigade: A group of mostly female supporters of the men’s rights movement; its weekly online radio show features such topics as “the top 13 creepiest feminist behaviors,” including “humorless vagina art.”



<p>Hypergamy – The instinctual urge for women to seek out the best alpha available. This is marked by maximizing rejection (therefore women are the selective gender). A woman will vet her alpha through various shit tests to ensure his "health" on the alpha scale. She is conditioned to recognize a declining alpha, as hypergamy also tends to continue seeking out higher status males even while with an alpha male. Shit tests allow her to prepare herself for eventually leaving when a new higher status male is found. If the male fails shit tests to a great enough degree, it will effect her feelings for him. He will effectively lower his sexual market value in her eyes. This will enable her to jump to the next male with ease and little remorse.</p>
<p>Incel - Involuntarily Celibate. A man who wants to get laid, but can't. A man who is "involuntarily celibate" and feels that women owe him sex. Mass murderer Elliot Rodger described himself as one.</p>
<p>IOD - Indication of Disinterest.</p>
<p>IOI - Indication of Interest.</p>
<p>Kino (Kino Escalation) - "Kino" means touching. Kino escalation is the process of ramping up the touching from light touching to heavy (though still not entirely sexual).</p>
<p>LJBF - Let's Just Be Friends (See Orbiter)</p>

LMR - Last Minute Resistance. A display of ASD immediately prior to closing
LTR - Long Term Relationship.
Mangina: What some men's rights activists call a man who supports feminism.
Manosphere - The loose collection of blogs, message boards, and other sites run by and/or read by MRAs, MGTOW, PUAs etc and any red pill associated people/groups.
Men Going Their Own Way: A faction that vows to avoid contact and relationships with women because they think women will inevitably treat them as "disposable utilities."
MGTOW – Men Going Their Own Way; the growing contingent of the male population who are saying "Fuck It All" to the Mating Dance. See /r/MGTOW
MMSL - The Married Man Sex Life Primer. A book written by Athol Kay specifically focused on marriage game.
Monk Mode - Mitigating distractions and focusing on introspection, reflection and self-improvement for a given period of time. Working on the body and mind. More in-depth information here.
MR - Men's Rights Group.
MRA - Men's Rights activist. See /r/MensRights

<p>MRM - Men's Rights Movement. A loose-knit network of groups and activists (MRAs) who believe men are an oppressed class. Most adherents consider Warren Farrell to be the intellectual father of men's rights.</p>
<p>National Coalition for Men: A nonprofit group that "raises awareness about the ways sex discrimination affects men and boys." Its leaders have filed lawsuits challenging registration for the draft and seeking to defund shelters for battered women.</p>
<p>Oneitis - When a guy has fallen in love with a woman in the same way a boy loves his mother. He obsesses about her, but she does not reciprocate.</p>
<p>Orbiter - Also known as Beta Orbiter. A beta guy who accepted the proposal to "just be friends" from a girl he has oneitis for. He will stick around her and constantly validate her whenever she requests it. Also known as "friendzone." She will keep him around because he will do anything for her and provide validation, giving small hints that he might eventually win her love- but he never will. Typical signs of orbiter status: likes and comments on new facebook photos. Go-to guy when girl has problem with boyfriend. Also known as emotional tampon.</p>

<p>Pickup Artists (pua): Self-proclaimed or aspiring “alpha males” who attempt to seduce women through a system of psychological gambits called “the game.” Notable PUA figures include Roosh V (Daryush Valizadeh) of the Return of Kings website, who has published a collection of sex travel guides such as “Bang Brazil,” in which he writes, “Poor favela chicks are very easy, but quality is a serious problem.”</p>
<p>Plate - Woman with whom you are in a non-exclusive sexual relationship with. Spinning plates is the act of having multiple plates simultaneously. Again, Rollo has a great article found here.</p>
<p>Post-wall - A woman past her peak beauty/fertility. Depending on genetics, this can be a woman as young as 25 or as old as 40. Generally speaking, it is agreed most women hit the wall around 30. Women tend to become desperate to settle down around age 28/29, realizing they have limited time to secure a quality mate as their beauty diminishes.</p> <p>See "The Wall."</p>
<p>Preselection - The idea that women are more attracted to men who already have the interest of other women. This saves the woman time in judging a man by using the idea that other women have already judged him favorably.</p>

PUA – Pick-Up Artist.
<p>puahate: A site for those who feel disillusioned by the PUA movement. Rodger, who blamed women for his sexual frustration, was a frequenter; Roosh V concluded about him: “Until you give men like Rodger a way to have sex, either by encouraging them to learn game, seek out a Thai wife, or engage in legalized prostitution... it’s inevitable for another massacre to occur.” (PUAhate shut down shortly after Rodger’s rampage.)</p>
<p>Pussy Pass - Letting a woman off without actual consequences for illegal behavior. See /r/PussyPass for examples.</p>
<p>Register-Her.com: An offshoot of A Voice for Men, an “offender registry” purporting to track female murderers and rapists as well as women who make false rape accusations.</p>
<p>Redpill: In the classic sci-fi film The Matrix, the hero must choose between swallowing a blue pill, which will allow him to remain in a pleasant illusory world, or a red pill, which will open his eyes to the reality in which he is enslaved. In men’s rights parlance, “red pillers” realize that men, not women, are oppressed.</p>

<p>Red Pill – The recognition and awareness of the way that feminism, feminists and their white-knight enablers affect society. An awareness of the dark truths surrounding human sexuality; hypergamy, women's AF/BB strategies, society's Feminine Imperative, sexual differences in emotional attachment, women's attraction to DT traits and sexual dominance/violence; Extremely politically incorrect, expect reflexive social ostracism for even mentioning the red pill in polite society.</p>
<p>Set - A group of people that you are interacting with.</p>
<p>Shit Test, or Fitness Test - A statement or question meant to gauge your level of Alpha traits.</p>
<p>SJW - Social Justice Warrior.</p>
<p>SMV – Sexual Market Value. A shorthand statement for “what you bring to the table,” whether for an one-night stand or for a longer sexual/emotional relationship.</p>
<p>SMP - Sexual Market Place. A description of the free market that is mating.</p>
<p>Snowflake - A woman who tries to persuade a man that she’s somehow unique, different, or special by playing up her good girl resume and downplaying her bad girl resume. When used as a verb, snowflaking refers to the argument she puts forth to justify her claim.</p>

<p>Social Justice Warrior (sjw): What MRAs and Gamergaters call someone who advocates equal rights for women and minorities.</p>
<p>Solipsism - In Red Pill, solipsism (e.g. female solipsism) refers to the female's tendency to frame everything she experiences or witnesses in terms of herself and her own needs - personalizing it **- even when such personalization would not make contextual sense.</p>
<p>Subreddit: A forum on the social sharing site Reddit, a.k.a. “the front page of the internet.” Gamergaters, PUA followers, and others congregate in dedicated subreddits.</p>
<p>The Wall - The point in a woman's life where her ego and self-assessed view of her sexual market value exceed her actual sexual market value; the beginning of the decline. Usually occurs as a wake-up shock to women when they realize that their power over men was temporary and that their looks are fading. This usually results with first denial and then a sudden change in priority towards looking for a husband. Even after hitting the wall, many women will squander a few more precious years testing her SMV with alphas to double-check, hoping her perceived decline was a fluke, this will make her even more bitter when she</p>

finally has to settle for a worse-beta than she could've gotten before because of squandering her youth.

Trickle Truth - A method of coming clean about bad behavior by only disclosing small pieces of truth at a time. "All we did was talk," leads to "Well we just cuddled," leads to "I didn't mean to fuck him, it just happened." It's a hamsters way of saving face when bad behavior is discovered.

Unicorn - Mystical creature that doesn't fucking exist, aka The Girl of Your Dreams.



White Knight – A man who “comes to the rescue” of a woman, or of women, reflexively, emotionally-driven, without thought or even looking at the situation; (2) a man in authority who enables Team Women in his legislative actions, judgments, or rulings, reflexively, emotionally-driven, without thought or even looking at what’s right.

Also known as "Mangina"

## Endnotes

“The Fappening,’ centered on illegally acquired nudes of celebrities distributed and discussed via anonymous image-board 4chan and Reddit.com” (Massanari, 2017, p. 329-330).

<sup>2</sup> “#Gamergate (GG), ostensibly a hashtag “movement” spawned by individuals who purported to be frustrated by a perceived lack of ethics within gaming journalism became a campaign of systematic harassment of female and minority game developers, journalists, and critics and their allies” (Massanari, 2017, p. 330).

<sup>3</sup> “...notorious for its libertarian invocation of free speech principles to defend unfettered misogyny, racism, and “niche” pornography. Calling themselves “betafags” and “incels” (involuntary celibates), and claiming to applaud Isla Vista killer Elliot Rodger, contributors to these boards appeared to be using social media to organize a campaign of revenge against women, “social justice warriors” and the “alpha males” who had deprived them of sexual success.” (Ging, 2019, p.3)

<sup>4</sup> Reddit communities implicated in spreading various forms of bigotry: r/Incels (banned 2017), r/Braincels (banned 2019), r/MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way), r/MensRights, r/IncelsWithoutHate, r/IncelsInAction, r/KotakuInAction, r/TheRedPill)

<sup>5</sup> The Manosphere is a collection of loosely associated websites and communities where sexism, misogyny, and general bigotry is widespread, normalized, and encouraged.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.reddit.com/r/MensRights/>

<sup>7</sup> The term *big data* encompasses a wide range of approaches of collecting and analyzing data in ways that were not possible before the era of modern personal computing (Landers et al., 2016, p.475).

<sup>8</sup> Python is a high-level programming language known for fast, simple programming and short, easy-to-read code (Wentworth, Elkner, Downey, & Meyers, 2012, as cited in Landers et al., 2016, p. 485).

<sup>9</sup> [https://github.com/jmupysch21/Reddit\\_Scraper](https://github.com/jmupysch21/Reddit_Scraper)

<sup>10</sup> <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezNdDNK1-P8mspSbmtC2r86Ee9ZRbC66u929cG2GX0T9UMyw/viewform?fbzx=7887534925239058672>

<sup>11</sup> How moderators are appointed is unique to each Reddit community. It’s not clear how moderators were appointed for the r/IncelsWithoutHate and r/MensRights community. Notably, other than the original founding members of any given Reddit community, the moderators are never self-appointed.

<sup>12</sup> A visual representation of the SASB model can be seen at:  
<https://lornasmithbenjamin.com/sasb/>

## References

- American Psychological Association. (2017). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct (2002, amended effective June 1, 2010, and January 1, 2017). <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>
- American Psychological Association. (2018). Harmful Masculinity and Violence: Understanding the Connections and Approaches to Prevention. *In the Public Interest Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/pi/about/newsletter/2018/09/harmful-masculinity>
- Anderson, M. (2015). Men Catch up With Women on Overall Social Media Use. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/08/28/men-catch-up-with-women-on-overall-social-media-use>. Accessed 10.15.19.
- Aosved, A. C., & Long, P. J. (2006). Co-occurrence of rape myth acceptance, sexism, racism, homophobia, ageism, classism, and religious intolerance. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 55(7-8), 481–492. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-9101-4>
- Arango, T., Bogel-Burroughs, N., & Benner, K. (2019, Aug 3). Minutes Before El Paso Killing, Hate-Filled Manifesto Appears Online. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/us/patrick-crusius-el-paso-shooter-manifesto.html>
- Associated Press (2012, February 2). Ithaca man asks Reddit community to help Kenya orphanage from attack; he receives \$80,000 in donations. Retrieved May 22, 2020, from [https://www.syracuse.com/news/2012/02/ithaca\\_man\\_asks\\_reddit\\_communi.html](https://www.syracuse.com/news/2012/02/ithaca_man_asks_reddit_communi.html)

- Baele, S., Brace, L., Coan, T. (2019). From “incel” to “saint”: analyzing the violent worldview behind the 2018 Toronto attack *Terrorism Polit. Violence* (2019), 10.1080/09546553.2019.1638256
- Barak, A. (2005). Sexual Harassment on the Internet. *Social Science Computer Review*, 23(1), 77–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439304271540>
- Benjamin, L. S. (2000). Use of structural analysis of social behavior for interpersonal diagnosis and treatment in group therapy. In A. P. Beck & C. M. Lewis (Eds.), *The process of group psychotherapy: Systems for analyzing change* (p. 381–412). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10378-014>
- Benjamin, L. S. (2003/2006). *Interpersonal Reconstructive Therapy: Promoting Change in Nonresponders*. New York, NY: The Guildford Press.
- Benjamin, L. S., Rothweiler, J. C., & Critchfield, K. L. (2006). The use of structural analysis of social behavior (SASB) as an assessment tool. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 2, 83–109. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.2.022305.095337>
- Berger, J.M., Strathearn, B. (2013). *Who Matters Online: Measuring influence, Evaluating Content and Countering Violent Extremism in Online Social Networks*. ICSR: Developments in Radicalization and Political Violence.
- Berke, D.S., & Zeichner, A. (2016). Man's heaviest burden: A review of contemporary paradigms and new directions for understanding and preventing masculine aggression. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 10(2), 83-91.

- Birks, M., Chapman, Y., & Francis, K. (2008). Memoing in qualitative research: Probing data and processes. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 13(1): 68-75.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1744987107081254>
- Bogost, I. (2019). Social Media Are a Mass Shooter's Best Friend. *The Atlantic*.  
Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/03/how-terrorism-new-zealand-spread-social-media/585040/>
- Bowlby, J. (1988). A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development. New York: Basic Books.
- Braswell, H. & Kushner, H. I. (2012). Suicide, social integration, and masculinity in the U.S. military, *Social Science & Medicine*, Elsevier, vol. 74(4), pages 530-536.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners. London: Sage.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2009). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. ISBN 0-674-22457-4
- Cassidy, J., & Shaver, P. R. (2016). *Handbook of attachment: theory, research, and clinical applications*. Third edition. New York: Guilford Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Charmaz, K. (2017). The Power of Constructivist Grounded Theory for Critical Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 34–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800416657105>
- Choudhury, M.D., & De, S. (2014). Mental Health Discourse on reddit: Self-Disclosure, Social Support, and Anonymity. ICWSM.

- Cole, K. K. (2015). "It's like she's eager to be verbally abused": Twitter, trolls, and (en)gendering disciplinary rhetoric. *Feminist Media Studies*, 15(2), 356–358.
- Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and power: Society, the person and sexual politics*. Stanford University Press.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept. *Gender & Society*, 19(6), 829–859.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205278639>
- Crabtree, B., & Miller, W. (1999). A template approach to text analysis: Developing and using codebooks. In B. Crabtree & W. Miller (Eds.), *Doing qualitative research* (pp. 163-177.) Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Denscombe, M. (2014). *The Good Research Guide: For small-scale social research projects*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Dickson, E. (2019) How the Toronto Van Attack Suspect Was Radicalized by Incels. *Rolling Stone Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/alek-minassian-toronto-van-attack-incels-891678/>
- Dunn, J. C. (2016). Going to work at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch: potentials of rhetorical and ethnographic methods for cultural studies. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 16(6):525–535.
- Eisler, R. T. (1988). *The chalice and the blade: Our history, our future*. San Francisco: Perennial Library.

- Ellis, E. G. (2019). Reddit's 'Manosphere' and the Challenge of Quantifying Hate. *Wired Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.wired.com/story/misogyny-reddit-research/>
- Estes, S. (2005). *I am a man!: Race, manhood, and the civil rights movement*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Ezzell, M. B. (2009). 'Barbie dolls' on the pitch: Identity work, defensive othering, and inequality in women's rugby. *Social Problems*, 56(1):111-131.
- Ezzell, M. B. (2012). "I'm in Control": Compensatory Manhood in a Therapeutic Community. *Gender & Society*, 26(2), 190–215.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243211434611>
- Ezzell, M. B. (2016). "Healthy for Whom? Males, Men, and Masculinity: A Reflection on the Doing (and Study) of Dominance." In *Exploring Masculinities: Identity, Inequality, Continuity, and Change*, edited by C. J. Pascoe and T. Bridges, 188–97. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ezzell, M. B., Johnson, J. A., Bridges, A. J., & Sun, C. F. (2020). I (Dis)Like it Like That: Gender, Pornography, and Liking Sex, *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 46:5, 460-473, DOI: 10.1080/0092623X.2020.1758860
- Farrell, T., Fernandez, M., Novotny, J., & Alani, H. (2019). Exploring Misogyny across the Manosphere in Reddit. In *Proceedings of the 10th ACM Conference on Web Science (WebSci '19)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 87–96. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1145/3292522.3326045>
- Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and



household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), 245–258. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797\(98\)00017-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797(98)00017-8)

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating Rigor Using Thematic Analysis: A Hybrid Approach of Inductive and Deductive Coding and Theme Development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 80–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500107>

Fivush, R., & Buckner, J. P. (2003). Creating gender and identity through autobiographical narratives. In R. Fivush & C. A. Haden (Eds.), *Autobiographical memory and the construction of a narrative self: Developmental and cultural perspectives* (p. 149–167). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Fox, J., Gilbert, M., & Tang, W. Y. (2018). Player experiences in a massively multiplayer online game: A diary study of performance, motivation, and social interaction. *New Media & Society*, 20(11), 4056-4073. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1461444818767102>

Fuller-Thomson, E., Baird, S. L., Dhrodia, R., & Brennenstuhl, S. (2016). The association between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and suicide attempts in a population-based study. *Child: care, health and development*, 42(5), 725–734. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12351>

Fulton, C. L. (2017). Gender Socialization. In J. E. Schwarz (Ed.), *Counseling women across the life span: Empowerment, advocacy, and intervention* (p. 21–38). Springer Publishing Company.

Frackowiak-Sochanska, M. (2021). Men and Social Trauma of COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Maladaptiveness of Toxic Masculinity. *Society Register*, 5(1), 73-94.

<https://doi.org/10.14746/sr.2021.5.1.04>

Ging, D. (2019). Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the

Manosphere. *Men and Masculinities*, 22(4), 638–657.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X17706401>

Habib, H., Musa, M.B., Zaffar, F., & Nithyanand, R. (2019). To Act or React:

Investigating Proactive Strategies For Online Community Moderation. ArXiv, abs/1906.11932.

Hardwick, J. (2020, May 9). Top 100 Most Visited Websites by Search Traffic (as of

2020). Ahrefs blog. <https://ahrefs.com/blog/most-visited-websites/>

Hauser, C. (2017, November 9). Reddit Bans 'Incel' Group for Inciting Violence Against

Women. The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/technology/incels-reddit-banned.html>.

Hendrix, S. (2019). How male supremacy fueled Scott Paul Beierle's incel attack on

Florida yoga studio. The Washington Post. Retrieved from

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/local/yoga-shooting-incel-attack-fueled-by-male-supremacy/>

Hines, A. (2019, May 28). How many bones would you break to get laid? The Cut.

<https://www.thecut.com/2019/05/incel-plastic-surgery.html>

Hipp, T. N., Bellis, A. L., Goodnight, B. L., Brennan, C. L., Swartout, K. M., & Cook, S.

L. (2017). Justifying sexual assault: Anonymous perpetrators speak out online.

*Psychology of Violence*, 7(1), 82-90. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0039998>

- Holtz, P., Kronberger, N., & Wagner, W. (2012). Analyzing internet forums: A practical guide. *Journal of Media Psychology: Theories, Methods, and Applications*, 24(2), 55-66. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1027/1864-1105/a000062>
- hooks, b. (2004). *The will to change: Men, masculinity, and love*. New York: Atria Books
- Hunt, G., & Antin, T. (2019). Gender and Intoxication: From Masculinity to Intersectionality. *Drugs (Abingdon, England)*, 26(1), 70–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687637.2017.1349733>
- Ingram, K. M., Davis, J. P., Espelage, D. L., Hatchel, T., Merrin, G. J., Valido, A., & Torgal, C. (2019). Longitudinal associations between features of toxic masculinity and bystander willingness to intervene in bullying among middle school boys. *Journal of School Psychology*, 77, 139–151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2019.10.007>
- Jane, E. A. (2014). “Back to the kitchen, cunt”: Speaking the unspeakable about online misogyny. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 28(4), 558–570.
- Jane, E. A. (2016). Online misogyny and feminist digilantism. *Continuum*, 30(3), 284–297.
- Johnson, A. G. (2005). *The gender knot: Unraveling our patriarchal legacy*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Khan, A. & Golab, L. (2020). Reddit mining to understand gendered movements. EDBT Workshop on Data Analytics Solutions for Real-Life Applications. Retrieved from <http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-2578/DARLIAP3.pdf>

- Kimmel, M. S. (2008). *Guyland: The perilous world where boys become men*. New York: Harper.
- Kimmel, M. S. (2013). *Angry white men: American masculinity at the end of an era*. New York: Nation Books.
- Kleinman, S. & Copp, M.A. (1993). *Emotions and fieldwork*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Koenig S. (2002). Walk like a man: enactments and embodiments of masculinity and the potential for multiple genders. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 43(3-4), 145–159.  
[https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v43n03\\_09](https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v43n03_09)
- Krasnova, H., Veltri, N.F., Eling, N., Buxmann, P. (2017). Why men and women continue to use social networking sites: the role of gender differences. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 26, 1-24.
- Kupers T. A. (2005). Toxic masculinity as a barrier to mental health treatment in prison. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 61(6), 713–724.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20105>
- Landers, R. N., Brusso, R. C., Cavanaugh, K. J., & Collmus, A. B. (2016). A primer on theory-driven web scraping: Automatic extraction of big data from the Internet for use in psychological research. *Psychological Methods*, 21(4), 475–492.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/met0000081>
- LaViolette, J. & Hogan, B. (2019). Using Platform Signals for Distinguishing Discourses: The Case of Men’s Rights and Men’s Liberation on Reddit. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth International Conference on Web and Social Media*, Vol. 13.
- Lerner, G. (1986). *The creation of patriarchy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Levant, R., Richmond, K., Majors, R., Inclan, J., Rossello, J., et al. (2003). A multicultural investigation of masculinity ideology and alexithymia. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 4, 91-99. doi:dx.doi.org.ezproxy.rit.edu/10.1037/1524-9220.4.2.91.
- Levant, R. & Wilmer, D. (2011). Masculinity constructs as protective buffers and risk factors for men's health. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 8, 110-120. doi:dx.doi.org.exproxy.rit.edu/10.1177/1557988313494408.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Love, T., Moloney, M., & Bunting, A. (2018). Analyzing virtual manhood: Qualitative analysis of fapping-related twitter data. SAGE Research Methods Cases. doi:10.4135/9781526429797
- Mantilla, K. (2013). Gendertrolling: Misogyny adapts to new media. *Feminist Studies*, 39(2), 563–570.
- Marche, S. (2016, April 14). Swallowing the Red Pill: a journey to the heart of modern misogyny. Retrieved May 21, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/14/the-red-pill-reddit-modern-misogyny-Manosphere-men>
- Marres, N., & E. Weltevrede (2013) Scraping the social? Issues in live social research, *Journal of Cultural Economy* 6: 313–335.
- Massanari, A. (2017). #Gamergate and The Fapping: How Reddit's algorithm, governance, and culture support toxic technocultures. *New Media & Society*, 19(3), 329-346. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1461444815608807>

Men's Allied Voices for a Respectful & Inclusive Community (MAVRIC) Project.

(2020). Healthy Masculinity. Retrieved May 21, 2020, from

<https://mavricproject.princeton.edu/healthy-masculinity/>

Mills, J., Bonner, A., & Francis, K. (2006). The Development of Constructivist Grounded Theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 25–35.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500103>

Moloney, M. E., Love, T. P. (2018). Assessing online misogyny: Perspectives from sociology and feminist media studies. *Sociology Compass*; 12:e12577.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12577>

Moloney, M. E., & Love, T. P. (2018). #TheFapping: Virtual Manhood Acts in (Homo)Social Media. *Men and Masculinities*, 21(5), 603–623.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X17696170>

Nakamura, L. (2008). Digitizing race: Visual cultures of the Internet. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Orenstein, P. (2019). The Miseducation of the American Boy. The Atlantic. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/01/the-miseducation-of-the-american-boy/603046/>

Parent, M. C., Gobble, T. D., & Rochlen, A. (2018). Social media behavior, toxic masculinity, and depression. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/men0000156>

Pew Research Center. (2016). Nearly Eight-In-Ten Reddit Users Get News on The Site.

Retrieved from [http://www.pewresearch.org/wp-](http://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/02/PJ_2016.02.25_Reddit_FINAL.pdf)

[content/uploads/sites/8/2016/02/PJ\\_2016.02.25\\_Reddit\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/02/PJ_2016.02.25_Reddit_FINAL.pdf)

- Prior, J. (2017), Qualitative study of online discussion forums about acne. *British Journal of Dermatology*. 177, 610-627. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/bjd.15761>
- Salter, A., & Blodgett, B. (2017). Toxic Geek Masculinity in Media - Sexism, Trolling, and Identity Policing: Anastasia Salter: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Salter, M. (2018). From geek masculinity to Gamergate: the technological rationality of online abuse. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 14(2), 247–264.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1741659017690893>
- Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity*, 52(4), 1893–1907.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8>
- Scaptura, M. N., & Boyle, K. M. (2020). Masculinity Threat, “Incel” Traits, and Violent Fantasies Among Heterosexual Men in the United States. *Feminist Criminology*, 15(3), 278–298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085119896415>
- Schrock, D., & Schwalbe, M. (2009). “Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 35:277–95.
- Schwalbe, M. (2015). *Manhood Acts: Gender and the Practices of Domination*. Routledge.
- Stein, J. (2016). How trolls are running the Internet. *Time*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/4457110/internet-trolls/>
- Stone, J. (October 13, 2014). "Gamergate's vicious right-wing swell means there can be no neutral stance". *The Guardian*. Retrieved from

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/oct/13/gamergate-right-wing-neutral-stance>

Suler, J. (2004). The online disinhibition effect. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, 7(3): 321–326.

Swain, J. (2018). A hybrid approach to thematic analysis in qualitative research: Using a practical example. In *SAGE Research Methods Cases*.

<https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781526435477>

Wall, D., & Kristjanson, L. (2005). Men, culture, and hegemonic masculinity: understanding the experience of prostate cancer. *Nursing Inquiry*, 12, 97-97. doi: doi-org.ezproxy.rit.edu/10.1111.j.1440-1800.2005.00258.x.

West, S. L., & O'Neal, K. K. (2004). Project D.A.R.E. outcome effectiveness revisited. *American journal of public health*, 94(6), 1027–1029.

<https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.94.6.1027>

Wikipedia contributors. (2020, April 15). 2014 Isla Vista killings. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 14:23, April 18, 2020, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=2014\\_Isla\\_Vista\\_killings&oldid=951080774](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=2014_Isla_Vista_killings&oldid=951080774)

Wikipedia contributors. (2020, April 16). 2018 Tallahassee shooting. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 14:13, April 18, 2020, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=2018\\_Tallahassee\\_shooting&oldid=951202895](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=2018_Tallahassee_shooting&oldid=951202895)

Wikipedia contributors. (2020, April 16). Toronto van attack. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 14:11, April 18, 2020, from



[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Toronto\\_van\\_attack&oldid=95132689](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Toronto_van_attack&oldid=95132689)

6

Wong, Y. J., Ho, M.-H. R., Wang, S.-Y., & Miller, I. S. K. (2017). Meta-analyses of the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and mental health-related outcomes. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 64(1), 80–93.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000176>

Wright, P. J., Sun, C., Bridges, A., Johnson, J. A., & Ezzell, M. B. (2019) Condom Use, Pornography Consumption, and Perceptions of Pornography as Sexual Information in a Sample of Adult U.S Males, *Journal of Health Communication*, 24(9), 693-699, DOI: 10.1080/10810730.2019.1661552

Zimbardo, P.G, Arnold, W.J., Levine, D. (1969). The human choice: Individuation, reason, and order vs. deindividuation, impulse, and chaos. Nebraska symposium on motivation, Vol. 17, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.