

BACHELOR THESIS EVALUATION: THESIS OPPONENT

Thesis topic: The Footprint of Gendered Neoliberalism on Incel's Archives: How the Postfeminism is Imprinted in incels.wiki

Author: Laura Blažeková

Advisor: Iveta Radičová

Opponent: Dagmar Kusá

Study program: Political Science, Liberal Arts

Evaluation contains objective and critical analysis of a bachelor thesis proposal. Evaluation should be considered by the following criteria:

Criteria for the evaluation of the final thesis	Max. points	Points given by evaluator
1. Methodological aspect (Logical frame, process of inquiry, topic specification, how realistic are set goals and how adequate are proposed working methods)	10	9
2. Sources of domestic and foreign literature, familiarity with relevant literature	15	14
3. Formatting and style	15	15
4. Scope and proportionality of content	5	5
5. Systematic approach	15	15
6. Evaluation of achieved results	40	38
Total	100	96

Final evaluation: A (95-100 points), B (83-94 points), C (68-82 points), D (55-67 points), E (50-54 points), Fx(<50 points)

Evaluation, comments, recommendations:

The thesis tackles the methodologically challenging topic of analyzing the discourse within the INCEL community, and it approaches it through the interesting lens of the phenomenon of postfeminism. The thesis pursues a largely descriptive approach—hypothesis is definitional rather than analytical—but such approach is fitting for this type of a pioneering exploration. The topic requires a thorough definition of both INCEL phenomenon and of the postfeminist wave—both deserving space and attention that could have sufficed as a single topic. However, it is obvious that the author is very well oriented in the literature and her immersion in the INCEL community data is commendable.

The written style is fresh and free of jargon, though it does not slip into opinion piece. However, it should have been submitted for a linguistic editing, as in some places the incorrect syntax or word choice unnecessarily take away from the overall impression.

Due to the loose hypothesis, it is difficult to anticipate the line of the argumentation—the link between postfeminism and INCEL community is not entirely clear at the beginning (is it one of the causes that led to the inception of the INCEL phenomenon, do they just happen to coincide?). This makes it difficult to guess at some places (e.g. in the section where postfeminism is defined) to follow why exactly that particular section is there, as the structure of the argument is not revealed at the onset. The author sometimes skips needed explanations of phenomena that are not familiar to a reader not read in the feminist or postfeminist research (e. g. p. 8- the example of cultural shifts in Ukraine leave one guessing as to what those trends may represent. Either they should be given their due, or if that is too distracting for the purposes of the thesis, skipped). Conceptually, the thesis chews on a bit too much, as it skims through trends that cannot be properly explained and juxtaposed or linked (for example, we learn that postfeminism is “in conversation” with neoliberal feminism and popular feminism—but what are they,

how are they related and what is the significance if it for the INCEL trend? Does hegemonic masculinity concept pertain to all three? Or just postfeminism?). The concluding remarks on p. 11 make the links a bit clearer (though they are very brief). They could have been presented at the very beginning to avoid confusion. The links are made at later stages, but the reader has to labor for them.

Equally ambitious is the definition of the INCEL phenomenon. The hypothesis and methodology are introduced late in the bachelor thesis—the literature review should summarize main trends, challenges, questions in research (limited to just a few pages), and the detailed analysis of postfeminism and INCEL movement should have then followed after thesis and methodology were introduced – but all the remarks so far return to the structure of the argument within the thesis. It is very rich and backed by knowledge and literature, just a bit “messy” for the reader.

The methodology is fitting and promising—we could potentially not only learn more about the community, but use it to inform the work of security services tasked with monitoring and preventing extremism.

Methodological section should explain which codes were selected in structural coding scheme and how they map the concepts the author has decided to map in the selected articles. It would also be useful to include a visual representation of key concepts that were either looked for or discovered during the process. Also, the implications should have been more dissected and related back to the theories the thesis started out with.

The excursion into the universe and language of the INCEL members is fascinating and worth laboring for. The topic itself has been given hardly any attention in Slovakia despite the fact that some of the fruits of this phenomenon have impacted our society greatly in the previous year, when is shook at its core after the murder of two gay men by an INCEL sympathizer.

The thesis makes for a very interesting read, and one wishes the analysis would continue to explore a larger number of articles to offer a plastic overview of the postfeminist discourse within the world of INCEL.

Questions for the author (relevant to the content of the Thesis):

1. Postfeminism is described as a backlash reaction to feminist movements. However, how widespread is it within societies—is it measurable, has it been measured? Is it a global phenomenon, one limited to the Western world where feminist movements were most present? In other words, how is it distributed in societies? It presumably impacts the mainstream value orientation—thus it should be an observable trend—more noticeable in some social groups than others.
2. Slightly different, yet related question--Can we find social underpinnings of the INCEL members? Other than being mostly white and young, do they share some other traits?
3. Was there anything that this methodological approach through content analysis brought that was surprising? Was there insight that could not be gained through existing theoretical literature? And also, how can it be potentially expanded to help us not only understand the community, but potentially be able to intervene or prevent potential violence, etc.?

In Bratislava, on: 15. 8. 2023 (date)

Signature of evaluator: 