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# PRACTICES OF PLEASURE: INVESTIGATING PORNOGRAPHY CONSUMPTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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**PhD Dissertation**

Submitted January 2017

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Supervisor: Professor Mehita Iqani

**A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Media Studies.**

**Johannesburg, 2017**

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

To my mother, Nqatyiswa Alicia Koba.

You've always been my hero from the times when my older brother and I, as toddlers, used to fight over you in your absence till now.

*Ungumthombo wothando, nobulumko, nothembeka.*
*Uligorhakazi elodlula amadoda athenjiweyo.*
*Ungumzekelo endifunda kuwo.*
*Ndingumsebenzi wezandla nothando lwakho.*
*Tolokazi!*
*Marhadebe!*
*Ngonyamakazi yobukhosi!*
*Uhloniphekile!*
*Akekho onje ngawe empilweni yam nakumhlaba wonke!*

To my supervisor, Professor Mehita Iqani.

Thank you for presiding over your field with such impressive acuity, intellectual vigour and unfeigned kindness. You are an inspiration. I keep learning more than just academic excellence from you.

To the Media Studies Department.

All the support you have been giving me the past 4 years has not gone unnoticed. Thank you for believing in me even when I was not in my best form.

## ABSTRACT

*Practices of Pleasure: Exploring porn consumption in South Africa*

Despite its enormous global lucrative charge, porn remains an under-researched topic in media studies, especially in Africa. Consumption theories which shed light on how people acquire, use and dispose of products (Aldridge 2003) can be used to explain the various ways people attain pornography and their motivations. In the context of South Africa, where pornography only became legal 20 years ago (1996), we still don't have sufficient research that illuminates on the uses leading to the expansion of explicit media. Most research projects addressing the topic of porn in South Africa porn do so by engaging its textuality and discourses surrounding it. Pamela Ramlagun's work on teenage girl's consumption of porn is the only known work in South Africa to tackle pornography through those who use it. Still, this work is mainly qualitative and does not offer an encompassing national outlook. It is also not clear how South African porn consumption practices deviate from or converge with other consumption practices in other global economies. What can pornography consumption in South Africa tell us about South Africans? This research proposes to find out "why do people watch porn?" (motivations), "which types of porn do people watch?" (preferences), "what are people hoping to get when they watch porn?" (needs) and "what do people think about certain aspects of porn?" (beliefs).

In determining the various consumption patterns of pornography consumers, this study utilised a mixed method approach, a large anonymous survey and in depth interviews. A total of 676 survey responses and 25 in depth interviews were recruited. Phase 1 of this research comprised the survey stage. An online questionnaire which remained open for 6 months gave porn consumers within the country an opportunity to participate in the study. The survey was hosted on an online survey hosting site called *Qualtrics* so that anyone in South Africa could access it. Information about the survey was advertised on the *Sunday Times* newspaper which is considered the largest weekly paper nationally. Various online fora such as *Chat24*, *ZaGossip*, *Facebook* and *Blogspot* were also used to mete out information regarding the study. Readers were informed the research sought to investigate porn usage in the South Africa and that in order to participate they had to be porn consumers, be at least 18 years of age, and be residing in South Africa at the time of completing the questionnaire. The link to the online questionnaire was also included. Once all the survey data had been collected, I exported it to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for analyses.

Phase 2 of the data collection process comprised interviews. Interview respondents chose their preferred mode of interviewing i.e. a face-to-face session, a recorded phone-call conversation, a WhatsApp mobile chat or an online live-chat. Information about the interview phase was distributed on *Blogspot*, *Facebook* and *Chat24*. All participants of the survey were guaranteed both anonymity and confidentiality. Where it was impossible to grant anonymity to the interview respondents (e.g. face-to-face interviews) confidentiality was assured. Interviews were transcribed and a coding schema was manually developed for the analyses of the interview data.

Data reveals that African[1] porn consumers often use borrowed, pirated and free porn whereas their white counterparts mostly afford to buy original DVD's or pay for home internet which they use to download and/or stream quality porn material. Porn is thus revealed to be a commodity whose attainment reflects national socio-economic inequalities where white minority citizens possess greater wealth than the African majority. In South Africa, porn also proves to fill the glaring crevices of sexual education in a prude socio-cultural milieu where many parents and educators deliberately eschew the topic of sex. Furthermore, South Africa is a nation bereft of access and circulation of its own porn with most porn consumers indicating to watch only international explicit content. Not surprisingly, many survey respondents felt there wasn't enough porn in South Africa. Lastly, porn consumption in the country is modulated by a contradictory legal framework which grants sexual consent at age 16 yet disbars porn till adulthood, making many consumers who possess and view porn as teenagers criminally complicit.

[1] In this dissertation, I use the word 'African' and 'black' interchangeably

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Porn is everywhere. Global statistical figures of both production and consumption are often cited to index the economic prowess and enormous popularity of porn. There is some consensus (Attwood & Smith 2014, McNair 2012, D'Orlando 2011, Garlick 2011, Paasonen, Nikunen & Saarenmae 2007) that pornography constitutes one of the most prolifically produced and consumed adult media forms. Regrettably, such repute has not been met with as equal rigorous academic inquiry, particularly in Africa. This dissertation explores pornography consumption trends in South Africa and aims to contribute to the bourgeoning field of porn consumer studies. South Africa, though hailed as Africa's leader in knowledge output (Tang & Tsui 2015, Tijssen 2015), has nonetheless sparsely produced research on the topic to date. The few projects already undertaken largely explore questions related to pornographic texts instead of the people who use them.

Works by South African authors include studies which explore internet pornography regulation e.g. Laughton & Rensleigh (2007) whose case study looked at how students accessed internet porn at the University of Johannesburg. Their paper concludes with recommendations for porn regulation policies at the university. Watney (2002) explores the country's pornography regulation policy through The Film and Publication Act. He draws on important terms, underlines nuances and references a few court case examples. Stemmet (2007) traces the history of South African censorship policies from the 18$^{th}$ century till the current dispensation while Maitse (1998) makes a theoretical argument against porn on the premise that it contributes to rape in South Africa. Sonderling (1990) dissects the body of anti-porn arguments made in South Africa before 1994 and rebuts such arguments as mostly paradoxical and unsubstantial since pornography at the time was not publically and legally available. More recent works include Rothman (2013)'s *Doing and using sexual orientation: The role of gay male pornographic film in the identity construction of gay men*. Rothman (2013) examines the "manner in which pornography in films and internet sites alike manifest themes associated with the identity construction of certain gay men." He does this by examining pornographic works produced both in the United States of America and South Africa. Ramlagun (2012)'s study explores the ways teenage girls in a Durban township express their sexual agency in a context of scant sexual education. Her research is a ground-breaking undertaking in so far as it engages with the actual

consumers of porn and addresses a nationally provocative topic of teenage sexuality. Lastly, the work of Artz (2012) is a dialogic treatise of "current debates surrounding pornography in South Africa" based on a "Porn Talk and Tea" discussion held in Cape Town in early 2012. Her work synthesises the views expressed during this forum in order to map a convergent feminist approach to porn and sexuality. Unfortunately none of these works traverses the topography of consumption trends let alone from a national perspective. By extending its focus to the gamut of national porn practices this study attempts to fill the gaping lacuna in the South African knowledge economy.

Furthermore, an examination of the ways in which pornography is used has can illuminate much deeper truths about consumers' beliefs, desires, thoughts, and sexual practices. One such truth, as pointed by Attwood (2009) is the very shift in conceptions and practices of sex as mediated by the online sex economy. For although sex has traditionally been associated with a corporeal experience, to reproduction and to aspects of relationship, new modes of sexual encounters have opened up spaces for new meanings of sex and sexuality as a recreational activity, as aimed at satisfying just the self (auto-sexual self-game), as fantasy and stimulation possibly involving a reimagining of the self (Attwood 2009). This is eloquently expressed in an earlier paper in which Attwood (2006: 79) states:

> ...sex is taking on new forms which disrupt older conceptions of its status and its place in society. Today, 'sex' may be an out of body experience, very intimately performed across time and distance; it may be an intense act of communication between strangers; an encounter conjoining flesh and technology; an act of presentation and a representation which is consumed as quickly as it is produced; a way of articulating or disarticulating identity; a type of interaction never before possible in human history.

To further elucidate on this statement by Attwood (2009), let me briefly refer to two real-life anecdotes. A friend of mine who comes from a strict Muslim upbringing in Pakistan once told me that he occasionally watches pornography and masturbates to it. If his family were to find out, he said, they would not see it as masturbation over porn but as sex hence be reproached or punished. Similarly, a married man with two children confessed to me on a chat-room that if his

wife knew he was consuming porn, she would be hurt. These examples illustrate the extent to which pornography avails opportunities for meanings of sex to evolve and mutate into a plurality of technological interventions with material rewards and consequences. Porn to the family members of the above individuals is more than risqué entertaining videos and pictures. It is sex. These kinds of anecdotal evidence necessitate serious research that can investigate, identify and decipher situated sexual practices within the specificities of the South African local context.

Nonetheless, research on pornography and consumption does more than simply reveal renewed polysemic conceptions of sexuality. Pornography is encumbered with questions of gender, power discourse, violence, morality and even race; what Mantilla & Whisnant (2007: 59) refer to as the "politics of porn." Williams (1999: 267) for example upholds that "pornography as a genre wants to be about sex. On close inspection, however, it always proves to be more about gender." Porn consumption therefore lies at the nexus of several topical trepidations of contemporary society.

Scholars agree that the weakness of research in porn studies has been a "text and effect" narrow focus on specific porn genres and the so-called control of pornography over its users (D'Orlando 2011, Bryant & Jae Woong 2008, Attwood 2009, Voss 2012, Griffith et al 2012). Examples of such research are those whose findings concluded the proliferation of pornography in society is associated with greater accounts of rape (Maitse 1998, Linz 1989, West 2003, Dines 2010) or that porn users are more likely to stay single or rape women (Rodgerson & Wilson 1991). Such works have only managed to raise more questions due to their lack of empirical anchorage and evident ideological favouritism e.g. denying consumers' positive accounts reported by other researchers such as Padget, Brislin-Slütz & Neal (1989), Attwood (2007, 2009), Lamb (2010), Weinberg et al (2010) Ramlagun (2012). Even though there are a number of writings on porn consumers (Wright & Randall 2012, Mary et al 2012, Wetterneck 2012, Egan & Parmar 2013), many tend to pathologise porn consumption based on psychology-specific measures of 'aberrance.' Few studies that do not pathologise porn actually examine consumption from a nationalist level.

Bryant & Jae Woong (2008: 188) agree that studies on porn users' motivations are suited for uncovering not just reasons for using explicit material but for identifying consumption patterns, distinct user preferences and the needs that inform porn access. A similar research lens on the South African scene of porn consumption practices captures idiosyncratic socio-cultural patterns

that reveal desires, needs, preferences and sexual beliefs. To discover how porn consumption "speaks" about the South African socio-sexual landscape would require asking questions such as: "which types of porn do people watch?" (preferences). This relates to questions of racial, gender and sexual orientation predispositions. Other questions include: "what are consumers hoping to get when they watch porn?" (personal needs), "how do consumers access various porn media" (modes of technological availability, access and policy regulations), "what do consumers think about their and others' porn consumption practices?" (beliefs). Below are the research questions this study aims to address. These questions are a result of a consultative process between me and my supervisor as we attempted to map out a comprehensive investigation into porn consumption practices.

## 1.1 Research questions

1. What are the different media channels through which people access and consume or interact with porn in South Africa? e.g. download, share.
    a. Where and when do most people access the porn they consume?
    b. What other practices are associated with porn consumption in South Africa?
2. How do South Africans define pornography?
    a. Which typologies of porn do viewers say they prefer and why?
3. What are the reasons people give for consuming pornography?
    a. How does watching pornography make porn viewers feel?
    b. What role does porn consumption play in viewers' personal lives?
4. What are porn consumers' views on how accessible porn should be in South Africa?

The remainder of this research dissertation is divided into seven sections, the literature review, conceptual framework, research methodology, three analytical chapters (mediation, public/private and pleasure/power) and the conclusions. The literature review offers a synthesis of the applicable academic literature, scholars, ideas, and other secondary sources of information which speak directly to porn studies. Examples of such scholarly conceptualisations include the theorisation of consumption, practice theory, the meaning of pornography and forms of pleasure in pornography. The conceptual framework acts as a convex lens that draws and concentrates focus on the best workable concepts with which to frame both the intellectual underpinnings and empirical undertaking of the study. As such, the data findings and discussion are modelled and

stratified along these three key concepts which are: mediation, public/private and pleasure/power. The research methodology section lays out the modes of data collection that were used by the study, a large-scale survey and in-depth interviews. The use of mixed methods served to assemble large data while shedding light into consumers' internal worlds i.e. thoughts, motivations and personal disposition. In total, the empirical phase produced 676 survey responses (phase one) and 25 in depth interviews (phase two) which will be discussed in greater detail later.

The analytical chapters will present and discuss the data in the following order: the 'mediation' chapter will look at technological, bilateral and access aspects of porn consumption. Mediatory processes, I will argue, mobilise both rarefied and tangible resources respectively in the form of perceptual cognitions and technology instrumentation. I will address the ways consumers understand porn and how their understanding informs practice e.g. how they access and use explicit content. The 'public/private' chapter will be presenting views on the counter-parring privacy of sex and publicness of porn, the personal consumer contrasted with the political, public genre. How consumers generally feel about porn and feel when viewing will form a key discussion. In addition, the section will also chart the ways consumers interact, integrate and interchange pornographic material and how these practices shape private and public lives. The last analytical chapter 'pleasure/power' will detail the manner in which porn consumption pleasures seem answerable to structural mitigations of state policy, religion and traditional social norms. Finally the conclusions will collate key findings of the study, starting with the original intentions for this topic, the questions the study sought to speak to and this dissertation's contribution to the canon of literature of porn consumption. I now turn to the literature review.

# 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section identifies the key concepts, discussions and concerns that inform the field of porn studies and applies them to the specifics of porn consumption in the context of South Africa. Such concerns include the very meaning and definition of pornography, the pleasures afforded by pornography, the meaning of consumption applied to pornography and the transformative role of the internet in porn consumption. Porn is also unavoidably interwoven with the ethics of sex, sexuality, gender and feminist discourse. These have consequently earned address and thoughtful consideration in this section as well.

## 2.1 What is pornography?

The difficulty in deriving an all-encompassing definition of pornography has been acknowledged by many writers such as Garlick (2010), Rensleigh and Laughton (2007), D'Orlando (2011), Paasonen, Nikunen. & Saarenmae (2007) and Williams (1999). As early as five decades ago, Hyde (1964: 1) was able to state that defining pornography was a task "by no means free from difficulty." Today, with the genre's multifarious and still increasing category assortments (Cooper 2011), Hyde's statement reads more like an under-statement.

The challenge in defining porn lies not in its uncontroversial etymological meaning but its contemporary application. The derivatives of the term pornography are the Greek words "*graphos*" which means "writing or description" and *pornei* meaning "prostitutes" (Rensleigh & Laughton 2007, Williams 1999: 9). Pornography in simple terms means "the descriptions of the life, manners, etc. of prostitutes (Williams 1999: 9, Hyde 1964: 1).

However, as Rensleigh & Laughton (2007: 2) point out the term has now been adapted to describe more than just 'writings of prostitutes.' The historical processes leading to the current and more divergent meanings of pornography are sketched out by Garlick (2010) who informs us that even though, throughout history, there have always been depictions of sexual acts, pornography as a separate representational category only emerged in the nineteenth century. It was in sixteenth century Europe, that semblances of what we understand as pornography today developed in the form of circulating explicit texts and images (Garlick 2010: 600). Arguably, such material was not only used for entertainment purposes but also as a means of revolting against orthodox religious beliefs and normative social morality. Such prints, Garlick (2010: 600) says, were thus associated with social critique and enlightenment sensibilities and took even

further political quality in the 18th century when they circulated among the educated elite. Modern pornography as we know it today is said to have evolved in early nineteenth century when sexually explicit content was no more a political apparatus but a means to sexually arouse men (Garlick 2010: 600).

The element of arousal has certainly been one of the fundamental considerations used to define pornography, with some accounts referring to the genre as "texts which *intend* to arouse their consumers" or as "texts which do arouse their consumers" (Paasonen, Nikunen. & Saarenmae 2007: 1). However, pornography has also been defined in various, often conflicting, ways with adjectives such as "degrading" "humiliating" "violent" and "obscene" thrown into the mix (Ciclitira 2004: 286). Other ways in which pornography has been defined are "sexually explicit depictions of genitalia and sexual acts" or as sexual "materials without any redeeming artistic, cultural or social value" (Paasonen, Nikunen. & Saarenmae 2007: 1) or as "sexually explicit subordination of women" (Williams 1999: 24). As noted by Rensleigh & Laughton (2007: 2) "The definition of pornography is determined by a society's norms and values, as well as its perspectives; whether they are conservative, liberal, post-modern or feminist." This has been the major obstacle in providing a stable unified, description of porn. D'Orlando (2011: 53) reveals that all definitions of pornography fall within six categories namely: those that define porn as the commodification of sex for profit; those who lampoon its artistic value; those that emphasise its portrayal of men and women only sexual objects; those that refer to it as a form of obscenity; those that define it as a type of oppression and those that define it as material intending to sexually arouse or as producing sexual arousal.

What marks porn a distinct genre is that, like all other genres (comedy, horror, thriller etc.), it aims to move the viewer in a particular way (Williams 1999). For this reason, two definitions which are most applicable for the purposes of this study are the definitions of Williams (1999: 30) "the visual and sometimes aural representations of living, moving bodies engaged in explicit, usually unfaked sexual acts with a primary intent of arousing viewers" and D'Orlando (2011: 53)'s "the representation (through any medium) of non-simulated, fully evident sexual acts with the sole intention of sexually exciting the viewers." Both these definitions are preferred as they speak to the specific type of explicit material examined in this research (unfaked, non-simulated sexual material). Both these definitions also address the crucial aspect of *intention*. This study

acknowledges and examines pornography as a mode carefully tailored for eliciting a sexually physiological response from the viewer, what Williams (1999) calls 'a body genre.' Although for the purposes of the literature and theoretical discussion, I rely on Williams and D'Orlando's definitions of porn, I am aware that consumers of porn might define porn in many different ways. As such, this study is be open to the multiple ways in which respondents understand pornography.

The distinction between 'hardcore' and 'soft-core' pornography has also been a means of drawing distinctions between simulated and unsimulated forms of sexual display. Soft-core on is often imbued with conceptions of beauty as it explores the artistic nature of sexual desire while hardcore is often framed as as artless and crass as it focuses on unemotional lust (Rensleigh and Laughton 2007: 3). However Nigel et.al (2007) argues that both softcore (often referred to as erotica) and hardcore are defined by their intention to arouse. All "artistic sensibilities are necessarily bound by social values. To distinguish pornography from some other product or expression requires the definition to be placed within the changing contexts of society" (Nigel *et.al* 2007: 3). Thus the idea of what constitutes pornography or erotica may vary not just between groups but between individuals within groups. One person's pornography could be another person's erotica (Williams 1999: 6). As such, this distinction is not adopted in this study.

### *2.1.1 Legal definitions of porn in South Africa*

In the context of South Africa, not all porn is legal. The Film and Publication Act which regulates the production, viewing, circulation and classification of explicit content distinguishes between legal and illegal pornography (Watney 2005). The Film and Publications Act identifies three categories of pornography, separating acceptable pornography from illegal and obscene content as shown in the table below.

| **Category** | **Descriptions** | **Legal status** |
|---|---|---|
| Category 1 | a) Bestiality, incest and rape<br>b) Explicit sexual conduct that violates or shows disrespect for the right to human dignity or degrades a person, which constitutes incitement to cause harm<br>c) Explicit infliction of or explicit effect of extreme violence, which constitutes incitement or cause of harm | illegal |
| Category 2 | Explicit sexual conduct, simulated or real, which in the case of sexual intercourse includes explicit visual presentation of genitals. | legal |
| Category 3 | Any image, however created, or description of a person, real or simulated, who is depicted or described as under the age of 18 who is:<br><br>□Engaged in sexual conduct<br>□Participating or assisting another to participate in sexual conduct<br>□Showing or describing the body or any part of the body in a manner which amounts to sexual exploitation. | illegal |

**Table 1. Legal classification of porn in South Africa.**

Violation of the act is punishable with a fine, a prison sentence (of no more than 10 years) or both. The Film and Publication Board also has power to refer any illegal online content to the Internet Providers Associations, a body set up through the Electronic and Communications and Transitions Act (ECT) of 2002 to report and act upon online infringements (Watney 2005). Whereas the Film and Publications Act of 1996 deals with regulating and classifying the production, possession, and distribution of explicit and/or violent publications, the Electronic and

Communications and Transitions Act (ECT) of 2002 addresses issues such as online contracts, customer protection, personal information protection and the prosecution of internet crimes (including illegal porn). In the area of illegal online porn hosted from a South African domain, the Electronic and Communication and Transactions Act allows for the issuing of "take-down" notices which legally compel any internet service provider to remove any material deemed illegal based on the country's legal classifications mentioned above (Watney 2005).

The references to violent sex and rape made in category1 all allude to the division between what is often termed 'extreme' porn (rape fantasies, bondage, sadomasochism scenes) and 'normal' or vanilla sex. Though pornography can be considered a genre, it can also be considered as transcending a genre since it encompasses many genres e.g. romantic porn, rough porn, public sex, amateur, bondage films, solo videos etc. In this dissertation, I refer to these as sub-genres since they all fall within the compass of porn's character to arouse. The precise legal mention and banning of 'violence' and 'rape' images can also be considered a political decision aimed at disparaging particular types of fantasies and types of 'bohemian' sexual practices. This becomes a convincing argument when one considers that most pornography aims to project imagined sexual scenarios rather than realistic ones. In any case, this is true of most commercial porn more than 'amateur' videos which are typically produced by ordinary people. In this dissertation, I refer to mainstream porn as those explicit images that have been produced by the professional porn industry as opposed to those dubbed by ordinary consumers and posted online. These legal classifications also bring to bear the division between the notion of the 'simulated' sexual act and the 'real' act. Pornography, of-course, encapsulates both.

The distinction between "hardcore" and soft-core pornography has often been made at the disfavor of hardcore porn as artless and crass as it focuses on "unemotional lust" (Rensleigh & Laughton 2007: 3). Soft-core on the other is often imbued with conceptions of beauty as it explores the artistic nature of sexual desire. Soft-core is often used synonymously with the term erotica derived from the Greek word meaning love (Rensleigh & Laughton 2007: 3) and is used to refer to arousing content focusing on the artistic expression of sensuality with some degree of emotional involvement. However Nigel et. al. (2007: 3) argues that since both erotica and pornography are defined by their intention to arouse, all "artistic sensibilities are necessarily bound by social values. To distinguish pornography from some other product or expression requires the definition to be placed within the changing contexts of society." Clearly then, the

idea of what constitutes pornography or erotica may vary not just between groups but between individuals within groups. One person's pornography could be another person's erotica (Williams 1999: 6). As such, this distinction is not adopted in this study.

It is very important to point out that South African law demands all distributors of porn e.g. adult stores to attain proof of identification and age from all customers. Due to the difficulties of verifying one's true legal age online, the Film and Publication Act together with the Electronic and Communication and Transaction Act criminalise the distribution of porn on the internet (Watney 2005, Steinberg 2013).

This dissertation takes into account that pornography definitions within the country become a matter of legal significance. Such definitions also dictate the ways in which porn can and cannot be made available. For example the legal definition of porn by the Film and Publication Act's (category 2) includes sexual depictions which are "simulated" and "real." However, even though both simulated and real sex are legal, the distribution of "real sex" over the internet is not legalised. Television broadcast of simulated sex, however, is permissible as long as such material is broadcasted after 20:00 PM (Steinberg 2013).

Also of great importance to this dissertation is the concept of 'practice' and how it has been theorised. To speak of porn consumption as a practice does require a look at legal processes but this also demands a look at human behaviour, social and cultural patterns which carry significant outcomes for the people who use porn and for their environment. The next subsection explores this.

## 2.2 How the theory of practice applies in porn consumption

Porn consumption constitutes practices which bear significant material imprints in the phenomenal world. This research relies on practice theory particularly as conveyed by Pierre Bourdieu to frame how porn consumption shapes (and is in turn shaped by) individuals, culture and society.

Bourdieu's theory of practice is a polemic of the dialectical ways individuals bring to efflorescence particular forms of knowledge, dispositions and proclivities through an array of performative acts. These acts engender transformation in the social order. Thus, social change according to Bourdieu, is a result of the vacillating process between social agents and social

structures, between "forces inscribed in an earlier state of the system, outside the body, and the internal forces arising instantaneously as motivations springing from free will, the internal dispositions" (Bourdieu 1990: 54-55). Bourdieu thus resolves what he calls the objective/subjective antimony of the social sciences by formulating a model that localises the objective external world within man's subjective internal dispositions. This conciliatory gesture makes man both the object and subject of environmental change. It is both the subjectivities of porn consumers and their surrounding context that determines the myriad of ways in which porn in South Africa is accessed, used, distributed, integrated and/or disposed/stored. The meaningful results of such activities are more than socially and economically transformative but they shape individual perceptions and behaviours. Significant to this study is Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* which is expressive of the ways the mind and the body, being ideologically and experientially inculcated or "structured" exact agency onto the material world.

> The theory of practice as practice insists, contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and, contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions (Bourdieu 1990: 52).

Porn is a *bona fide* genre of sexual and bodily dispositions and how porn consumers are "structured" or transfigured and in turn transfigure their environment through practices of consumption can be explained in the two following ways. Firstly, porn generates enamoured and paradigmatic affect in consumers. Artz (2013: 14) mentions that consumers do not just simply feel sexually aroused when using porn. Consumers also speak of porn with a valence charged with notions of learning and sexual liberation through such terms as "'educational', 'empowering' and mutually pleasurable" (Artz 2013: 14). In this manner, consumers experience transformation "by the extrinsic, instantaneous determining mechanism" (Bourdieu 1990: 54) of porn and its consumption.

Secondly, and in the words of Bourdieu (1990: 54), porn consumers can be said to "bring to bear on the relatively autonomous world and the structures characterising a determinate class of conditions of existence" a significant mobilisation of capital, labour and modes of consumption

only realisable by the porn industry. As stated by Attwood (2009: 551) porn is "an enormous economic force." In the context of South Africa, porn consumers have economically sustained a popular giant franchise, Adult World, dealing in sex toys, porn and lingerie; what Mugo (2014: 1) calls "The Adult World Empire." The franchise has about 1042 employees working in stores across the country (Mugo 2014) evidence of how porn consumption practices and porn consumers hold significant material effects on their environment. Porn consumption practices thus constitute behaviours that transact pay for pleasure and pleasure for pay. They are activities that give birth to legislation (e.g. Film and Publication Act), necessitate sexual education and overseer establishment of media structures. They manifest in everyday advertising campaigns that seek to garner capital and mobilise audiences through appealing to porn-specific conventions and sex innuendo.

In his hermeneutics of practice, Bourdieu (1990: 67) deconstructs the *field* as a specialist domain or arena of participation by members with "feel for the game" to participate in that particular field e.g. science, law, medicine, theatre. Bourdieu's use of simile to analogise various *fields* to sporting-games is particularly useful due to the unavoidable linkages and associations that 'gaming' has to pleasure and enjoyment. Worthy to also note is his emphasis on emotion, excitement, or "feel for the game" as a necessary inducement to 'play.'

These parallels are no better discursively applicable to the specialist area of porn consumption where benefits of participation by members accrue in bounteous amounts of sexual pleasure. The symbolic playground of porn consumption imposes its own rules, codes and guidelines or *doxa* the "fundamental presuppositions of the field" (Bourdieu 1990: 68) which allow for "sensible practice" and "consensual validation which is the basis of collective belief in the game" (Bourdieu 1990: 66). Correspondingly, practices of porn consumption are subject to checks and balances which guarantee none-threatening, sustainable cultural production of sexual pleasure. Examples of maligned practices in contravention to the consumption ethic of porn, those practices opposed to the established *doxa* include the use of paedophilic content, snuffle videos/films and bestiality which fall outside the ambit of this dissertation's focus.

## 2.3 How theories of consumption apply to pornography use

The term consumption is used in this dissertation to refer to the ways in which individuals assimilate and integrate pornography into their lives. As such, this section gives account of the ways in which consumption has been operationalised. After giving the Oxford dictionary

definition of consumption, "the purchase and use of goods" Miles (2000: 3) goes further to offer a much more comprehensive definition as "the selection, the purchase, the use maintenance, repair and disposal of any product or service." The problem with this definition however, as noted by Miles (2000) is that it relies solely on economic conceptions of consumption which tend to ignore socio-cultural dimensions of consumer behaviour. Arnould & Thompson (2005) point out that economic oriented studies on consumption preferred the 'rational choice' paradigm in explaining consumer behaviour. This paradigm assumes that buyers are driven by a rational instinct to acquire the products they need. However, as pointed out by Arnould & Thompson (2005), certain historical developments such as identity brands, lifestyle and multicultural marketing and customer relations management seemed to indicate that consumption is implicated in more than just people's pragmatic everyday needs but that it is further linked to their personal desires. Some other reasons for which individuals purchase consumer goods are to form individual or group identities, to rebel against the commodification of culture, to express themselves and to derive pleasure (Arnould & Thompson 2005). As Baudrillard (1970: 159) puts it "objects no longer serve a purpose; first and foremost they serve you." This is particularly applicable to pornography since people don't necessarily consume porn as first and foremost a *need* but as a form of self-gratification. Porn practices are therefore not about meeting living needs but about experiential consumption (Aldridge 2003) as a way of attaining a satisfying experience.

In order to account for the sporadic ways in which consumers form relationships with the products they use, a much more culture-compliant disciplinary milieu than economics is essential. It is because of this consideration of culture that Arnould & Thompson (2005) advances the field of consumer culture studies and consumer culture theory (CCT). Consumer culture is not a grand unified theory but "refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings" (Arnould & Thompson 2005: 868). Such an approach serves to illuminate "the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption" (Arnould & Thompson 2005: 868). It is therefore from the vantage site of consumer culture theory that this research draws meanings consumption and explanations of how consumers are configured in the matrix of consumption practices, particularly the practices of pornography consumption.

In consumer culture, consumers, consumption and consumerism form a triad of overlapping overtones glued together by the ritual of consuming. While consumption speaks of a "set of social, cultural and economic practices" (Miles 2000: 4) consumerism refers to a way of life made manifest by these everyday practices of consumption. Consumers are those who divest energy "into expenditure on and maintenance of consumer goods" (Aldridge 2003: 5). Consumer goods or commodities are the function of consumption through which consumers gratify their needs and desires therefore consumption is ultimately about desire gratification (Aldridge 2003). It is due to the prominence of consumption and consumerism as everyday phenomena that Aldridge (2003: 4) says we do not just consume but we have become consumers. This 'becoming' aspect of consumption applied to the context of pornography connotes a state of being and a course of being transfigured and defined by these pornography consumption practices and would suggest that people's identities are somehow interlinked with these practices.

If we accept the assertion made by Featherstone (2010) that the image of the body in consumer culture, has become a site of pleasure and an obsession of visual indulgence, then we certainly can concede that what pornography does is to present bodies as available for purchase, for hire, for repeated viewing, for downloading and for sharing with friends. In this case, the words of Horning (2005: 1) certainly ring true that " Pornography is sex as consumption, it's sex as convenience and possession (...) Porn, which is a commodity that exists in space can be collected, taxonomised, autonomously manipulated the way real sex, an experience that exists in time, cannot." The consumption of pornography can thus be seen as possession and control over moving bodies, allowing us to slow down, fast-forward, rewind or pause the body in order to catch all the ways in which "affects are communicated by the face, gestures and body movements, to observe the affect thresholds which cannot be perceived in the normal choreography" (Featherstone 2010: 199).

In consumer culture, consumption entails engaging with products, goods and services which are both durable and non-durable, material and non-material (Iqani 2012: 26). This means consumption as a way of "visually engaging with goods, brands, and services, made available in three dimensional stores or presented in a variety of media genres" (Iqani 2012: 26) can be used to apply to the use of pornographic images, indeed, to the use of all kinds of images.

Consumption in pornography works via the visual apparatus of the eye through the act of looking.

Consumers, in consumer culture, are often imagined in two ways (Miles 2000, Iqani 2012). Firstly as manipulated subjects of the oppressive capitalist system which entices people with the lures of leisure and entertainment, thereby distracting them from genuine political concerns. Secondly, consumers are conceptualized as free-thinking subjects who possess agency over their lives and purchasing choices (Iqani 2012). In this neo-liberal view, consumers are seen as able to "shape, manage, and make meaningful their lives" through acts of consumption (Iqani 2012: 26). However, Miles (2000), rather than adhering to either one of these two polar opposites, adopts the view that consumption embodies both oppressive *and* liberating aspects. This ambivalent quality of consumption as both liberating and constraining, is referred to by Miles (2000: 5) as the *consuming paradox*:- "the fact that in terms of our individual experience consumerism appears to have a fascinating arguably fulfilling, personal appeal and yet simultaneously plays some form of actually controlling the character of everyday life." This research, aims to move beyond the dichotomy of consumption as either liberating or constraining. A more useful approach is laid out by Aldridge (2003) who paints nine imageries of consumer agency as: the consumer as chooser, communicator, explorer, identity seeker, hedonist, victim, activist and citizen

The consumer as chooser acts as a rational informed actor who knows his interests best, the communicator conveys messages to others and themselves e.g. through fashion and conspicuous consumption and the explorer surveys and scouts the market to take advantage of market anomalies e.g. discounts and bargains. The identity seeker constructs an image to create narratives of the self through products bought, the hedonist seeks pleasure and emotions through acts and processes of purchase and the consumer as victim is deceived into paying for a product or a service that does not work or one she does not need. The rebel uses the mass market subversively e.g. ripping jeans to oppose commodification, the consumer as activist seeks large-scale social change e.g. opposing monopolies and the citizen is entitled to purchase and to partake in acts of consumption as part of his civil rights (Aldridge 2003).

These descriptions of the consumer can easily be applied to porn consumers. For example, it can be argued that porn consumers are pleasure seekers who deliberately chose to watch porn thereby communicating specific messages about themselves to themselves about their needs. It could be argued that porn consumers have a right as citizens to viewing explicit material which are constitutionally considered as free speech (Eberstadt 2009) and that in the act of consumption they discover new ways or entrench old ways of seeing themselves in relation to sexual acts. Watching pornography could also be considered a way of rebelling against hegemonic moral social views of sexual propriety even though sometimes watching may not fully satisfy for various reasons (consumer as victim). All these deductions on porn consumption are in align with Aldridge's (2003) nine ways of perceiving the consumer.

Though focus on consumption admittedly precludes extensive emphasis on other aspects of the porn production chain, it still promises to sufficiently shed light on aspects of regulation, production and distribution. It is difficult to imagine a treatise of porn consumption that absconds considerations of sexual preferences for either local or global genres (production elements), age, consent and ethics (regulation) and challenges associated with accessing specific kinds of explicit content e.g. foot fetish, BDSM (distribution). For this reason, Du Gay et al (2013)'s concept of *circuit of culture* is of indispensable value to this study. Du Gay (2013) propose that a comprehensive reading of any specific culture demands an examination of five key elements which, when put together, constitute an exhaustive circuit of that culture. These five elements are production, consumption, regulation, representation and identity (Du Gay 2013: 3). Applying these elements within the context of this research means profiling the identity of people in South Africa who consume porn (who are they? i.e. gender, age, race), understanding the types of explicit content they consume most (production) and why; analysing ways in which they represent themselves and their consumption practices (representation), outlining how and where they use porn (consumption) and exploring legal impositions and punitive measures associated with particular kinds of content (regulation).

## 2.4 The pleasures of porn consumption

A study of motivations and methods for porn use must be able to explicate some of the pleasures offered by the genre. Schroeder (2005: 12) points out that porn "visual images create desire" (…) They are worshipped for their almost magical ability to conjure desire and delight." It is the work of this sub-section to attempt to decrypt some of the mechanisms of the "magic" that lends allure to porn images.

For Williams (1999), the pleasure of the pornographic image lies in its ability to satiate hunger for the knowledge of the mechanics of sex and sexual pleasure. This natural immense yearning to know more about the truth of sexual pleasure and the sexual act is made evident in that we have discovered multiple ways and modes to talk about and represent sex. This 'will to know' about sexual pleasure is, in of itself, a form of pleasure, such that when one seeks to know about pleasure through speaking about it, one is in fact seeking for the pleasure of knowing pleasure (Williams 1999: 3). We are therefore elated at the privileged accounts or confessions of other people's sexual activities.

Pornography is one of the many modes of speaking about sexual pleasure, a confession of privileged truths about the act of sex. The very visual conventions and iconography of pornography testify to this very need to know all there is to know by revealing all there is to reveal, an approach called the principle of *maximum visibility* (Williams 1999: 40). This functions to "privilege close ups of body parts over other shots; to over-light easily obscured genitals; to select sexual positions that show the most bodies and organs and later to create generic conventions such as the variety of sexual 'numbers' or the externally ejaculating penis" (Williams 1999: 40). Apart from being coded in explicit visibility, pleasure is further afforded by the unique position of the viewer in relation to the explicit events depicted. The spectator, being outside of the scenes shown, is configured as a voyeur, an unauthorised spy who sees everywhere and sees all acts forbidden and hidden (Williams 1999: 40). On being positioned on this site of power and seeing, the viewer is granted purview over others' sexual pleasure thus is stimulated to fantasise, feel and produce his own sexual pleasure.

The pleasure of voyeurism is related to another kind of pleasure forwarded by the theorist, Laura Mulvey (1975). Mulvey offers valuable ideas which could be applied to the area of porn studies.

One of the ways in which moving images administer pleasure is by the very act of looking. This kind of pleasure is called scopophilia. Similarly, it can be argued that the very spectacle of naked people (even devoid of sexual activity) is visually compelling enough to warrant a pleasure of viewing. Rumult (2011: 3) in her comical essay *I Did It for Science-Friendly Porn* joyfully proclaims "naked people are such fun to watch!"

Using a psychoanalytical approach, Mulvey (1975: 714) explains that scopophilia in moving images also acquires a narcissistic aspect in which the viewer engages with the depicted human characters in ways that articulate likeness and recognition. In the course of watching, the viewer sees a character she admires and begins to recognize herself in this character. This fictional character who is able to perform extraordinary feats the viewer may not be able to perform is constituted by the viewer as both an expression of who she is and as an expression of her ideal ego (who she would like to be). "Recognition is thus overlaid with misrecognition: the image recognised is conceived as the reflected body of the self, but its misrecognition as superior projects this body outside itself as an ideal ego (Mulvey 1975: 714). Used in the context of pornography, Mulvey's analogy of how viewer identification works would suggest that porn viewers, apart from experiencing the pleasure of seeing pleasure, further experience a different kind of pleasure in which they can see themselves in the porn stars they admire and vicariously experience their eroticised sexual encounters. This indicates there are complex dimensions of imaginative employment in the attainment of pleasure through porn.

This perspective echoes the sentiments expressed by Attwood (2006, 2009) who observes that the proliferation of communication technologies has led to an increase of pornographic material which in turn has generated and facilitated new conceptions of sex as a recreational and auto-sexual experience rather than a relational and reproductive one. Whereas traditional conceptions of sex as a relational act demand the presence of a second or even third body, conceptions of sex as an auto-sexual activity doesn't. Pornography as a form of recreational sexual experience of the self relies heavily on the mental aptitudes of imagination. This becomes one of the pleasures of pornography i.e. it is not confined by the boundaries of the physical body but avails multiple opportunities for the body to experience pleasures drawn from the limitless realms and faculties of visual fantasy.

Pornography could also be said to be a form of Aphrodisia. Foucault (1985: 40) defines Aphrodisia as "the acts, gestures and contacts that produce a form of pleasure." However, according to Foucault (1985: 42), it is not just the physicality of sexual actions that apprise Aphrodisia but the ability of those actions to wield desire and pleasure. Therefore, the sexual activities portrayed in pornography and their ability to exert desire in the viewer help infuse pornography with pleasure. Desire is the compelling urge and thrill for sexual indulgence and pleasure is the actual feeling of sexual gratification and satisfaction (Heathwood 2015). Desire and sexual pleasure both form levers of enjoyment elicited by acts of porn viewing. These accounts of pleasure are important for this research as they help frame people's motivations for watching pornography. Apart from the pleasures of fantasy, knowledge and identification offered by pornography, the internet seems to avail surplus pleasures in the encounters and experiences of consuming pornography. These are anonymity, affordability, unlimited accessibility, consumer participation and the democratisation of sexual content.

## 2.5 The pleasures of consuming pornography online

Online porn has even led to neologisms such as netporn, techno-porn and cyber-porn, marking its stark contrast from analogue and material forms of pornography. Scholars agree that the very nature and characteristics of the internet have revolutionised the way in which people view porn (Cooper 2010, D'Orlando 2011, Garlick 2010, Andreas et al 2005, Attwood 2009).

Due to the copious, swift and resourceful nature of the internet, users are able to access unlimited amounts of pornographic content online, all at the comfort and privacy of their own homes (Cooper 2011: 97). The World Wide Web has caused a phenomenon called the *Triple A Engine* effect which refers to the web's ability to make pornography more accessible, affordable and anonymous than ever before (D'Orlando 2011, Cooper 2010). This model points out that the development of the internet has increased the quantity of sexual material available to users, has further amplified the speed of delivery of this material, has reduced both the monetary and psychological costs of acquiring such material (paying less than over the counter sales and suffering no anxieties of being spotted publically buying porn) due to absolute anonymity.

However, it is not just the conditions of anonymity, accessibility and affordability that make internet porn radically different from other forms. Using theories of management information systems, Andreas et al (2005) proffer that the pleasure of online pornography lies behind the very

nature of encounters afforded by the web-based and computer-based technology and features. Certain forms of interactions with the computer and the web have the ability to enhance user enjoyment of internet browsing. The internet offers its users the leverage of customisation which refers to the user's ability to make personal changes and textual amendments on the interface of the website. The high levels of user interactivity offered by the site to even digitally and spatially manipulate products offered online has the potential of evoking feelings of enjoyment in the user. "Consumers feel enjoyment when they interact with a virtual product and have the ability to customise it, which is usually not available in brick-and-mortar stores" (Andreas et al 2005: 4). Williams (2008: 312) notes that while general pornography arranges the viewer as a viewer, cyber pornography positions him as a user-participant.

Andreas et al (2005: 4) show that the temporal-spatial dimensions of pornographic sites are another feature that increase pleasure. They compare the spatial temporal dimensions of real "brick and mortar" adult shops with pornographic websites. They explain that real shops offer shopping experiences that belong to four categories: "more time, less space" where people can take their time to look around yet within limited layout space and product range; "less time, more space" where the design or layout is large but provides no space to sit, loiter and browse; "less time, less space" where adult stalls offer a narrow product offering and encourage customers to make a quick purchase and move on and finally "more time and more space" where the shop offers infinite time to browse and numerous places to sit and loiter. Andreas et al (2005: 4) indicate that the only shops or sites that offer infinite time and space are websites rather than material shops "Pornographic web sites are equivalent to more time and more space adult shops whereby users can browse for unlimited time within unlimited product offerings with the added advantage of doing so from the comfort and privacy of their own homes." This analogy however, does not just apply to the binary possibilities of real "brick and mortar" adult shops versus pornographic sites. It can similarly be applied to compare other forms of pornography e.g. DVD's, magazines, pay television to internet pornography. Other forms of pornography would offer a limited temporal-spatial experience since they would offer more space (when watched from the user's home) yet very little time since the films have a limited time span before they finish.

Other technological features which enhance pleasure of online pornography for users are additional aspects of interactivity such as dynamic graphic elements, vividness, tele-presence and

indirect input. Vividness refers to the media richness of the site such as texts, images, sound, 3D simulations (Andreas et al 2005). Tele-presence is the ability of the website to simulate the perception of a real experience by stimulating as many of the five senses of the user as possible i.e. aural, visual (images, texts, 3D simulations), tactile (through responses triggered by the user's navigation of the mouse). Indirect input refers to the guarantee of safety of the physical body from the activities that are happening in the virtual world of the website (Andreas et al 2005). Indirect input also helps to create a sense that the user is in control of what is happening. Other writers have also noted the pleasure and lure of internet pornography in making the user feel in control (Iqani 2012, Garlick 2010, Williams 1999, Andreas et al 2005: 7).

Internet porn sites are equipped with enough attractions to imbibe the user's mind to reach what Andreas et al (2005: 7) call the flow experience. This experience happens when the mind of the user is so engulfed in the online activity that he becomes oblivious to time, environment and even self "Losing oneself in pornographic cyberspace is an experiential activity whereby the individual becomes considerably taken by the flow of his erotic consciousness and sub consciousness" (Andreas et al 2005: 8).

Online porn sites have also provided a space for what Garlick (2011) calls the democratisation of sex and sexual desire. This term refers to two online phenomena. The first is the vast expansion of pornography online coupled with increased access to this material. The increase of pornography and its access online has led to what Garlick (2011) calls pornotopia- a porn market in which numerous porn material are grouped in category assortments which allow the viewer to pick and watch those of his preference (APPENDIX 1). This way, the internet caters for all the different sexual tastes of its users providing "different strokes for different folks" (Williams 1999: 6) even those historically deemed unnatural or 'bad.'

The second phenomenon referred to by democratisation of sex is the arrival of non-professional porn videos called amateur porn. Amateur porn is often different from professional pornography because it expresses no aspirations of aesthetic and artistic values (Cooper 2011). There is no narrative, lighting, the sound can be poor or non-existent and the locations are ordinary homes and bedrooms. Also referred to as 'real-core' (Garlick 2011), amateur porn has been associated with real sex, real people and real pleasure. A porn user responding to an article about internet porn on the website *Nerve* wrote:

> Ages ago I completely got turned off from professional porn actors and actresses. I became an avid fan of amateur porn, the people are real. The sex is real. The orgasms are real. Not all porn is for everyone, but looking around and finding out what works for you is why the internet exists...

Cooper (2011) says the boom and commercial success of these videos have compelled porn production companies to emulate this style. This democratisation of sex means that anyone with a digital camera and internet cable access can post his porn video to be seen by millions of people across the world. Many porn watchers who have become aware that pornography is a genre construction have decidedly opted for this sub-genre. Amateur porn has become the niche of online pornography and one of the pleasures of cyber-porn, a personal sexual experience-cum-commodity that couples and friends can share with themselves and the world.

## 2.6 The pleasures of sharing porn

The ways in which porn is made available is central to its circulation and how it is attained and consumed. Porn is not attained just through occasions of selling and buying. Consumers may share digital files through peer-to-peer computer networks, exchange mobile phone videos and give each other DVDs. The sharing economy or "share economy" is an important concept that helps us conceive of ways in which porn is attained outside of traditional economic trade models. According to Cohen & Kietzmann (2014: 1) sharing economies are types of business models "where people offer and share underutilised resources in creative, new ways." In their paper Cohen & Kietzmann use the ways in which people temporarily exchange vehicles for money as an example.

While Cohen & Kietzmann (2014) apply the idea of share economy as a creative and sustainable business model, Botsman & Rogers (2010) and Botsman (2013) transcend the scope of business models and opt instead to conceptualise collaborative consumption in terms of social networks through which symbiotic exchange may or may not necessitate profitable or monetary gains- "An economy built on distributed networks of connected individuals and communities versus centralised institutions, transforming how we can produce, consume, finance, and learn" (Botsman 2013: 1).

Botsman & Rogers (2010) propose there are three different collaborative consumption systems: product service systems, collaborative lifestyles and redistribution markets. Product service systems encompass acts of sharing or renting out privately owned goods to others e.g. renting out one's car. Collaborative lifestyles refers to the sharing of everyday resources such as time, skills, knowledge and even money with people having similar interests e.g. an online community of students embarking on helping one another complete school assignments. These types of collaborative systems avail a precise conceptual framework and vocabulary for articulating various ways in which porn users may possibly share porn. Consumers can freely and magnanimously give porn to their fellows as a form of sharing an experience as in the case of collaborative lifestyles. Consumers may also give porn away as a means of disposing of it. Such a situation entails a form of a redistribution market where people who never truly "owned" pornographic material can do so. Lastly, some consumers may share porn as a means of receiving other favours e.g. more porn. The concept of sharing economies is hence a useful resource in expounding on how porn as a medium is easily attained without orthodox trade conventions. Porn is a media form and this means porn consumers are people who have a relationship with media devices. The nature of this relationship in media studies has been conceptualised in different ways which have serious implications for the way porn consumers are ascribed or negated personal agency. This dissertation locates itself in the myriad schools of thought proposed by the field of media studies regarding the relationship between media technologies and media users.

## 2.7 How media theories conceptualise consumers

The history of media studies is inundated with miscellaneous schools of thoughts on the nature of relationship between media texts and their audiences. Grasping the relationship of consumers with porn texts demands that one tease out the constituent motifs of these various theories. Do porn texts negatively impinge on psychological and behavioural dispositions of consumers to an extent the concept of 'porn effects' can be rightly applicable? Are audiences susceptible to 'addiction' by consuming porn or do porn users possess individual agency over their own viewing choices and habits? Models such as 'the hypodermic needle' or effects tradition, the decoding/encoding theory and uses and gratification theory all assume different responses to the above questions.

There is a long tradition of mass communication research that purports media technologies possess power to affect or alter audiences' behaviour. This research tradition is premised on the idea that "media have effects which in turn have the power to influence the thought of individual audience members to such an extent that they might 'act out' the activities and ideas the media have exposed them to" (Taylor & Willis 1999: 188). Despite the widespread dismissal of this tradition by most of media scholars, the belief in "media effects" still remains prevalent in contemporary culture particularly in the face of mounting moral panic regarding violent and sexually explicit media texts. Pornography for example, has generated a retinue of publications on the topic of effects on audience behaviour (Wright & Randall 2012) sexual arousal (Brand et al 2011), marital or spousal commitment (Ross 2004, Lambert et al 2012.), rape (Linz 1989, Maitse 2012), sexual satisfaction (Stulhofer, Busko & Landripet 2010) and violent sexual behaviour (Kingston et al 2008). These effects-oriented works assume a straightforward relationship between porn and some aspect of an audience member's emotional or behavioural formation. The dilemma with such theoretical foundation, as has been noted by many media academics is that it treats media consumers as "uncritical, gullible hordes who are incapable of rational thought" (Taylor & Willis 1999: 188). Most researchers, however have agreed that there is "a series of factors which impinge on media effect: selective exposure, perception and retention of media messages, as well as group processes and norms including factors such as opinion leaders" (Taylor & Willis 1999: 158). Therefore to speak of porn consumers as being affected or mentally induced is to assume that audiences possess no critical cognitive abilities and emotional filters through which to read and interpret media texts. This position of 'monkey see, monkey do' implicitly indorsed by the effects tradition is not one adopted by this dissertation.

Renowned academic and theorist Stuart Hall proposed a far more compelling conceptual model for understanding the audience/media-text relationship. In his encoding/decoding model Hall (1973:128) seeks to challenge traditions such as the effects school for the "linearity – sender/message/receiver – for its concentration on the level of message exchange and for the absence of a structured conception of the different moments as a complex structure of relations." Hall contends that meaning cannot not simply reside in or be construed just from texts but from "linked but distinctive moments of production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction" (Hall 1973: 128).

‘Meaning’ therefore according to Hall is not fixed or stable but vacillates from the moment of production to the moment of reception/consumption while also varying from audience member to audience member. This is an obvious deviation from any perceived singular determinative outcome or “effect” of consuming media products. To capitulate to conceptions of porn “effects” (such as addiction) would be to presume such singular linearity between audiences and texts actually exist. Since the structural instability of any perceived meaning seems the only inevitability in any audience-textual encounter, it seems rather implausible to expect the dominance of any one "effect" from a text.

Furthermore, Hall’s proposed three hypothetical decoding positions the hegemonic, the negotiated and the oppositional all infer a degree of autonomy to audiences. According to this model, audiences can perceive media texts from a hegemonic perspective:- agreeing with the "intended meaning” encoded by the producers. They could also take a negotiated position which partially agrees and partially disagrees with the encoded message. Lastly, audiences could be oppositional to the producers' message thereby occupying a completely different individual view of their own (Hall 1973).

In the context of this research, Hall’s three decoding positions could be seen in terms of the producer’s intent to sexually arouse. Simply put, the hegemonic or intended message of porn (encoded) to which consumers are expected to concur (decode) is one that concedes such material are ‘sexually stimulating.’ Let me quickly refer to Williams (1999)’s concept of body genre. Knowing that a particular media text is *supposed* to (or *trying* to) help you laugh (comedy), feel aroused (porn), scared (horror) or cry (romance) is an entirely different matter to realising that one *actually is* aroused, laughing, crying or horrified. Thus, the yardstick for successfully assuming ‘the hegemonic position’ is not necessarily being able to ‘decode’ what the art-work is *attempting* to communicate (arousal, laughter, fear) but whether or not such communication is thus received by the audience member. In receiving the intended communication from a pornographic text, for example, consumers derive sexual affect from it. This means in the event that a consumer is not, even in the slightest, sexually moved by a particular pornographic text, such a member would have occupied the oppositional position. Likewise, a media consumer would have assumed the ‘negotiated’ position if she found the

media content ‘somewhat’ arousing instead of completely so. This would mean such a consumer found other aspects of the explicit material unappealing. Ultimately, the encoding/decoding model translates to a list of three possible positions for porn consumers engaging with porn texts i.e. “aroused,” (preferred) “somewhat aroused”(negotiated) and “not aroused” (oppositional).

Though a reputedly canonical and authoritative work, crediting audiences with agency within the text-reader nexus, Hall’s encoding/decoding theory presents narrow and unsophisticated schemata for audience’s possible readings of and relationships with media texts. Think for example of consumers who do not necessarily view porn for sexual arousal purposes (producers’ intent) but “for a laugh.” Since such a consumer finds porn ridiculously comical instead of arousing, when he wishes to humour himself, he watches porn. Any data-collection project premised from Hall’s encoding/decoding model would inadvertently omit such a consumer since he does not fit neatly into any of the three hypothetical reading positions.

Research into porn consumption demonstrates that consumers find varied uses and motivations for accessing explicit media texts (Bryant & Shim 2008) evidence that media possess a far more abundant list of reading possibilities than Hall had theorised. It is for example, precisely the rich polysemic nature of media texts such as porn which affords them ability to inspire various types of affect e.g. arousal, disgust, guilt, embarrassment, excitement, curiosity, resentment, wonder (Taylor & Willis 1999).

On the other hand, the Uses and Gratification model proposes that in selecting particular types of media texts, audiences evince cognisance of the types of affect they seek to partake in and therefore possess personal agency. “Uses and gratification marked a realisation that audiences were not empty vessels waiting to be filled with media messages. Instead, audiences selected what they wanted to see and hear because the media served a function for them and their selections gratified their needs” (Taylor & Willis 1999: 162). A host of needs for porn use have been identified by various scholars such as Bryant & Shim (2008) Attwood (2005) Kinsey Institute (2002). These include, among many others, the need to masturbate, to alleviate stress, to learn sexual techniques, to distract oneself and even to improve one’s sexual life. All these uses align with the uses and gratification ethos which asserts that “audience do things with media messages” (Schroder et al 2003: 124)

The uses and gratification approach is a deviation from the effects tradition in that it focuses on what people do with media rather than what media do to people. This marks a distinct departure from the dogma of powerless susceptible consumers often insinuated by effects research. This model is also a deviation from Hall's encoding/decoding hypothesis because it presents a concretely utilitarian version of media texts as instruments for multiple uses and gratification, rather than as mere messages to be understood. Moving from this position makes it possible to ask one of this research questions: "what role does porn consumption play in viewers' personal lives?"

## 2.8 The intersectionalities of sex, gender and sexuality in porn

Sex, sexuality and gender form an integral medley of porn's pleasure economy. Pornography consumption is convened around the sexual desire of distinct biological human bodies (sex), their cultural/symbolic meanings and expected behavioural norms (gender) engaged in idiosyncratic ways of erotic expression with other bodies or objects (sexuality). How the genre exploits aspects of sex, sexuality and gender is of paramount significance to its very visual materiality and is a topic that merits attention for any study focused on the consumption of explicit media.

Scholars and activists in various schools of feminist thought e.g. post-structuralism, queer theory and post modernism have questioned and critiqued the ways in which the concepts of sex, sexuality and gender are often deployed to entrench heteronormative sexual values. Milani (2014: 261) in his paper *Queering masculinities* states for example that Queer theory "seeks to foreground how some of the ties between sex, gender, and sexuality are socially (re)produced as "normal" and "desirable" (typically, the attraction between two allegedly opposite and complementary sexes/genders that underpins heterosexuality) while others are devalued as "deviant" and "unwanted" (usually, same-sex desire)." For this reason, this dissertation takes into consideration the socially constructed and charged nature of these terms. Relying on the concepts of sex, sexuality and gender is by no means capitulating to traditional, heterosexist

standards but a way of trudging through the mechanics with which forms of structural power operate in porn.

### *2.8.1 Dicks, penises and cocks: The phallus as the iron sceptre of the porn universe*

Mainstream pornography constitutes a sexual universe where males and females have clearly defined roles both in terms of the sexual act and in terms of power and dominance roles. Freud (1912: 189) once asserted that "anatomy is destiny," a claim that proposes sex/biology is determinative of one's sexual behaviour. Spinelli (2014) however points out that many writings have since disputed and contested the credibility of this statement. Social factors such as one's upbringing play an indivisible role in people's sexual behaviour. The nature/nurture debate underscores the very fact that no singular cause is determinative of any facet of human behaviour (Spinelli 2014).

In the facile fantasy world of pornographic enactments, however, it is easily perceptible how one may perceive Freud's statement applicable. Subjects with penises dominate and objectify those without (Williams 1999). Maleness remains a privileged position and the erect penis stands as the phallus bestowed with sexual and symbolic power (Williams 1999). It is the engorged penis which is the imagery of male sexual prowess and virility hence the scarce visibility of the flaccid male organ in porn. Freud (2014: 38) spoke of how even little girls at the sight of their male siblings' genitals experienced "penis envy," wishing they also had a penis while male children experienced "castration anxiety." i.e. the fear of losing their penises. In summary, both men and women want to possess the phallus.

Even though pornography extols scenes "in which women's bodies are the object of knowledge" (Williams 1999: x) the phallus embodies the power to perform upon those bodies. Stager (2002: 57) reminds us that "female pleasure is hard to display in any quantifiable manner. So when it is made the focus, it is often made masculine." The failure of the camera to capture the anatomically interior sexual pleasures of the female marks the male's penis the most expedient means of signifying sexual climax making the male genital an inevitable centre-piece for the genre hence Williams (1999: 56) says "seeing from the single perspective of the phallus and the male orgasm is not to see woman at all but to see only (…) the one and the same of man against

the more or the less of woman." Despite the woman being the object of visual obsession through the male gaze, she is only as relevant as the duration of the penetrative sexual act. Her vagina and her affective currency expire the moment the phallus reaches its climactic endpoint as pointed by Stager (2003: 56).

> Consider this: In pornography, virtually every male orgasm occurs when the man pulls out of the woman and masturbates onto her. Known in the industry as the "money shot," this slang for the mandatory, visible ejaculation explicitly confirms what the audience is paying for: the ultimate presentation of male pleasure. The audience must see the money shot, must see the penis in action, which transforms a shared, internal, concealed, heterosexual act into a solitary, external, visible, homoerotic one. If the penis weren't the focus, then it could simply stay hidden.

The ejaculating penis grabs and mobilises attention unto itself transfiguring its orgasming image into an obligatory effigy. However, Lacan, unlike Freud, spoke less of the phallus as an anatomic organ but as a signifier of desire existing in the Symbolic order. Lacan proposes that there are three orders of being: the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real (Hook 2006). The Imaginary "is an order of experience, a 'state of being' that characterises the infant's earliest preverbal and 'pre-social' interactions" (Hook 2006: 61) while the Symbolic order is "a system of social structure and meanings, of laws, language and regulations" (Hook 2006: 63). Finally, the Real order "designates that which cannot be signified, that which cannot be captured or reduced to symbolic expression" (Hook 2006: 62).

Accordingly, Lacan asserted that just as femininity and masculinity do not reside in the realm of the biological but of the symbolic (i.e. meaning and language) so does the phallus (Hook 2006). Consequently, the phallus as a signifier cannot be touched or seen but only represented. Rather than dichotomise differences between sexed subjects (penises and vaginas) as Freud did, Lacan's concept of the phallus enunciates a sense of lack, a desire for personal and sexual wholeness "our wish for completeness, 'the phallus is what no one can have but everyone wants: a belief in bodily unity, wholeness, perfect autonomy" (Luepnitz 2002: 226).

It is worth noting that the phallus even as a sign or representational device still, according to Lacan, remains a "privileged signifier" (Hook 2006) expressive of completeness and perfection

albeit in the shape of the male shaft. Thus even in the domain of the symbolic, the phallus remains an androcentric visual metonym. In pornography, the sight of the male shaft is enough to denote the whole of the visually lacerated male actor whose only visible part is his male member "the male body, reduced to the erect penis" (Garlick 2011: 234). Famous straight porn actor "Danny D" confirms this in a *Gay Times* magazine interview where he admitted his initial 'shyness' in front of the camera due to his "skinniness" but then later divorced himself from the feeling when he realised "no one's looking at me, they're looking at my cock" (Gonsalves 2012: 40).

The "cock," therefore, in porn is not just an anatomical fixture but a symbolic phallus representational of an array of meanings. Possessing a penis or being male in porn is the privilege of control over sexual situations. It means the culmination and termination of the male's sexual pleasure is the pivot of the entire scene. All penetrative activity begins and end respectively once he is visibly tumescent and once he has visibly orgasmed. The image of "the cock," an embodiment of the phallus, is not only what denotes the completeness of the often faceless male or what signifies sexual climax but also what the female actress desires in her frequently dramatised demands "yeah, give me that cock" or "I want your cock inside of me now" (Garlick 2011: 222). The world of porn is thus dictated by a logic that privileges the symbolic power of the phallus as an instrument of power, desire and sexual orchestration.

As can be expected, this has significant bearing on which market contingent mostly consume porn. Since "Much of the pornography that has entered mainstream culture through such channels as car advertising, cinema, music, the Internet, and TV, continues to be male-oriented" (Ciclitira 2004: 285) most mainstream porn garners a consumer-ship of heterosexual males with gay, bisexual, lesbian, female-friendly porn constituting their own special niche. Bryant & Shim (2008: 189) point out that "men are more likely than women to prefer to watch sexually explicit material." The androcentric treatment of sexed bodies in porn ultimately creates a vanguard of mostly male consumers. This South African research project like many others abroad, (Ogas & Gaddam 2011, Janssen, Carpenter, & Graham 2003; Lo & Wei 2002, Bryant & Shim 2008) expected the same gender imbalance amongst recruited porn consumers. The following sub-section looks at gender and how notions of manhood and womanhood are deployed in

contributing to the world of sexual pornographic fantasy and how this has bearing on porn consumption.

### *2.8.2 The role of gender constructions in porn and porn consumption*

When Simon De Beauvoir (1949: 330) asserted "One is not born but rather becomes a woman" she was articulating the social and cultural machinations that construct accepted ideals of womanhood and manhood. Contrary to Freud's (1912: 189)'statement that "anatomy is destiny" De Beauvoir (1949)'s declaration locates the etiological determents of one's socio-sexual behaviour and identity formation to endemic socio-cultural processes. Though pornography is defined by the display of explicit genital activity, it functions through the eroticisation of unequal gender dynamics. Connell (1995: 71) defines gender as the "reproductive arena which includes bodily structures and processes of human production which organise practice at all levels of social organisation from identities to symbolic rituals to large scale institutions." Institutions, identities, social rituals and social organisation are the nodal points of interest in the pornographic imagination which order and coordinate sexual practice. Williams (1999: 267) for example upholds that "pornography as a genre wants to be about sex. On close inspection, however, it always proves to be more about gender." Pornography expresses statements about the nature of womanhood and manhood more than it does so about sex.

Gender as the constitutive law in porn's sexual universe means all narrative logic and sexual developments are premised on gender-based ideological assumptions which are explicitly visualised. What it means to be a man or a woman unfolds in the consistency of the types of actors and actresses deployed and the actions they are respectively assigned. As Garlick (2010: 610) points out:

> porn presents its viewers with a world in which there are an endless number of women who are available for sex, the effect is ''. . . . to demand that men conquer increasing numbers of women to demonstrate their manliness''; moreover, the repeated display of well-endowed male bodies '' . . . reinforces the idea that women can only be satisfied by men with large penises who can maintain erections for indefinite periods'' (Garlic 2010: 610).

In essence, manhood or manliness is equated to 1. having well-endowed bodies 2. high sexual performance 3. sexual durability 4. an ability to sexually satisfy multiple women. Inevitably, this places at centre stage a monolithic type of 'manhood' which monopolises mainstream depictions in popular visual culture. This hegemonic type of masculinity is what Connel (1995: 86) describes as "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of such practices on bodily experience, personality and culture." Hegemonic masculinity as a "place" or social location means that anyone (man or woman) can navigate or enter that space through practice. As a set of practices, hegemonic masculinity equates to actions that are socially and consensually translatable as "masculine." Finally, it also embodies social and cultural ramifications of the aforementioned actions. Pornography captures the account of all three descriptions as a space, a world in which both men and women through their practices venerate ideals of 'maleness' while simultaneously depicting the consequences of such actions as pleasure and collective satisfaction (Garlick 2010: 608). It is the sexual labour of both men and women in porn who work to reify hegemonic masculinity. The implied ideology is that men's control over women leads to the satisfaction of both men and women. In porn, hegemonic "masculinity is the most valuable currency and femininity is rejected as worthless and undesirable (Milani 2013: 16) but more importantly, hegemonic masculinity "within the pornographic imagination defines a pattern of gender relations in which men are both in control of women and of themselves" Garlic 2010: 610).

Resultantly, most mainstream porn consists of a consumer-ship of men whose significant aspect of enjoyment is a sense of control. In many respects porn is similar to cyber-sex in that both are digitally mediated forms of sexual encounters. Yet, porn can be considered to differ from cyber-sex with respect to registers of interactivity between technology, consumers and consumption. Cybersex as "a form of interaction carried out entirely through text on various online services" (Attwood 2009: 280) tends to demand instantaneous engagement with other users whose actions, though often compliant and co-operative, are also autonomous. Cybersex happens in "real-time encounters" which "are used to construct relatively realistic sexual experiences, jointly constructed through various types of dialogue" (Attwood 2009: 280-281). As a dialogic instantaneous form of communication, cybersex promises consumers sexual pleasure with other sexed bodies but not necessarily control over them. In contrast to the transient form of cybersex,

pornography's assiduous imagery guarantees consumers sexual pleasure *with* control. Consumers of porn "tend to derive considerable satisfaction since they feel that they have control over sexual actions and can direct them to their liking" (Andreas et al 2005: 4).

Nonetheless, as much as pornography lends itself to various formations of vicarious sexual control, the genre also facilitates the expression of historically unpopular or excluded forms of masculinities. According to Schippers (2007: 87) "gender hegemony operates not just through the subordination of femininity to hegemonic masculinity, but also through the subordination and marginalisation of other masculinities." Subordinate, implicit and marginalised masculinities represent socially relegated groups which lie at the peripheries of mainstream popular culture. Connel (2013) proposes a conceptual framework that conceives of different masculinities as operating in axes of (often) intersecting hierarchies. While the concept of hegemonic masculinity is certainly analogous and interchangeable with 'heterosexuality,' there are many heterosexual people who do not necessarily conform to classic hegemonic masculine codes and thus are expelled from this dominant group. These may include, for example, men and boys who have no interest in sports, business or dating, men who love reading and those who exude socially discernible traits that could easily be construed as feminine (Connel 2013). These men and boys are often stigmatised through belittlement and slurs such as "dweebs," "nerds," "yellowbellies," "wimps," "sissies." Therefore, not all forms of heterosexual masculinity are culturally celebrated or hegemonic. Due to the culturally pre-eminent status of hegemonic masculinity, these men sometimes aspire to belong in it. Mainstream (hegemonic and masculine) porn is one way in which aspirant men can participate in hegemonic masculine culture (Andreas et al 2005). Part of the reason for the popularity of mainstream porn lie in the fact that even people who may not necessarily enact hegemonic masculine practices identify its ubiquitous codes in mainstream porn and often watch it. This includes 'marginalised masculinities (those of subordinated classes/ethnicities/race e.g. black, poor) and complicit masculinities (those who benefit from hegemonic masculinity without being its frontrunners all e.g. cisgendered men) (Connell 2005). Heterosexual masculinity "is still perpetuated and portrayed as dominant and adaptable across sexual boundaries" (Rothman 2013: 52).

Writers such as Rothman (2013) Artz (2012), Connel (2013) and Garlick (2010) acknowledge that gay masculinity in particular is often juxtaposed as the antithesis of heterosexuality and

consequently faces more than mere stigmatisation but conscious subordination through a range of material practices. These include political, religious, economic exclusions which are legalised in various forms such as anti-gay policies, religious prohibitions and economic structures. According to Connell (2005: 78)

> Hegemony is related to cultural dominance in a society as a whole. Within that overall framework there are specific gender relations of dominance and subordinations between groups of men. The most important European/American society is the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men.

Lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, transgendered, intersexual and queer men are exemplars of subordinated masculinities. South Africa "officially became the fifth country to legalise same-sex marriage, following the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada" in November 2006 (News-centre 2006. 1). For this reason, and many other reasons, South Africa has internationally been acclaimed as having one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world (Massoud 2003). Despite this, many homosexual people become targets of homophobic violence such as 'gay-bashing,' grazing and even murder (Massoud 2003). Hegemonic masculinity, therefore in the context of South Africa deploys both subtle and audacious socio-cultural modes of oppression. It is for this reason that ANC politician Jessie Duarte, who spoke at the South African Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in 1994 said: "It is one thing for you to have your rights and equality in the law, it's quite another to have them each day in the street, at work, in the bar, in public places" (Mossoud 2003: 301). This difference proves most real where the tolerant and progressive laws of South Africa are accompanied by a largely conservative society that does not adhere to such laws.

In such an environment, pornography takes on pronounced cultural significance as a cathartic medium of self-reflection, expression and assertion. Pornography grants *cart-blanche* expression to subordinated masculine identities and practices that have restricted social, cultural and media representation. This dissertation posits that the consumption of pornographic images by subordinated gender groups becomes more than a sheer sexual act. It is a political statement pertaining the human rights to freedom of expression, the acknowledgment of minorities'

equality before the law and affirmation of society's slow rise to tolerance (Rothman 2013). Considering the extensive role of women in pornography production, the work of various 'femininities' is also fundamental in examining how porn's conventional constructions assist or resist hegemonic masculinity in practices of consumption.

### *2.8.3 How constructions of dominant femininity shape female porn consumption*

If gender is the socially constructed binary that defines 'women' and 'men' as two distinct classes of people (Butler 1990) that means both 'manhood' and 'womanhood' find meaning in relation of each other i.e. to be a woman is to be different from a man and vice-versa. According to (Schippers 2007: 90) "heterosexual desire is defined as an erotic attachment to difference, and as such it does the hegemonic work of fusing masculinity and femininity together as complimentary opposites." Note, the context and condition under which such complementary interdependence rests is 'heterosexual desire.' Feminine lesbian women, for example, foil gender expectations for not extending their gender (feminine) and sex (female) to the culturally preordained point of coitus (sexuality). Similarly, a masculine female or feminine male negate the logic of complementarity between 'feminine' and 'womanhood' and 'masculine' with 'manhood.' In these instances, there is no complementarity. Butler (1990) calls this tripartite convergence of gender, sexuality and sex, the "heterosexual matrix" and describes it as "the hetrosexualisation of desire (which) requires and institutes the production of discrete asymmetrical opposition between "feminine" and "masculine" where these are understood as expressive attributes of "male" and "female" (Butler 1990: 17). To faithfully adhere to the "heterosexual matrix" would require the compartmentalisation of all women (sex) who exhibit feminine traits (gender) to be heterosexual (sexuality). The ideological contention of such hegemonic assertion is the claim that to be 'woman' is to possess a set of attributes associated with feminine behaviour and to be 'man' is to display unmistaken features allied to masculine conduct.

The concept of "heterosexual matrix" can be said to constitute a prototypical format from which most pornography derives and displays its own version of 'womanhood.' 'Womanhood' as envisaged by pornography, encompass more than the idea of femininity understood in the

popular discursive sense of the word as passive and coy, coquettish and nurturing (Williams 1999: 83, 215, Connel 1987: 188).

Pornography inundates the consumer with images of 'model' beauty as pointed out by Brod (1988: 271) "For women to serve this purpose of achieving male social validation, a woman "conquered" by one (man) must be a woman deemed desirable by others. Hence pornography both produces and reproduces uniform standards of female beauty." Such standards of female beauty comprise mostly of white nubile women "the vast majority are tall, super-thin and under 25" (Featherstone 2012: 215). Barker (2014: 151) agrees with Brod: "This is the opportunity that porn gives. People gain the entitlement to look at beautiful bodies, details of (women's) bodies." The word entitlement suggests 'beautiful bodies' have become such an integral aspect of porn that consumers demand to see nothing less than these ideals.

In comparing how women's bodies are located and deployed in pornography, Williams (1999: 43) observes that "Men's naked bodies appear natural in action: they act and do; women's must be explained and situated." The woman's body in porn is the nucleus of visual focus, with the camera engrossed on most of her face and body. For such reason, her 'work' is to be beautiful. Her (male) sexual counterpart's body is, however, assumed 'normal' (except for the penis) and is mostly away from the camera's purview. According to Featherstone (2012: 204), the porn actress must embody "the new beauty ideal in line with the goals of the cosmetic industry. This new facial ideal is an unmarked, uncluttered face, a face without marks."

Undoubtedly these idealistic notions of 'beauty' and 'womanhood' occlude aesthetic appreciation of 'difference' in women's bodily appearance. Short, old, plump and pimpled women are inadvertently set up to fall short of such standards. For this reason "It is frequently asserted that (…) porn imagery make the vast majority of women feel unhappy with their bodies" (Featherstone 2012: 202). The feelings of discontentment amongst women related to their bodies go beyond being about their physique e.g. a question of being tall, short or thin. They include despondency about an array of isolated body parts such as noses, ears, arms, abs, toes, buttocks, breasts, thighs and even vaginas. Even though porn imagery eulogises women with large breasts, according to Seema (2015: 1), "breast enlargement surgeries dropped by 8.5 percent from 2013 to 2014." Seema points out that this trend is strongly related to the shift of

visual emphasis in pornographic images from breast prominence to the visual prominence of vaginas.

> In 2014, two Chicago researchers set out to find whether porn was the problem. John Arkins and Dr. Otto Placik examined 490 *Playboy* magazine centre-fold photographs published between 1954 and 2013. They found that, over time, the vagina overtook the breasts to become the focal point of the photos (Seema 2015: 1).

According to Kobrin (2004: 4) most women who undergo vaginal plastic surgery do so because they feel pressured "to conform to an idea of beauty most often seen in the porn industry. Doctors say these women request the procedure because they are afraid of having "old looking" vaginas (Kobrin. 2004: 3). Therefore, porn consumption does not just expose consumers to uniform ideals of tall, thin, smooth-faced women but also to particular 'types' of uniform vaginas whose inner labia do not stick out of their outer labia, symmetric, smooth, slit-like vaginas (Kobrin 2004, Seema 2015). Part of the undertaking of this research was to probe whether or not women porn consumers felt insecure about their bodies due to watching porn.

The culturally permeating existence of mainstream porn means such visually perpetuated and enduring ideals of 'womanhood' assume hegemonic prestige. Hegemonic femininity according to Schippers (2007: 94) "consist of characteristics that are defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complimentary relationship to masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women." Schippers' delineation of hegemonic femininity demands we pay specific attention to the 'characteristics' of 'womanliness' promoted by porn and question how these contribute to the continual dominance of men. A preliminary assessment of the feminine characteristics advanced by pornographic imagery suggests immaculate beauty standards are vital traits of womanliness. Another assessment could lead to a similar conclusion: femininity *is* coterminous with arduous forms of self grooming and impeccable beauty ideals. Whichever interpretation one assumes, one observation seems self-evident: since the occupation of these women's beauty pivots around men's sexual pleasure, hegemonic femininity as depicted by porn, is one whose existential foundation is the pleasure of men. It is important to note just as hegemonic masculinity operates both through coercive and persuasive forms of cultural incursions to globally subordinate women

to men, hegemonic femininity functions through endorsing standards of acceptable 'womanhood' that are in harmony with hegemonic masculinity to deify those exacting accounts of womanhood and to ostracise non-compliant forms of other femininities.

Pyke & Johnson (2003) propose that these ostracised, non-qualifying varieties of femininity should be considered equivalent types of what Connell (1987, 1995, 2005) termed subordinate masculinities. According to Pyke & Johnson (2003: 34) subordinated femininity groups "experience their production of femininity as inferior to those forms engaged by privileged white women and glorified in the dominant culture." Schippers (2007) however disagrees with equating hegemonic femininity to a monolithically racial category of whiteness juxtaposed against other bodies of race. Schippers highlights that Pyke & Johnson's model makes "no way to identify the relationships between femininities operating within race and ethnicity. That means that if white femininity is hegemonic femininity and non-white femininities are subordinate, we have little conceptual room to identify multiple femininities within race and class groups" (Schippers 2007: 88-80). To extend on Schippers' strand of logic, one only has to consider that hierarchies exist even within homogeneous race groups. How does one account for the fact that an older plumb white woman is considered less attractive than a thinner, younger woman of the same race? Consider also the fact that the same (unknown) younger, thinner white woman may, nevertheless, fail to possess the same cultural capital compared to an equally young or even older well-known Naomi Campbell. Considering these factors of race, age, class and status, Schippers coins the term 'pariah femininities' to describe all marginalised forms of femininities. Porn sublimates unequal treatment of women into a form of erotic fantasy which serves to sexually excite while naturalising and favouring a uniform type of femininity over multiple others. Porn consumers sometimes experience feelings of complicity when realising the inequalities with which the genre seems so fraught (Ciclitira 2004, Attwood 2005). This dissertation explores, amongst other things, the ways in which porn consumers position their sense of pleasure in regards to their awareness (or lack thereof) of the treatment of various women in porn.

Despite assisting to stratify divisive chasms between ideal and non-ideal feminine and masculine forms, pornography also allows for the expressions of multiple sexualities. Porn consumers become sexual citizens of a world that articulates, with a lucid visual language, recognition and acceptance of all sexual alignments. The next sub-section explores how sexuality organises

(pornographic) sexual narratives and scenarios and how this may impact practices of consumption specifically in South Africa.

## 2.9 Porn consumption and sexual citizenship in South Africa

This brief segment attempts to capture the ways in which porn enfranchises (sexual) difference through its heterogeneous scope of visual representation. Porn consumers are therefore able to express their own sexuality through using the kinds of porn best suited for their desires and sexual identities.

Sexuality encompasses all aspects of being an erotic being (Spinelli 2014) such as sexual orientation, proclivity for specific sexual practices (e.g. bondage, domination, sadomasochism), biological aspects e.g. sex- hermaphroditism, femaleness and maleness, and lifestyle choices e.g. chastity/celibacy and even asexuality (Bedley 2010). Sexuality as an aspect of human nature finds its expression in all facets of human life. Bedley (2010: 1) points out that sexuality "might be consummated in the bedroom, but first partners must be found in the public space of streets, bars, and media such as newspapers and the internet." The right to free sexual expression is hence one that extends beyond the bounds of the private bedroom.

Hekma (2015: 1) notes that "The right of free sexual expression especially concerns marginalised groups, such as women and sexual minorities." South Africa has seen significant strides over the last 10 years in the representation of sexual minorities such as gay, lesbian, transgender, intersex and queer people on television. In 2006, just after the country became the first in the continent to legalise same-sex marriage, the Soap opera *Isidingo* depicted two white men kissing thereafter getting married (Mamba-online 2013). Ever since then *Isidingo* has continued to include homosexual characters in its plots. Other examples include *Rhythm City* on the free-to-air channel E-TV which, in 2009, premiered the channel's first lesbian couple (Warn 2009). *Intersexions* is a sexuality-awareness TV series on the SABC1 channel depicting various characters (gay, lesbian and intersex) prone to personal struggles related to sexuality. One grand example of inclusive sexual representation for gay men is *Generations*, often dubbed 'the most watched TV programme in South Africa (TimesLive 2014, City Press 2009). In 2009

*Generations* caused ripples in South African media terrain when two black men were featured kissing on prime time television for the first time in the country's history (News24 2009). *Generations* currently features a storyline on intersexuality through one of the male characters, Wandile, who, in the unfolding of the narrative discovers his pleasure for cross-dressing.

Despite these attempts to represent South Africa's sexual minorities, non-normative storylines remain quite sporadic, few and tend to confine sexual encounters to a simple kiss whereas heterosexual couples tend to be granted more latitude for light petting. These stories also tend to attract moral panic which operates to silence the expression of sexual difference. By the Friday of the week that *Generations* featured two black men kissing (Jason and Senzo), a group called "*We will stop watching Generations if Senzo and Jason continue kissing*" had already amassed over 19 000 members (City Press 2009). This demonstrates that the right of free sexual expression is a contested arena for sexual minorities in South Africa.

Additionally, South Africa, unlike many developed countries, does not have any television channel dedicated to any group of the country's sexual minorities. Despite the fact that "there are approximately six million LGBTQIA lifestyle consumers in South Africa" (Mamba-online. 2013: 1) there is virtually no television based programming for this group of people. In the context of such a gap, pornography becomes one medium of sexual expression easily available to such sexual minority groups.

Porn consumption grants sexual citizenship to every member of society precisely because it caters to everyone's sexual tastes and identities in an explicitly open manner. Both Evans (2013) and Bedley (2010) agree that the term 'citizenship' initially evoked the relationship between the state and individuals' rights to reside, work, claim social grants. Evans (2013) observes that 'citizenship' in the 70's – 80's started to shift emphasis from "social rights of welfare towards civil rights of an economic kind (i.e. market share related) such as the right to buy council houses and to purchase shares in privatised industries" (Evans 2013: 10). Citizens are not just abstract bodies (foreign or native) moving in space to perform their duties. According to Bedley (2010: 1) "Citizens have genders, sexualities, and bodies that matter in politics. The rights of free expression, bodily autonomy, institutional inclusion, and spatial themes are all pertinent to the concept of sexual citizenship." Being a sexual citizen means more than simply partaking of the

country's social/state privileges. It means citizens as sexual, gendered beings must obtain a sense of belonging based on provisions made to express their sexual and gendered identities. It means the right to enjoy legal, social, commercial and even media representation, to be afforded freedom of expression as sexual beings.

As stated earlier, sexual citizenship for sexual minorities in South African society remains stifled and pressurised. Pornography and porn consumption can be seen as playing a critical role in offering all people a means to realise sexual expression. By *all* here I allude to Bedley's (2010:1)'s words that "Free expression of sexuality means that the public sphere, from schools to politics, cannot continue to be the privileged domain of male heterosexuality." By *all* people I refer to inclusivity which gives voice and visibility even to most unfamiliar sexual desires sometimes referred to as paraphilic or 'atypical' sexual behaviour. These include scatophilia (sexual pleasure derived from faeces), urolagnia (sexual pleasure derived from urinating or being urinated upon), picquerism (sexual pleasure attained from skin piercing or being pierced), exhibitionism (sexual pleasure derived from exposing one's genitals to strangers), fetishism (sexual pleasure derived from objects or other people's body parts not conventionally viewed as sexual e.g. elbow), pyromania (sexual pleasure derived from playing with fire) (American Psychiatric Association 2013). Inclusive sexual citizenship means that even consumers with sexual preferences historically deemed 'abnormal' (yet consensual) may now gain a sense of personal belonging within the state as sexual beings. Other historically marginalised sexual practices such as BDSM[2] feature prominently in pornography although there is still scant media recognition/representation of such practices and those who enjoy them in South Africa. Despite the various power and gender polemics already stated in this discussion, this dissertation takes into account the positive contribution that porn consumption has for South African consumers. For this reason, sex positive feminism plays an important role in how this project frames the topic of porn consumption.

## 2.10 The role of sex positive feminism in this research

This last section of the literature review identifies key pillars of sex positive feminism and calibrates their relevance to the study of porn consumption in South Africa. The unequal

[2] Bondage and Discipline (BD), Dominance and Submission (DS), Sadism and Masochism (SM)

configuration of gender and power dynamics in porn has, since the 'sex wars,' been the crux of concern and contestation for various scholars and feminists (Queen & Comella 2008). Contemporary pro-censorship feminists such as Gail Dines, Robert Jensen and Catherine Mckinnon have vehemently argued for porn censorship laws based on the negative depiction of women (Paasonen 2009, Jurisz 2011). While there is little doubt most mainstream hardcore codifies pleasure as a male oriented sexual fest, this dissertation positions itself against censorship and aligns itself with tenets of sex positivity particularly sex positive feminism.

Pro-censorship feminists often cite the subjugation of female bodies in the hardcore industry as ammunition for censoring porn. These feminists rely on rhetoric which purports to protect all women from male sexual abuse and exploitation. Dines (2010), for example in her book *Pornland: How porn has hijacked our sexuality* argues that porn consumption encumbers the development of a healthy view of sexuality and thwarts the establishment of real-life relationships. Dines (2010: 106) asserts that women are "held captive by images" that promote hypersexualised, thin, young and toned female bodies. She also maintains that porn encourages men to degrade women. Such arguments, of course, are interlaced with legislation calls to censor porn.

However, sex positive feminism resists readings which position women as helpless victims. Glick (2000: 20) observes that "Radical feminists' representation of women as disempowered actors fail to see women as sexual subjects in their own right." Sex positive feminism sees porn actresses as free agents, who not only choose to perform in the genre but also exploit the porn industry's own gender conventions to their own profit. Female porn actresses get larger financial remunerations than male actors. Most women who enter into mainstream porn are cognisant of the wealth available to them in the business (Voss 2012). Queen & Comella (2008: 278) define the field of positive feminism as:

> the cultural philosophy that understands sexuality as a potentially positive force in one's life, and it can, of course, be contrasted with sex-negativity, which sees sex as problematic, disruptive, dangerous. Sex positivity allows for and in fact celebrates sexual diversity, differing desires and relationships structures, and individual choices based on consent.

A few noteworthy terms ‘positive’, ‘consent,’ ‘individual choice’ and ’sexual diversity’ all underscore the irrevocable human right to opportunities and choice. The option to choose from an array of diverse sexual experiences, the possibility for one to have fulfilling, positive sexual encounters and the decision for these experiences to happen between preferred associates are all merits of sex positivity. Sex positive feminism can thus be understood as situated between two axes of ontological human domains: human rights and human responsibility. From a human rights perspective any legal embargoes imposed on pornography would breach both men and women’s basic right and options to freedom of (sexual) speech. Human responsibility is the discretion accredited to any two or more consenting adults to be able to conduct private sexual affairs in benign ways as stated by Jones (2016: 100) that “Being sex positive means advocating for safety and consent, and refraining from making harsh judgments about the personal choices of others.”

It is ironically harsh judgments (of other people’s sexual choices) that fuels criticisms of pro-porn feminists i.e. the idea that sex between parties ought to unfold a particular way and that way only (Cooper 2010, Williams 1999, Queen & Comella 2008). Such a view is certainly myopic for a study of porn consumption that seeks to delve into a multiverse of sexual practices as appreciated by consumers *sans* harsh or moral judgment. Considering that porn censorship would function to curtail both men and women’s sexual expression, sentiments of protecting women (from porn) under the guise of pro-censorship feminism, would ultimately be detrimental to the same women’s sexual liberties. Censorship would police the ways in which women can and cannot sexually express themselves.

No wonder, then, the most fundamental principle of sex positive feminism is: *women can never be free unless they are sexually free* (Jones 2016, Queen & Comella 2008). Of course this speaks more than of sexual practices but about complete bodily autonomy in every single aspect: contraceptive/reproductive autonomy, sexual practice autonomy, sexual expression autonomy, sexual embodiment autonomy. Sexual freedom as an ethic which lends itself to absolute bodily autonomy is a much needed resource in South Africa where thousands of women are deprived control over their own bodies due to rape and traditional/cultural beliefs.

In her paper about female sex bloggers in China, Jacobs (2004) has shown that sexual media are one of the ways through which women in repressive states can express their political opposition

and self-determinism. Therefore porn consumption can be both a form of sexual expression and a means of voicing discontent. South Africa is often putatively known to have one of the highest rape statistics in the world (Jewkes. et al 2015, Swarr 2012). According to Eye Witness (2015) 53 617 rapes were reported to the South African Police Services in the year 2015. This translates to 147 rapes per day or 6 rapes per hour. Jewkes et al (2015) looks at how rape has become a culture in South Africa and how specific behavioural codes become risk factors and increase the likelihood of a woman being raped. "Women and girls are expected to be sexually modest, as well as submissive to men, which includes agreeing to their sexual propositions. Multiple perpetrator rape is used as a way of punishing perceived transgressions of or resistance to this order" (Jewkes et al 2015: 2). Other risk factors that put women in danger of being raped include constantly refusing men's propositions (thereby appearing 'snobbish'), wearing revealing clothes (which is considered disrespectful to men) and possessing masculine mannerisms (Jewkes et al 2015). No example better illustrates the cultural suppression of women's bodies in South Africa than the forced public stripping of two young girls in 2008 and 2012 respectively. Both these women were wearing mini-skirts at the busy taxi rank, Noord. In South Africa 'taxi ranks' are over-crowded areas typically overflowing with several hundreds of shuttles and an influx of passengers catching transport to various locations. Taxi ranks are known harbingers of sexist behavior as most operators within ranks are men. It was in such an environment that various women were publically accosted by several men who forcefully stripped them naked claiming they shouldn't have worn short skirts in public. Even the president of the Republic, Jacob Zuma, who has four wives, is no stranger to articulating public sexist comments. In 2012 he publically stated that all women *must* get married and bear children for their own growth and training into motherhood.

For scores of women in South Africa, pornography may not just be a mode of sexual expression but one of the few platforms through which they are able to freely exercise sexual autonomy. Women who act in porn exhibit nothing less than "female power and assertiveness" (Attwood 2005: 70) and women who consume porn prove an audacity for sexual exploration of their own bodies through visual media. In aligning with sex positive feminism, this dissertation acknowledges the potential for porn as a positive force in women's lives and the right of all women to do with their bodies as they please.

## 2.11 Conclusions

In concluding this section, a short recapitulation is in order. Definitions of pornography are multifarious and depend on the socio-cultural context in which they are coined. Williams (1999) and D'Orlando's (2011) definitions are both preferred for this project since they address the kind of explicit material looked at by this study while also including the intentionality of arousal that typifies porn as a genre. Only pornography that falls within the acceptable legal framework of South Africa will be included in this study yet participants are expected to articulate their own understanding and uses of pornography. Consumer culture theory is used to explicate the ways in which subjects consume pornography since the theory is socially adaptable to the specific cultural contexts of the people being studied. This study treat consumers as makers of multiple meanings in the process of consumption rather than adopting the parochial classical view that consumers are either liberated or manipulated during consumption practices. In giving an account of what gives porn its appeal to masses of consumers, this study offers that pornography avails various forms of pleasures: scopophilia, Aphrodisia, the satiating of our sexual curiosity and the fulfilling of sexual fantasy. These pleasures are further enhanced by the internet which offers other additional pleasures such as anonymity, affordability and accessibility to unlimited amounts of porn videos, participation and the democratising of sex which allows anyone to be a porn star through amateur films. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework within which all the concepts and issues raised in this literature review are to be investigated and deconstructed. These scaffolding concepts *mediation*, *private/public* and *pleasure/power* form the hinge around which the data and literature will revolve.

# 3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The preceding literature review discussion on the meaning of pornography, practice theory, how consumption applies to porn and the pleasures afforded by pornography now leads us to a different investigation on the complex ways through which the genre interpolates itself in the social world and how this impacts on how it is consumed. This research hinges on a number of specialised concepts which have an inextricable relationship with the multifaceted ways through which porn materialises itself. Pornography is expressed through mediation, exists in the public realm yet is consumed in the private realm and is coated with sexual pleasures that are contested by ideological power. These terms: mediation, public/private, power/pleasure all require some untangling for the way in which they are applied in this research.

## 3.1 Mediation: Pornography as the construction of sex in text.

Mediation is a term that refers to the act of transmitting various kinds of information through the media to the public and involves the deployment of communication technologies (Couldry 2008). Users' consumption of explicit images is facilitated by modern-day devices/technologies such as laptops, personal computers, television sets, cellphones, iPods, video cameras and magazines. The term mediation is used in this research to refer to the technological character of pornography.

Mediation in the words of Silverstone (2002: 3) "describes the fundamentally, but unevenly, dialectical process in which institutionalised media of communication (the press, broadcast radio and television, and increasingly the world wide web) are involved in the general circulation of symbols in social life." The dialectical nature of mediation, pointed out by Silverstone, means that viewers are not simply passive receivers of media communications, but are active respondents who interpret, modify and adapt such communication, through various forms of technology, creatively into the schema of their daily activities. This is especially the case in highly interactive genres of media like porn, as well as in digital forms available online. Consumers' dialectical interactions with technology during porn consumption may reveal the vast ways in which consumers use pornography and the various meanings that porn acquires through these technologies e.g. porn as masturbatory aid, as an instructional manual, as emotional escape, as a pastime of entertainment or as an instrument of socializing.

For this research, mediation helps to theorise the centrality of technology to practices of porn consumption. The varying kinds of media used to access pornography dictate how porn is consumed, when porn is consumed and the kind of viewing experience enjoyed by the consumer. Someone with a computer and home internet is most likely to have unlimited access to porn and have self-determined porn-viewing patterns, while someone who watches porn on a pay-per view channel would have to adjust his viewing patterns to the schedule of the TV station. A person on a bus/taxi journey is more likely to be able to watch porn on his phone than on a laptop which has a more publicly visible screen. Nonetheless, the term mediation demands a change of focus "from functionalist media-centered analyses to the exploration of everyday practices of media appropriation (Mattoni & Treré 2014: 260). Porn as technology or as mediated sex means practices of porn access and porn use are experience integral to people's daily living experiences.

Jurisz (2011: 11) states that "we must acknowledge the affective dimension to the embodied nature of technological culture. The intense emotional responses we have with, through and against technologies are all embodied aspects of experience." The investigation of this research therefore is the various affective responses of users to porn i.e. the ways in which consumers access, view and integrate pornography in their lives in the process of mediation. A significant question that arises out of the mediation concept is: to what extent do different technological media diminish or heighten the porn consumption experience for different consumers?

## 3.2 The public/private: How porn consumption transmigrates spaces

The dialectic of the private/public applies at two different discursive layers which will be used in this research. Firstly, pornography is available on the public realm (television sets, porn magazines, the internet, DVD's) yet is watched in the private realm. Working with Hannah Arendt's writings on the public/private Iqani (2012: 18) refers to the media as the public realm, a space of "visibility and appearance" where actions are (theoretically) "seen and heard by all." The private realm on the other hand is concealed, obscure and not visible to all (Iqani 2012). Perhaps this is synonymous to Lacey (1993: 94)'s private sphere as, a space in which human relations must be allowed to develop away from public scrutiny. In the private act of watching pornography, apart from seeking and finding pleasure, consumers also construct and project their own personal identities (Iqani 2012: 29). Rumelt (2011) in her 'scientific' experiment to explore pornography use, found herself searching for, watching and being moved by videos that reflected

her own preferences and practices. Her experiment led her to discover parts of her own sexual desires previously hidden from her awareness. Thus, the private consumption of publicly available porn images expedites the construction, the projection and sometimes the discovery of consumers' personal identities.

Secondly, although pornography is public, it depicts sexual acts and sexual behaviours that are normally performed in private (Iqani 2012: 133). The migration of these private acts into the public realm in the mode of pornography transmutes them into commodity form "It is in media texts and public retail display sites that the pornographic imagination enters the public realm and is thus commodified" (Iqani 2012: 135). The attainment of pornographic material always involves financial costs whether through buying a DVD, downloading a porn clip, streaming an online film, buying a magazine or watching a pay per view porn TV channel. The visibility of pornography as commodity and economic activity through media technologies and spaces (TV, internet, magazines, dvd's, adult houses) grants porn its publicness (Iqani 2012). The public/dialectic of porn begs us to ask: to what degree do consumers feel that their porn consumption practices are constrained by financial challenges? Do financially challenged individuals have interest/investment in porn or is pornography a luxury for those who have money?

## 3.3 Power/pleasure: The counterbalances of enjoyment and control in porn

The pleasures of porn form a quasi-connubial relationship with hegemonic vectors of power at various levels of society. While pleasure promises exploration, liberation and enjoyment, power manifests itself in all attempts to curb and regulate such enjoyments (Foucault 1985). At the pinnacle of power regulation lies the state and its legal impositions which dictate the types of porn images that can and cannot be viewed while also establishing the permissive framework through which porn may be consumed by individuals and groups. In South Africa pornography which depicts incest, violence, bestiality and children is against the law and anyone who wishes to host screenings of porn to large groups needs to acquire a license (Watney 2005). The injunctions of power are very real since they are accompanied by grave punitive consequences in this case imprisonment. This is particularly pertinent for the ethical and academic credibility of this research because it determines which cases of porn consumption to include and which ones to exclude. The consumption of illegal pornography will not be a focus of this study. Nonetheless, power does not simply trickle down in hierarchical fashion from the state to its

citizens but "it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the later are always local and unstable….Power is everywhere" (Foucault 1985: 93). Certain institutions within civil society (religious groups, conservative politicians, family structures, interest groups) may also exert forms of moral and ideological pressures against pornography and its consumers' conscious. This is commonly done by mobilising and disseminating discouraging and disapproving messages about pornography e.g. porn as sinful or harmful or degrading.

Foucault (1985) iterates that discourse (as a way of talking about a topic) becomes an instrument of power, able to constrict and regulate people's ways of perceiving and behaving. As a result, pleasure and enjoyment are often known to live side by side with guilt and feelings of shame (Andreas et al 2005). In instances such as these, pleasure becomes couched in the spells of power. There are still other instances where pleasure functions as a form of resistance, a means of speaking to power. Jacobs's book *People's pornography: Sex and pornography on the Chinese internet* is testament to the fact that citizens within autocratic regimes can utilise pornographic imagery on the internet as cultural and political rebellion. These considerations are crucial in dissecting not just consumer behaviour but the underlying social, cultural and personal conditions informing such practices.

Lastly pornography as pleasure has been reported to aid in a number of aspects such as relieving stress, relieving sexual frustration, acting as an arousing visual aid for sex, acting as masturbatory aid and a form of sexual education (Bryant & Jae Woong 2008). Despite this, most mainstream pornography function with a commercial imperative that encourages hegemonic masculine consumption consequently alienating female users (Cooper 2011). This is done firstly by presenting women as obsequious sexual bodies that are at the service of pleasuring and being conquered by men (Cooper 2011). Masculine hegemony in pornography, I argue, is also instigated by the power of the gaze. As indicated by Schroeder & McDonagh (2006: 224) "To gaze signals more than to look at. It implies a psychological relationship of power in which the gazer is superior to the object of the gaze. Pornography has been called an extreme expression of the male gaze, producing sexist representations of women." The vision that directs the eyes of the lens and consequently determines the seeing of the audience mostly caters for the sexual desires of men. Pornography, says Lawson (2012) is intended to make men feel like they are having sex and not just simply watching it. "The camera angles minimize the visual information

about who the guy is. Porn tends to be the shots of the penis with the woman seen in more totality" (Lawson 2012: 133).

Of course this is not to say that women cannot derive pleasure from porn targeted at men but that such pleasure for women is not actively sought out in most porn. Any pleasure derived by women from mainstream porn is most likely to be burdened with the awareness of exclusion. Erotic, sensual and female friendly pornography which re-orientates its gaze to accommodate its female consumers has become the recourse of most female porn users (Williams 1999). Such pornography is still growing and does not compare with the heaps of already existing male-oriented pornography that dominates the porn market (Garlick 2010). Pleasure in porn is therefore intercepted and mitigated by hegemonic powers of masculinity encoded in the genre. Power transmits an exclusionary politic on pleasure. It has been argued (whether rightfully or not) that pornography is a men "thing" (Bryant & Jae Woong 2008, Lawson 2012). Consequently most research in pornography has found that men watch porn more than women (Bryant & Jae Woong 2008, D'Orlando 2011, Garlick 2010). This observation has been factored into this research project in regard to men and female participants and how they might differ in their experiences. The power/pleasure dialectic leads us to a consideration of the following questions: in what ways do the consumption experiences of female consumers differ from those of male consumers? Is there a sense of guilt and shame in most consumers during or after watching porn?

The next section will present the methodological approaches used to collect data needed to answer some of these questions. This study utilised a mixed method approach, a large anonymous survey and in depth interviews. The following chapter details the specific research instruments used during the data collection process. It also discusses the methodological procedures taken to give credence to the data findings.

# 4 METHODOLOGY

In total, the study recruited 676 complete questionnaire responses and 25 in depth interviews. This section will further outline the measures taken to ensure ethical research standards, data validity, reliability and the recruitment of research participants and how their rights were protected. Lastly, I shall present accounts of how data were captured, coded and analysed concluding the chapter with a statement of the array of obstacles encountered by this research during the data collection period.

## 4.1 Why mixed methods were best suited for this research

Traditionally, research design is split along the lines of two approaches: qualitative methods and quantitative methods (Gunter 2000). While qualitative research methods are known to embrace "interpretivist social science paradigms that emphasise interpretation over measurement" quantitative methods are framed by a scientific approach "in which behavioural phenomena are quantified and measured numerically" (Gunter 2000: 23).

Bryman (2004) suggests that there is more to the traditional distinction of qualitative/quantitative method than the simple presence or absence of quantified measurements. Epistemological foundations, ontological considerations and theoretical orientations are what inform which research techniques to employ (Bryman 2004). Simply put, the kind of questions asked or nature of scholarly inquiry, the ideological premise espoused and the scope of exploration all dictate the kind of research methodology to use. Likewise, the demand for large-scale information required to sketch broad patterns of consumer behaviour within the South African context called for a quantitative approach. However, the need for in-depth understanding of consumers' personalised motivations, beyond statistical figures, necessitated the use of a qualitative method. Questions about what aspects of porn respondents opted to integrate into their lives, the specifics of sexual techniques they learnt and their thoughts on depictions of gender were all examples of discussion points that required interviews.

Creswell says mixed research methods are "more than simply collecting and analysing both kinds of data; it also involves the use of both approaches *in tandem* so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research" (Creswell 2009: 4). The use of mixed methods functioned in such a way that the weakness of the survey was supplemented by the strength of the interviews leading to greater confidence in the findings. The cross-checking

advantage offered by the mixed method approach meant that the feedback from the questionnaire was measured against the feedback of the interviews. Some features present in the survey were often confirmed during the interview state e.g. a larger pool of male respondents compared to female respondents, a consistent pattern in the reasons for porn use and a re-confirmation of (multiple) pleasures attained when consuming porn. At the same time, the interview data did more than simply act as a cross-checking measure. Interviews helped expound on the salient patterns revealed by the survey.

The empirical research of this study was undertaken in two phases: phase 1 and phase 2. Phase 1 comprised the survey execution and phase 2 the conducting of the interviews. The survey was chosen to precede the interviews so that its feedback could be used to collect more in depth information during the interview process.

## 4.2 The conceptual and empirical processes comprising Phase one

The research activities that comprised Phase one included, planning for the survey, conducting a pilot study, revising and fine-tuning the final questionnaire, launching the completed instrument and finally promoting it to attract survey responses. The following sections give details of each of these steps.

### *4.2.1 How the survey was planned, designed, piloted and implemented.*

According to Bertrand & Hughes (2005: 68) surveys are systematic ways of collecting data which can be used to describe phenomena, make comparisons and explore relationships between variables. This form of quantitative method was preferred in this study because it "provides procedures that can enable large quantities of data to be collected across large numbers of individuals" (Gunter 2000: 41). Porn consumption does not occur within a vacuum. It is wrought by a host of global and local factors. The comprehensive ability of surveys to reap large scale information was particularly essential for this study as it aimed to provide findings that could be used to make inferences about the specific geo-cultural context of South Africa.

Gunter (2000) distinguishes between cross-sectional surveys and longitudinal surveys. He explains cross-sectional surveys as those that are conducted at one point in time, establishing no causal/effect relationship between audience behaviour and their exposure to various media. Contrary to this, longitudinal surveys are conducted over a long period (with two or more survey

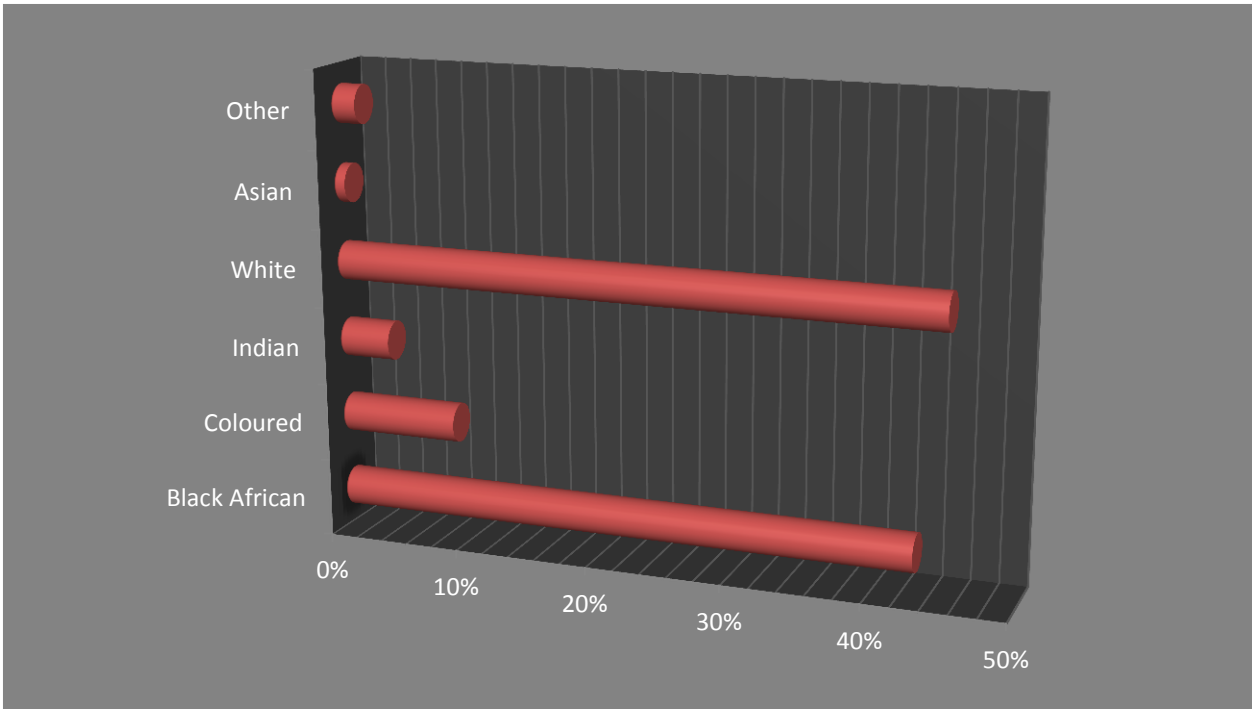
waves) and seek to establish a causal link between consumer behaviour and their exposure to media.

Since the aim of this study was never to uncover any long fixed connections between porn exposure and consumer behaviour, a cross-sectional survey was used. The survey data was collected at one period in time, within a six month period, June 2013- November 2013.

This study made use of an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was made available on an online survey software programme called *Qualtrics*. This meant that time and location posed no hindrance to respondents who wished to participate. Anyone with internet access in South Africa was able to access the online questionnaire and participate at any time they deemed suitable. *Qualtrics* was particularly chosen because the university where I study already purchased the license of use. I found that other well-known online survey programmes like *Survey-Monkey* and *Sogo-survey* limited the number of questions a researcher could enlist unless he were a paying subscribed member. Even such subscription was only for a year. With *Qualtrics*, I was assured that I would list as many questions as needed for free and that payment issues would not hinder my continued yearly access to the dataset.

Unfortunately, the use of the internet as the sole medium of data collection also had a negative consequence. In the South African context, internet access is still a luxury that many cannot afford. At the time of data collection, the internet penetration rate in the country was 45%. In 2015 the internet penetration rate in South Africa was only at 49% (International Telecommunication Union 2015). This means the survey was biased towards respondents with internet access most of whom are white. This is despite the fact that Africans comprise majority of the country's population (80%) compared to the white population who comprise only 8% (Statistics South Africa 2015). For this reason, the data of this research cannot necessarily be considered representative of all porn users in the country. The following graph shows there were more white survey respondents (N=303) than black ones (N=295).

**Figure 1 Survey respondents by race**




*Qualtrics*, like most survefy software, allows for a number of response-regulating parameters which helped strengthen the credibility of the data gathered. An example of this is the "force response" function which made it impossible for respondents to continue the online questionnaire unless they answered mandatory questions that established them as South African porn consumers. This was a highly significant factor as it pertained to the sampling frame of the research.

### *4.2.2 How a sampling frame was chosen*

The question of sampling was a crucial aspect of the data collection process. As expounded by Roberts & Stark (2002: 61) a sample refers to "a set of units or cases selected from a population or universe." The specific "units" or "cases" that were sought out by this research were 500 South African-residing porn consumers who were of legal age. The sample of this research had to meet three requirements.

Participants had to have watched porn within the last six months of their participation in the study. This was important because the aim of the study was to investigate consumption practices and opinions of porn consumers and not those of the general public. The second requirement was that porn consumers had to be living in South Africa at the time of their participation. This study

was specifically interested in porn consumption patterns within South Africa and not anywhere else. The last requirement pertained to the legal regulatory framework that polices the distribution, viewing and classification of pornographic material in the country. The Film and Publication Act mandates that only adults have access to pornography (Watney 2005). For this reason, the survey participants also had to be of legal age (18 years and above). If any participant indicated that she did not meet *any* of these criteria, she was exited from the survey.

This consideration was also reflected in the organising logic of the online questionnaire. The first section of the questionnaire consisted of a consent page and three filter questions designed to screen out any participants who did not meet the sampling criteria. Filter questions help to save respondents' time from participating in a survey or questions that are irrelevant to them (de Vaus 1991: 93). Most importantly, filter questions helped weed out inappropriate research candidates from the desired research sample. The consent page contained a six-line description paragraph about the research which stipulated the necessary terms of participation and gave potential respondents the choice to "agree and continue" or to decline. If a respondent felt she met the stated requirements, the survey further led her to three screening questions and if a non-applicable response was entered for *any one* of the three questions, the respondent was terminated from the survey. This means that if respondents indicated that they did not live in South Africa, were not 18 years and above and/or had not watched porn in the past six months, they would not be allowed to continue to the rest of the questionnaire. Once I had made the decision about the sample of this research, I worked on developing the questions this select group would have to answer and on piloting the instrument.

### *4.2.3 Developing the questions and piloting the survey*

Before the survey was nationally rolled out, it underwent a process of piloting. This helped me detect potential errors and problems that may not have been evident at first glance. The questions of the survey were designed to be lucid and unambiguous. The other aspects of the instrument that the piloting phase sought to improve were the five factors pointed out by De Vaus (1991). These are the applicability of individual questions to the research topic, the flow of questions from one section to another, the skip patterns of the survey where filter questions are used, the timing and length of the survey and its respective sections and the survey's ability to retain respondents' attention.

Questionnaire development was the first phase of pilot testing. Many surveys usually borrow question items from previous questionnaires which addressed a similar topic (De Vaus 1991). However, because this kind of research was rather novel for the South African context, most questions were developed from scratch. At this particular stage of questionnaire development, the aim was to "establish how to phrase each question, to evaluate how respondents interpret the question's meaning and to check whether the range of response alternatives is sufficient" (De Vaus 1991: 99). The questions were developed using a six-fold thematic framework of demographics (age, race, gander), beliefs/perceptions (how people perceive porn and their porn consumption), feelings (how porn makes consumers feel), practices and preferences (how people consume porn and which porn they like), uses (why people consume porn) and associations (how porn consumption intermediates consumers' interactions with other people).

These themes constituted the six main sections of the questionnaire. Each of these sections had a number of questions that respondents had to answer. Recall however that the survey, as mentioned earlier also made use of filter questions as a way of screening respondents. These questions ensured respondents met the sampling criteria and were therefore placed at the beginning of the survey. This means that in essence, the questionnaire had seven sections instead of six.

Under the "uses" section of the questionnaire, the survey adopted an inventory of porn uses composed by Bryant & Jae Woong (2008) (APPENDIX 2). In 2008 these two authors conducted a survey study that aimed at discovering motivations and uses of internet porn among 321 university students. They formulated a list of 18 uses for pornography. These I used as foundation to build the porn "uses" section of the questionnaire.

In their list of 18 uses, two more items were added "Porn makes me happy" and "I am extremely curious about sex." Research in porn studies have indicated that the sex life of some consumers deteriorates the more they engage with porn and that such consumers grow to prefer pornography to actual sex (Andreas et al 2005, Lawson 2012). From this, we can deduce that there are those consumers who watch porn, not for lack of sexual partners or of sexual frustration but because porn makes them feel satisfied. The second option "I am extremely curious about sex" was extrapolated from studies which reveal that many people, including those who have never had

sex find their sexual curiosity satisfied in watching porn (Wilson 1971). This confirms the assertions made by Williams (1999) that porn is watched to fulfil deep curiosity about sex.

The survey made use of a structured questionnaire for a number of reasons. Bertrand & Hughes (2005) point out that structured questionnaires are much simpler for the respondents to answer and much easier to process. They don't demand that respondents agonise over a response or that they write much other than to simply choose from the range of options presented. For this reason, structured questionnaires usually take less time than unstructured questionnaires or semi-structured questionnaires. This consideration was also used to mitigate against the challenge of non-responses. Respondents are known for quitting surveys if, for whatever reason, they lose interest. Non-responses jeopardize research reliability by yielding insufficient data from which it may be difficult to draw salient deductions (De Vaus 1991). Surveys that require too much time from the respondents or require that respondents formulate their own answers run a higher risk of non-response. This was particularly applicable to this survey since it had a long list of questions which could reduce respondents' motivation to complete it. By opting for a structured or "forced-choice" questionnaire, this research sought to eliminate all such possible variables that could lead to non-response errors.

Once the preliminary MS-word questionnaire was drafted, it underwent a process of vetting by my supervisor and by a number of postgraduate students from the Advanced Research Methods class I was attending at the time. The feedback I received helped me detect and remove some redundant questions and add more pointed, pertinent ones. The second amended draft questionnaire which was borne out of these corrections was then mounted online and became the official pilot questionnaire (APPENDIX 3). The link to the survey was circulated in an email list of researchers and students at the University by my department and my supervisor. Although this version of the survey made use of closed ended questions, it had one open ended question at the end which invited participants to share comments on how they thought the questionnaire could be improved. The feedback commentary helped to significantly refine the final instrument for official national roll-out. Modifications were related to the content of the questions, the structure of the questionnaire, the range of options made available, the scales of measurements used, and installing of software commands in the survey e.g. to exit people who did not qualify to participate. At the pilot stage, this was not something I had implemented.

The pilot survey had a rather crude and rudimentary layout structure which presented *all* the survey questions on one page. Even though the questionnaire obviously comprised of various sections, the problem was that *all* these were on a single page and made the pilot respondents feel it was too long. This reduced the motivation to complete the survey. In a situation where a researcher needs to ask a lot of questions Bryman (2004: 221) advises researchers to find ways "to make the questionnaire instrument appear as short as possible in order for it to be less likely to deter prospective respondents from answering." To address this concern, the modified final version of the survey was digitally modified to load each section of the questionnaire on a new page such that respondents would fill in the survey on a page-by-page basis. Once a respondent completed answering one section and pressed the "next" arrow, the next section would appear with its new set of questions. This created a very noticeable structure accompanied by a well-designed layout which did not reduce respondents' motivation to complete the questionnaire. Also added was a short introductory paragraph about the research on the first page. Interestingly enough, this short descriptive summary was included in the first MS-word questionnaire draft but I had not initially included it in the online pilot instrument. I had merely assumed that anyone who would visit the online questionnaire would have received prior knowledge of it elsewhere. After the pilot study, it became evident that, participants would not be getting information about the survey only from me or from my many marketing initiatives alone but from a multiplicity of other sources that may not have passed on accurate information about the research to potential participants.

The pilot study also revealed that the levels of measurement used for some questions needed to be changed. Levels of measurement refer to how categories of variables relate to one another. (Vaus 1991: 130). The variable "sex" for example traditionally has two categories male and female. These dichotomous variables contain data that only comes in two categories (Bryman 2004) and are limiting.[3] Five of the questions in the pilot questionnaire were measured as dichotomous variables with respondents asked to choose between two answers "Yes" or "No." One example of such a question item was "I would like to watch less porn" with the answer options as "yes" and "no." It later emerged that this was a rather simplistic measurement since porn consumers may feel like watching porn less at different times. The suitable question therefore was not whether or not porn consumers wished they could watch less porn but how

[3] The variables "male" and "female" for example exclude and erase trans-sexual and intersex identities.

often they felt this way. This meant the scale of measurement for the question, and indeed for most other questions, had to change to reflect the nuances in consumers' possible realities. A likert scale was therefore used and the new options were "Always, often, occasionally, never." A likert scale is "a multiple indicator or a multiple item measure of a set of attitudes relating to a particular area" (Bryman 2004: 145).

The pilot study also brought attention to the need for commands to the survey software in order to make it possible to regulate responses so as to increase the reliability of the data. Reliability as defined by (Vaus 1991: 54) is "a measurement where we obtain the same results on repeated occasions." The online survey instrument was programmed such that it would reject *all* responses that did not fall within the sampling frame. I also later programmed it to make *all* questions mandatory. One could simply not continue to other sections if one neglected to answer a particular question. This was deliberately done after it became clear that many of the pilot questionnaire respondents forgot or neglected certain questions yet were able to move on to other parts of the questionnaire without notification. This created a situation where respondents could pick and choose which questions they would answer, creating a lot of missing data. It was therefore important to standardise the responding procedures and create a measure of response reliability. This way, I could be sure there were no inconsistencies in the manner in which the questionnaire was answered by different respondents because all respondents were subjected to the same software validation demands, helping to increase the reliability of the data.

Once all the modifications were made to the questionnaire, the final survey instrument was vetted one last time by my supervisor. It was then officially launched online for national roll-out on the 1st of June 2013 (APPENDIX 4) and promoted to attract respondents.

### *4.2.4 How the survey was advertised and promoted*

The target minimum number of respondents for the questionnaire was 500. This number is consistent with Bertrand & Hughes's (2005: 64) advice on selecting the appropriate sample size which is "small enough to be practically manageable and large enough to provide the sort of data you need, (and) within budget." The survey instrument was initially meant to be active for just one month but due to advertising challenges and the inability to canvass the targeted number of respondents, the marketing and promotion of the survey ended after five months of being officially launched while the survey itself was kept open and ongoing.

The first national platform used to market the survey was the *Sunday Times* Newspaper which is the largest selling national weekly in South Africa with a circulation of over 500 000 and a readership of over 3 million (TimesLive 2016). The briefly worded advert gave a sentence description of the research, conditions of participation and information on how to participate. It was printed on the classifieds section of the newspaper. This advert was published twice in one month: on the first and the last Sunday of June 2013. Due to the high costs of advertising on such a large-scale, enormous platform, these were also the last times I made use of the *Sunday Times*.

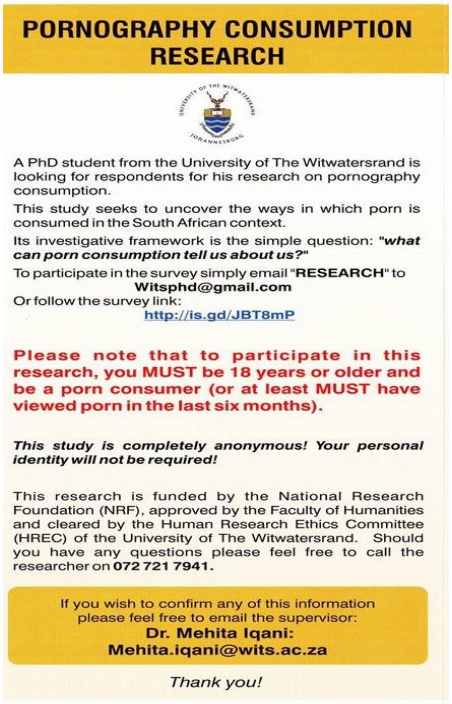
**Figure 2 Advert placed on the Sunday Times**




A number of reputable national radio stations with a large audience reach were also approached. I requested a few minutes to discuss the research on their late night shows. The stations that were approached were YFM, KayaFM, Radio South Africa, Talk Radio, Power FM, Radio Pulpit, Metro FM and Ukhozi FM. Each of these radio stations has a listenership exceeding one million per month except for Radio Pulpit which has 50 000. All these radio stations received and confirmed receiving my request. Unfortunately none of them were willing to assist. Radio Junto, a newly formed online South African radio station with national and international coverage requested me to speak about the research on one of their Saturday afternoon shows. The station has a listenership of 30 000 per month and prides itself of "engaging in progressive debates" from which most people would shy away (Radio Junto 2016). The survey was promoted on this station twice in the month of July 2013.

I printed 3000 flyers which were meant to be distributed at Adult World stores across the country. Adult World is the largest Adult store franchise in South Africa with more than 50 stores across the country's 9 provinces (Adult-world 2016). The original plan was that I would mail about 100-200 flyers to 20 various Adult World shops in the country and each store would make these flyers available to their porn consumers. Adult World informed me that I needed permission from the national C.E.O. For four weeks, various agents at various management levels tried to assist me to reach the C.E.O who was impossible to pin. I eventually abandoned my plans of distributing the flyers at Adult World after the C.E.O's assistant informed me that my request was against the franchise's policy. I decided, instead, to try different strip clubs around the country. A large number of strip clubs refused to accept the flyers. Only a total of 11 strip clubs accepted: one in Kimberly (Black Diamond), three in Cape Town (Chicago Gentlemen Club, The Embassy Gentleman's Club, The Ranch) and five in Johannesburg (Teasers Midrand, Hustler Extreme, Love craft, The Lollipo Lounge, The Summit Club) and one in Pretoria (Teasers). I mailed 110 flyers to each shop.

**Figure 3 The flyer used to market the research**




Other flyers I left with street hawkers who sold porn DVD's on the streets of Johannesburg. Friends and colleagues who worked and studied at various institutions took flyers and made them available at their various institutions e.g. SABC, Standard Bank Headquarters, Nelson Mandela

Metropole University and what was previously called Medunsa (Medical University of Southern Africa) now called Sefako Makgatho University. Other flyers were placed at police stations in Durban and Johannesburg. I also asked permission from a number of residential buildings in Johannesburg to leave the flyers by the foyer where people could see them when they entered and exited the building. Most building managers agreed to help.

Apart from distributing flyers to as many places as possible, I used a host of online platforms to market the study. I created two blogs. One had a short paragraph description about the survey study, conditions for participation and a link to the actual online questionnaire (www.pornsurvey.blogspot.com). The other blog was a much more comprehensive account about the research as a whole, its various stages, motivations for its undertaking and endorsement information (pornresearch.blogspot.com). The decision to have two blogs was informed by studies such as Foster & McChesney (2010)'s which reveal that people on the internet tend to favour reading short written texts as opposed to overly detailed ones. Online cultures have fostered a pervasive attitude where internet users just want to get to the "bottom line" (Foster & McChesney's 2010: 14). The shorter blog referred readers who wished to get more information to the detailed blog. Both these blogs contained the link to the survey. Potential respondents could simply click on the link if they felt they wanted to participate in the study or they could go visit the detailed blog for more information. In three months' time the short blog had received about 3400 online visitors while the longer one had about 380 visitors.

**Figure 4 Shorter blog with survey link directing people to the more detailed blog**



**Figure 5 Detailed blog about the research**




In addition to these online platforms, I also created a Facebook group called "Porn Consumption Research." The purpose of this group was not only to attract people who would participate in the research, but also attract those who would help promote the research on their Facebook pages. The group grew to 166 members. This also constituted a forum where participants could engage more with the research by asking questions and making contributions. I used the Facebook group to update participants about developments and progress made on the research. As administrator of the group, (*Witsie Studdy)*, I posted provocative visual material, news articles, and questions related to pornography in order to generate discussions and debates which would get members interested in participating in the research. Before any person was allowed to join, a thorough check of their profile and birth information was done to make sure he was 18 years and older. No person under the age of 18 years was allowed to be part of the group.

**Figure 6 Porn Consumption Research Group on Facebook**

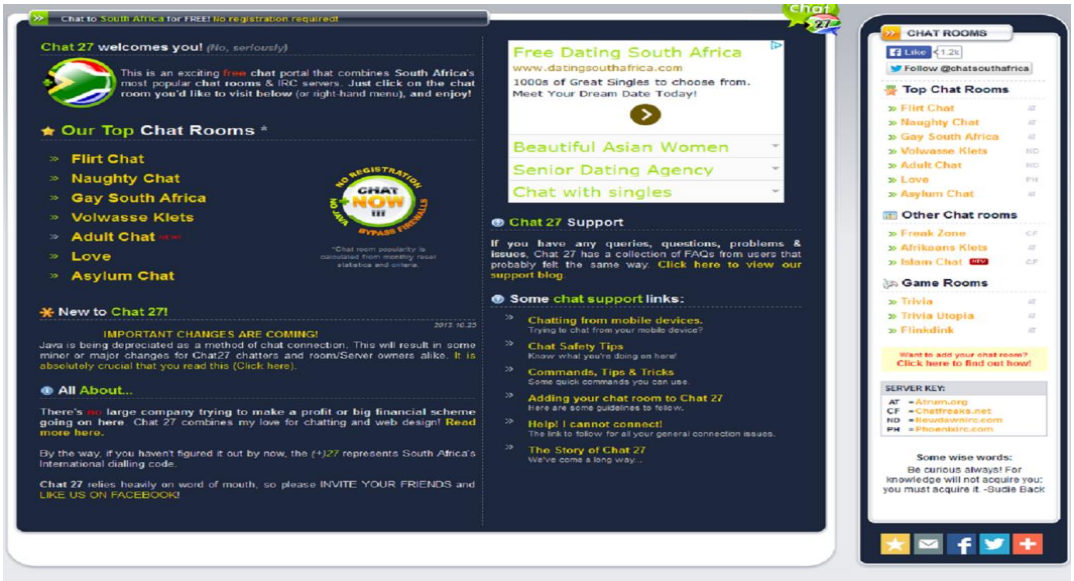



The research survey was promoted on 26 South African Facebook groups and pages dealing with porn and sex in South Africa. Most of these groups had members of more than 10 000 each. When promoting the survey on other Facebook pages, other than the Porn Research Group, I posted the blog link instead of the direct survey link. This was so that potential respondents could first be informed before going straight to the survey instrument. By going to the blog first, they would get an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the research before participating. Once potential participants arrived on the short blog, they were further presented with the option of going to the detailed blog, if they desired to know more. They could also just click on the survey link if they felt happy with the summary. Giving potential participants these options was very important in safeguarding against participants who did not fall within the sampling frame. This also guaranteed that participants would be properly informed.

The survey was also promoted on some online South African chat rooms. These platforms were very ideal as they allowed me to advertise the survey to active, synchronous users while simultaneously responding to their questions and comments. Marketing the research in chat rooms was an exciting experience because I knew online chatters were more likely to be conversationally candid and, most importantly, likely to be porn consumers. Attwood (2007:

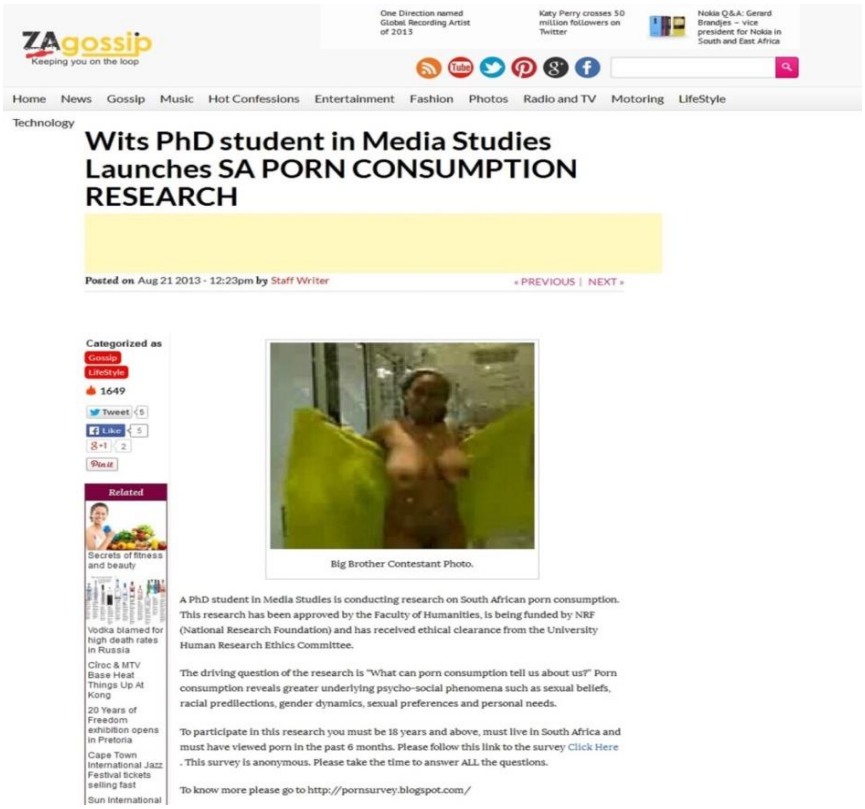
445) says online platforms have fostered a community of consumers who are bound together "in relations of economic and cultural production and consumption" where sexually explicit imagery and language have become more visible. 'Chat27' is a popular chat site that hosts six different chat-rooms, *Adult Chat*, *Naughty Chat*, *Gay Chat*, *Flirt Chat*, *Asylum Chat*, *Love Chat* and *Volwasse Klets*. Each of the rooms typically has over 40 users at any given time. Chat room users increase proportionally to around 100 during evening hours of 18:00 till 22:00. For two weeks, every night, I logged onto the chat rooms using the pseudonym *Researcher* to promote the survey among the chat room users. It was very important for me to be identifiable as a researcher in the chat rooms rather than as an ordinary chat-room user. This meant that other users could engage me as a researcher. The precarious ebbs and flows of online chatting meant I did not always feel I had something to contribute in *every* conversation in the rooms. In such instances where I just "listened." the benefit of using the pseudonym *Researcher* meant active users who saw my name and felt curious could always ask me about 'what I was researching.' Most nights I stayed for 20-30 minutes in each chat room. Some nights I would spend more time in other chat rooms than others simply because the people in those chat-rooms were more engaging that particular night.

**Figure 7 The home page of *Chat27* showing all its chatrooms**




The South African social-media personality Tendai Joe was generous enough to publish information about the research on his news site *Za Gossip*. The site has a monthly readership of 20 000 and 200 000 page views (Zagossip 2016*)*

**Figure 8 *Za Gossip*: Another site where the research was publicised**




The last online site that was used to publicise the research survey was *My News 24*, an adjuvant platform of *News24,* a South African "premier online news resource, with round-the-clock coverage" of national and international news (News24 2016). It attracts tens of thousands of South African news readers which, by extension, become available to *MyNews24*. A three-paragraph synopsis mentioning the aims of the research, its institutional endorsements and conditions of participations was published on *MyNews24* the "a user-generated section of *News24*" (News24 2016).

**Figure 9 Short promotional article on MyNews24**




After using *My News24* the targeted 500 responses were finally reached and all marketing and promotional endeavours were ceased. The survey was not shut down because I had noticed that some respondents were still discovering news about the survey from the many marketing sources I had been using. After receiving a number of emails and SMS'es, I felt it was only fair to give time to everyone who was discovering information about the survey. On the 29th of November 2013, I closed down the survey. By this time 676 responses had been recorded. The following two graphs show the percentages of the survey respondents by gender and age.

**Figure 10 Survey respondents by gender**

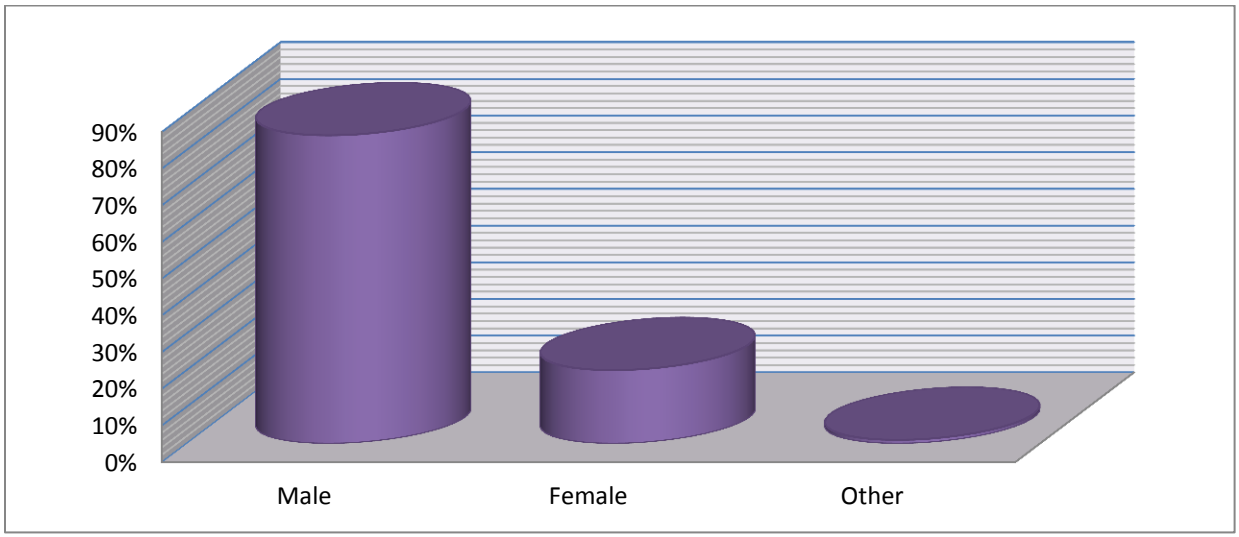
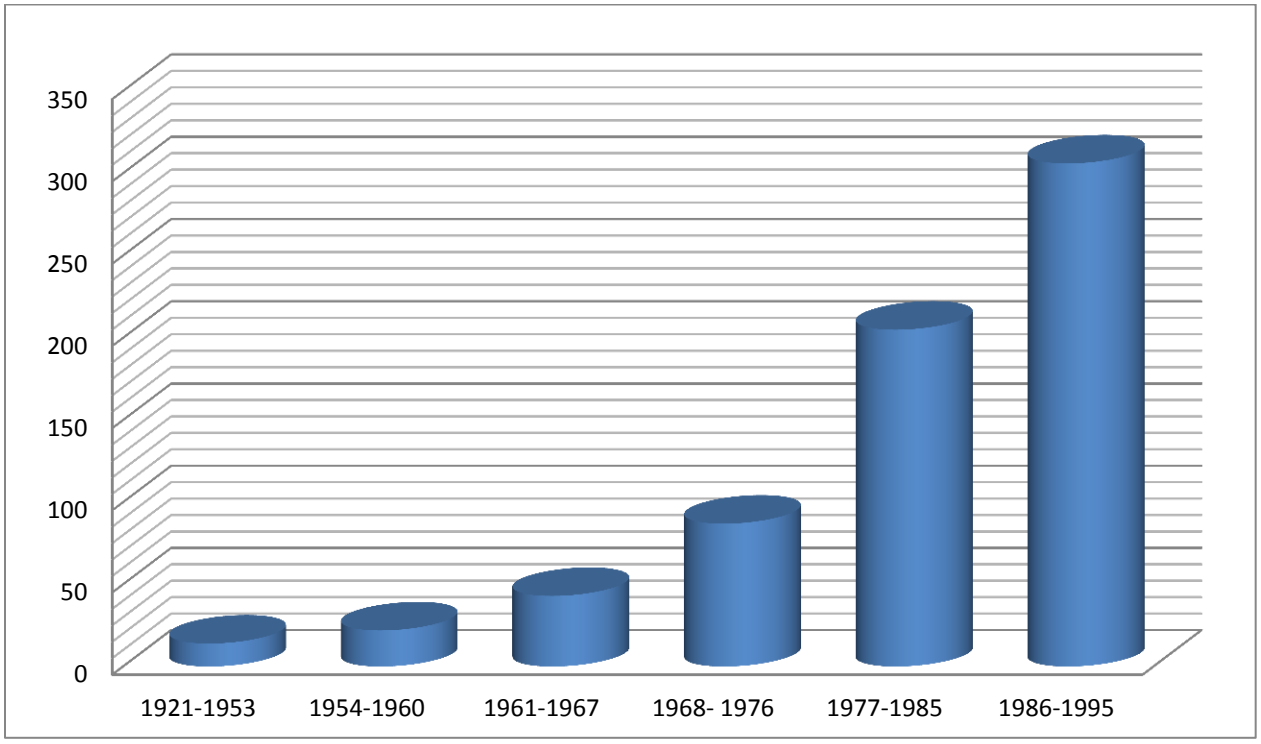


**Figure 11 Survey respondents according to age**




## 4.3 The conceptual and empirical processes comprising Phase two

Phase two of the research comprised of semi-structured interviews which were conducted in the month of September. Since interviews rely more on interpretation, summary and integration (Shuman 2002) than on quantifiable data, less respondents were required than those of the survey. This study sought to recruit 16 -20 interviewees but more people were willing to be interviewed and 25 respondents were ultimately recruited and interviewed using the semi-structured approach.

### *4.3.1 Why the semi-structured format was chosen*

According to Weiss (1995) the weakness of questionnaires is their brevity and inability to give answers in the words of the respondents. This weakness was supplemented by the use of in-depth, semi structured qualitative interviews. According to Weiss the qualitative interview is one which "departs from the survey approach" in order to "gain in the coherence, depth, and density of the material each respondent provides" (Weiss 1995: 3).

Originally Phase two of the research was meant to commence after the completion of phase 1. The survey data was meant to lay the basis from which to develop and formulate much more in

depth interview questions. However, too many incomplete survey responses meant that Phase 1 could not be discontinued but was allowed to run concurrently with Phase 2. While the interviews were being conducted, the online survey was still collecting and saving responses. By the time Phase 2 started, the survey had garnered only 250 complete survey responses. These responses were collated to identify significant lacuna of missing information that couldn't be provided by the survey. Why were the respondents watching porn yet refusing to keep it? Were they perhaps ashamed of being "caught"? Why was it that majority of white people "never" watched black porn (57%) whereas a significant number of black people (50%) "often" watched white porn? Examples of such questions could only be derived after examining the survey responses and answered only by interviewing research participants themselves.

Brinkmann & Kvale (2009: 27) says the semi structured interview "comes close to an everyday conversation, but as a professional interview, it has a purpose and involves a specific approach and technique (…) it is neither an open everyday conversation nor a closed questionnaire." Due to the fact I had prepared swarthes of questions for the interview respondents, structure was needed. A mode of interviewing that lay between "an everyday conversation" and a purely structured "Q &A" seemed preferable. The semi-structured interview method was evidently most appropriate.

The interviews were used to collect in depth information such as the respondents' "interior experiences" (Weiss 1995: 1) that the survey could not find due to its regimented structure. Questions that were directed at the interviewees were those pertaining to their feelings in the act of porn consumption, their understanding of porn, their views on their own consumption practices, their opinions on the depiction of gender and race and their personal opinions about the place of pornography in society. Answers to these questions would help illuminate the intellectual, emotional and social dynamics that informed consumption practices in South Africa. The interview questions were developed with this purpose in mind.

### *4.3.2 The development and purpose of the interview questions*

The initial research instrument was an interview-schedule with 38 questions, subdivided into five theme-based segments: 'Introductory questions', 'feelings,' 'practices and preferences', 'uses/interactions' and 'personal beliefs' (APPENDIX 5). Even though the basic sections of the instrument remained unchanged throughout the interview period, their order and question-size

evolved after the first 5 interviews. The first 5 interviews made me realize that there were other questions that needed to be asked. These questions had to do with condom use in porn, learning about sex and about oneself through porn, feelings about certain violent types of porn, opinions on age-related access to porn and assessing the nature of relationship consumers had with porn consumption. As a result, fourteen more questions were added and the final interview schedule became a 52 question-item instrument (APPENDIX 6). The structure was also changed to ensure that difficult were placed towards the end. Weiss (1995) says interviews should always ask general easy questions before moving to difficult ones. This allows interview respondents time to feel at ease and comfortable in the interview environment and readies them to answer more difficult upcoming questions. I had noticed, during the initial interviews consumers struggled to describe their feelings more than they struggled describing their behaviour. The "feelings" set of questions were therefore moved towards the end of the schedule.

The introductory questions served two functions:- to establish the demographic information of interviewees and to grease a potentially difficult discussion with easy questions while establishing a friendly conversational milieu. The *practices/preferences* section inquired about consumers' personal predilections and how these found expression in the way they engaged with pornographic material. The *uses/interactions* section probed how porn had intermediated consumers' interactions with themselves and with those around them. The f*eelings* section asked participants how their feelings directed their porn consumption and vice-versa. The last section *personal beliefs* interrogated consumers' personal convictions about porn in relation to key social issues such as gender inequalities, morality and legal regulations.

Bryman (2004: 451) insists that interviews should never solely focus on "*what* people say but also in the *way* that they say it" and why they say it. Apart from extracting key answers from the interview respondents, the question items were also used more as an entry point into the internal world of the interviewees. Follow up questions served as a very strategic tool of probing the motivations and rationale behind the interviewee's responses. For example, even though the simple question "where do you view porn?" was also asked in the survey, within the interview context, this question availed an opportunity to excavate consumers' deeper emotions associated with specific locations when watching porn. Consequently, some of the questions from the survey were repeated during the interviews so that, through follow up questions, a richer and more nuanced picture of porn consumption could be seen. One of the interview respondents for

example, mentioned that he used to watch porn in his car. This was not a 'location option' offered in the survey. This demonstrates how interviews served as fertile ground for new and richer information.

According to Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) the psychological state of the interview respondent is pivotal in yielding trustworthy data. It was therefore important for this study to produce the needed conditions that would make respondents feel comfortable during the interview. A major threat I had to address, in particular, was the prospect of interview respondents feeling embarrassed by some of the questions during the interview. To prevent this from happening, I decided to send the interview schedule to all the interview respondents prior the actual interview. This way, all 'nasty' surprises would be averted and respondents would not be shocked, embarrassed or uncomfortable during the interview. This decision also gave the interviewees a chance to change their minds about being interviewed if they felt the questions were too intrusive. Some, after seeing the questions, actually stopped communicating with me. This worked well as it sifted those who were willing to divulge information about their experiences from those who were not. Ultimately, all people who agreed to be interviewed had to be willing to share their experiences and stories for this research to be successful. Another decision made to assist respondents feel at ease was to offer multiple ways of conducting the interviews. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, I was aware that some interviewees would not necessarily feel at ease talking face-to-face with a stranger about their deeply personal experiences. The interview respondents were therefore allowed to determine the mode of discussion. They could choose between a face-to-face session with me, a telephonic interview, an online text chat or a WhatsApp mobile interview. Out of the 25 interviewed porn consumers, 11 chose to be interviewed over the phone, eight asked to have a face-to-face session with me, three opted for an online text chat and the other three preferred a WhatsApp interview. Participants were located throughout the nine provinces of South African. As such, I couldn't travel to all these locations neither could the respondents travel to Johannesburg where I am based. The miscellaneous mode approach thus also solve logistical difficulties related to travel.

I conducted the interviews mainly in English but during the interviewing period, some respondents expressed a desire to communicate in vernacular languages. In South Africa, English is only part of the 11 official languages that are all enshrined in the country's Constitution. Since I speak and understand many of these languages, I was happy to conduct interviews in any

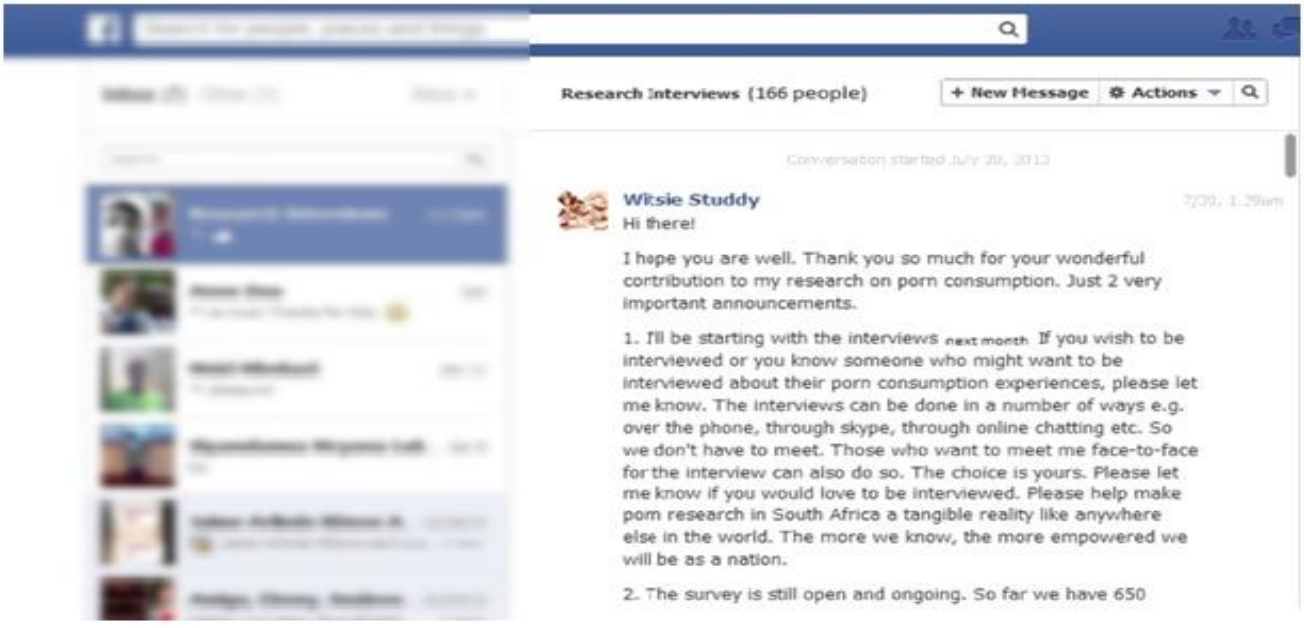
preferred language of the respondent's choice. Ultimately, interviews were held in English, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana, Pedi and Swati.

### *4.3.3 How the interview respondents were recruited*

The interview respondents were recruited in four ways, through the Facebook research group, an email list compiled from previous email inquiries about the research, an SMS list compiled from previous SMS inquiries about the research and one promotional blog.

The Facebook research group members were sent an inbox announcement about the commencement of the interviews. The members were made aware of their right to choose their preferred mode of interviewing. Once members indicated an interest in being interviewed, a follow-up message was sent requesting confirmation of age. All potential interview respondents who confirmed they were of legal age were sent the interview schedule and other consent documents (I discuss these documents later under ethical considerations). Participants were also requested to set aside an hour and a half for the interview so they would be not be surprised or unhappy if the interview took longer than an hour. Once respondents agreed to all these conditions, I requested to schedule the date and time for the interview.

**Figure 12 The announcement of interviews on the porn Research Group**




The names of the members are blurred to protect their identities. During the interview stage, the short blog was modified to include information about the interviews. A simple two-sentence

paragraph was added on how to be interviewed and the various options of interviews available to participants. Once potential interviewees indicated their interest via email, I sent them the interview schedule and ethics documents. If, after looking at the documents, they still wished to be interviewed, we determined the date, time and interview platform.

Recruiting respondents a month early made it possible to conduct *all* the 25 interviews in one month since dates had already been scheduled. A summation of the entire empirical research process is captured in the table below.

| **PHASE ONE**<br>**2013 Academic year** | |
|---|---|
| **Period** | **Research Task** |
| March | Designed and drafted the pilot questionnaire |
| April | Launched the pilot survey online, recruited pilot respondents, generated pilot findings. |
| May | Reworked, amended and updated the final questionnaire based on pilot errors and findings. Launched final survey online and advertised survey. |
| June | Recruited respondents, monitored responses. Advertised the survey in online platforms, *The Sunday Times*, an email list and distributed flyers. |
| July | 200 responses acquired. Continued to recruit respondents and to monitor responses. Continued advertising of the survey. |
| August | 500 response target reached with only 250 responses fully completed. Extended the survey and sought two extra people to help advertise. Decided to begin with Phase two of the research and to let it run concurrently with Phase one. Used survey responses to devise and draft interview questions. Sent invitations for interviews and listed number of people interested for interviews. |
| **PHASE TWO** | |
| **Period** | **Research Task** |
| September<br>**Survey** | Finalized interview schedule, canvassed participants for interviews, set interview dates and started interviews and completed 25interviews.<br>**350 completed responses acquired** |
| October<br>**Survey** | Beginning interview transcriptions<br>**450 completed responses acquired** |
| November<br>**Survey** | Transcriptions ongoing<br>**Over 650 completed responses acquired. Ceased advertising survey** |
| December | Completed transcriptions. Imported survey data, began initial coding and compiled basic findings graphs. Closed the survey down |
| January | Coding interview data. |
| February | Starting with Findings, Analysis and Methodology chapters. |

**Table 2. Summary of empirical research activities.**

| Respondent | Gender | Race | Age | Mode of interview | Relationship status | Brief Bio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Themba | M | Black | 27 | Phone call interview 38min | Married | Works as a security guard officer in Eastern Cape. |
| Tina | F | White | 30 | Face-to-face interview 31min | In long term relationship | Not working. Studying towards a Masters degree in Linguistics. |
| Joe | M | Black | 37 | Phone call interview 32min | Married | Lives and has an office job in Johannesburg. Has two children |
| Suraj | M | Indian | 23 | Online live chat interview 14pages | Single | Working and staying in Durban. |
| Duma | M | Black | 23 | Face-to-face interview 41min | Single | Home in Mpumalanga but studies in Johannesburg. Completing Masters degree in Economics. |
| Senzo | M | Black | 31 | Face-to-face interview 1hr40min | Single | Lives in Soweto and works at a debt collecting company in Johannesburg. |
| Litha | M | Black | 26 | Online live chat interview 26pages | Single | Works as an actor in the South African TV industry. |
| Joseph | M | Black | 45 | Online live chat interview 15pages | Married | Information not available |
| Zethu | F | Black | 22 | Face-to-face interview 27min | single | Not working. Final year student in Politics. |
| Sheila | F | Black | 25 | Face-to-face interview 53min | Stable relationship | Working. |
| Tara | F | White | 50 | Phone call interview 47min | In long term relationship | Retired. |
| Danny | M | Black | 18 | Phone call interview 1hr | single | Final year in matric |
| Elam | M | Black | 30 | WhatsApp mobile interview 7pages | In long term relationship | Information not available |
| Brian | M | White | 63 | Phone call interview 30min | Married | Working at a Tv/music studio |
| Simon | M | Black | 31 | WhatsApp mobile interview 7pages | Married | |
| George | M | Black | 40 | WhatsApp mobile interview 7pages | In long term relationship | Information not available |
| Thabo | M | Black | 22 | Phone call interview 1hr19min | In a relationship | Information not available |
| Pule | M | Black | 22 | Phone call interview 1hr15min | In a relationship | Works as a security guard in Kwazulu Natal |
| Lihle | M | Black | 27 | Phone call interview 1hr26min | single | Looking for employment. |
| Elrod | M | coloured | 60 | Phone call interview 1hr4min | Married | About to retire |
| Ndoda | M | Black | 18 | Phone call interview 47min | Single | Final year in high school |
| Dave | M | White | 42 | Face-to-face interview 2hrs38min | In long term relationship | Works as a call-centre agent |
| Kholo | M | Black | 29 | Face-to-face interview 1hr4min | Engaged | A script-writer freelancer. |
| Emmanuel | M | Black | 29 | Face-to-face interview 1hr31min | Engaged | Unemployed |
| Sam | M | Black | 36 | Phone call interview 44min | Engaged | Information not available |

**Table 3. List of Interview respondents (pseudonyms) in the order of their interviews.**

All audio interviews added together amounted to19 hours, 36 minutes and 50 seconds. Transcriptions combined with text-based interviews (WhatsApp and online Chat) were1110 pages.

## 4.4 How the research met standards of ethics

In keeping with professional research standards, this research adopted stringent ethical measures. According to Polonski (2004) ethics are primarily about observing practices that ensure safety and a good working relationship between parties. Safety and functional relationships (between researcher and participants) were particularly vital given the sensitive nature of the research topic.

The collection of data also had to adhere to the University's code of ethics. The University's code of ethics together with the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), serve to ensure that all researchers at the University respect the rights of participants. The code of ethics demands that all research involving human beings give informed consent, never be exploitative and never make research participants feel embarrassed. In adhering to these standard ethical protocols, both the survey and the interviews were implemented under the following ethical considerations.

### *4.4.1 The research granted informed consent to participants*

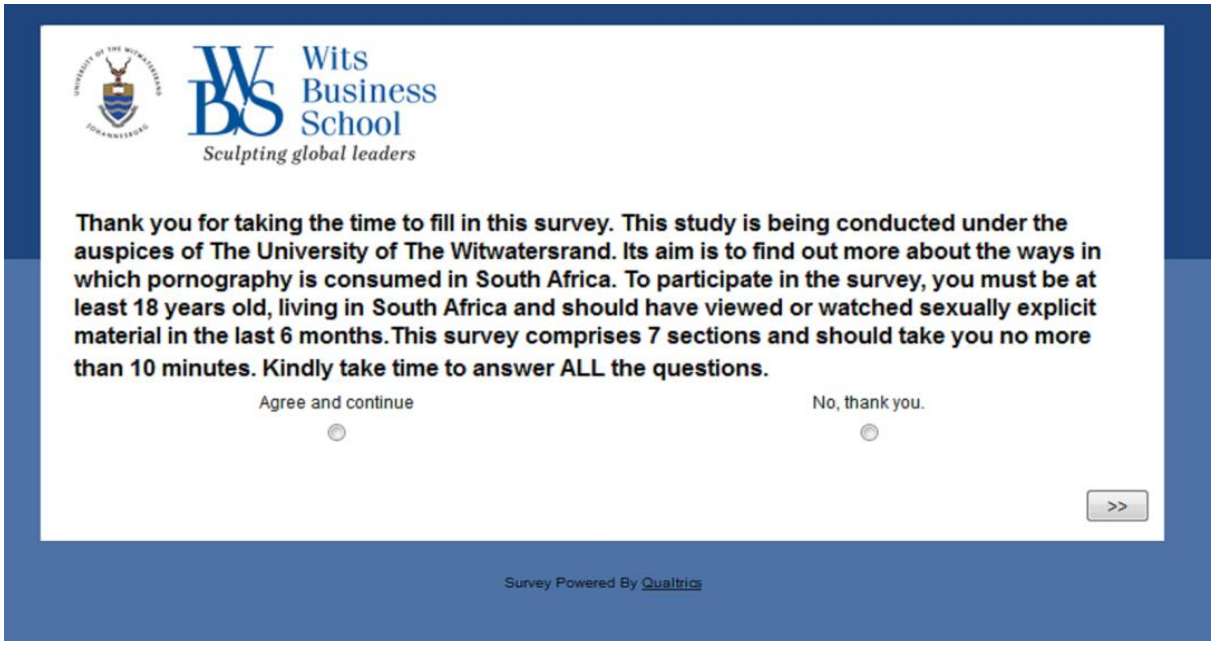
Apart from the interview schedule, all interview respondents were also emailed three crucial documents that they had to read prior the actual interview session. The first document was a one-page information sheet that notified the respondents about the research topic, aims and conditions of participation (APPENDIX 7). The information sheet offered a basic synopsis of the research and the rights of potential participants while it also acted as an invitation of participation. The second document was a consent-form that required the signature of the interview respondent. This document stated that the participant had been informed about the research topic, aims, terms of participation and their individual rights (APPENDIX 8). Interview participants were required to sign this as confirmation that they had, indeed, received such information. The third document that was sent to potential participants was an audio-recording form that indicated that the participants had agreed to grant permission to the researcher to record the interview (APPENDIX 9). The University's code of ethics states that "The use of monitoring devices such as tape recorders and cameras should be open, and fully understood by the people concerned. They should be free to reject them if they wish" (Wits 2016: 2).

Even though all the people who contributed in this study received these documents and were well informed about the research, none of them wanted to sign. Participants seemed more willing to participate yet less motivated to put their names and signatures on the documents

due to the sensitivity of the topic and potential risks perceived. Dickson et al (2009: 62) defines sensitive research as that which poses serious risks and a threats related to the "topic, the consequences, the situation and any number of other issues that may arise" for participants. Boyle & Vanderwolf (2004) note the difficulty of obtaining written consent for research on sensitive topics. They argue that, in such cases, informed consent can be reached verbally with the respondent orally expressing her understanding and agreeing to contribute. Boyle & Vanderwolf (2004) also point out that the absence of written consent does not imply unwillingness to participate. Due to participants' reluctance to sign the aforementioned documents, the data collection process relied solely on verbal consent.

Survey respondents indicated informed consent by selecting the option "agree and continue" on the first page of the online questionnaire which gave a summary of the research and conditions of participations. Potential participants could not proceed to the rest of the questionnaire without indicating their consent.

**Figure 13 The front page of the online questionnaire offering informed consent**




### *4.4.2 How the concept of anonymity and confidentiality applied*

The sacrosanct prerogative to protect the identities and personal information of participants meant that all those who contributed in the research had to be afforded anonymity and confidentiality. Anonymity, a term often used to refer to the waiver of participants' real identities or to allow them to remain unknown for the sake of preserving their right to privacy (Wiles et al 2009) was critical. Research respondents partook in the research based on the understanding they would be protected. Part of guaranteeing anonymity was the choice not to

request personal names, contact details or addresses of the participants. However some forms of communication that took place between me and some research participants left traces of their identities. Respondents and potential respondents called and emailed me to ask questions, to make suggestions and to participate. This meant that some identifiable information about the respondents was collected and even later used to respond to them. Complete anonymity could therefore not be possible. Furthermore, during the survey data collection process, I unwittingly discovered that the survey software was recording the Internet Protocol (IP) addresses of everyone who responded to the online survey instrument. Even though IP addresses do not reveal respondents' names, the fact that they disclose their exact geographic location meant that respondents' anonymity could not be guaranteed.

Being privy to the sensitive personal details of research participants meant that upholding their confidentiality was very crucial for maintaining ethical research standards. Confidentiality means "not disclosing any information gained from an interviewee deliberately or accidentally in ways that might identify an individual" (Wiles et al 2009: 418). Confidentiality was assured by the anonymisation of both the survey and interview data. All the IP addresses that were stored by the survey programme were deleted and exclude from the data analysis. All the interviewees who participated were given pseudonyms so that recorded responses could not be traced back to them. This is what Wiles et al (2009: 417) means when he states "The concept of confidentiality is closely connected with anonymity in that anonymity is one way in which confidentiality is operationalised."

Wiles also points out that confidentiality speak of how the data is stored to ensure its protection. The survey data was stored on my personal *Qualtrics* account which could only be accessed by me through my email details and unique password. This means that I was the only one who could access the online data. The interview transcripts were saved on my laptop which could only be accessed by me through a personal password. No one else could access either the survey data or the interview data. This means the research managed to protect every participant's personal identity and right to privacy.

## 4.5 Data coding and analyses

Once all the survey and interview data had been collected they had to be ordered and concentrated into forms that could easily be presented. Coding as the "process of organising data material into chunks" (Creswell, 2003: 192) meant I had to adopt systematic methods to ensure the data's intelligibility and application to the research questions. The coding and analyses of the survey and interview data took place in different ways which I now present.

### *4.5.1 How the survey data were managed and analysed*

The survey data was directly exported from its online software host *Qualtrics* to another programme SPSS, designed for statistical analysis. SPSS is a well-known acronym for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences[4]. The University also had a license for SPSS which made it easy for me to access it. I had also been taught how to use SPSS at a Masters research class from the University's Sociology department.

Once the data was exported to SPSS it was also checked for non-responses. These were individuals who visited the survey, agreed to participate but reneged before completion. The problem with non-responses was that they were counted as part of the overall pool of responses by the software. Non response here also refers to those individuals whose questionnaire responses could not be used because of large numbers of unanswered questions. Out of the total of 1337 respondents who filled in the survey, only 673 completed *all* the questions. This means that 664 people (49%) did not complete the questionnaire. However, not all these partially-answered questionnaires were discarded. Bryman (2004: 181) advises that when dealing with incomplete responses, it is "better to employ the number of usable" questionnaires rather than discarding them all. Accordingly, all responses that did not answer and complete any of the core sections of the survey, those beyond the filter questions and demographics, were considered unusable and were therefore discarded. However, if any respondent completed the filter questions, the demographic questions and at least three core sections of the survey, the questionnaire was considered usable and incorporated in the analysis. Using this selection criteria, only 3 questionnaires out of the incomplete 664 were considered usable. It took me well over 6 hours to delete all the unusable online responses. Ultimately, the total number of responses that were used for analyses was 676.

Once I had deleted all the unusable data, I had to think about coding. For online surveys, coding is particularly important as "a step in which responses provided by the survey sample

[4] This programme was chosen for its capacity to handle large data sets and to provide highly effective chart creation (IBM 2012).

are converted into codes that permit computer-based analysis to be undertaken (Stopher 2012: 401). However, forced-choice questions in surveys are already allocated categories and labels such that coding happens even before answers are filled in (de Vaus 1991, Bryman 2004). Think for examples of how the pre-coding of gender ("1. female", "2. male" and "3. other") meant that I did not have to manually capture, convert or categorise any of the data. This includes the itemising of gender, relationship statuses, population groups and all the other survey questions since they were all 'forced-choice' types. This made it easy easy to move straight to data analysis. I did however, have to re-label some of the data's categories since the imported data only contained numerical labels instead of nominal ones. Gender answers for example (automatically coded by SPSS as "male=0" "female=1" "other=2") were titled a randomised long number which I simply changed to "Gender."

The data analysis in this study made use of descriptive statistics instead of inferential statistics. This was due to the descriptive nature of this research seeking to uncover and describe porn consumption in South Africa rather than to infer future consumption patterns and probabilities. Descriptive statistics differ from inferential statistics in that the former describe and summarize observations and "patterns in the response of people in a sample" (de Vaus 1991: 134) while the latter allows us to infer, interpret and predict behaviour (Bryman 2004).

The data analysis was conducted to serve two primary functions; to reveal salient features and attributes emerging from the data and to assess associations between some of the measured concepts and variables. Correlation analysis, frequency distributions and ratios were used as the three analytic tools that served such a purpose. According to (Stopher 2012: 17) frequencies are the "counts of the number of times that a particular value occurs in the data." The use of frequencies in the analysis assisted in signalling distinct noticeable patterns in each of the variables measured in the data for example the pattern that shows the gendered nature of porn consumption as a whole; shown simply by the high numbers of males compared to females. While frequencies helped to flag out the most perceptible properties in the data, the use of correlation analysis enabled comparison between variables. Bryman (2015: 144) says correlation analysis allows for a "more precise estimates of degrees of relationships between concepts." An example of this is comparison the consumption patterns e.g. racial preferences of white consumers juxtaposed alongside those of black consumers and the preferences of female respondents to those of their male counterparts. Even though ratio's in this paper were used only twice, they were very helpful in showing the number of times

one value was contained within the other (Oxford University Press 2016) e.g. how many consumers, out of a hundred, view porn for more than an hour.

Once the survey data was exported to SPSS, cleaned of non-responses, rightly labelled and run for analyses, it was stored in a ”survey data” folder contained in my “research work” folder. To visually present the data, I used line graphs, area graphs, pie charts, bar and column graphs. This was important, not only to bestow character and colour to the visual presentations but to help accentuate different aspects of the data. To highlight any consistent trails of deviations between different data points, I used line graphs (Figure 35, 40, 42-43). To bring perspective on the significant difference in size and scope between responses I used pie charts (Figure 15, 32). When I wanted to simply contrast responses alongside each other, I used bar graphs (Figure 1,17-20, 28,34, 37, 41 ) and column graphs (Figure 10-11, 16, 21, 24, 33, 36). I used area graphs when I wanted to bring attention to significant peaks among response factors (Figure 30, 32, 39).

### *4.5.2 How the interview data were managed and analysed*

Once the interviews were all completed, they were transcribed. Interview transcription as noted by Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) is an essential part of conducting interviews. It allows for a dependable account of the respondents’ answers instead of relying on the fallible memory or partial notes of the researcher. Not only does the transcription provide the researcher with the exact verbatim reproduction of the respondent’s words, but it also makes conversation analysis possible. Conversation analysis refers to how a discussion between speakers is deciphered according to the conversational codes the speakers abide by “how they defer to or override each other, how they adopt roles within a conversation, who chooses to respond or to be silent and when” (Bertrand & Hughes 2005: 93). It took eight weeks to transcribe all the interviews that needed to be transcribed.

The task of transcribing 19 hours and 30 minutes was one I could not do by myself since I wanted to begin analyses soon after the interviews. I paid a transcriber to assist me to transcribe some of the interview audio files. The transcriber was thoroughly briefed about not allowing anyone to have access either to the written or audio files. Upon receipt of the transcribed material, I requested that he delete all the work from his own computer. Because some of the interviews were conducted in vernacular, it was important that the transcriber could both speak and write South African indigenous languages.

The transcriber was responsible for 10 audio files while I transcribed the remaining 9. I chose to transcribe all of the audio files above one hour. This was a personal decision I took since,

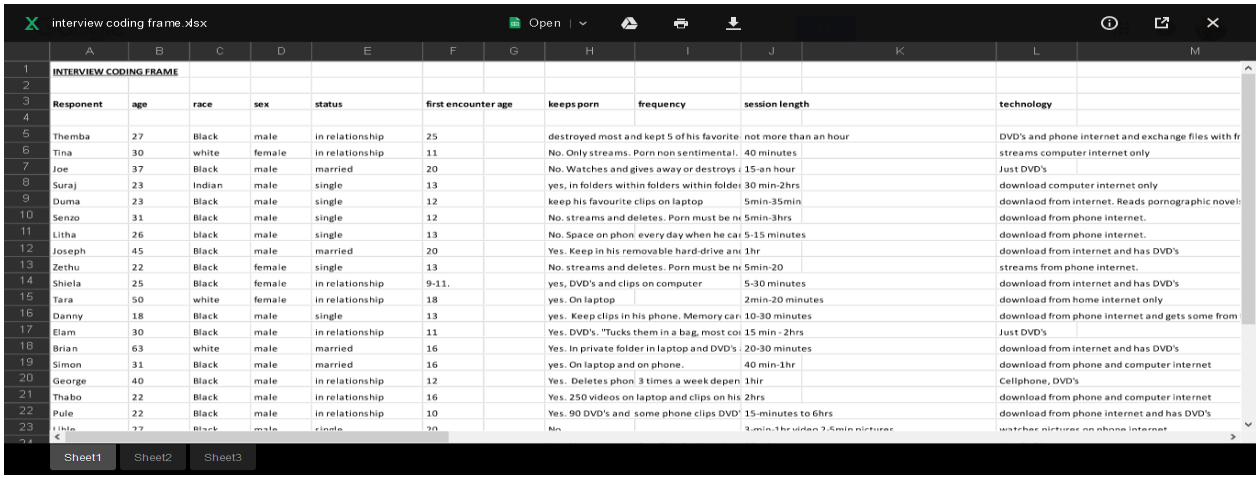
as a researcher, I had a personal connection to the long interviews as they contained rich data. Transcribing these for me was more than an act of converting information. It was a significant part of immersing myself in the respondents' ways of thinking and feeling. Bryman (2015) believes that transcription forms part of the analytical process rather than simply constituting a means of presenting data in a particular form. This became evident in my own process of transcription. I kept a detailed "data notes" sheet alongside my transcriptions. This "data notes" sheet was an MS-word document on which I wrote any noteworthy information e.g. insightful quotes, some tentative analyses and even observations pertaining to *how* respondents answered. I had initially kept these notes to help me remember where to locate particular information from the transcripts. As time went by, I started to also incorporate some literature, current news affairs in addition to rudimentary analyses and thoughts. At first there was no particular order to the writings. They were simply my own exuberant scribbles made at various points of my transcriptions. However, as time went on, the data notes developed a discernible structure. All similar quotes, themes and writings became lumped on particular sections of the page. By the time the transcriptions were complete, I had already mapped out a picture of answers according to particular quotes and themes.

All transcriptions from my transcriber went through the same process. I had to vet the dictations' accuracy. I listened to the audio interviews at the same time I read through the written text to establish concordance between the spoken and the written word. In the process of adding more details to my notes, I also corrected misnomers such as incorrect spelling, missing words and misunderstood communication by my transcriber. Particular names of porn stars for example were mostly misspelled because my transcriber wasn't very familiar to porn stars. I also wanted to make sure the transcriptions stayed true to the language and wordings preferred by participants. I had no desire to edit them to sound more academic e.g. respondents used words such as "dick" instead of penis, "muffing" instead of cunnilingus and "come" instead of "ejaculate." During the transcription process, it was important that these were kept the same way they were spoken. All interviews that were spoken in vernacular had to be written that way. Translations only happened during analyses when I used parts of the written interviews and included them in the analytical discussions.

A coding scheme is a "matrix based method for ordering and synthesizing data" (Richie et al 2003: 219). After the interviews were transcribed, the interview data of each respondent were segmented and assessed according to key categories. Once the categories were finalised, e.g.

race, sex, age, porn uses, modes of access etc for all the respondents, a coding framework was developed for all the 25 respondents.

**Figure 14 Coding frame developed from all the 25 interview respondents**



interview coding frame.xlsx — Open

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | INTERVIEW CODING FRAME | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Responent | age | race | sex | status | first encounter age | | keeps porn | frequency | session length | | technology | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Themba | 27 | Black | male | in relationship | 25 | | destroyed most and kept 5 of his favorite | | not more than an hour | | DVD's and phone internet and exchange files with fr | |
| 6 | Tina | 30 | white | female | in relationship | 11 | | No. Only streams. Porn non sentimental. | | 40 minutes | | streams computer internet only | |
| 7 | Joe | 37 | Black | male | married | 20 | | No. Watches and gives away or destroys | | 15-an hour | | Just DVD's | |
| 8 | Suraj | 23 | Indian | male | single | 13 | | yes, in folders within folders within folde | | 30 min-2hrs | | download computer internet only | |
| 9 | Duma | 23 | Black | male | single | 12 | | keep his favourite clips on laptop | | 5min-35min | | downlaod from internet. Reads pornographic novel | |
| 10 | Senzo | 31 | Black | male | single | 12 | | No. streams and deletes. Porn must be n | | 5min-3hrs | | download from phone internet. | |
| 11 | Litha | 26 | black | male | single | 13 | | No. Space on phon | every day when he ca | 5-15 minutes | | download from phone internet. | |
| 12 | Joseph | 45 | Black | male | married | 20 | | Yes. Keep in his removable hard-drive an | | 1hr | | download from internet and has DVD's | |
| 13 | Zethu | 22 | Black | female | single | 13 | | No. streams and deletes. Porn must be n | | 5min-20 | | streams from phone internet. | |
| 14 | Shiela | 25 | Black | female | in relationship | 9-11. | | yes, DVD's and clips on computer | | 5-30 minutes | | download from internet and has DVD's | |
| 15 | Tara | 50 | white | female | in relationship | 18 | | yes. On laptop | | 2min-20 minutes | | download from home internet only | |
| 16 | Danny | 18 | Black | male | single | 13 | | yes. Keep clips in his phone. Memory car | | 10-30 minutes | | download from phone internet and gets some from | |
| 17 | Elam | 30 | Black | male | in relationship | 11 | | Yes. DVD's. "Tucks them in a bag, most co | | 15 min - 2hrs | | Just DVD's | |
| 18 | Brian | 63 | white | male | married | 16 | | Yes. In private folder in laptop and DVD's | | 20-30 minutes | | download from internet and has DVD's | |
| 19 | Simon | 31 | Black | male | married | 16 | | yes. On laptop and on phone. | | 40 min-1hr | | download from phone and computer internet | |
| 20 | George | 40 | Black | male | in relationship | 12 | | Yes. Deletes phon | 3 times a week depen | 1hir | | Cellphone, DVD's | |
| 21 | Thabo | 22 | Black | male | in relationship | 16 | | Yes. 250 videos on laptop and clips on his | | 2hrs | | download from phone and computer internet | |
| 22 | Pule | 22 | Black | male | in relationship | 10 | | Yes. 90 DVD's and | some phone clips DVD | 15-minutes to 6hrs | | download from phone internet and has DVD's | |
| 23 | Lihle | 27 | Black | male | single | 20 | | No | | 3-min-1hr video ? -5min pictures | | watches pictures on phone internet | |

Sheet1 Sheet2 Sheet3

## 4.6 Various challenges encountered by this study

The data collection process of this research encountered a litany of obstacles and challenges that seemed to be telling of the moralising perceptions that society has of porn as a 'debased' art form. As a strip club manager said after asking him for assistance "We are a strip club. We are much better than porn." It also became clear that one could not conduct research on a highly stigmatised topic such as porn without incurring a lot of stigma. The challenges encountered during the data collection of this research included sabotage, hostility, brazen refusal to assist, a tangible academic trivialisation of the research topic by academics and an unusually high percentage of non-responses.

Even though the online chat-rooms offered an anonymous and liberal platform for respondents to freely ask questions and participate in the research, they also seemed to license the expression of very traditionalist views and unprecedented hostility. In the online chat-rooms, there seemed to be a very scathing rumour that anyone who does research into porn should never be trusted. I encountered this assumption quite a few times when I became accused of trying to "trick" people into launching the questionnaire for satisfying my "sick sexual fantasies" and "getting off" on people's responses. Some people seemed to think that anyone who conducted research into the topic of porn must have something wrong with him. Even when I directed people to use the verification contact details of my supervisor made available in the detailed blog, some still believed that this was all an elaborate ruse and that I couldn't possibly be a legitimate researcher. The hostility became particularly pungent when a room administrator kicked me out of one of the rooms simply because she "did not like

me.” It was rather shocking to me that such flagrant prejudice was even possible in online platforms which are often deemed strongholds of cultural multiplicity and information.

Such crude legitimations about what constitutes valid academic research were not only confined to online chat-rooms but became interestingly visible in academic circles. I encountered many academics within the university who simply saw the research as a “fun” exercise rather than a serious academic research project. Some academics asked me if my parents knew I was researching such a topic as if there was something to hide or be ashamed in researching porn consumption.

One of my most alarming experiences was the removal of my research posters from university notice boards. These posters were promotional invitations for the academic community to participate in the research. Since the posters had stamps of approval from the relevant university authorities, their unsubstantiated removal was tantamount to sabotage. About 10 of my A2 colour posters were illicitly removed from notice boards across main campus where I had mounted them. When I spoke to the relevant university bodies responsible for removing posters on campus, none admitted to having removed them. I had to pay for the re-printing of more colour posters which had to be re-stamped and re-mounted across the university. Some of these were removed again and I had to replace them again and again. It dawned on me that someone on campus must have felt that research on porn consumption was a vulgar mistake that could not be allowed to gain visibility in the public eye.

According to De Vaus (1991: 73) the average non-response rate for surveys should be around 20% of the total number of answered questionnaires. However, the percentage of non-responses for the online survey, for most of the data collection period, was 51%. This means there were more incomplete surveys than complete ones. This was rather disturbing. This number just seemed abnormally high and did not make sense to me. It was through my online interactions that I discovered a large number of people who went to the survey site were hoping to find porn pictures and videos. They did not believe they would find a typical research instrument. Some who later spoke to me even expressed their disappointment at this and advised me to put up some porn images to make the survey more "spicy."

Others who had seen or heard about the survey from me or elsewhere said they just wanted "to see" what “this whole survey thing” was about. It became clear to me that out of the scores of people who visited the survey site only half were sincerely committed to participating. This delayed the data collection process and led to the extension of the survey

from the originally intended one month to 6 months. Since 50% constantly remained the rate of non-response throughout the data collection period, it was clear that even when the responses reached 500 only 250 would be completed.

It became evident during the data collection that companies and businesses were least likely to assist research into porn consumption. In my attempts to promote the survey, I approached 8 radio stations with national coverage for marketing assistance. I asked each of the stations for a few minutes to talk about the research during one of their late-night shows. None of the stations assisted. One national newspaper, the *Mail and Guardian*, refused to advertise a classified advert about the research in their newspaper because, they said, their newspaper "caters to professionals." The assumption here is that research into porn consumption is not professional and that professional people do not consume porn. Both these assumptions are false.

The biggest disappointment was the refusal of adult shops, particularly Adult World to assist making the flyers I printed available to their clients. The 3000 flyers I had printed were specifically aimed for distribution at adult shops. Even when I sent samples of the flyers to some adult shops to show them that consumers would be safe since no personal information was required, none of the adult shops owners agreed to help. It dawned on me that adult shop owners weren't necessarily worried about the safety of their consumers than the prospect of consumer backlash and loss of business from customers' fears. After I had explained the research and how it would work to one shop owner, he listened and then brazenly asked me "So what will I gain by doing this?" I explained to him that the benefits would not come in monetary form but will be in the form of knowledge that could help him understand his consumers more. He refused.

Monitoring the submissions of the online responses allowed me to see which marketing initiatives yielded an increase in survey responses. It was rather interesting that the distribution of flyers did not translate to an increase of survey responses at all. The placing of the research advert in the *Sunday Times* Newspaper translated to a small increase of responses of about 29 on the day of the newspaper publication and a menial 10 responses per day for the first week of publication. Both these forms of marketing (printing the flyers and newspaper advertising) cost a sizeable amount of money. It was, however, the free medium of the internet that attracted most responses of about 70-90 responses on the day of online publishing and 20 daily responses for the whole first week of online publishing. Two websites in particular *Za Gossip* and *My News24* generated more responses than all

marketing platforms I had been using. The success of online marketing can, perhaps, be attributed to the anonymity and the sense of safety offered by the web.

One of my research aids who was helping me promote the research recalled how he attracted backlash from a number of people in his building for distributing the research flyers on Sunday. A number of people who had been to church were angry at him and felt it was inappropriate for him to be distributing the flyers on a 'holy day.' He decided to stop and continue the following day. It appeared that research into porn consumption on a Sunday is not such a great idea after all! My hope in sharing these challenges is to help future porn researchers have a better, possibly pleasant research experience.

## 4.7 Conclusions

In determining the various consumption patterns of pornography consumers, this study utilized a mixed method approach, a large anonymous survey (Phase 1) and a smaller number of in depth interviews (Phase 2). This led to the recruitment of 676 survey responses and 25 in depth interviews. The cross-checking advantage offered by mixed method approach meant that the feedback from the questionnaires was measured against the feedback of the interviews. The survey was chosen to precede the interviews so that its feedback could be used to collect much more in depth information during the interview process.

The questionnaire was made available on an online survey software programme. This meant that time and location posed no hindrance to respondents who wished to participate. Anyone with internet in South Africa was able to access the online questionnaire and participate at any time. Sadly, this also meant that the survey was biased towards respondents with internet access most of whom are white. The survey instrument underwent a period of piloting which really helped expose errors related to content of the questions, the structure of the questionnaire, the range of options made available, the scales of measurements and software commands.

The sample of this research had to meet three requirements. Firstly, they had to have watched porn within the last six months of their participation in the study, they had to be residing in South Africa and they had to be of legal age. In keeping with professional research standards and the university's code of ethics, this research adopted stringent ethical measures for providing informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. All survey respondents indicated informed consent by selecting the to "agree and continue" option on the first page of the online questionnaire. This page also gave a summary of the research and conditions of participations. Those who did not wish to participate could simply click "No, thank you" and

be exited from the survey. All interview respondents were emailed a one page information sheet about the research, a consent form indicating their agreement to participate and an audio recording form.

Complete anonymity could not be made possible during this study because communication between me and some respondents who needed clarification occurred. These forms of communication happened through emails and telephone discussions. This means that some identifiable information about the respondents was collected and even later used to respond to participants' questions. Moreover, I discovered during the data collection phase that the survey software was recoding IP addresses of respondents, making them geographically traceable. However, the guarantee of confidentiality meant such information was not used. Both the survey and interview data were anonymised so that names and IP addresses were eliminated from the analysis.

The survey data and interview data were also stored securely and could not be accessed by third parties. The survey data was stored on my personal *Qualtric* account which could only be accessed by me through my email details and unique password. The interview transcripts were saved on my laptop which could only be accessed by me through my laptop password. Finally, the challenges encountered during this research study indicate that porn researchers may be undermined by other academics, be deliberately sabotaged and receive little to no assistance in carrying out the research.

The following chapters will present and discuss some of the key findings made from the data. The quantitative and qualitative data were analysed together and integrated into my arguments. They will both be presented in the chapters that follow.

# 5 MEDIATION: PORNOGRAPHY AS THE CONSTRUCTION OF SEX IN TEXT

The previous chapter has outlined and discussed the various methodological approaches that were utilised to collect both the quantitative and qualitative data obtained during the empirical phase of the research. A total of 676 survey responses and 25 interview respondents were gathered. The following three analytical chapters, will now delve into a detailed breakdown of the collected data, beginning with a chapter on 'mediation' which will discuss the centrality of technological devices to practices of porn consumption and the various ways consumers access, interpret, modify and adapt such porn images into their own lives. The second chapter will explore the 'public/private' dichotomy of porn consumption and how consumers perform their own private desires through publicised sexual images and examine the polysemic nature of porn as consumption conditions and porn encounters migrate across different public and private spaces. The last chapter on the dialectic of power and pleasure will address the ways in which pleasure in porn is intercepted by a host of hegemonic factors such as social ideologies, gender, religious institutions, family structures and state regulation.

I now turn our attention to 'mediation' and how porn as mediated sex is consumed. This chapter consists of six sub-sections. The first addresses definitional issues involving the ways porn consumers intellectually frame and select pornographic material. Impressions, perceptions and selections, I argue, are foundational steps into plotting out the rubric of human behavioural patterns including porn consumption. What became clear during the interviews was that consumers understood porn was a construction, media text that is 'read' in various ways for various reasons. The second sub-section explores the role of technology in porn consumers' experiences. Porn exists as technology and is only seen, heard and experienced as such. Internet pornography in particular, is a unique form of technology, completely refurbishing traditional ways of experiencing porn content. The third section looks at this distinctive role of the internet in South African porn consumption. The fourth sub-unit presents the set of material conditions under which porn consumers use porn most, what I have come to term 'the spatial-temporal dimensions of mediation in porn consumption.' The penultimate section discusses the reasons for which porn consumers use explicit material and the conclusions offers a brief summary of the entire chapter.

## 5.1 What is porn? Considerations on how users select explicit material

Pornography is not sex; it is the representation thereof in many textual forms using many types of technologies. While the visual cues adopted by the genre give away its status as a carefully crafted sexual display, the technologically embodied nature of pornography also betray its very attempts to pose as sex, pointing to its nature as a packaged form of sexual

desire, a mediated form of sex, a construction of sex in text. As stated by Schroeder & McDonagh (2006:2)

> Producing sexualized pictures requires advanced photographic technology, a conscious effort to photograph the act, and often, especially within pornographic representations, a costumed, scripted, and directed scenario produced for profit.

Therefore, mediation articulates the process by which, porn like any movie, is sculpted from the interweaving partnership between directors, writers, actors, lighting, editing and make-up artists. In addition to all these conventional production accessories, the porn industry deploys STI testing and hygiene inspections on actresses and actors. There is therefore no doubt that the level of behind-the-scene preparation involved in porn reflects very meticulous efforts.

Even though most consumers admittedly seek out the idea of candid and authentic sex in porn, the constructedness of the very form hauntingly lingers in the recesses of their minds and shapes the way they experience pleasure. Elrod (60 coloured male), for example, admits that when he watches porn he becomes uncertain of the genuineness of the sexual exchange depicted when a woman screams during sex.

> The noise they're making. I wonder if it's real or do they fake it? …..Ja we've seen this in the rugby games, in the soccer games before; where they fall, but they haven't been tripped, here (in porn) they fell but they don't feel nothing.…(*laughs*). No, I'm not convinced by it.

Elrod's analogy of porn as a game one needs to "feel" is reminiscent of Bourdieu (1990)'s own homology of various domains of life as sporting games played by those with a "feel for the game." Bourdieu spoke of the "feel for the game" as impetus for individual participation in a field. In such an instance one plays the game *because* one had "feel" for it. Elrod on the other hand speaks of "feeling" as compensatory, as a reward that comes at the end of the game not the "feel" that comes before. Thus, one plays the game *to* feel, entailing that porn consumption is a constant, unending pursuit of *that* "feeling." D'Orlando (2011: 61) refers to this as escalation: the pleasure of being emotionally "satisfied, through porn but soon begin searching anew for ''harder'' pornographic material. And so on, without end." The synthesis of Elrod's and Bourdieu's perspectives seems to suggest porn practices both emanate *from* a place of feeling leading *to* another place of feeling. This theorem that consumers access porn

when they feel *something* and wish to feel *something* greater or better or different is one I will discuss in the following chapters. Salient in the formulation of porn consumption as a "feel game" is the implication of mediation as a type of *play*. Sutton-Smith (2008) contends that *play*, though enamoured with convivial activity is not simply for pleasure. He lists a few theories that have identified the biologically industrious functions served by *play* e.g. *play* as preparation for life, as relaxation incentive and as "recapitulation of ancient practices" (Sutton-Smith 2008: 82). However, the most useful theory of *play* for this study is that of Sutton-Smith's himself: *play* as *viability variable*.

> Play's positive pleasure typically transfers to our feelings about the rest of our everyday existence and makes it possible to live more fully in the world, no matter how boring or painful or even dangerous ordinary reality might seem. It appears to me that in this way play genetically refreshes or fructifies our other, more general, being. Play we might conceptualize as what I came to call a viability variable, one supplied as a genetically based technique that allows us to triumph over regular, ordinary distresses and disasters or, more simply, to feel good about life in general (Sutton-Smith 2008: 95).

Looking at Sutton-Smith's definition of *play* as an exculpatory feature of a cumbersome existence, a restorative elixir, one finds a logic that suggests *play* to be the enjoyment, the "positive pleasure" of "our feelings" we indulge in order to fulfil necessary human obligations we may not enjoy. This philosophy of *play* as 'do what you like so you can do what you need' places mediation at the bidding arm of social responsibility; as a pleasure-tool for duty. It also suggests that media technologies, as mere enablers of life, are separate from life. They are the virtual lending themselves to the valid, the cyber to the solid; porn as sex but not quite, bodies in coitus yet in performance. After all, material existence has never been the game one can rewind, fast-forward, pause and play at a whim.

Nonetheless, if as Sutton-Smith (2008) suggests, life without *play* becomes impossible to *do* then *play* by all definitions becomes indispensable. In this sense, mediation becomes both an instrument for living and a component of life. The terms "everyday existence" "ordinary reality" and "life in general" echo the intrinsic ethos of mediation as supersession of 'technology as just momentary utility.' It points to the appropriation of media electronics as constitutive of daily life experience. To coin a rather haphazard maxim: where sex sails porn stays. Sex as an everyday global occurrence makes porn consumption as frequent a manifestation, an organ of the body of daily life and mediation its heart-beat. Perhaps then,

Elrod's doubts of the authenticity of on-screen sexual pleasure captures another certainty as real as his doubt: pleasure in porn sex is as imitable as pleasure in actual sex. In any case, mediation still tease (plays) as well as it authenticates.

Despite the fact porn consumers in the moment of porn use are affective bodies, they still remain astute, critical and discerning bodies as seen from the respondents below. Zethu, (22 black female) a self-declared 'unapologetic' consumer of pornography, conceded to what she acknowledged as the comic nature of porn. To her, porn is funnier than it is arousing.

> I don't particular watch porn for (sexual) enjoyment. I feel like…… I feel like it's entertaining and it's funny.

Zethu also recalls a moment of watching porn with her friends. This was meant to be a serious moment of talking about sex between girls but instead, she says, "it turned into a big joke."

> We found a clip where there was a story line in inverted commas, you know….and it was just *so* stupid so we made a joke about all of that, you know. We were laughing.

When Tara (50 white female) consumes porn she mentions that she cannot help but be concerned about the forceful treatment of women.

> I know it's staged but uhmm….. but I can't get pass that you know… that's an everyday occurrence. Women are being, you know, physically overpowered every day in the world purely because they don't have the physical strength. I believe that women …….sex for women is more emotional…. and in most of the hard core porn there's zero connection.

The two respondents' accounts tally with Silverstone (2002: 3)'s rendition of mediation as a "fundamentally, but unevenly, dialectical process in which institutionalized media of communication are involved in the general circulation of symbols in social life." The dialectical aspect of mediation reveals itself in the ways consumers such as Tara and Zethu 'speak back' to media texts in ways that are, arguably, 'unintended' by producers. As already

stated by other writers (e.g. Artz 2013, Bryant & Shim 2008) porn consumers bring their critical faculties even when consuming porn.

This reciprocal 'speak back' process differs for both female respondents. Zethu reaps humour and comic relief from a medium that is supposedly designed for her sexual arousal. This unconventional use of the genre challenges dominant presuppositions about its affective nature and opens possibility to see porn as a sardonic critique of (masculine) sexual fantasies. Zethu's reading of porn as funny is obviously telling of the fact that more than just sex transpires on porn screens. The fantastically grandiose ways of body angling, positioning, choreography and pretend-groaning mark the genre as a territory of sexual drama and gymnastics. Paasonen (2009: 590) states:

> Pornography's commercial underpinnings, hyperbolic displays of gender difference and relations of control, demonstrations of casual sex and indifference to health issues such as STDs ensure that it is easily identified with 'false interpretations', 'myths' and 'slanted attitudes' towards sexuality.

Understandably, the hyperbolic fictions that accompany sexual activity have to be amusing to some like Zethu just as the attempts at narrative devising (for a form reputed for reasons other than erudite story-telling) are laughably contrived. On the other hand, Zethu's laughter can also be considered a sign of her discomfort and denial of the sexual satisfaction she perhaps *does* derive from seeing sexual bodies. There are, after all, a slew of tailor made genres designed specifically for laughter, yet she opts for one keynoted by sexual practice. It is the genre's achievement that the ludicrousy of its "myths," "hyperbolic displays" attract the derision that amuse Zethu and the fascination that keeps her coming back for more. The process of mediation thus proves to be a non-linear path, strewn with rugged boulders of doubt, self-contradiction and a perpetual pursuit for pleasure.

Tara's own experience seems as layered as Zethu's. Her realist observation and concern about the treatment of women, arguably speaks of her age as someone who has had time to not only enjoy porn but ponder on it. Her pleasure/ambivalence position characterise a soliloquy of internal conflict regarding enjoying something she also perceives prejudicial. Note her words "I can't get pass that that's an everyday occurrence. Women are being, you know, physically overpowered every day *in the world*." Note that Tara began by pointing out that porn is "staged." Nonetheless, she is still able to observe that it is a problematic sexual medium in that it reproduces misogynistic forms of power dynamics that are real in the 'unstaged' material world i.e. "Women are being overpowered everyday by men." There is a

logic that seems to suggest the overbearing treatment of women in the *staged* world is only problematic because it is rampant in the real one. In this sense, porn as fantasy and fiction is acceptable as long as it does not reproduce already pervasive forms of inequity in the non-fictional universe. Perceived real dynamics of oppressive power assimilated into and portrayed by the *staged* contaminate fantasy, making it complicit in the very problems from which it draws pleasure. Despite her qualms, Tara, nonetheless, still consumes porn; ironically, because its "staged" status assures her that the misogynist portrayals are locked, confined and quarantined behind the screen.

Tara's concerns for 1.forceful treatment of women and 2.the exclusion of women's pleasure in the porn industry are objections buttressed by various feminist movements and scholars such as Sharon Lamb, Susana Paasonen and Karen Ciclitira. All these scholars, though opposed to porn censorship, still nonetheless noted that the version of women empowerment advanced by mainstream media needs to be diversified and augmented by images that promulgate "ethical sexual practice, based on respect, caring, and justice" (Lamb 2010: 317). Similar to Zethu, Tara's observations do not deter her from consuming porn. After all, porn is "staged." Both Tara and Zethu's responses underscore the ways in which mediation as a dialectical process and practice gives rise to multitude understanding of porn consumption in various individual spheres e.g. as both doubt and certainty, derisory and desirable..

Iqani (2012: 16) notes that "questioning the dynamics of consumerist mediation inherently involves questioning the concepts" often taken for granted. For this dissertation, such concepts encompass unpacking the ways consumers understand terms such as "sex" and "porn." The way consumers conceptualise and define porn for themselves is not an academic exercise. It is one which strikes at the core of how users select and experience explicit material. Those, for example, who understood porn as "any material showing full nudity without sexual activity" or as "any material depicting nude sexual acts without the exposure of genitals" tended to be happy and satisfied watching non-penetrative porn. On the other hand, those who defined porn as "material depicting sexual activity and exposure of genitals" tended to demand penetrative porn. Emmanuel (29 black male) was one of the people who emphasised that complete genital nudity was not enough but had to be supplemented by sexual activity.

> ..if they are just naked, sitting there, no it's not porn. I cannot even waste my time…. cannot waste my time…waste my time watching (*Zulu*) nje abantu abahleli" (*people who are just sitting*)

For Dave (42 white male) on the other hand, sexual activity needed to be accompanied by explicit exposure of genitalia. In other words, sexual activity was inadequate in making him feel he was watching porn.

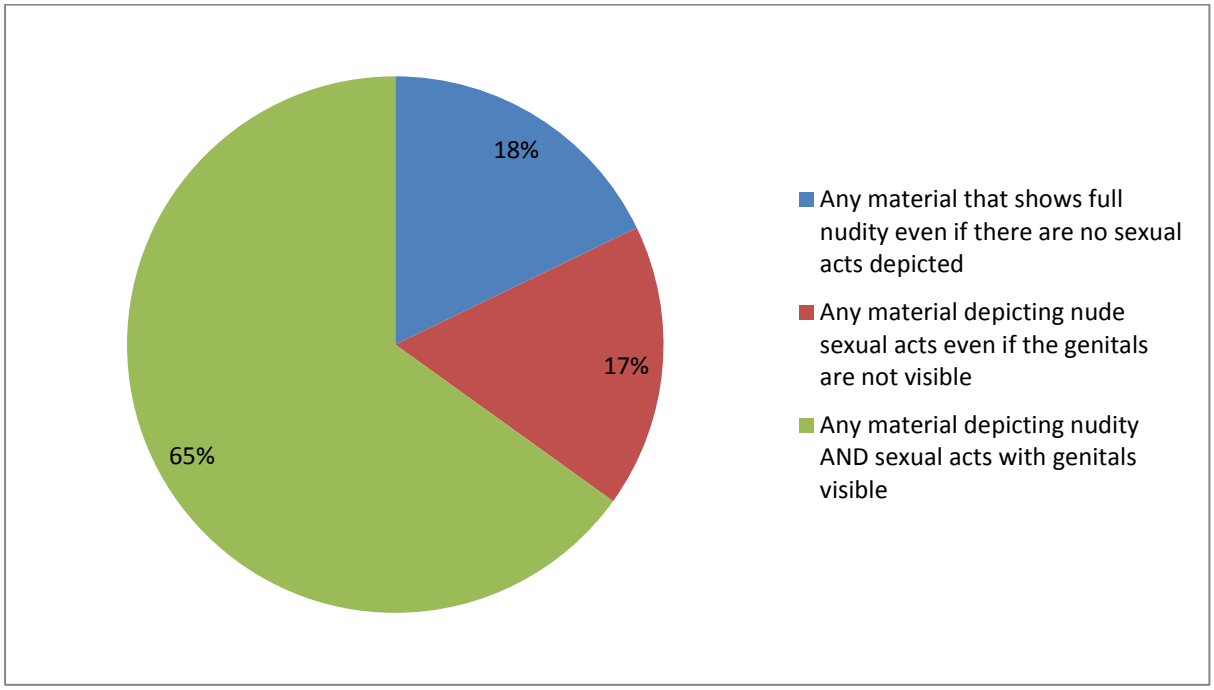
> If it doesn't show genitalia then wow! What are we…? I mean, no! Then it becomes a simulated sex scene……then why would I want to like.….then why would I want to watch it?

In characterizing porn, both these respondents insist on two quintessential qualities: full genital nudity and sexual activity. This of course can range from fellatio, masturbation, penetrative sex, *ménage à trois* to orgiastic sex. What is critical is that the sexual activity be explicitly revealed, otherwise, it becomes a "waste of time." It is in such a manner that understanding informs practice. Of course one could easily argue the inverse i.e. how people engage or position themselves to explicit material informs how they understand it. D'Orlando (2011) Paasonen, Nikunen & Saarenmae (2007) have argued that the term 'pornography' acquires whatever meaning different parties and camps (e.g. radical feminists, religious groups, liberal lobbyists, academics) imbue it. Since most of the interview respondents watch genitally explicit porn it makes sense that they would describe porn in such terms. Tara, was the only participant who defined porn using the 'hard-core/soft-core' dichotomy.

> Well to…. to divide it into the two categories…. soft porn and hard porn. Soft porn; one doesn't see genitals, male and seldom female genitals uhm…… And it's more tastefully perhaps the photography is….is….uhmm….the camera is further away from the people. Hard porn……pornography is where the camera zooms in on the bodily parts and the sexual act that's happening

Unsurprisingly, Tara consumed both kinds of porn and was hence able to speak of both as porn. Majority of the survey respondents (446) also defined porn as sexual material that shows genitals while 112 respondents defined porn by full genital nudity (even if there's no sexual activity). The remaining 116 respondents said some level of nudity with some suggestive sexual activity would be enough to constitute porn.

**Figure 15 How consumers understand porn**




Evidently, genital nudity and (visible) sexual activity is the combination that work to trigger the sexual pleasure consumers seek from porn. There is obviously some combustible element attached to genitally explicit imagery. Williams (1999) asserts that these kinds of pornographic images appeal to audiences because they satisfy a profound curiosity that human beings have about sexual intercourse, "the truth of sex" (Williams 1999: 32). This evokes notions of 'seeing as desiring' and 'desiring as seeing' as alluded to by Barker:

> Remember that the experiment involved showing men and women representations of other people and creatures engaged in sex. Bodies respond, and in doing so raise in us the very idea of sex and sexuality. We are creatures who not only desire sex, but can enjoy the idea of desiring (Barker 2014: 157).

If consumers take corporeal prompts from 'seeing' or being 'shown' then, it seems that 'showing' or 'seeing' must be the sexually expository kind. That which is conventionally a tantalising bedroom secret must explode into a kaleidoscope of enthralling visual confessions "where physical parts are seen penetrating other physical parts" in the words of one of the respondents Sheila (25 black female). It is in such an instance it can be said seeing sparks "the idea of desiring." Of course, the "enjoyed" "idea of desire" in this case is desire itself. Nonetheless, if (sexual) desire needs to be planted through an idea, porn as a visual cue becomes both the idea and its graphic articulation. In the project of selling sexual desire, porn must be a convincing demonstration. To be convincing means eradicating doubt by showing

*everything* there is to show. The principle of revealing is therefore of paramount significance to consumers of porn. When defining pornography, Pule (22 black male), touched on this "hidden" attribute of sex and the ability of porn to make it known.

> To me it's….. how can I describe it? It's like a way of viewing or expressing the....the hidden aspects of sexual intercourse… it's something very secreted.

It makes sense most consumers demand 'their' porn expose the hidden, reveal the concealed and "display precisely those details of sex so hard to see elsewhere" (Williams 2008: 142). To Pule, porn is a mechanism of unveiling, a laying bare of privileged sexual material for everyone to enjoy. There is an unavoidable classist component in Pule's elucidation of sex as a secret. From whom must this secret be kept if not from children, youth, physically or mentally disabled people and women? The availability of porn as availability of sex has strong ties with a history that has deprived marginalised communities (Jacobs 2004: 8) such as women, youth, gay, bisexual, black people and other socially subordinated groups of sexual agency in the form of education, contrastive autonomy and free sexual practice. As stated by Attwood (2002: 94).

> "the production of 'pornography' by definition has a particular function; the construction of porn as a 'special' category and as a 'secret' to be kept from certain social groups – women, children and the lower classes.

Therefore, the principle of maximum visibility serves more than as utility for pleasure. Although this is the primary interest of porn producers, to arouse, there is no doubt complete visibility is a by-product of unrestricted sexual expression. In the context of a censorious gender-unjust history, the current liberties availed everyone to access explicit materials are a function of sexual self-determination made possible by egalitarian social structures. This is no clearer than when we consider South Africa's neighbour states, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Though criminalising porn, these countries still import many western visual media containing degrees of nudity and sex without genital display e.g. *Sex and the city, Oz, Game of thrones.* This suggests that the most provocative aspect in porn is the exhibition of genitals in sexual action. Ironically this is also the aspect that most consumers demand, as shown by 65% of the survey respondents.

Mediated consumption of sex shows that consumers' conceptual understanding and descriptions aren't textbook-based but emanate from their own consumption practices and preferences. Such practices are intervened by various forms of technological devices which ultimately reveal porn as a form technology in its own right. The next sub-section considers how porn consumption is made possible by the confrontation between man and machine.

## 5.2 The role of technology in porn consumers' experiences

Mediation is a term that refers to the act of transmitting various kinds of information through the media to the public and involves the deployment of communication technologies (Couldry 2008). Users' consumption of explicit images is facilitated by modern-day devices such as laptops, personal computers, television sets, mobile-phones, iPods, video cameras and magazines. The survey respondents were asked to select from a list of 14 options any combination of the ways in which they access pornography. The table below shows how respondents reported their respective avenues of access.

| Answer | Response | % |
|---|---|---|
| I download it from the internet at home | 333 | 49% |
| I stream and watch from my home internet but never download it | 304 | 45% |
| I buy DVD's from adult stores | 135 | 20% |
| I pay to watch at adult shops or porn clubs | 28 | 4% |
| I download it from the internet at work | 51 | 8% |
| I stream and watch from my work internet but never download it | 38 | 6% |
| I share digital files with friends on computer-to-computer connections | 81 | 12% |
| I download it from the internet at school/ university/ college | 38 | 6% |
| I stream & watch from my school/university/college internet- never download | 33 | 5% |
| I download it from the internet using my cellphone | 179 | 27% |
| I share digital files with my friends using our mobile phones | 57 | 8% |
| I stream and watch using my phone internet but never download | 100 | 15% |
| I buy magazines from adult stores | 42 | 6% |
| I watch porn using a pay TV channel | 27 | 4% |
| **Total** | **675** | **100** |

**Table 4 How survey respondents reported their channels of access**

As evident from the data, about half of the respondents (49%) download and watch porn via the internet at home. This is consistent with a host of other writings which indicate the ascendency of the internet as the sole mode of porn access. Beyond being just a putative statement, it has become a well-documented observation that the convenience of the internet has transformed the way porn is consumed (Cooper 2010, D'Orlando 2011, Garlick 2011,

Artz 2013). No longer are consumers saddled with the necessity to enter public porn stores or having to hide that clunky VHS cassette or 'dicey' magazine from family members. Nonetheless 50% is a relatively low percentage in comparison to other consumption figures of online porn consumption elsewhere. In the USA 75% of porn consumers used home internet to access porn (Twohig. Crossby & Cox 2009), 80% from Finland (Paasonen 2009) and 75% from Australia (Flood 2007). However, all these countries have an internet penetration rate above 85% while, according to the International Telecommunication Union (2015) and Nielson (2014), South Africa only has 49%. Looking at the highest figures from the above frequency table, a clear hierarchy of technological dominance starts to emerge as seen from the summary table below.

| | **Technological access** | **Respondents** |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Home Internet access | 49% |
| 2 | Mobile phone internet access | 27% |
| 3 | DVD access | 20% |

**Table 5 Most popular means of porn access: Summary of survey data**

The relatively low home internet access betrays South Africa's prestigious standing as the 'hub' of technological advancement on the African continent. Just like all other African countries, it would seem South Africa is at the unfortunate end of the digital divide International Telecommunication Union 2015). Despite this, the above order of technology use mirrors consumer trends of media electronics around the world, with home internet mostly on the lead (Egan & Parmar 2013, Bryant & Shim 2008), mobile porn on the rise (Jurisz 2011, Horvath et al 2014) and DVD's "nearly dead" (Tibbals 2014: 130). South Africa also forms part of the continent's exceptional mobile-phone narrative. Africa moved from having the least telephones to having "the world's fastest growing mobile phone market, as the number of subscribers rose from 10 to 647 million from 2000 to 2011" (Carmody 2013: 24). Many scholars (Chiumbu 2012, Carmody 2013, Gillward & Stork 2008, Bloomfield 2014) have noted this accelerated shift which has earned Africa the title of 'mobile only' continent (Carmody 2013) as "the first continent to have more mobile phone users than fixed-line subscribers" (Chiumbu 2012: 193).

In particular, South Africa's mobile phone penetration rate has already been touted as being above 100% (Carmody 2013, Fisher 2013). This makes mobile porn access an inevitable certainty. Pule, mentioned that even on his way to work, he watched porn.

> "When I'm in a taxi to work I just put my, my ear phones then I just watch it (*laughs*)."

In my conversations with Pule, he made known his ardent love for porn, explaining that he watched it everywhere because "it interacts with all" his needs.

> When I'm happy, I just feel like "gosh damn let me go watch porn." When I'm angry I just tell myself "ok maybe if I can just watch two movies, then Ja, I'll feel a little bit different." You know, like any mood, it corresponds with all my moods.

For someone like Pule who enjoys watching porn everywhere, the ability to safely access it in public spaces without attracting undesirable attention is a fortuity brought to bear by technology.

Unlike the developed world, in South Africa taxis are mini-buses, shuttles occupied by no less than twelve people. They are no mainstay of privacy. Despite this, Pule manages to create for himself in these public sittings, a very private sexually charged encounter between his mobile-phone and his body. Pule's porn viewing experience is made possible and rendered pleasurable by the relatively small size of his mobile phone and, by extension, the surreptitious discretion it affords him in such a crowded setting. This open yet concealed moment of privacy and publicness articulates ways technological appropriation refigures and expands the body's cultural adaptation in spaces. Mobile (phone) porn renders bodies interpolated within cultural and social spaces - taxis, restaurants, classrooms, mosques, museums- 'multidimensional bodies' i.e. both present in place yet immersed in (timeless) affect hence out of time.

Minhee & Kim (2003: 240) state: "It is not uncommon for people to share their desktops, laptops or TV sets, but it is often rare for them to share mobile phones. The mobile device always carries its user identity." The customisable features of mobile phones making them carriers of owners' identities coupled with the mobility aspect makes this piece of technology an extended limb of one's body. Since one's mobile phone attends its owner everywhere and is privy *only* to the owner's use, every location navigated and occupied by the body becomes a space of prospective sexual affect. Spaces traditionally understood as sexually sterile: mosques, museums, restaurants, churches, taxis all resound with options for sexual pleasure. The mobile phone as (annexed) limb in mobility evokes and merges two seemly disparate concepts: 'the body as technology for pleasure' (since porn is technology and technology becomes the body) and technology as the body self-realised (the body 'discovers' new ways of being itself through porn).

Apart from the ways porn technology amplifies body positionality in various spaces, Dave (42 white male) also revealed that mediated access means technical specificity and personal selectivity.

> Somehow it just doesn't….watching it on the phone or your laptop doesn't have the same uhmm ….**smack**…the same arousal effect as watching it like on TV or like at Adult World.

Dave watches his porn exclusively through DVD discs on his home television set or at Adult World where they offer single private cubicles with TV screens. This has been his way since VHS cassettes were pushed to the margins by the upsurge of DVD. Dave's "arousal effect" is less when he does not consume porn through the preferred technology. It would seem porn as a genre centred on sexual pleasure is devoid of its best enjoyment when consumed through the 'wrong' device. Thus the pleasure experience is contingent on the demands of the consumer, the surrounding socio-cultural milieu and adaptability of the technology. Some of Dave's requirements are that the porn he watches be of "good quality."

> I mean the sort of stuff that Adult World has is pretty good quality…. Adult World sells pretty good stuff and I mean their quality, and their way of setting it up is like pretty good. That's the sort of porn that I've been more into. It is good quality. It's...it's well executed, it's well shot… reasonably good looking actors or actresses. I mean, maybe there's something I don't find appealing...maybe about either the guys or the girls. Then I would like… I have left out and walked half-way through.

The aesthetic judgements expressed by Dave establish an emotional contract he enters into before consuming porn. The breach of the contract, the disillusionment of fixed standards constitutes reason for termination or, in his case, a "walk out." Dave's use of the word "good" conjures its polar opposite, implying a dichotomy between good porn ("good stuff") and 'bad porn.' If good porn is "well shot" and features "good looking actors or actresses" then by inference "bad porn" is poorly shot and has unattractive models or "bad bodies." Imbedded in the formulation "good looks" plus "good shots" equals "good porn" is the manifest centrality of idealism in porn. This idealism is necessitated by the function and

standard of porn as fantasy which obliges porn bodies be fitting of fantasy, "good bodies" or what Tina (30 white female) calls an "unattainable ideal."

> I think that porn portrays an deal that you can never….. that…that is unachievable by any women…. like even the girl in the picture does not look like that because she's air-brushed. I think that whole thing, that unattainable ideal which is also in adverts and in magazines and in everywhere else…. that's a bit unjust.

Ironically, most motion-picture-genres aspire to a verisimilitude as proximal to the material world as possible. Where most genres attain credibility through conventional vignettes of recognisability, porn attains its credibility by its deviance from markers of reality. It draws commendation from the imagined world of fantasy where bodies are 'impossibly' beautiful (airbrushed), sex is ever abundant, step moms frequently have sex with their step-sons, pizza delivery men have ripped abs and 10 inches penises and high school boys always manage to seduce their young beautiful teacher into sex. The visual tropes that frame most mainstream porn suggest the genre is more than just raw "fucking" but fucking of the extraordinary kind or fantastical "fucking." As such, visual conventions: - lighting, shots and even bodies must match up to a register of fantasy. It is inescapable therefore that porn consumers make judgements about physical beauty since the very canons of the genre seem to demand these ideals. When Dave walks out of a porn viewing where the porn models do not match up to a certain appearance ideal it is because he feels entitled to do so. Barker (2014: 151) says consuming porn means "the entitlement to look at beautiful bodies." Note that even though she is aware of gender injustices in porn and the demands placed on female bodies, Tina still consumes the "airbrushed" bodies she perceives "unattainable." Perhaps, a part of her accepts that unfair beauty standards are an essential part of enjoying her sexual fantasy.

From both Tina and Dave, we see that to be a porn consumer is to be connoisseur of physical beauty-ideals, to be a sexual savant of sexual pretend. Nonetheless, going back to Dave's insight about technology, it would seem that visual standards do not suffice. For a consumer to truly feel the ultimate "smack" or "arousal effect," the appropriate and desired technology is needed. No matter how beautiful and well-shot the scene may be, Dave would not feel entirely quelled viewing porn through his laptop or his smart phone. He *needs* to see it through his TV screen. Pule wouldn't enjoy his porn on his laptop in a huddled taxi nor

would Zethu appreciate it much on her phone when inviting her friends to watch with her. Mediated porn access, therefore means both sexual and technological preference. Above all technologies and modes of access, the internet, both as a platform and technology, is the most unique. Transforming the ways content is imbibed, the varieties of porn available and the sheer quantities readily at hand, the internet has become the medium of choice for most consumers in South Africa and around the world. The benefits associated with online porn access manifest in a host of ways. The next sub-section delves into this.

## 5.3 The role of the internet in porn consumption

Porn pleasure abounds at exponential rates when we start to shift focus to the boons of cyberspace. Internet-mediated consumption of pornography avails legions of emotional incentives of which other technological sources seem deprived. For a number of the interview respondents, for example, accessing porn through the internet circumvented the prospect of public humiliation. Dave (42 white male) says when he started watching porn he only bought straight porn because he was too afraid to buy gay porn, which would have been more to his liking.

> "I mean I always thought like oh, they mustn't think
> that I'm into gay stuff so I would always make sure
> that from them I got heterosexual stuff"

South Africa legalised porn 20 years ago, in 1996. The sourcing of porn in the public domain is still a scandalous issue. This was no more evident than when, in May of 2014, the ruling party and some government officials opposed the opening of an adult shop next to a parliamentary building for fear that it would "offend moral sensibilities" (TimesLive 2014). Prior that, the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Malusi Gigaba undertook efforts to approve a draft bill that would ban all porn from the internet (Jones 2010). It is in such a prude social climate that the internet becomes a safe outlet for porn consumers. This, in part, explains why only a meagre 4% of the survey respondents said they watched porn at adult stores while only 6% buy porn magazines at Adult stores in a country with only 49% internet penetration.

One respondent reported to having a humiliating purchase experience from one of the illegal porn DVD hawkers in Johannesburg. Even though these street porn traders are illegal, their business has come to attract a large black market of consumers who cannot afford to purchase porn material at more expensive legitimate adult stores. These hawkers characterise the idea

of a quick, cheap "pass-by" transaction. One goes to the trader with the money already in hand, points to the DVD of his choice, exchanges the money for DVD and swiftly walks away. Unfortunately, despite the inexpensive charges and rapidity of trade, sometimes a quick "pass-by" transaction becomes an unexpectedly protracted affair. Such was Kholo (29 black male)'s experience when he decided to buy a porn DVD from the streets.

> I was so ashamed, because I do remember giving the guy some money and I said I want *that* one, and he was like "which one?" And I was like "ah hayi wena man!" (*Zulu: Come on man!*) "That one!" And then I took it and it was embarrassing.

Apart from this, these street purchases are not done in inconspicuous secluded corners of the CBD. Far from it. The hawkers set-up 'shop' in the busiest and most visible streets where they know their DVD's will be noticed by thousands of passer-byes. So buyers like Kholo are most likely to feel publicly exposed. Kholo has now become part of the vast community of consumers who accesses porn through the internet. Anonymity is one crucial advantage afforded by online media. D'Orlando (2011) says the internet has reduced the emotional costs associated with acquiring pornography.

Apart from reducing the emotional costs of accessing porn, the internet has also dramatically increased both the amount and variety of available explicit material. This means consumers can access inexhaustible amounts of porn at any time, an improbable option for any other media platform. Sheila (25 black female) and Duma (23 black male) say that one of the online websites they use is Pornhub, a prominent, popular adult website that hosts over 1.5 million videos and still continues to upload new videos everyday (Katie, 2014). Pornhub is just one example of the legions of adult websites such as *Redtube*, *Youporn*, *Xvidieos* that provide users with fast and free volumes of porn videos. This means that internet porn consumers have day-to-day access to new porn material. Consequently, this has the potential to increase the frequency of consumption. Duma (23 black male) admits that when he is at university he watches more porn than when he is at home where there is no internet.

> I watch more porn when I'm here (university) as supposed to when I am at home cause I don't have internet access. I have uncapped uhm…Internet here so I do watch a considerable amount.

However, this is not a corollary deduction that those with the internet watch more porn than those without it. It simply means that internet porn consumers have greater options of access to porn material than people without it. The question of how regularly internet porn consumers utilise that access is a matter up for discussion. Zethu (22 black female) for example has internet access and by extension new porn every day, yet admits she does not watch porn on a daily basis.

> I have access to new porn daily if I wanted to….. if I was watching daily then I'll have access because like I go to a website where they update daily……they upload videos and clips daily.

Similarly, Dave (42 white male), though with internet access, says that he prefers to watch DVD porn because internet porn gives him the pressure and impression that one has to watch porn daily, something he does not want to do.

> "it's becoming like you, you've gotta have new stuff every day coming out and that to me would be a… like… it would just be like.. too much."

The pornotopia of the internet, a porn market in which numerous porn material is grouped in vast category (Williams 2008:142), allows the viewer to pick and watch only those of his preference. This way, consumers do not struggle to find what they like and the internet caters for all the different sexual tastes of its users. Litha (26 black male) has a foot fetish of which he feels embarrassed. He is not willing to disclose this to anyone, not even his close friends.

> I also have a very intense and secret foot fetish, so I can literally bring myself to orgasm at the site of a fully clothed barefoot man. If I feel embarrassed, it is because of that.

For Litha, publicly searching for this kind of porn would not only be embarrassing but practically challenging since foot-fetish porn is not as mainstream and easily available as penetrative porn. However, with the manifold categories of different porn assortments online, foot fetish is not only effortlessly and anonymously available but is dedicated its own catalogue page, containing countless videos from which to choose. This same observation applies to Sheila (25 black female) and Tina (30 white female) who both admitted to liking BDSM porn.

Sheila

..you know I'm not really the kind of person who just wants to watch two people in missionary and then doggy style and then.... reverse cargo. That bores me. Uhmm... I like, you know, my things, and the chains and things…. The whippings and that...

Tina

..when I'm watching porn I don't want connection, I wants sex….. it's not really…..like my alley (romantic porn)…..I like it a bit rough.

For people like Sheila and Tina, the exclusivity of BDSM porn would pose an access challenge without the internet. Thanks to the internet, the barriers of what has previously been considered exclusive or even bizarre is now common features of online sexual websites. This is one of the ways the internet has contributed to a democratisation of sex i.e. through the recognition and proliferation of historically marginalised sexual practices such as BDSM and fetish porn. As Cooper (2011: 97) says "it's no surprise that, for those who crave the more drastic masturbatory aid, the internet offers easy access (….) What is surprising is what now constitutes widely available, routine stuff in the major porn portals." Apart from the rendition of bountiful pornotopia, cyber pornography becomes more gratifying than analogue content due to its ability to foster and facilitate anonymous interactions between consumers and interactions between content and consumers. Litha admits that when he consumes porn online, he is never alone.

Porn for me has changed since the days when I would watch E-Tv alone in a dark room while everyone was asleep. The website where I download porn has so many social network features that I am never alone in my experiencing of certain materials. Videos are 'liked' by visitors of the site, which helps me sort through just the avalanche of videos that are available. People comment on the video, and even help me if I need information on,

> say, the stars of the film… Also, people review the video in the comment section and full on discussions can happen. I now can participate in a real discussion of sex with others who think and desire like me. I even sometimes challenge statements I find problematic with other viewers, so it becomes a site of mini activism. Pornography in 2013 is a social activity.

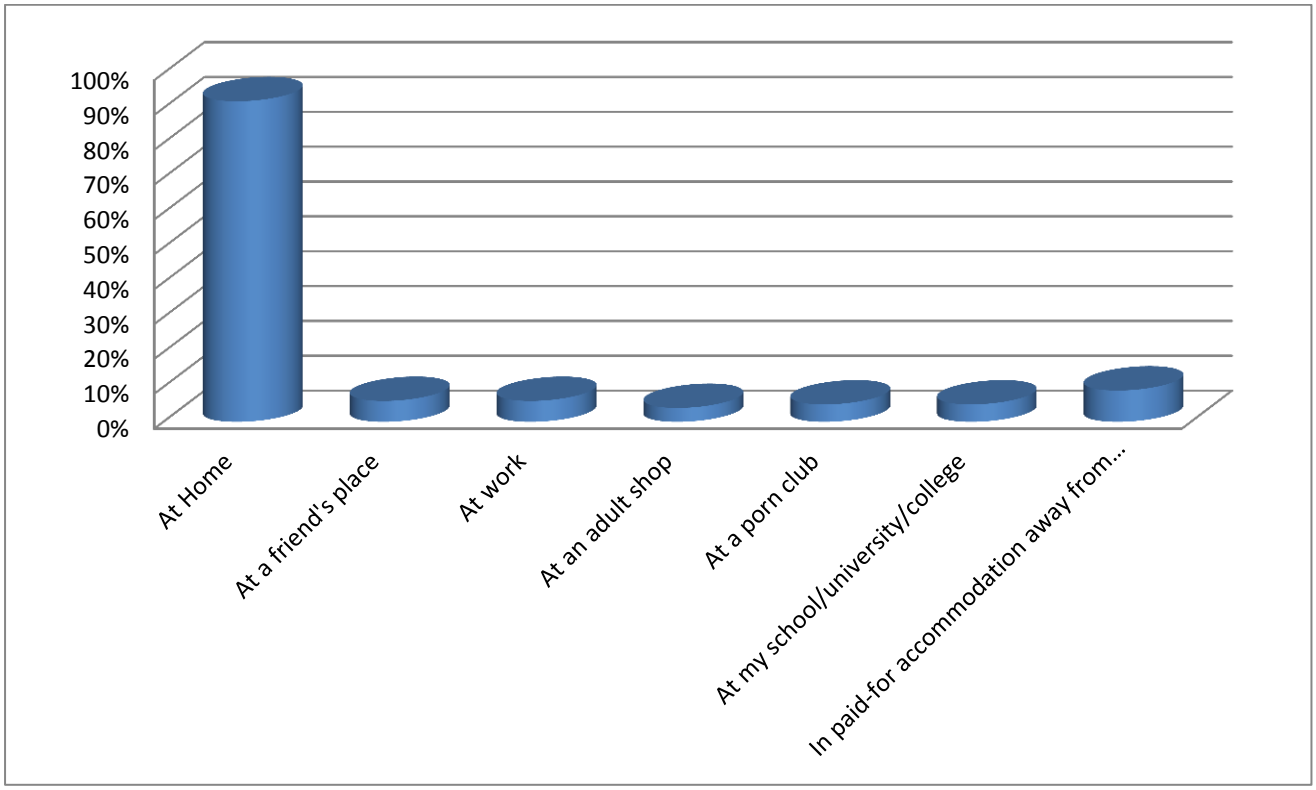
Williams (2008: 312) notes that while pornography positions the viewer as a viewer, cyber pornography configure him as a user-participant. Internet porn consumers are not just active audiences but become interactive ones. "Interactivity is the direct communication and involvement between users and the system interface" (Andreas et al 2005: 5). Note the binary level of activity between individuals who use technology and technology itself. Considering the emotional and intellectual interfacing between consumers and content, arguably, a third level of user participant-ship emerges. As a gay man, Litha forms a statistical minority in a larger dominant heterosexual and mostly heterosexist South African populace. He belongs to a historically marginalised community of people who still suffer brutal physical attacks from fundamentalist hate groups who rape lesbians and beat gay men. For Litha, interactivity with a group of people "who think and desire" like him online is a crucial part of his social fulfilment, not something to be taken likely. The advent of cyber porn communities on the web is another aspect that makes internet unlike any other technological medium. Cyber communities constitute a space of "casual playfulness, more grounded senses of community and social interaction and mutual pleasure" (Attwood 2009: 286). It is on such spaces that people like Litha and others from the LGBTQI community in South Africa can safely engage with their sexuality. As indicated by Litha, porn sites aren't just platforms for watching, but constitute part of a cultural practice where people perform their identities in a host of ways i.e. share advice about sex, discuss sexuality issues in common terms, fearlessly address and debate critical matters and aid each other in sourcing material. Still, one's presence in the virtual world is just as important as how one accesses that world. What are the times and locations most porn consumers prefer to view porn?

## 5.4 The spatial-temporal dimensions of mediation in porn consumption

Referring back to Table 4, it is significant to note that even though there were some who streamed (6%) and downloaded (8%) porn from their work internet they remained

statistically negligible to the number of those who streamed (49%) and downloaded (45%) porn at home. Mediation therefore appears to have a bi-fold dimension: technological *and* spatial. In other words, it is not just access through the internet but seems to be access through the internet access *at home*. This is consistent with the answer that most respondents gave to another question that was asked in the survey. When asked where they watched porn, 621 of the survey respondents said they watched porn at home. The following graph summarises these results.

**Figure 16 Where the survey respondents reported to watch porn**

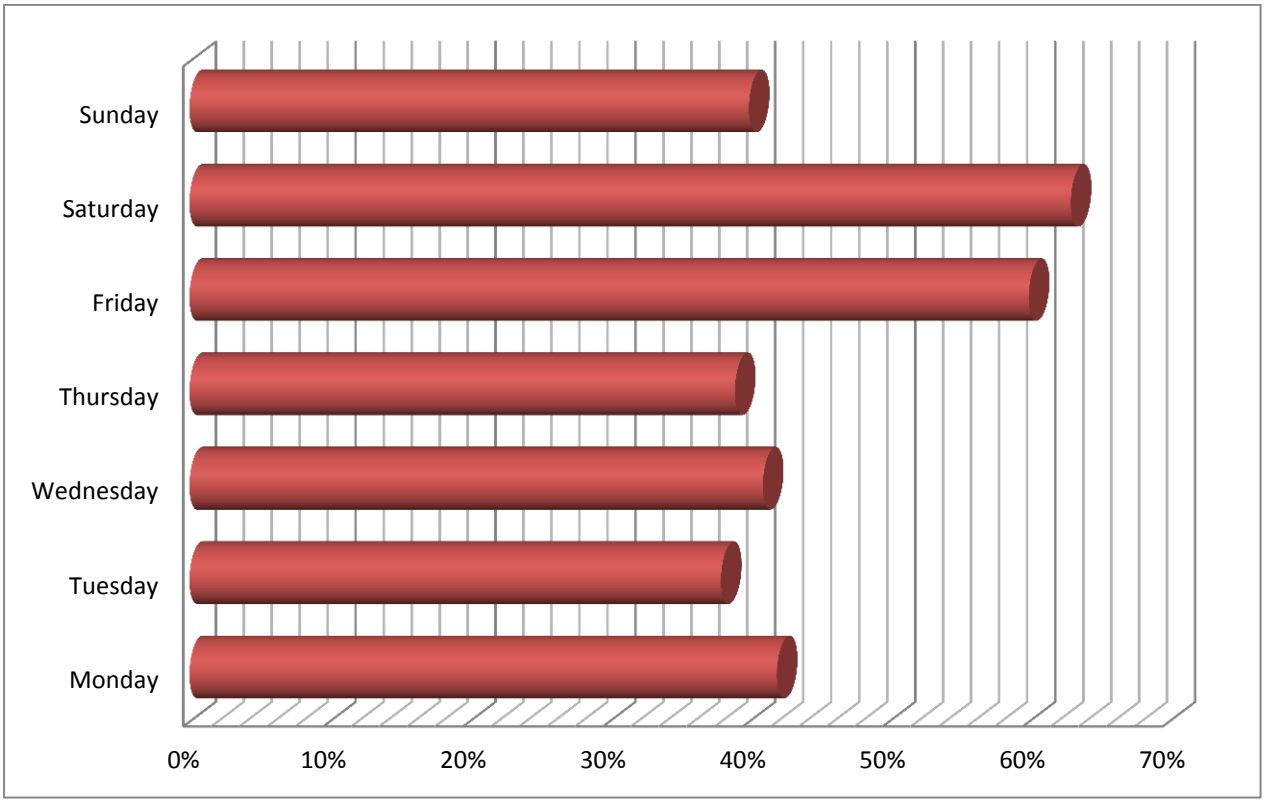



These results are similar to a study by Hald (2006) in which he looked at gender differences in porn consumption of heterosexual Danish adults. Hald (2006: 577) found that "the usual place of (porn) use was home and no significant gender difference was found in this regard." The recreational nature of porn as "erotic, highly individualised form of hedonism" (Attwood: 2006 80) means that consumption conditions have to be in aligment with recreational proprieties associated with pleasure. It makes sense that 'home,' a place associated with relaxation, comfort and rest would be the epicentre of porn consumption rather than work or school, places imbued with pressures of production and duty.

Apart from the technological and spatial specificity of mediation in porn consumption, temporal considerations also come into play. Consuming porn is not an arbitrary occurrence but one informed by strategic adherence to periods that are fitting to the needs of the

consumer. When asked when during the week they watched porn 410 (63%) of the 653 survey respondents said they watched porn on Saturday whilst 393 (60%) said that they used porn on Fridays. Mediation therefore is shaped by a framework of technological, spatial and temporal dynamics.

**Figure 17 Days survey respondents reported to watch porn**




Fridays and Saturdays, reputed days of entering respite and refreshment from a long week of work, are obviously ideal days of indulging in recreational pleasures. When interviewing the respondents it became clear that time availability was a significant factor in determining when people watched porn and for how long. Unsurprisingly, most people, like Sheila have more free time during Saturday. Sheila (25 black female) says that watching porn with her boyfriend is determined by how quick they want sex to be. If they want quick sex then they will forgo porn but when they desire a longer session together porn will form part of their sexual inventory.

> You know cause sometimes there's..... there's the "ok we wanna make love but we have.... we wanna make love but dude we have to be up at six o'clock in the morning!" So it's like...it's like the 15 minutes in and out- everybody's happy, go to bed

> ...And then there's the LONG session at Saturday night, fine, we can go on for hours it's ok....then we can go on for hours and stuff, then we can explore and play and stuff.

Even though Sheila does not watch porn with her partner when they want quick sex, she does when she individually wants a quick masturbatory session. Still, however, the same considerations of available time dictates the length of her sessions.

> It can be anything from five minutes to half an hour …It just depends on how much time I've got usually. Usually that's what dictates it to me. It's how much time do I have…. Do I want to get this over and done with quickly? Am I supposed to be somewhere in the next hour?... "but I am really, really horny right now!"….

Pule (22 black male) says that when he's off duty on weekends, he usually watches porn the whole day

> You see like on weekends I'm off duty at work so Ja, I can watch it the whole day… like tonight, like I have, I'm gonna do some few stuff. Then maybe around 12 o'clock I'll catch fifteen twenty minutes then I will play it.

Elrod (60 coloured male) also said that he watches porn during weekends because that's the time he has available.

> On weekends, it's the time that is there available…. the time I've got…. that would be about half an hour.

Asked when she did not feel like watching porn, Zethu (22 black female) said that when she's pre-occupied with work she does not feel like watching porn. Coincidentally, on Saturday she's not working or attending classes.

> When I've got work to do….when I'm busy…it's just like at the back of my mind…… Porn for me I

> think is recreational, you know. So when I'm relaxing I'll watch it.

Duma (23 black male) mentioned boredom (an obvious sign of superfluous time) as an important aspect for watching porn.

> When I'm bored uhmm…….. I suppose it stems from…because I watch porn for partly, mainly for entertainment not necessary for masturbation or anything.

These responses lend credence to Schatzki (1997: 284)'s theorisation of practice as "spatial temporal manifolds of action." Schatzki ascribes difference between actions and practice. While actions are "that which govern the performance of individuals" practice is "contingent agglomerations of already constituted actions (Schatzki 1997: 284)." Seeing porn use through the lens of practice means porn consumption is a connected vocational phenomenon across constituent consumers rather than disparate incongruent doings. The golden thread, of course, are the "spatial-temporal organisations of the nexuses" (Schatzki (1997: 286). These spatial temporal organisations, as seen from the data, are the generic structured specificities of preferred location (home) and preferred time (weekends) shared amongst most porn users.

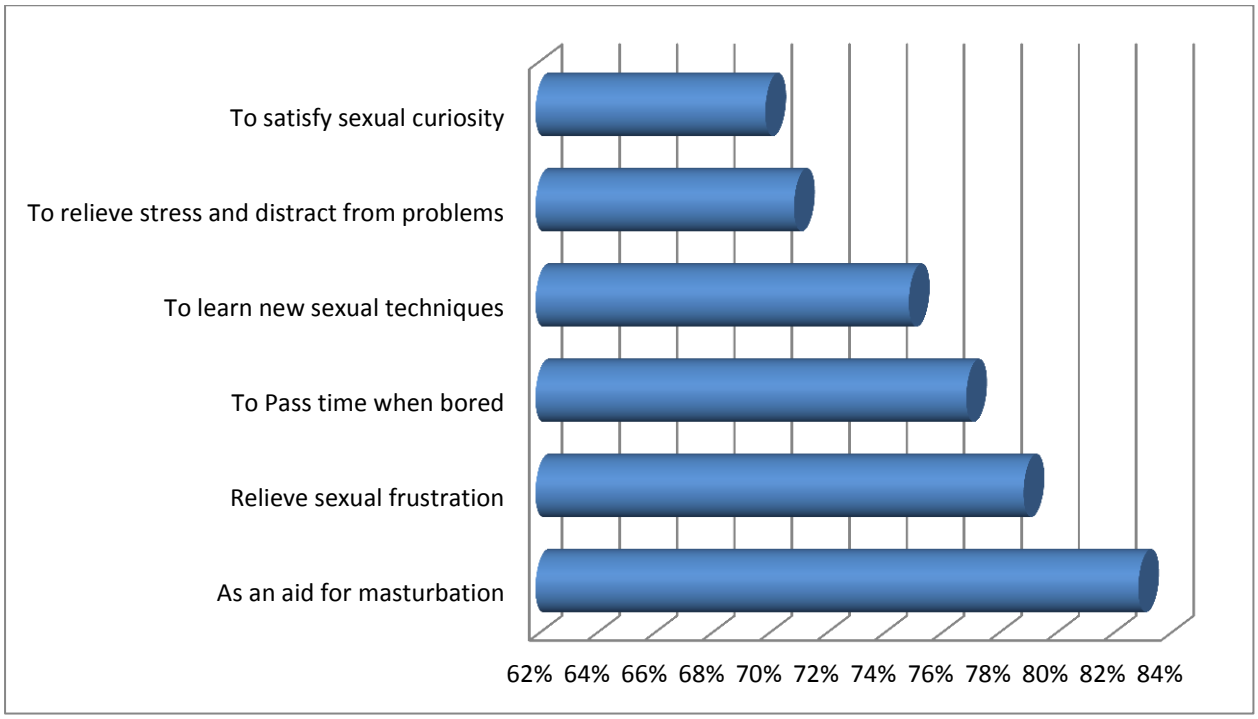
Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* also weighs great valuable insight in this case. In so far as *habitus* refers to "structured, structuring dispositions" (Bourdieu 1990: 52) of the porn consumers, we can extract that *habitus* is responsible for more than just consumption activities but also of consumers' thoughts, motivations, decisions and feelings. In all the narratives of the above interviewees, Zethu, Pule, Shiela, Elrod and Duma, it becomes clear that the sense of succor, the disposition of environmental security and timeliness are key components of consumers' *habitus*, consumer disposition oriented towards porn consumption. Ultimately, it is from this collective repository of consumers' *habitus* from which specific "spatial-temporal organisations" of consumption patterns emerge.

Nevertheless, even though availability of time and place are important considerations as shown by the data, these are simply few of the miscellaneous determinants of porn practice. One of the issues this research sought to explore was the motivation consumers gave for using porn.

## 5.5 How porn consumers use porn.

Bryant & Shim (2008: 188) assert that "people's selection and use of a certain medium and content may be strongly associated with their motivations to fulfil specific needs." By zooming into the different ways porn consumers deploy explicit images, we inevitably hone into their *de facto* personal needs. Although the survey question dealing with motivational uses contained 17 options from which respondents could choose, in this sub-section, I only present six of these. The reason for this is that these responses attracted a large response pool that sets them apart from the rest. There are only 6 question items whose response pool peaked above 100 responses in either or both "always" or "often (I will be discussing some of the 'less statistically significant' items in the following chapters). The following graph shows these response items.

**Figure 18 Top six uses of porn as reported by the survey respondents**




This graphs shows 'masturbation' and 'relieving sexual frustration' as the two leading uses for porn. These numbers are reminiscent of those of the survey conducted by the Kinsley Institute on porn use in America. This 2002 survey polled over 10 453 porn consumers and found that, with over 72% of the respondents, masturbation was the prime purpose for porn use. On what is often punted as the largest online survey in history, Ogas & Gaddam (2011) have also pointed out that most online consumers use porn for masturbation. Pornography is clearly the aphrodisiac of self-pleasuring.

D'Orlando (2011) proffers that porn purchasers' consumption cycle leads them to the ultimate stage of 'doing' or 'acting out,' their sexual desires. He proposes that watching porn inevitably leads one to carry out a sexual act of some kind. Porn consumption, from this view, is not just a practice (of access, viewing and termination) aggregated by distinct spatial temporal patterns. It is a practice leading to forms of individual 'doings.' Even though D'Orlando suggests these sexual acts include the use of prostitutes, I would like to posit from the data that the most accessible and common 'doing' is that which entails individual sexual activity. If porn is a conduit or catalyst of sexual 'doing' (not just fantasy pleasure), that 'doing' is most likely to transmute into 'solo' sexual activity. This of course does not preclude other forms of 'doing' which comprise of secondary parties. However, what is indisputably clear from the data is that porn consumption is a highly individualised form of sexual cruising.

There is also some cross-vetting consensus between the survey results and the interview data. Using porn for masturbatory purposes was a shared common answer amongst the 25 interview respondents. The following table shows how the interviewees reported their porn use.

| | **Respondent** | **Porn use** |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Themba | For sex preparation, learn new sexual techniques, helps him relax |
| 2 | Tina | For masturbation, to enhance sexual intimacy between her and boyfriend, as a distraction from work. |
| 3 | Joe | To learn new sexual techniques and incorporate them into his sexual repertoire (" up his game"). |
| 4 | Suraj | To masturbate. |
| 5 | Duma | To masturbate, to alleviate boredom, to socialise with friends and sometimes brothers. |
| 6 | Senzo | To masturbate, alleviate-stress, to feel good |
| 7 | Litha | To masturbates, helps him fall asleep |
| 8 | Joseph | To masturbate, to relieve stress, to have foreplay with wife, |
| 9 | Zethu | for a laugh, entertainment, to relieve stress, to help her incorporate new sexual techniques in her sex life. |
| 10 | Sheila | To destress, for having sex adventures, to masturbate |
| 11 | Tara | For distraction, |
| 12 | Danny | To masturbate, to learn new techniques. |
| 13 | Elam | To masturbate, to relieve him sexually and keeps him faithful to his partner instead of wondering off with other women. |
| 14 | Brian | To masturbate. |
| 15 | Simon | To increase his arousal effect and enhances sex with wife. |
| 16 | George | To masturbate, to Enhance his partner, to alleviate pressure and stress and to learn sex new techniques |
| 17 | Thabo | To masturbates, to fantasise, to relieve stress, to learns new sexual techniques. |
| 18 | Pule | To masturbate, as sex preparation, to learn new techniques, to socialise with friends, to use it lure women for sex, to relieves stress, to entertain himself |
| 19 | Lihle | To masturbates, relieves stress. |
| 20 | Elrod | To masturbates, helps him fall asleep, gives him a sexual boost and helps him relax. Helps him fall asleep |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 21 | Ndoda | To masturbate, to new sexual techniques |
| 22 | Dave | To masturbate, to destress |
| 23 | Kholo | To masturbate, as a good distraction, |
| 24 | Emmanuel | To masturbate, to relieve stress, generally helps him feel good especially when in bad spirits |
| 25 | Sam | To masturbates, to learns news sexual moves, to relieves stress and sexual frustration |

**Table 6 How the Interview respondents reported to using porn.**

This data re-affirms that masturbation is the most common function for porn. It also reveals the utilitarian value of porn as multidimensional and complex since respondents used porn in more than just one way. Caution is necessary not to read the recurrence of masturbation as an expression of sole purpose. Masturbation may simply be the compulsive 'doing' outcome., Many of the people who said that they masturbated reported they wanted to feel good, destress, distract themselves, to learn sexual techniques or fall asleep yet they would often conclude their porn encounters with masturbating. This suggests the purpose of watching porn may not have directly been masturbation *per se*. Referring to the Kinsey Institute's porn survey, Janssen explains this way:

> Sometimes people seek out porn simply because it feels good to be in a state of sexual excitement. Sometimes they use it to be entertained, or to be distracted from work or other activities. More often than perhaps assumed, people don't use it because it feels good, but because it makes them feel better; a subtle distinction (Janssen 2014: 1).

Purpose (to feel better) and means (masturbation) must not be conflated. Reportedly, it is much easier to intimate an observable physical act than to give voice to emotional or cognitive drives. The latter are not always intelligible while the former are. It makes sense then that most people who reported to masturbate through porn actually had an accompaniment of other uses. Emmanuel (29 black male) for example masturbates using porn. However, he says this happens under very specific conditions of emotional stress.

> I've noticed something. Before (*Zulu*) kade bengibuka (*I was watching*) i-porn because I'm stressed to be honest with you. I don't just masturbate, I don't just masturbate. It's not like I'm horny then I will just masturbate…. if my account, my bank account is okay. I don't have any stress, I am happy. Ummm, my family is okay, I'm okay, my love life is just okay I don't need that (porn).

Emmanuel had told me that he suffers intermittent attacks of depression. Sometimes, he spends days in his flat sleeping especially when he has been unable to find work. Feeling good or as Janssen says, 'feeling better' is no trivial matter to him. That he admits not to "need" porn when he is "happy," when his "account is okay" and when he does not "have any stress" testifies that he uses porn as a form of mood enhancer. Just as Emmanuel, Senzo (31 black male) watches porn mostly when he is under certain life stresses. He further adds that porn helps to rescue him from moments of boredom.

> I don't know it's… it's kind of like…….There's something that it brings back inside of me when I am looking at it…… it makes me want to, to engage in life again to re-awaken me again. When I feel like things are going well and my life is on a smooth…..I don't have any problems, I don't have any stresses, everybody …..everything is running smooth, then no, there's no need for me to watch porn. There's no need for me to watch porn cause I feel like I'm in charge. I feel like, you know…...I'm already alive. There's no need for me to watch porn at that time except if I'm bored of course. If I don't have anything to do and I'm like, I'm just sitting there doing nothing ok let just ….let me just watch porn.

Both Emmanuel and Senzo use the word *need* to describe their relationship to porn consumption, a common description for, say, medical treatment but not typical for describing porn. Perhaps there is commonality between porn's endorphin effect and some treatments that help alleviate moods. Porn consumption, in these instances operates as a form of therapy. Note how Senzo says it makes him feel "alive" and "in charge." This ability of porn to uplift emotional temperaments may be the greatest worth it has for many consumers, indeed the only one for some. See how both Senzo and Emmanuel express no need for porn outside of its pain abating properties. Senzo says "When I feel like things are going well… there's no need for me to watch porn." Emmanuel also says "If I don't have any stress…. I don't need that." Emmanuel puts emphasis on the fact that porn consumption for him transcends mere sexual desire. "It's not like I'm horny," he says, but "because I'm stressed." Both Emmanuel and

Senzo use porn but only when they feel they *need* it. Lihle (27 black male) does not just feel 'better' after consuming porn, he says he feels "happy."

> *Zulu:* Mhlambe kukhona….mhlambi into mhlambe engistressayo makuthi ngistressed, mhlambe ngento ethile mhlambe or eskoleni ngiyibukele…. bengizizwa happy. (*Say maybe there's something maybe stressing me….maybe when I am stressed…maybe at school…..I watch it. Then I would feel happy")*

For Litha (26 black male) porn is also a need for the kind of function it serves him.

> It really depends on my sleeping patterns. I watch porn to aid masturbation, which helps me sleep. My sleep patterns are irregular. This month has pretty much meant that I've watched a scene a day.

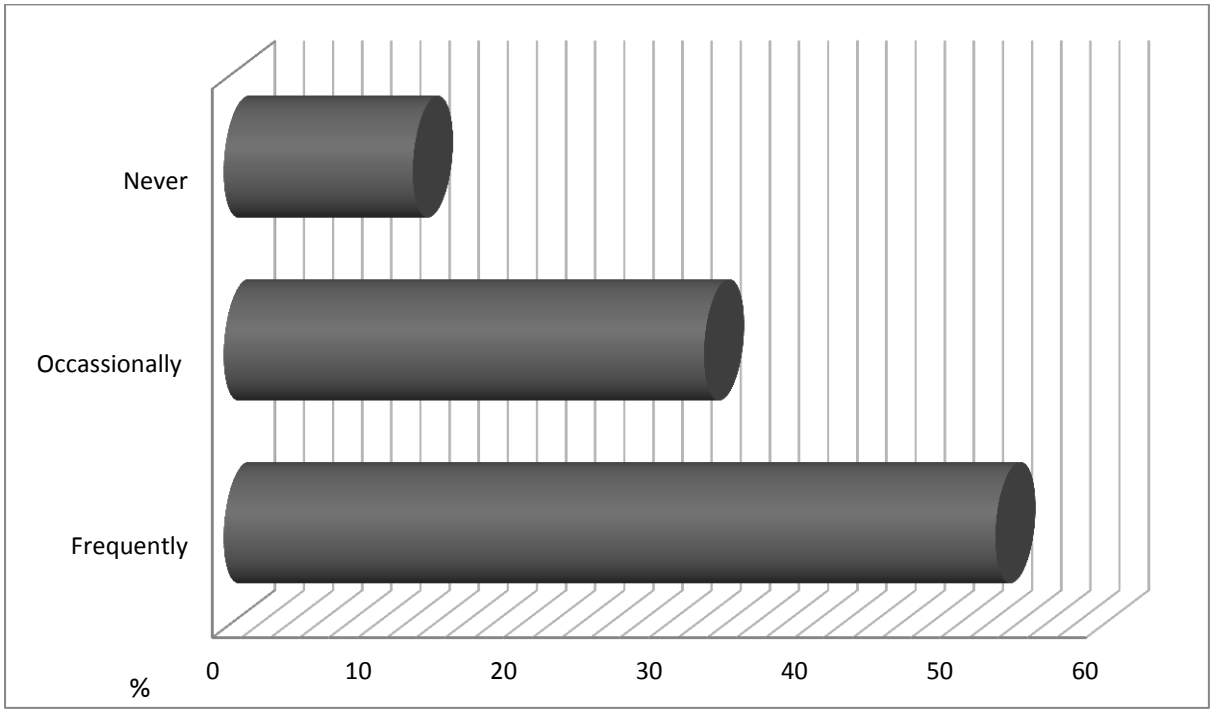
Porn acts as a form of sedative that helps Litha fall asleep and to manage his erratic sleeping patterns. Resultantly, his scheduled porn time is at night before he goes to bed. Like everyone else, Litha needs to be able to fall asleep. In his case, he needs to masturbate to fall asleep but he needs porn to masturbate. Porn consumption can therefore act a means to another means and an aid to an aid. Elrod (60 coloured male) uses porn for a similar purpose as Litha's. He states:

> Sometimes when I can't sleep uhmm okay, uhmm and I wanna take a nap mostly…. I know it takes time maybe during the day time, I masturbate watching it….I masturbate then I fall asleep.

As a retired and much older man who has to catch the occasional siesta, Elrod admitted to sleeping both during the day and during the night. We can expect that Elrod's need to dose off correlates with a higher reliance on porn consumption than Litha's. This is much more so considering Elrod also has more time on his hands as someone who no longer works. It would appear the more persistent the consumer's needs; the more frequent the porn consumption. Consider Litha's words "It really depends on my sleeping patterns…This month has pretty much meant that I've watched a scene a day." Elrod's statement "sometimes when I can't sleep" simply means 'as often-times as I cannot sleep.

A look at all these respondents reveals that pornography is both a pleasure and a function, perhaps a pleasure *put* to function. Porn is consumed to aid sleep, to alleviate stress, to feel happy, to ward off boredom and to feel alive. When we consider the bio-chemical mechanisms of sexual arousal, it becomes clear how porn can harvest such a swarm of psychological benefits. Porn is able to be a masturbation aid, stress remedy, a sleep sedative and an energy stimulant precisely because it emulates the corporeal effects of sex which bio-chemically animate people in all these ways "Pornography "mimics" sexual intimacy and "fakes" the body into releasing a tidal wave of (happy) chemicals" (Hyde & Chistensen 2010: 2). The following graph shows the percentage of porn consumers who reported happy feelings due to consuming porn.

**Figure 19 Using porn makes me feel happy**




It is for this malleable proficiency of porn that allows porn consumers to use it as anything they need when they need. It's adaptable, polymorphous nature coupled with variances in people's personal and sexual desires means that porn takes on many different roles and functions in the lives of consumers. Recall the survey data that some people also used porn to 'learn news sexual techniques, 'satisfy sexual curiosity' and to 'pass time when bored.'

The evident utility value of porn is commensurate to the rationality of the uses and gratification model. Mediation seen as uses and gratification speaks of the ways technological access becomes a medium for need-fulfilment, "how individuals use media to gratify their needs" (Bryant 2009: 344). From what has been revealed by the data, mediation-

*cum*-uses-and-gratification entails a few key things worth expounding. Firstly, media devices are able to encapsulate the day-to-day necessities of human life including sexual needs.

The uses and gratification model points to media use as functional utility. People deploy media to achieve particular goals or to satisfy needs at moments in time e.g. to relay important messages, to be informed, for entertainment, for education (Bryant 2009, Taylor & Willis 1999). Needs thus precede technology and focus is placed on needs and how various media contraptions fulfil them. Implicit in this model is the inferred disposability of media devices. Needs after all, can be appeased in varying ways. Logically, the absence of media would be augmented by alternate means of quelling human needs. Additionally, the ensuing proposition from this model is that media lie dormant when not in use since they themselves are not the need.

On the other hand, mediation refers to media as an intrinsic component of life (Mattoni & Treré 2014). The emphasis shifts from needs to the sociotechnical processes which enable life continuance. Mediation infers a degree of indispensability to media devices since they become accessory to daily existence. From this perspective, a lack of media would not avail different channels of fulfilling needs but would alter life itself. From this perspective, media do not simply fulfil needs which precede them but media become a need and media create the needs which they fulfil. The marriage of these two concepts (mediation and uses and gratification) leads to the deduction that need fulfilment through media paraphernalia is an essential component of life. Pornography consumption does not fulfil consumer's needs but is a need in its own right.

Pornography as sexual technology lends itself to the contiguity, mobility and ubiquity of the sexual body and therefore is an extension of the body. Though porn as technology is underwired by sexual practices fashioned for sexual deployment, its use is often undergirded by purposes that are non-sexual e.g. psychological (to relieve stress) and didactic (to learn sexual techniques). Thus, mediation as uses and gratification means consumers can imbibe raptures of euphoric sexual pleasures in multifarious convenient ways and places as technology facilitates sexual stimulation through a packaged form called pornography.

## 5.6 Conclusions

This chapter has discussed the centrality of technological devices to practices of porn consumption and the various ways consumers access, interpret and adapt such porn images into their own lives. Porn reputedly attempts to capture the uncensored 'realness' of sex yet paradoxically manifests itself as a genre of easily detectible superficial constructions.

Mediation as the transmitting of various kinds of information through the media has technological, spatial and temporal dimensions. Porn is not arbitrarily consumed but is informed by considerations of time, place and technology type. The experience of pleasure in porn is contingent upon technological suitability to meet the demands of the consumer's personal and social conditions.

Mediation is a form of *play*, emoting fanciful occasions of artifice and diversion. It is also uses and gratification, corroborating the utilisation of porn to fulfil needs. As an integral part of life mediation (as needs fulfilment) constitutes a need on its own. Technology, particularly mobile phones, has made sexual affect at any public place possible, becoming an extended organ of the body and the body a digitate of technology.

However, I must point out that some limits of phenomenology as a method is that informants may not generally invoke broader cultural issues such as sexism, violence against women, historical patterns etc. An important critique concerns asking porn consumers 'why' they use porn since they are most likely to provide 'rational' answers and may have defenses about 'deeper' motivations. This is a significant consideration for all studies that use interviews but might be particularly important for those that study sensitive topics like porn.

The next chapter will now explore the ways in which pleasure in porn possesses different meanings as consumers recount and formulate personalised articulations of the role of porn in their own lives.

# 6 THE PRIVACY OF PORN AND ITS INTERFACE WITH THE PUBLIC

The previous section looked at how porn as a construction of sex hinges on technologically mediated practices. How porn is accessed, used, adapted and consequently experienced by consumers is aided by various technological paraphernalia whose use is furthermore contingent on suitability of location and availability of time. Our previous discussion on how porn consumers access, select and use porn now takes us to a much more private universe of the consumers' experiences with publically available images of pornography. The dialectic of the private/public applies at three different discursive layers in this chapter. Firstly consumers' private bodily gratifications and identities are mirrored by publically available commodified images of sex. The publicness of sex simulacra through pornography has a profound private impact on the construction, the projection and sometimes the discovery of consumers' personal pleasures and identities. Secondly, the differing and sometimes overlapping private and public consumption conditions enjoyed by consumers reveal the polysemic meaning and fluid nature of pornography. Finally, although pornography is public, it depicts sexual acts and sexual behaviour that are normally performed in private (Iqani 2012: 133). The migration of these private acts into the public realm in the mode of pornography transmutes them into commodity form, which is what we turn attention to next.

The foregoing 'mediation' chapter demonstrated the utilitarian value of porn to consumers and discussed how the technologically mediated usage of explicit material served very concrete personal functions. The compatibility of porn consumption to the uses and gratification model resonates with the 'rational' economic paradigm which presupposes that people rationally select and use products to satisfy needs (Miles 2000). If porn, like most consumer goods, functions simply to fulfil consumers' personal needs, it invariably assumes commodity status in a global economy organised around the visual consumption of images (Schroeder 2005). It is therefore impossible to talk of how consumers engage with explicit images without factoring the nature of the publicness of those images as 'visual goods.'

## 6.1 Porn as commodity: 'You have to pay to watch porn'

Pornography as publicised mediated sexual acts "has less to do with sex and more to do with shopping; one can troll around the dark side of the web, looking at hundreds and hundreds of naked women, searching for just the right one to choose to get off" (Horning 2005: 1). The migration of conventionally private sexual acts into the public realm through porn makes these sexual acts commodities. "It is in media texts and public retail display sites that the pornographic imagination enters the public realm and is thus commodified" (Iqani 2012:

135). Consequently porn as commodified sex always entails a financially affiliated *quid pro quo*.

Danny (18 black male), for example, felt that his lack of financial wherewithal curtailed his general porn access. He admits that if he had more money, he would "go to the internet and see many more (videos)." Similarly, Sheila (25 black female), although having internet at home, felt the concern to constantly exercise a degree of frugality when using her internet impeded her access and enjoyment. She expressed that she does not often download and "save (porn) because "that just kills my bandwidth." Sheila cannot watch porn directly from her favourite BDSM porn channel *kink.com* because she has to pay to watch from there. She therefore devised a shrewd strategy of her own for watching the videos hosted by this online BDSM channel for free.

> You have to pay to view but I just look at the titles and then I go to the torrent bay and I download it…… you can always sort of preview what you wanna watch…..then go to the website and check the title, then go to the torrent bay and put the title in there and then download it. Some geekers have made it free for you.

This cost-free option is somewhat arduous and controversial. "The Pirate Bay" contains egregious copyright infringements which Sheila knows about. Earlier in the interview she glibly declared "I torrent my porn illegally." She acknowledged however that if she had more money she would do things differently.

> "If I had more money on my credit card to spend, on porn channels online, then I'd just go straight to the channel and I could stream and don't have to go and do this whole process of elimination, looking for the name…….If I had more money on my credit card then, I would pay fourteen dollars a month subscription fees"

These instances demonstrate the ways in which access to financial resources dictate, in very practical ways, the manner in which consumers access and experience porn. Another respondent. Zethu (22 black female) who consumes porn using her mobile phone revealed that her porn viewing sessions were dictated by how much data bundles she had on her phone.

This means if her data bundles were depleted before she completed the porn scene, her viewing session would literally be cut short.

> What determines my sessions because angithi (Zulu: *remember*) I watch it on my phone… So, it depends on how much data I have. If I don't have lots of data then I won't watch too much porn.

Of course data bundles, just like ordinary phone credits are bought with money. When Zethu, for example, does not have money to load data bundles on her phone, she cannot watch porn. For a university student, money comes in short supply.

Dave (42 white male) who frequents adult shops to consume porn says that each of the DVDs at Adult World, (the shop he likes to visit) costs between R199 to R350 ($14-$25) depending on the quality and exclusivity of the material. Even though he says his expenditure on porn tends to be sporadic, he does not mind paying over a R1000 ($71) when he sees material that he likes.

> At one time when I was like on holiday in Durban once, I went to this Adult World that was really well stocked with like Brazilian porn, I mean, I must have purchased like about four DVD's and I mean that was like R1200 ($85) cause I mean they were each like R299 DVDs I mean. I spent quite a bit there.

Duma (23 black male) was the only interview respondent who read porn literature. His favourite porn writing *Mills and Boon* is attainable when one buys a copy of a local magazine *Move*.

> It's a series of books…..sexually explicit…. It's actually quite cheap. A few years ago it was put in, I think *Move*. You know the magazine called *Move*? When you buy a copy you get a copy of *Mills and Boon*… I think…….. It was quit cheap like 20 bucks ….. and they've got like volumes and volumes of this stuff.

Duma's reference to the word 'cheap' is indicative of the inescapable cost-factor associated with attaining porn. His nonchalant mention of *Mills and Boon*'s cheapness is telling precisely because it points beyond the quality of the material being discussed (e.g 'cheap' quality) to an affirmation that money actually matters when you want porn. Cheap is the opposite of costly. Cheap is an important adjective for porn consumers. Pornography is a commodity borne of the economic cycle of production, distribution and consumption and does not exist outside the spectra of economic activity. As such, the attainment of pornographic material always involves financial costs whether through buying DVD's like Dave, streaming porn clips, like Zethu, downloading online films, like Sheila, or buying a cheap magazine, like Duma. The visibility of pornography as commodity and economic activity through media technologies and spaces grants porn its publicness (Iqani 2012). I could find no truer yet anecdotal narrative from any of my interview respondents than that of Tara's (50 white female) to illustrate this point. For the indulgence of the reader, I have decided to add this short extract of my *tête-à-tête* with Tara verbatim so as to maintain its nuanced conversational qualities.

**Tara**

> Pornography was still banned in South Africa and this was the year…. gosh!...It must have been about 1987! I was flying oversees and my plane was delayed and I had to spend a night in a hotel at the Buffels Airport in Belgium and I turned the Telly on and of-course there hadn't been Telly in South Africa ….. I only got TV when I was seventeen. So I mean, obviously I'd watched TV in those ten years but I didn't know anything about how TV worked or TV channels international and in the Belgium hotel. I was flicking through the channels and I came across about three pornographic channels so I stayed awake all night watching, flicking between these three channels, watching many, many many, many different porn things…..I enjoyed myself thoroughly and the next morning I had to rush to catch the plane because my plane had been delayed and when I was checking out, my whole stay was free because the

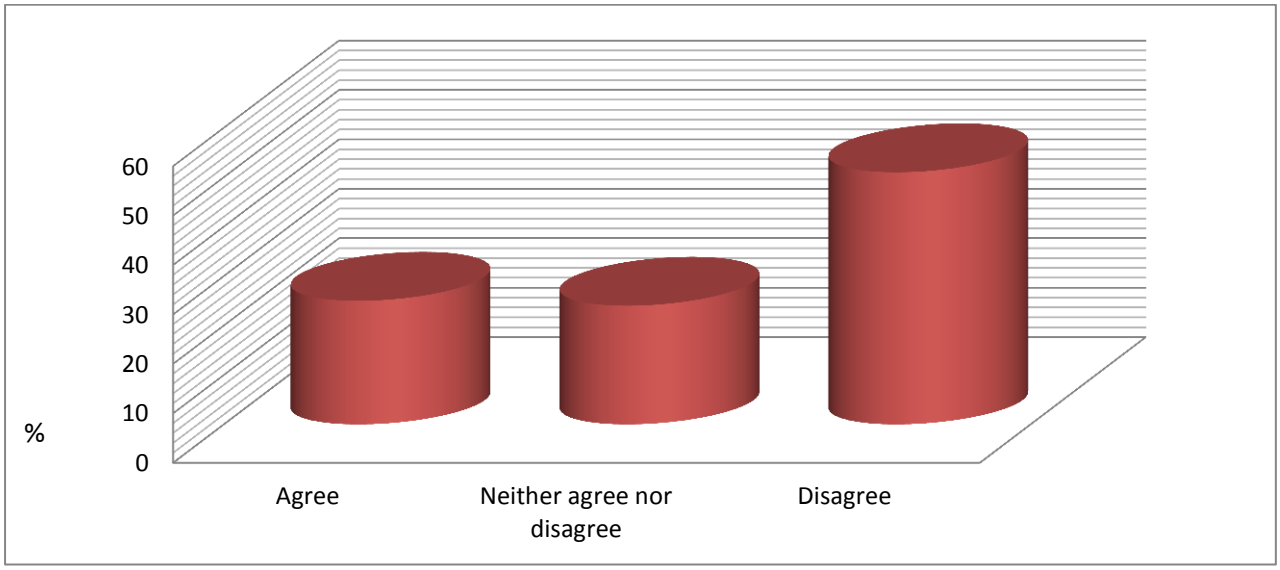
> airline, I think it was SAA was delayed… was paying for us to stay in the hotel and as I was running to catch my plane. The desk clerk stopped me as I was handing my hotel room keys and she said "No, no, there's a charge for your room" and I said "No, there's no charge." I said "It's SAA" and she looked in the 'thing' and she said "No but you've been watching TV!" and I said "Yes, I've been watching TV" and she said "Well, there's a charge" and she showed me this bill for this vast amounts of money and I said "I don't know what you mean!" and she said "Well, you have to pay to watch *those* channels" and I said "I'm very sorry. I don't have any money" and I grabbed my back-pack and I ran like hell and I ran away and I jumped on the plane!
>
> **Me.**
>
> *Laughing*
>
> **Tara**
>
> *laughing*… and I learnt a big lesson (*laughing*)
>
> **Me**
>
> And what was that lesson?
>
> **Tara**
>
> Well, that you have to pay to watch porn!

Tara's narrative captures the reality that porn is hardly free even at those times it has seemingly been attained without costs. For someone like Tara, who "came from a very conservative family" this must have been a scintillating moment, to never be forgotten. Tara stated: "I never had any sex education from my parents, non, zero not even about menstruation." Furthermore, her parents "voted National Party so they voted for Apartheid… they're British so all emotions were stifled, stiff-up a lip, not talk about politics or sex." Combine all this information with the fact that, in South Africa, pornography was illegal and very difficult to attain and the product is an understandably inquisitive young Tara, willing to

toss sleep to the wind for an all-nighter of sexual revelations and pleasure. This was not the first time Tara viewed porn. The first time was at age 18 with her boyfriend over a grainy VHS cassette. She felt uncomfortable. This time, at age 21, by herself, in a country that permitted her porn on a clear TV screen, all conditions were in her favour. Most excitingly, it was all for free, so she thought.

In his paper, *The demand for porn* D'Orlando (2011) argues porn is an economic good whose constant supply is contingent on the perpetual demand from its customers. He devises an economic equation to help explain this demand/supply relationship. D'Orlando (2011)'s economic equation is one of the few works that attempt to devise a model to explain the ubiquitous circulation of pornography. D'Orlando (2011) however does not explain *why* porn has as a greater demand than other forms of media. One of the endeavours of this section is to table a functional model for understanding both the *how* and *why* aspects of porn's high demand. It is evident from Tara's experience: "staying awake *all night* watching, flicking between these three channels, watching *many, many, many, many* different porn things" that there is an enchanting quality in porn that sets it apart from most aesthetic forms. It is this flammable aspect that would lead Tara spending the whole night watching instead of resting for her flight the following day. Even though, undeniably, "you have to pay to watch porn" there is strong evidence from the survey data that insufficiency of financial means does not necessarily impede many consumers' access from pornographic material. When asked if financial limitations hindered them from watching as much porn as they would, 51% of the 676 survey respondents (348) disagreed, 162 respondents (24%) were neutral and only 165 (25%) agreed). The following graph shows these results.

**Figure 20 Financial limitations prevent me from watching as much porn as I would like**



It is interesting that 24% of the consumers were undecided on how to answer this question. This could be an indication that some consumers have not really considered the role of their finances in their porn consumption.

Of greater interest, however, is the 51% who indicated financial limitations had no adverse effect on their porn consumption whatsoever. This figure could be construed in two ways. It is either most of the sampled respondents in this survey were predominantly people with no sense of financial precarity. Those who express no scarcity in porn expenditure, like the above respondents, can be considered to enjoy a reasonable amount of disposable income. Since the online questionnaire never requested income information this will remain a matter of speculation.

The second explanation for the above data is that most porn consumers possibly have other methods of sourcing porn other than through their own economic means. Resources for accessing porn both occasion and transcend monetary dictates. Even though, for example, it is clear that scarcity of capital curbed their porn consumption, many of the interviewees revealed they had social networks that enabled them to consume porn even in the face of financial deprivation. Kholo (29 black male) for example says he stopped buying porn once he discovered a clandestine world of pornography swapping.

> …when your friends discover that you watch porn…..*some* of them actually discover that you do watch porn and you have it, then they say "oh I have this" and then the exchanges began…. and it was very under the carpet. Nobody knew about it and all of them were keeping it a secret…. you know and you discover that there's an entire industry and then that's when I actually started getting porn for free now…. and there's an exchange and you start to collect. You start to have a collection.

Before Kholo discovered the hidden "industry" of porn networking and exchange, he never collected porn. By tapping into the relevant reservoirs of social networks, he acquired free access *and* a porn collection, amenities to which he wasn't previously privy. It surely behoves any discussion on porn consumption to theorise the manner in which porn as a commodity remains in surplus stock even to people who, in real financial terms, like Kholo, cannot afford

it. What Kholo describes above is what I have come to coin a *socio-sexual-circuit*, a network of socially connected people whose social ties and mutual sexual interests translate to a magnanimous exchange of sexually explicit material. Unlike Du Gay et al (2013)'s *circuit of culture* which offers a sweeping scope of culture through five processes existing in and outside of consumption, the *socio-sexual-circuit* consists only of three nodes within the phase of consumption: buyers, borrowers and what I term 'bargainers.'

Social network models and theories have been used to "to connote complex sets of relationships between members of social systems at all scales, from interpersonal to international" (Passmore 2011: 2) and have enabled the analysis of information transmissions, new media platforms, disease spread and internet connections. One popular model in media studies proposes that all networks consist of ties and nodes. Nodes are defined as "the individual actors within the networks" and ties as "relationships between the actors" (Passmore 2011: 1). Ties can be described as "whole" (communities and large populations) or "egocentric" (personal or individual communities) and "the typical size of an egocentric network is constrained to about 150 members due to possible limits in the capacity of the human communication channel" (Passmore 2011: 5). Different nodes consist of different kinds of ties e.g. friendships, familial, spousal, professional, religious etc. In the particular instance of the *socio-sexual-circuit*, ties - no matter the type e.g. friendship, family - share a common logic of sexual trust which enables an exchange and a flow of sexual content.

Pule (22 black male) who has over 90 porn DVD's in his collection is a good example of how consumers simply need to be connected to other consumers to have porn access. Pule is an avid exchanger of explicit content. Other than that, his brother and fiancé, for example, both benefit from his extensive collection Due to their relationship with him, they never have to buy porn.

> Like……most of the time my brother can just come "hey muna" (Sotho: *hey man*) what new DVD have you got? Then he just picks some. You see?…. My girlfriend can just come "hey muna" (Sotho: *hey man*) which style you got today…?

Pule later revealed that he also shared his porn with other friends from his neighbourhood. Based on their dominant means of access and salient sharing behaviour, all the nodes in a *socio-sexual circuit* mostly fit into one type of three main constituents: those who mostly buy porn, those who mostly borrow it and those who do both.

Buyers do not mind spending generous amount of money on porn. Dave (42 year white male) has spent over R1200 ($87) on DVD's at Adult World, and on a monthly basis buys new material that costs between R199 to R350 ($14 - $25). As someone who solely purchases original porn, Dave fits neatly into the class of "buyers." Both Dave and Sheila have DVD collections of original content bought from legitimate porn shops. Unlike Dave however, Sheila now uses the internet as the main source of porn. Earlier, she cleverly countered "why go to the DVD store and pay a R150 ($11) when I can download it for free?" Sheila does not always 'save' or download because, "that just kills my bandwidth." Free, in this sense just means 'not charged by the site of the download.' Sheila's internet provider charges her more for downloads. Both Sheila and Dave are classic examples of buyers.

Borrowers are people who hardly buy their own porn but mostly receive it from their network of friends, family or colleagues. Kholo (28 black male) who discovered an "industry" of porn-sharing is an example of such consumers. Kholo stopped buying porn when his friends started sharing it with him. Borrowers therefore tend to build a collection from the material they get from their peers.

Bargainers access porn mostly by swapping material through associative ties, by pirating DVD's or buying cheap pirated DVD's or other cheap material and by exchanging digital files. What makes bargainers different from borrowers is that they are willing to spend some money on (cheap) porn while borrowers, for the most part, are not. Additionally, bargainers, unlike borrowers, tend to give away most of their porn. Joe (37 black male) for example exemplifies this.

> I get the DVD's from my friends or sometimes I buy some copies….We get piracy….. That is why…that is why it's easier to, Yeah, maybe give it to my friend if I don't want to keep it anymore……because it's a piracy and it's…it's a lot cheaper…

As a father of two children with a wife and numerous monthly expenses, it suits Joe well to not buy costly original material or to have a monthly subscription fee for porn. Joe's statement also underlines a highly significant link between the price of the pornographic material and the willingness to share or give it away. The report "that is why it's easier to give it to my friend…. because it's a piracy and it's a lot cheaper" confirms the endowment effect theory which intimates that owners are more likely to value and even over-value

possessions that have cost them (Dunning & Van Boven 2000). The worth of the explicit material and the readiness to give it away is determined by how much it has cost the consumer and according to Joe's statement "piracy" is easy to give away." This also suggests that swopped, borrowed and freely-given porn is most likely to be cheap materials. Elrod (60 coloured male) also confirmed this when he stated:

> I buy these cheap ones you know and uhm, once I watch few times I simply just give it away.

Both Elrod and Joe are fathers who live in the same houses as their wives and children. The acquiring of 'cheap' material is a strategy devised to ensure that porn does not stay in the house in case children find it. For both fathers, porn needs to be expendable. That cannot happen if they invest money on sourcing original DVDs. Joe mentioned that he and his wife "don't want to expose our children while they are under age to pornography" and Elrod pointed out he could not keep porn because "the explicit sex…. because with these movies….small children is around." As people who buy cheap porn and share most of it, Joe and Elrod are classic bargainers. What is clear is that whether one is a buyer, borrower or bargainer may not necessarily be determined by just the availability of funds but by the living conditions one finds oneself in.

By this logic "buyers," are the least willing to share porn. David (42 white male) and Sheila (25 black female) who both buy and download original material mentioned they did not share their porn.

Sheila

> You know what I mean? It's…it's…. like underwear. When you are younger it becomes a social thing where you are learning cause you know nothing. As you get older it progresses and you know more sexual graces…it becomes *your*….*your* porn.

Dave

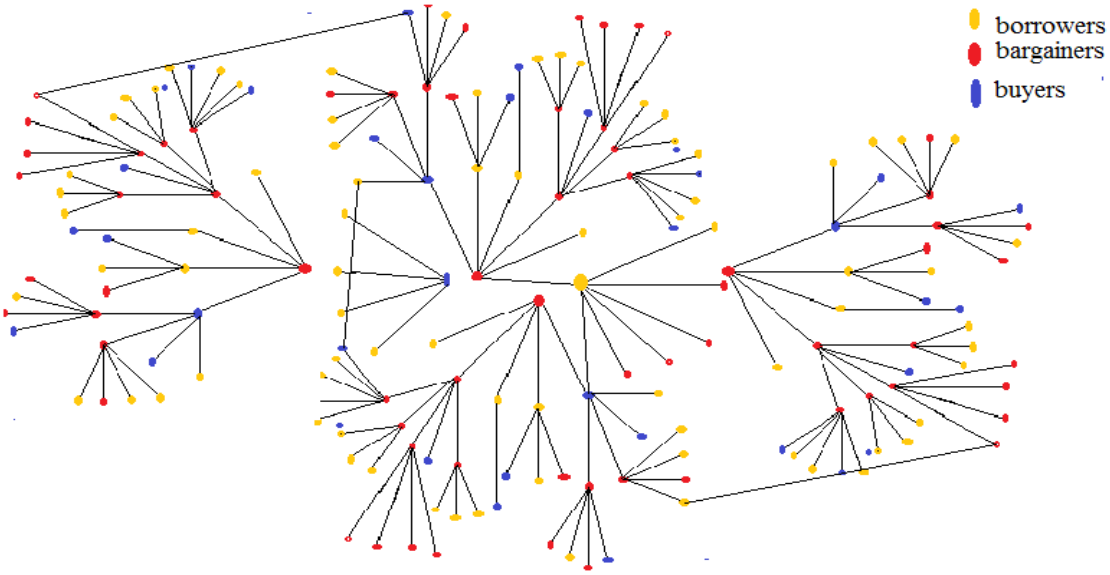
> I did once (share) with a colleague at work, uhhh.. we sort of like swapped stuff and it was quite good

Note Sheila's words: "It's like underwear….it becomes *your* porn." Underwear are not just personal objects but sentimental ones. There is obvious sentimental value endowed to legitimately attained and/or costly material hence the reluctance and difficulty in sharing it with others. Whereas Sheila has never shared porn Dave has had the experience with one person at work two years back. This was the first and the last person Dave shared porn with. At the present moment Dave does not share explicit content with anyone.

The socio-sexual circuit model I am proposing does not advocate rigid or stable categories. It is simply a perceptual paradigm that seeks to plot the myriad and fluid ways explicit material attains widespread social presence. The units comprising the sexual circuit: buyers, bargainers and borrowers equally do not represent static behavioural homogenies but rather condensed generic patterns revealed by the data. One who ordinarily buys original content for example, may at one or two occasions share porn. Dave who once had a friend with whom he exchanged material is a good example. However, this still does not change the generic pattern of Dave's porn access as mainly being through purchasing original DVDs and the fact he no longer shares porn.

The three different types of nodes - buyers, bargainers and borrowers form a network of ties which allows for the exchange of pornographic material as shown in the following social network illustration.

**Figure 21 Buyers, bargainers and borrowers in a socio-sexual-circuit network**

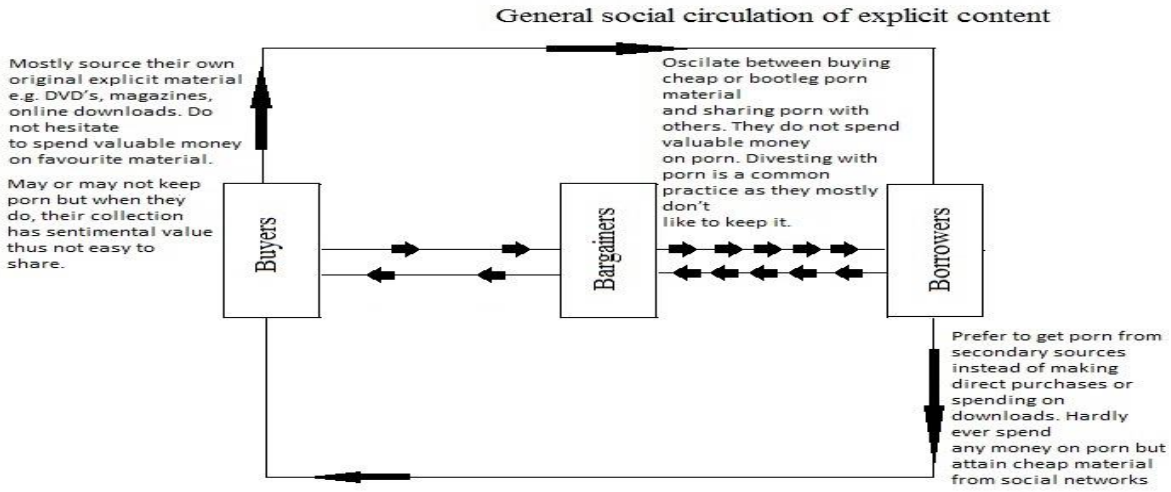



These small egocentric networks comprising a minimum of three people formed publics who "shared (a) world defined by the presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear" (Arendt 1958: 19). 'Publics' and 'the public' in this sense has less to do with

Harbamassian conceptions of equal social members deliberating issues for the benefit of all but has more to do with people sharing a "space of common attention, where things are visible to all" members of that space (Iqani 2012: 18). Note in the diagram that each network consists of an average of one to two buyers highlighting the resistance of sharing amongst this constituent group. On the other hand, the over-abundance of borrowers and bargainers captures these units' proclivity to exchange and circulate pornographic content. Even though members of an egocentric network were more familiar with each other and seemed oblivious to other porn sharing publics, they were nonetheless likely to be unknowingly connected to others through at least one common node. A good example of this was Pule who shared porn with his brother, girlfriend and neighbourhood friends. These people who formed their own unique network might not have been aware that Pule was a common connector between them and another network of people consisting of Pule and his work colleagues. Despite the non-generalisability of the interview data, one non-negligible observation that emerged was that all 25 interview respondents had been introduced to porn via a friend or a family member, suggesting that the members of any socio-sexual circuit are people with very close ties.[5]

What defines the circuit however is not just how respondents obtain explicit material but the ways all three constituent groups share or refuse to share explicit content with others such that explicit content circulates organically within and outside of economic paradigms. A socio-sexual economy therefore entails the stream of pornographic material in non-hierarchical ways based on both social contracts/ties and financial considerations. The following illustration gives a basic visual depiction of how porn flows in a socio-sexual-circuit.

**Figure 22 Porn flow in a socio-sexual circuit**




[5] The survey did not contain a question about first porn exposure.

Each miniature arrow represents the direction and density of porn flow. Explicit content flows to and fro all the constituents. The paired lines represent this to and fro pattern. Note the highest density of current flow is at the fields of bargainers' and borrowers. Like an electrical circuit, the socio-sexual circuit contains conductors (paths of easy porn circulation) and resistors (paths of resistant porn circulation). We have already established that buyers share porn the least. For this reason, "bargainers" and "borrowers" are the two constituents most responsible for high speed circulation of explicit material. This is why the least current flow of porn is experienced at the buyers' field where the highest resistance to share exists. The outside larger arrows represent the general social circulation of porn.

The socio-sexual circuit underscores the fact that porn is not just easily accessible and anonymously consumed. Porn is and has always been shared or accessed through social networks as well. This is a crucial factor to consider when talking about porn prevalence. This also sheds light on why most consumers' first experience with explicit content is often located outside the ambit of financial trade and at an impressionable age. The permeable flows of pornographic content in a socio-sexual-circuit make it easy for young inquisitive minds to reach. As early as 1969, a survey report of a national randomised sample in America found that 70% of teenagers between 13-18 had already been exposed to explicit pornographic material while 90% of college students had exposure before reaching college (Wilson 1971). More recent studies have also confirmed high rates of child and teenage exposure to porn (Melby 2010, Flood 2007, Hald 2006, Bente 2004). Garlick (2011) argues that the omnipresence of porn is no novel occurrence and that the World Wide Web has simply transfigured the ways in which porn is availed and consumed (e.g. more privacy, more porn options), not necessarily the core principles that inform such access and circulation e.g. willingness and ability to pay for porn and the proclivity to share or circulate porn. For example, although the internet embodies the concept of easy porn access, borrowers like Kholo and bargainers like Joe would do use *their* own internet to download or watch porn since it would be too costly for them. Watching porn using university computers and getting free DVD's from friends is therefore easier for Kholo just as buying bootleg porn DVD's is easier for Joe.

The pattern of porn movement in a socio-sexual circuit means that explicit material exchanges hands from and between those who have and those who do not (as in the case of Kholo who started to build a collection) and sometimes from those who have to others who also abound (as in Dave's example who used to exchange materials with someone who had his own collection). Most importantly, this circulation means no one who wants porn can be in lack of

it, as long as they are socially connected. This explains why many respondents did not feel lack of finances hindered their porn consumption.

The socio-sexual circuit model offers a much more nuanced account of the ways porn disseminates than the famed idea of pornification. Clarrisa Smith points out that the Pornification or pornigraphication argument draws on moralist arguments which often negatively infer a society awash with explicit imagery. Calling the pornification ideology a "conceptual sledgehammer," she notes that "claims of 'pornographication' and 'pornification' are already so saturated in the languages and references of concern and regulation that they restrict the range of possible explanations that can be admitted" (Smith 2010:104).

Seeing that the praxis of a socio-sexual-circuit precedes the advent of the internet, it makes sense that idiosyncratic patterns endemic to cultural practices would remain the same. Countless scores of people still consume porn as they did decades ago. They share porn as they did decades ago. The concept of a socio-sexual-circuit is therefore one that cuts across time and assists us to conceptualise the distinctive exchange systems that shape how porn is consumed and disseminated.

Practices of pornography consumption therefore seem to manifest an economy different to the orthodox capitalistic model. They reveal an economy of pleasure which both utilise the financially defined *quid pro quo* yet simultaneously transcendent it. Simply put, the high social circulation of porn is due to the fact that it circumnavigates in two streams simultaneously: both as a commodity good and as a gift commodity. Now that the question of how explicit images circulate has been addressed, there remains the matter of why consumers share and exchange explicit content. The following discussions give an account of these reasons.

## 6.2 The sharing economy: Why porn consumers share porn.

The sharing economy according to Botsman and & Rogers (2010) is an economic model founded on sharing and swapping of products and services enabling access over ownership. Also referred to as 'collaborative consumption,' the sharing economy is governed by a strong sense of community which valorises social ties. From the interview and survey data, it became clear that social ties were central to practices of porn sharing and exchange. One of the reasons for which consumers shared porn, for example, was to cement social ties and to partake in the spirit of community. Litha (26 black male)'s community comprised his group of friends who shared and discussed explicit material in relation to their own sexual fantasies, philosophies and experiences.

> My friends and I have a BBM group where they give me links or post pictures of us to discuss. We always discuss the...er...texts and compare to our sexual experience. So we'll say "I start off in X position because penetration is a lot easier." Etc. Also, my friends often show me their sex partners' sex pics.

Clearly, the rational paradigm cannot account for Litha's porn sharing experiences with his community of friends since there is obviously no essential 'need' for this form of collaborative consumption and no actual economic transaction at work. The ostensible absence of rational need fulfilment in this camaraderie exchange leads one to the conclusion that something of greater gratuity is being consummated in this scenario: an ethos of social membership and community. This affirms Arnould & Thompson (2005)'s consumer culture theory which asserts that consumption is implicated in more than just people's pragmatic everyday needs and that it is further linked personal desires, social identities and communal belonging. Notice that such gratuity is being relished in an ecology of trust and friendship rather than the volatility of strangers. Sharing porn is therefore not about the act itself but about the social ties between the interlocutors and how the act of exchange cements these bonds. The social act of porn exchange must therefore be seen as rendering its own unique form of pleasure just as exchanging clothes, make-up or music; each carries its own pleasure signature. The economy of sharing in porn consumption is a socially determined phenomenon (rather than an economic one) and consolidates communal bonds through sexual enjoyment. As stated by Jacobs (2004: 11) "gift exchange supplements commodity exchange in that it aims to construct a mechanism of social cohesion rather than economic utility or profit." There's more!

### *6.2.1 It's good, it's new: How consumers validate their pleasure through others.*

Sharing porn was also premised around the conjecture that 'if I enjoyed it, others will enjoy it too.' Consumers shared porn to validate their own enjoyment by inviting others to share in their own sense of enjoyment. Material were circulated on the condition they were intriguingly novel, comical and relevant to a particular affiliated public. The sharing was still conducted in social circles of acquainted associates. For Joe (37 black male), these affiliates were his work colleagues.

> All my colleagues are crazy about porn ….Yeah sometimes we share DVDs if they got some new stuff. Yeah, they can lend me their stuff and I do the same…

The concept of novelty is key to the consumer's urge to share. Novelty means porn material contain an imprint of enticing oddity and freshness. Nevertheless, the perception of novelty still rests on the subjective discernment of the consumer. Her taste for the mesmerisingly and thrilling may not be the same as her counterpart's. Consequently, it takes a decent degree of acquaintance to speculate with some semblance of accuracy what others will enjoy. Due to prevailing social ties, some porn consumers successfully hit the target while some, sadly, miss the mark. When a consumer misguidedly shares porn material that appears not to be of her fellow's liking, her sexual tastes are not validated. Sharing porn is risky business and demands that one has solid knowledge of other's sexual predilections. Emmanuel (29 black male) describes a situation where a former friend give him porn he did not really appreciate.

> I used to have a friend who watched only gay porn. …..good, good, good gay porn but I've never ngibe (Zulu: *been*) turned on to be honest with you. I've never…. I've never enjoyed two naked guys…

Emmanuel's friend knew Emmanuel as a bisexual man. In fact, Emmanuel at the time was in a gay relationship and he and his gay friend used to talk and share intimate sexual experiences and advice. However, what Emmanuel's friend did not realise was that Emmanuel's taste in porn differed slightly to what he extrapolated from Emmanuel's real life. Even though Emmanuel admits the quality of his friend's porn gay porn was 'good, good, good' he did not enjoy it. Unsurprisingly, Emmanuel had to ask his friend to stop offering him porn.

This incident verifies the fluid nature of sexuality (Spinelli 2014). Sexual identities are not "as rigid 'hard-wired' traits….they are more adequately understood as fluid conditions that remain dependent upon a wide number of inter-relational and socio-cultural contextual factors" (Spinelli 2014: 19). The complexity of sexuality means knowledge of one aspect of another's sexuality cannot always be used to make inferences on other sexual aspects such as taste in porn.

Since pornography is so indivisibly attached to one's sexual tastes, disagreements about porn can inevitably equate to judgments about others' sexual sensitivities. The rejection of

another's porn can easily be decoded as the denunciation of his sexual perspective. In such a situation, instead of friendship bonds validating each other's sexual preferences, they can, hurtfully, ostracise them. Today, for whatever reasons, this individual and Emmanuel are no longer friends.

For Elam (30 black male), the impulse to share was based on the novelty of humour that he experienced upon viewing his first explicit magazine. After seeing images of penetration and fellatio from the magazine he acquired from his uncle's bag, Elam tore off some pages and disseminated them amongst his friends.

> ..the sucking & penetration was a bit of a joke to me...I got a good laugh as well… no wonder I distributed some pages to share the funny.

Elam was age 11 when this incident took place. His naiveté as a pre-pubescent boy meant there were aspects of copulation he never knew. Evidently, when he 'saw' these previously hidden details they seemed hilarious to a point he *had* to share. Even though what Elam thought was funny back then is no longer funny to him today, the realisation that humour could be a cause to share porn is still as relevant today. This is more so considering the emergence of an interesting porn sub-genre called 'laughter porn' where one or two of the actors in the scene are laughing due to an unexpected blooper that calls attention to the performativity of the sexual moment. Nonetheless, to share even 'laughter porn' entails one has a grasp of the other's sense of humour.

Whether it is considered new, funny or simply good, sharing lies on the consumer's judicious aptitude to speculate his fellow associates will be enthralled by what he has to share. Sharing entails no monetary gains or discreet benefits other than the sharer's personal validation from collegial shared appreciation. There was also data evidence that showed porn sharing was a form of disbursing sexual advice.

### *6.2.2 Porn sharing as sexual advice*

Some of the respondents who shared porn seemed to occupy privileged roles of sex patriarchs, adept at advising others by handing them porn. The more porn one had, the more sexually familiar one felt. Duma (23 black male) recalls a time when his virgin friend sought his sexual advice. Instead of talking to him, Duma gave his friend porn.

> Cause yeah, I have like a former friend….came and they were like ….they were virgin and they were like "I don't know what to do" whatever …. I'm like "I will hook you up." I gave them the porn.

Even though Duma himself was a virgin when this incident took place, he felt slightly more ahead sexually than his friend. Of course he never divulged the fact of his own virginity to his friend. One of the findings made by Bryant & Jae Woong (2008) in their survey of online porn use is that many respondents felt educated by watching porn. Even though Duma did not know what to say to his friend in the form of sexual counsel, having porn at his disposal made him feel useful. Giving out porn to someone can therefore be an act of sexual intervention. Themba (27 black male) recalls a similar situation as Duma's except that Themba is a married man with sexual experience.

> He told me that he's having some problems at home, he can't satisfy his woman and he wants to know where he can get help….. and from the porn that I threw away, I give him some of them.

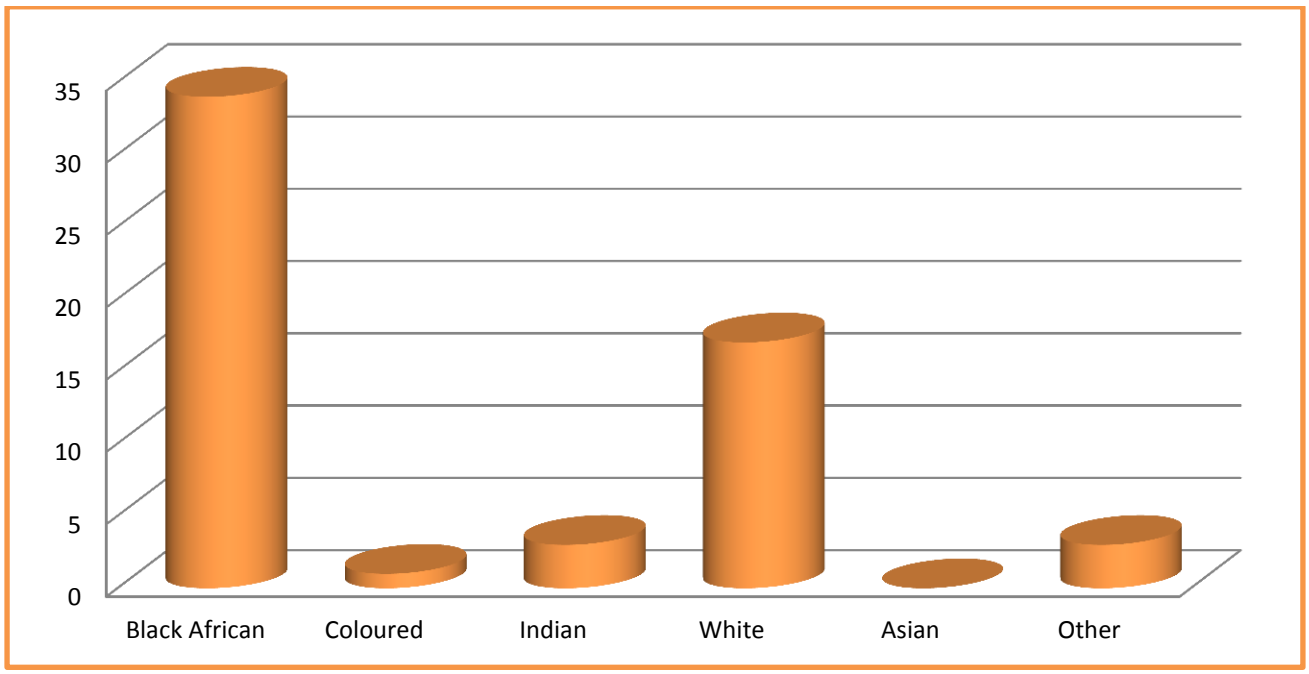
Themba, rather than talking to his friend about his sexual problems, preferred to hand him porn. This can be read as his way of assisting his friend. It can also be construed as means of avoiding a difficult discussion that he, even with his sexual experience, finds awkward. Here, Linda's Williams (1999) words ring true: pornography forms part of our cultural vocabulary for communicating sex. I would like to extend this a little bit and suggest that porn becomes a way for people to directly talk to each other about sex in situations where they personally deem it difficult to verbally do so. There is a manifest situational oxymoron in Themba and Duma's inability to directly talk about porn. Even though both consumers admit to having seen voluminous quantities of porn, there is an evident struggle in 'talking' about sex in the mundane verbal way when situations call upon them to do so. Perhaps this is understandable for Themba, a traditional man who grew up in the rural areas and believes in African customs. Though he works in the urban centres of Durban, Themba's marriage ceremony never took place in court or church but at his tribal village in Kwazulu Natal. As a traditionally married man who pays obeisance to culture, Themba would have been raised to know the "cultural taboos against certain behaviours and practices that include discussions about sex and sexuality" (DePalma & Francis. 2014: 548). Clearly, one's consumption of porn does not necessarily translate to openness in talking about sex. Nevertheless, porn consumers are able

to fill the systematic silences they fear to fill by instrumentalising porn to speak for them. Lastly, sharing porn was also a reflection of financial lack.

### *6.2.3 Porn sharing as reflection of financial constraints*

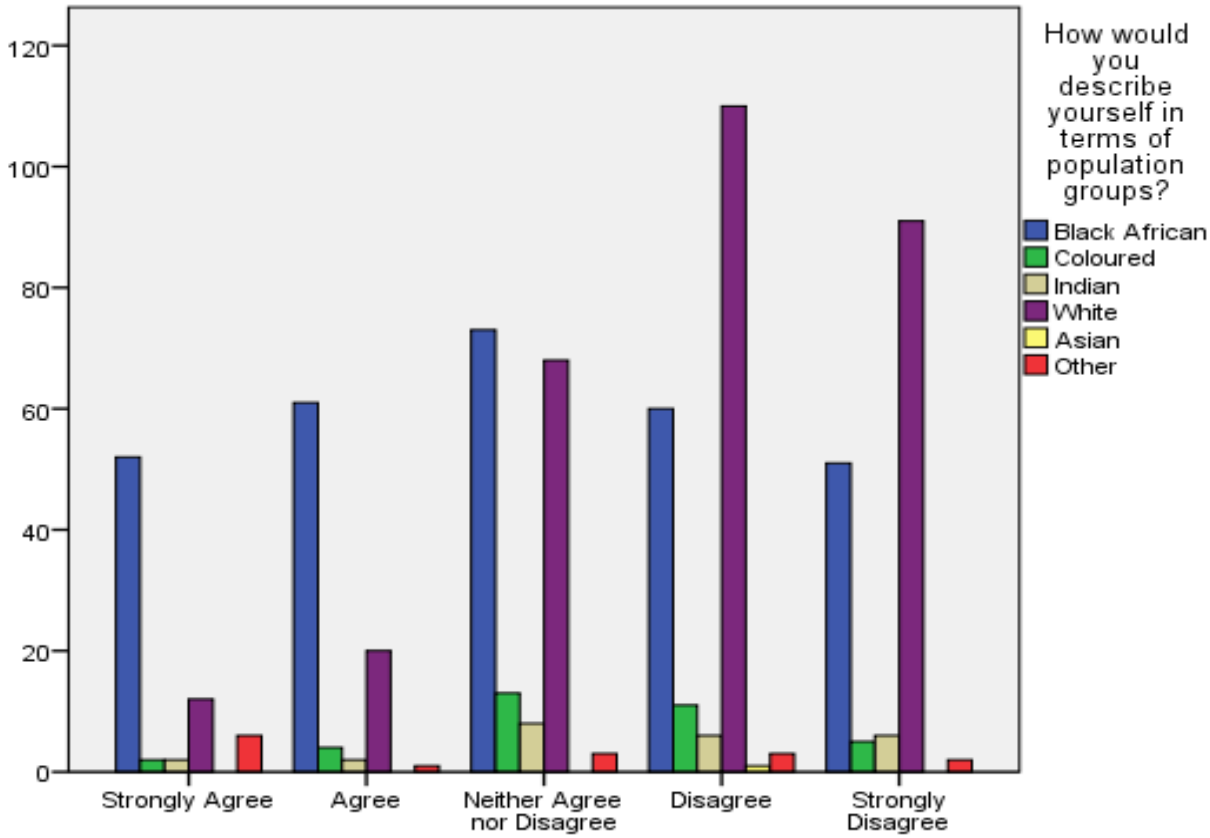
I've already mentioned consumers shared porn to consolidate social bonds, to validate their own sexual tastes and as a form of sexual advice. From the survey data it also became apparent that consumers shared porn due to lack of financial means. Out of the N=58 survey respondents who answered positively to the question of sharing porn via mobile phones, black people were the most prevalent.

**Figure 23 I share digital files with friends using mobile phones**




A panellist at a PhD writing seminar saw these figures and suggested that black people shared porn more than other groups because they are more communal and generally enjoy sharing. The concept of *Ubuntu* is an Africanist philosophy which loosely translates "I am because we are" (Mutwa 1964). It is rooted within a primordial indigenous ethos that privileges community above individualism. The tenet of *Ubuntu* speaks of the generosity of the human spirit but also refers to the approachability of a person or a people. Some have claimed that Africans share more than others and tend to be more approachable (Mutwa 1964). Do black South Africans share porn more because they possess more *Ubuntu*? The following graph suggests black people share porn for other reasons than *Ubuntu*.

**Figure 24 Cross-tabulation: Financial limitations prevent me from watching as much porn as I want**




This cross-tabulation graph juxtaposes the two variables of race and financial limitations alongside each other. A glaring pattern becomes evident as the bar columns of white and black respondents peak at two distinct opposite ends respectively. For white respondents the peaks are at 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree.' Financial limitations did not affect or curb white respondents' porn access. For black respondents the peaks are at 'strongly 'agree', 'agree' and 'neither agree nor disagree' indicating financial limitations were a restraining factor to their porn consumption.

Sharing is an expedient path to free porn access for those experiencing financial constraints. In this regard, porn consumption mirrors the socio-economic imbalances of South Africa where the minority of white people surpasses the wealth of the majority Blackpopulation by momentous proportions. Even though black people form 80% of the South African population "Race remains the dominant factor in relation to income inequality in South Africa" where a "household headed by black Africans is R69 632 while the average for white-headed households is more than 5.5 time this amount at R387 011 per annum" (United Nations Development Programme 2014: 61, Statistics South Africa 2015). Practices of porn sharing, swopping and piracy in the sharing economy have a face and a race. The next sub-section will consider how porn consumers experience porn in the privacy of their viewing.

## 6.3 The private and internal world of porn consumers

Porn consumption practices are beholden to fickle and temperamental worlds of people's private thoughts and feelings. Porn users don't always desire porn. A thought, an idea or a feeling acts as a catalyst that sets in motion an array of consumption choices (from accessing, viewing and storing or disposing of porn). A statement by Sheila (25 black female) points this out:

> I'm not always feeling like watching porn. I'll get aroused for some unknown reason. Like a…like a…like a tender breeze might blow through the window and I'm like "Ok" (*laughs*).

The ethereal "breeze" of emotions isn't at all abstract or immaterial. Feelings in porn consumption are determinative and create the obligatory "Ok" moment that commences consumption. It is moreover the emotional experience which sustains the moment of viewing through its termination. Where sexual affect is the fundamental prerogative, feeling is consumption and consumption means feeling. I now survey the landscape of this private multiverse of consumers' feelings. The following sections will look at three key moments that define porn consumption: the pre-porn experience, the porn encounter and the post-porn experience.

### *6.3.1 The porn impulse: When do consumers feel like porn.*

Pornography as a concupiscent agent thrives and capitalises on the ability to ignite pleasurable feelings in the consumer. However, as mentioned earlier, such pleasure is contingent on specific pedantic consumption conditions which help ensure that which is meant to deliver pleasure does not turn to cold disillusionment. Dave (42 white male), for instance mentioned that "there are better (porn) days than others," meaning that users' porn use may not always feel as enjoyable as desired. It is thus in the interest of the consumer to guarantee, even before consumption, she is positioned for pleasure, not only in terms of appropriateness of location, time, venue as discussed earlier but also in terms of emotional readiness. Emotional readiness delineates the departure point into the path of porn consumption. Litha (26 black male) alluded to this when he remarked: "Porn is like Coca-Cola; it's only good when you crave it. Otherwise, it can be boring." If boredom, in porn consumption, is a prospect that ominously lingers alongside the probability for pleasure, there invariably lies a reason to ensure that one is purposefully and specifically interposed for pleasure. For Litha "craving porn" defined that decisive 'nudge' of emotional interposition.

Emmanuel (29 black male) expressed similar sentiments as Litha: “For instance, it’s like I’m from town going to my flat. I’ll be like ‘yoh I miss porn. I miss porn! Where can I get that DVD?”

Whether we call it a “gentle breeze,” in Sheila’s words, “a craving” (in Litha’s words) or simply “missing porn” (in Emmanuel’s words) it is clear that porn consumption begins on more than just a thought but more so on an impulse. In their paper titled *The Role of compulsivity, impulsivity and experiential avoidance in internet pornography use* Wetterneck et al (2012: 4) describe impulsivity as

> ….as acting suddenly on an urge with little forethought. Impulsive actions can be dysfunctional or functional. Though impulsive behaviour most often is thought of negatively, it also can be adaptive or functional (…) Impulsivity also commonly is understood as action toward engaging in pleasurable activities with little forethought.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I adopt Wetterneck et al (2012)’s framing of impulse behaviour as functional rather than dysfunctional and as “action toward engaging in pleasurable” porn consumption “with little forethought.” The functionality of porn, for example manifests itself in the industrious ways through which consumers use porn i.e. to fall asleep, to get better at sex, to alleviate feelings of stress, depression, loneliness and to pleasure themselves through masturbation.

Wetterneck et al (2012)’s assertion that impulse behaviour entails “engaging in pleasurable activities *with little forethought*” was a discovery that emerged from this research’s interview data. The overwhelming torrent of emotions experienced by consumers during porn consumption empowered them to psychologically block out their immediate world (and its concerns thereof) from their mind. Kholo (29 black male), for example, reported that at some point he used to watch porn in his home living room late at night while everyone was asleep. I asked him if he never felt nervous about being caught, perhaps by a family member who unexpectedly woke up to get a drink from the kitchen. He responded “Yeah, you, feel anxious at first but once the pleasure brings you in then you don’t care anymore (*laughs*).” Similarly Suraj (23 Indian male) stated that porn was “like losing yourself in a video-game. You feel like not much else in the world matters.” This is similar to Andreas et al (2005: 8)’s “flow” concept defined as “when individuals come to attain a high level of concentration relatively effortlessly and come to experience considerable joy (…) a state in which individuals are so

engaged in an activity that they might be oblivious to the world around them and possibly lose track of time and even of self. Known as flow experience or state of flow, this condition becomes an optimal experience."

I want to propose that "the porn impulse" acts more than just a compulsion to view porn but is instrumental in rendering an actually enjoyable experience rather than a quotidian one. Suraj said that he felt like watching porn "when I'm erotically aroused randomly, by a dream or visual stimulus of sort." The randomness of the consumption impulse forms part of the excitement which creates heightened sexual anticipation. If you have to "miss porn" or "crave" it or feel an emotional "breeze" in order to enjoy it then the converse may equally be true i.e. porn watched out of ordinary routine may (in Litha's words) be boring. Seen this way, we may conclude that porn doesn't form part of consumers' average routine, but rather constitute a type of sexual adventure they often or occasionally undertake. Using Michel Foucault's term 'heterotopia' Jacobs (2004: 9) describes porn as a type of "mediated spaces where porn users explore phenomena and intersect with each other's mental, physical and emotional journeys." Porn browsing and porn heterotopia thus constitute a form of 'journeying' which infers a degree of eagerness and expectation.

In many ways, this mirrors the act of dyadic sexual intercourse. Colson et al (2005) in their paper *Sexual behaviours and mental perceptions of sex* reported that couples did not just routinely have sexual intercourse but often capitulated to some kind of "stimulus" that resolved in coitus. Examples of such stimuli were "having a good time with the partner" and "having a good meal" and "being away from the partner for too long" (Colson et al 2005: 3).

Understanding that porn consumption, just like sex, transpires around special periods and events, means there is a measure of predictability from the seemingly random 'porn impulse.' It means that the cryptic nature of what respondents considered an arbitrary impulse may simply be an urge given rise due to a set of conducive serendipitous social conditions. The fact that one would not be least likely to "crave" porn in the middle of a heat wave in the desert, for example, testifies to the reality that the 'impulse' to porn is provisional to congenial surrounding circumstances. The following table represents a summary of the various circumstances under which the interview respondents felt the 'impulse' to consume porn.

| **When do I feel like watching porn** | **Respondents** | **When do I not feel like watching porn** | **Respondents** |
|---|---|---|---|
| When I am bored | Themba, Tina, Duma, Senzo, | When I'm with my family or I am with people, socialising | Themba, Suraj, Thabo, Elrod, Dave |
| When feeling overwhelmed with studying | Tina, Kholo | When I'm busy with work or something else | Themba, Joe, Suraj, Duma, Zethu, Sheila, Elam, Brian, Thabo |
| When I miss my partner | Emmanuel, Tina, Thabo | On Ramadan | Elrod |
| When I get the urge to learn something sexually new, ("to up game") | Joe | When I'm in control, happy and all is well with me | Senzo, Emmanuel, Danny, Lihle |
| when I'm erotically aroused and alone | Suraj, Litha, Danny, Sam | Immediately after sex or after having an orgasm | Joseph, Sheila, |
| **When do I feel like watching porn** | **Respondents** | **When do I not feel like watching porn** | **Respondents** |
| When I'm restless and cannot concentrate on doing anything else | Suraj, Kholo | It's just very irregular. I've not really thought about it. | Sheila, Kholo |
| When I'm under pressure | Senzo | When I'm upset | Brian, Sheila |
| When I'm stressed and alone | Senzo, Zethu, Elam, Lihle, Emmanuel | When I'm tired | George, Thabo, |
| When I need to fall asleep | Litha, Elrod | | |
| Before I have sex | Joseph, Sheila, Simon, Pule | | |
| It's just very irregular. I've not really thought about it. | Zethu, Sheila | | |

**Table 7 Times when interview respondents felt the impulse for porn**

If we adopt an association between porn consumption and unexpected social events, an interesting picture starts to emerge. If for example we take porn consumption to be a dependent variable, reliant on the independent variable of people's precarious life circumstances, we can assume that increase in the independent variable would lead to an increase in the precarity of porn consumption and vice versa. To be more specific, if a respondent drastically increased his social time (one of the factors reported by respondents to reduce their desire for porn, and an independent variable), we can expect that his porn consumption will decrease. At least this was the case with Dave (42 white male) who

reported that the longest amount of time he spent without porn was three months. When I asked him what was different during those three months, he said:

> I was doing like quite a lot of uhmm...travelling up and down to Durban like, on weekends off and I was doing quite a lot of jollying like at other places. Uhmm...like you know, like clubs. I mean, night clubs..... I was just going out. So I think, during that time when I was like more...how can I say….. more socially inclined.

It's clear that the prompting impulse for porn consumption is not stable. It fluctuates according to the rhymes and rhythms of consumers' social activities. Yet, the impulse for porn is not such a mystery. We can, with a decent measure of accuracy, extrapolate from people's social events when they might likely gravitate towards porn. The next sub-section looks at respondents' feelings subsequent to capitulating to the 'porn impulse' i.e. at the moment of consuming porn.

### *6.3.2 Strands of vicariousness: How respondents felt at the moment of consuming porn*

Even though respondents could clearly articulate what brought them to the moment of consumption, most of them were at pains to describe precisely how they felt *during* the process of viewing. It seemed easier for respondents to talk about their behavioural patterns (i.e. how they sourced porn, where/when they watch and with whom) than it was for them to attest to their emotional state at the moment of consumption. Most respondents deployed mono syllabic adjectives such as "good" and "aroused" in attempt to give expression to their feelings when watching. Another common response amongst respondents was "I feel turned on." Respondents couldn't expound on their emotions beyond these elementary epithets.

I believe this can be explained by what Bell (2001: 35) calls the paradox of porn: its simple goal (to arouse) contrapositioned to its arcane mechanisms.

> ….at first glance it (pornography) appears painfully simple to understand. Its obvious goal is creating sexual desire in the viewer. However, understanding how pornographic film even begins to do this is surprisingly challenging (…) If the reason to watch pornography is to be "turned on," then what does being

> "turned on" mean? What are the imaginative and physiological processes that occur when anyone, male or female, watches pornography and gets turned on?

Part of this research aimed to understand, not just *what* porn consumers felt during consumption (sexual arousal) but precisely *how* sexual arousal, specifically through porn, mentally and emotionally established itself within consumers. As Bell notes, this is rather difficult to understand and, as I experienced from the interview respondents, perhaps even harder to describe. In her book *The body in pain* Elaine Scarry speaks about pain as residing in the realm of the 'unspeakable.' Groans, moans, screams and writhing are examples of the vocabulary communicated by the 'body' in pain. This 'unspeakability' of pain seems resonant with the 'unspeakability' of 'pleasure' where words seem inept to capture the mellifluously ecstatic experience of sexual enjoyment. This linguistically illusive experience of porn is not unique only to visual pornographic media but extends to affective bodily responses caused by imbibing written forms of pornography. As pointed out by Smith (2009: 24) "The pleasures of reading become a pathological use of pornography, with little space for understanding how it works effectively upon the pulses." Just as the body in pain, the body in pleasure also speaks through groans, moans, screams and writhing which spoken or written speech labour to relay. Suraj (23 Indian male) more than all the other interview respondents was able to give an amplified account of his feelings when watching porn.

> That is quite difficult to describe. I think it's kind of like losing yourself in a video-game. You feel like not much else in the world matters, and you can almost psychologically and physically feel what's happening on screen. It's vaguely similar to the feeling of sex.

When Suraj speaks of feeling "what's happening on screen" he, refers to the sexual activities on display. The notion of "psychologically and physically feeling what's happening on screen" epitomises the vicarious way in which porn consumers imbibe pleasure through the displayed sexual action of others. When consuming porn, all that consumers need to do is sit and watch other bodies engaged in sexual activity. Bell (2001) adopts concepts of cognitive film theorist Murray Smith in attempting to unpack how vicarious experiences transpire through porn. He proposes that vicarious consumer encounters through porn can occur in two ways: by consumers feeling *like* the characters in the video or by feeling *for* the characters.

The former, (referred to as empathy) refers to how consumers' emotions directly mimic those of the characters in porn. In such an instance, a porn consumer would report to feeling virtually like she *is* the character and enjoying the emotions that come with the sexual actions of that character. The latter (referred to as sympathy) is described as the "process by which the spectator constructs an overall imaginary system of different characters (…) and comes to feel emotions on that basis" (Bell 2001: 38). Here the consumer does not feel like she *is* the character but rather instinctively and creatively blends aspects of the porn universe with her own imaginative reality which may not precisely feel liked mirror feelings. In both instances of empathy and sympathy, consumers would, to use Suraj's words, "psychologically and physically feel what's happening on screen." One would do so through interpolating himself onto character and the other through incarnating the preferred imaginative account of what the characters are doing. Dave knew how to experience porn from both vantage points:

> Do you ever fantasize about or put yourself in the role of one of those actors at the time? Uhmmm… Now look, that is not something that I always do because sometimes I watch it as like a third party… but there are…..there have been scenes where I thought "wow I mean like yeah, I wouldn't mind like being in that position right now!

The prospect of viewing sexual activities "as a third party" provokes ideas of voyeuristic pleasure which affords the viewer privileged glimpsing of hidden activity. As ultimate sexual voyeurs, porn consumers have unrestraint visual access to every sexual act humanely imaginable. Voyeurism is defined by the very act of watching as a "third party" or as an outsider who is privy to everything performed by parties of interest (Williams 1999: 40). Voyeurism in porn functions alongside another form of visual pleasure called scopophilia, the attainment of sexual pleasure by looking at naked images (Mulvey 1975). So, while voyeurism permits the porn viewer to don a privileged position of an invisible "third party" onlooker, scopophilia delivers satisfying sexual enjoyment of the (nakedly) observed.

Using a psychoanalytical approach, Mulvey (1975: 714) explains that scopophilia in moving images also acquires a narcissistic aspect in which the viewer engages with the depicted human characters in ways that articulate likeness and recognition. In the course of watching, the viewer sees a character he admires and begins to recognize himself in this character. This reverberates with Dave's revelations of "being in *that* position right now." If Dave sometimes

perceives himself in the sexual *mise-en-scène*, he can only do so through one of the characters. To desire to be in the scene is an expressed veneration of what already occurs there with present characters. To maintain the integrity of the scene one admires, one must vicariously become a member of the characters in the passion of the action. In sum, sexual pleasure seems to be experienced by means of vicarious virtuality wherein the consumer *becomes* sexual character and by means of zealous, distanced voyeurism. Nonetheless, the recognition that one can watch porn as a "third party" voyeur also conjures up other possible ways of watching e.g. as 'second party' or 'first party.' Dave's statement that "I wouldn't mind being in that position now" is a simple semantic slippage since he already acknowledged that he *does* put himself in "*that* position." Recall his words "Now look, that is not something that I always do."

However, I am not entirely persuaded that vicariousness occurs only either through voyeurism or narcissistic scopophilia. Instead, I would like to propose that both pleasures co-exist in varying degrees to each other. How, for example, can one feel he is character without voyeuristically observing character enough to know so (or feel so)? How can one deliberately select material that locates him as a voyeur if he does not feel viscerally or vicariously stimulated by it? Even though it makes sense that porn consumers would, at any one time, feel one of these pleasures more intensely than the other, I posit that these strands of pleasure, cohabit and are enmeshed in each other.

The pleasant voyage of pleasure in consuming porn is always succeeded by the arrival of another experience: the apex of sexual pleasure to a point of cessation. The post-porn experience is a contrast from the sensually convivial moment of consumption. It can be marked by feelings of guilt, regret and loneliness or it can leave the consumer with pleasant residues of satisfaction and fulfilment. I now turn my attention to how consumers feel after watching porn.

### *6.3.3 How porn consumers feel after watching porn*

Many scholars have noted how the encounters of porn consumers vary from individual to individual and are furthermore stratified along the lines of gender (Queen & Comella 2012, Bryant & Shim 2008, Garlick 2011, Eck 2003, Ramlagan 2012). Even though researchers acknowledge that women are the world's fastest-growing porn-consuming demographic and that there are presently more women porn consumers than in all history (McNair 2012, Evans 2013), this progress is also undermined by reports that most women, after viewing porn, walk away with ambivalent thoughts, negative feelings and questions about the moral or ethical legitimacy of their pleasure (Ciclitira 2004, Bivona & Critelli 2009, Ramlagun 2013).

Tina (30 white female) for example admitted that she did not watch romantic or erotic "female-friendly" porn as is often presumed for women consumers. On the contrary, Tina enjoys BDSM pornography, a form of sexual practice that has notoriously come to connote aspects of sexual pleasure accompanied by varying levels of pain, dominance and bondage.

> When I watch porn, I don't want connection, I want sex… Say I went on to a website and it was under the category "female friendly" I wouldn't click on it… It's not really like my alley. I like it a bit rough….you know what I'm saying?

Interestingly enough, most BDSM videos feature men, rather than women, in dominant positions. Women in most BDSM porn assume obsequious roles where they submit to every command of the male actor, from what they should do, (either to themselves or to the male actor and even to some object or sexual prop), to how they should physically position themselves (e.g. kneel, lie down, stand up) and finally to what they should be saying (e.g. begging for more, calling out the male actor's name or told to keep quiet). In addition to these kinds of conventions, women in BDSM are often subjugated in some kind of physical 'bondage' e.g. blindfold, tied, gagged or even caged. In fact, Tina's favourite actor is James Deen, one of the most popular and highly admired successful male figures in the BDSM industry. Deen is known for the ways in which he likes to 'punish' women (Well 2012).

As a gender conscientious individual who supports women's rights, Tina admitted that it was very difficult to call herself a feminist knowing that she still enjoyed the kind of porn she watched.

> I think…… I'm a feminist and I'm still trying to come to terms with the whole porn thing because I know that feminism is like against porn and my struggle with that is that I like porn but …..Am I liking the male….. what the male's dictating as pleasurable? Or is it something that I would find as pleasurable? You know what I'm saying?…..And that's a struggle that I'm…that I'm working through myself. Like is it for the male gaze? Is it the male's sexual needs that are being fulfilled and then women are just buying into that, you know?

Tina's response confirms Ciclitira (2004)'s research findings that women are often sexually acculturated by orthodox (anti-porn) feminist ideologies that vilify pornography as a form of oppression. It is interesting that Tina associated feminism with the total rejection of *all* porn. This evidences the ways in which popular traditional anti-porn rhetoric has monopolised sexual discourse on porn, overshadowing most alternative feminist views such as sex positive feminism. Notwithstanding that feminism isn't a unified monolithic edifice but a splintered movement consisting of pro-censorship feminists, anti-censorship feminists, it still becomes unequivocally obvious that anti-porn sentiments occupy a more prominent space in the social consciousness of most women like Tina. These women experience "contradictions between their beliefs, feelings and actions" (Ciclitira 2004: 293) after watching porn. Cognisant of their egalitarian views for socially equitable representation of women, many female porn consumers have expressed surprise at how their bodies caved in to some of the most 'women-unfriendly' sexual images exhibited in porn. This was the case with the prolific feminist online essayist Rumult (2011: 3) who, *after* seeing some aggressive porn and finding herself aroused to orgasm, asked herself "What was wrong with me that my body and my mind were so out of sync?" Clearly some women porn consumers believe that by virtue of being a woman (and) feminist experiencing sexual affect from particular types of porn images (or from porn at all), is morally contemptible, hence the articulation of conflict mixed with guilt.

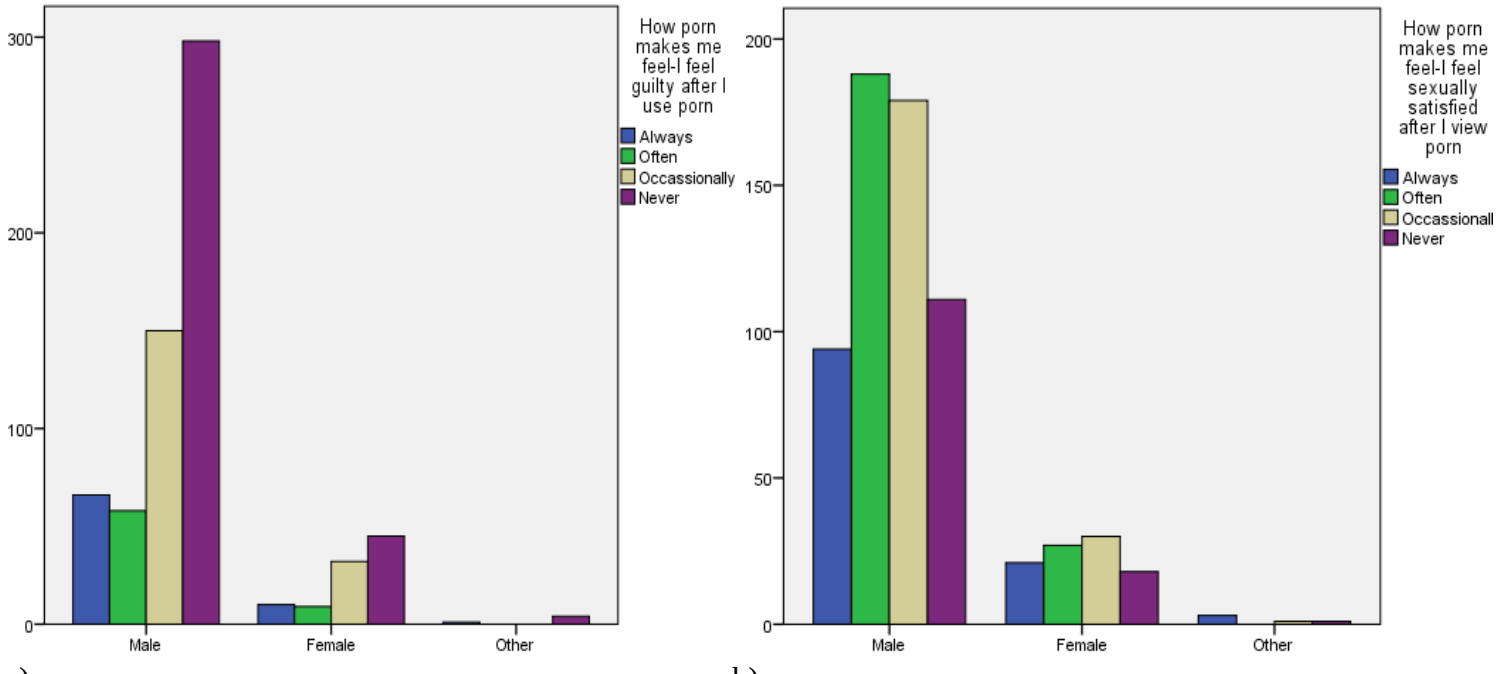
Likewise, Sheila (25 black female (who interestingly also watches BDSM porn) affirmed that it took her years to feel sexually liberated enough to enjoy porn as an integral part of her sexuality. Even though she started watching porn at an early age, she recounted experiencing, for many years, an internal conflict with the pleasures she derived from porn and the dominant ideas of womanhood she inherited from her social institutions. During the interview, Sheila exuded a commanding confidence about her sexuality and her right as a woman to explore her body through explicit media. When I asked her how she transitioned from that shy and guilt-ridden young woman to becoming the person she had currently become, she responded:

> The pursuit of knowledge I suppose and understanding…….. and just kind of understanding things better. That's what sort of helped me. Once I understood that my current ideologies about sex and sexuality had been dictated by patriarchal society that had no idea what was going on with my body and wanted to limit my enjoyment to my body,

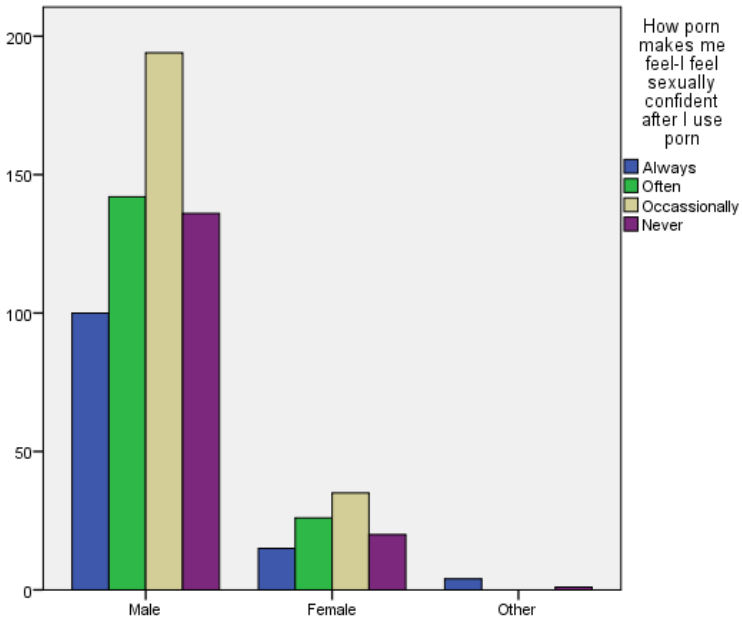
> especially for women...uhmmm...then I was kinda like of "bugger off actually!. You have no right telling me what is ok and what is not ok when it comes to my body." I just sort of read and started looking into my own things and I fell into BDSM so I started reading more about that and speaking like to two of my mentor sexologists so I kind of have that culture now.

Ciclitira (2004: 293) observes that "The feminist debate about the ways women should respond to pornography is bedevilled by an ignorance of how they actually do." However, it seems to me rather evident how women actually respond to pornography. Women porn consumers, just like their male counterparts, find watching porn arousing and pleasurable. It seems most unlikely that they would be porn consumers were it not the case. As Tina said: "That's why I keep doing it." Even though Sheila, for example, spent years feeling guilty and morally uncertain about using porn, there is no doubt that, even during those years, she enjoyed porn during her moments of viewing. The interesting question that begs attention perhaps is: how do women conceive of their pleasure from porn *after* consumption and how do such feelings align or deviate from those of male porn consumers? The following five graphs present an overview of how surveyed women and male consumers reported to feel after watching porn?

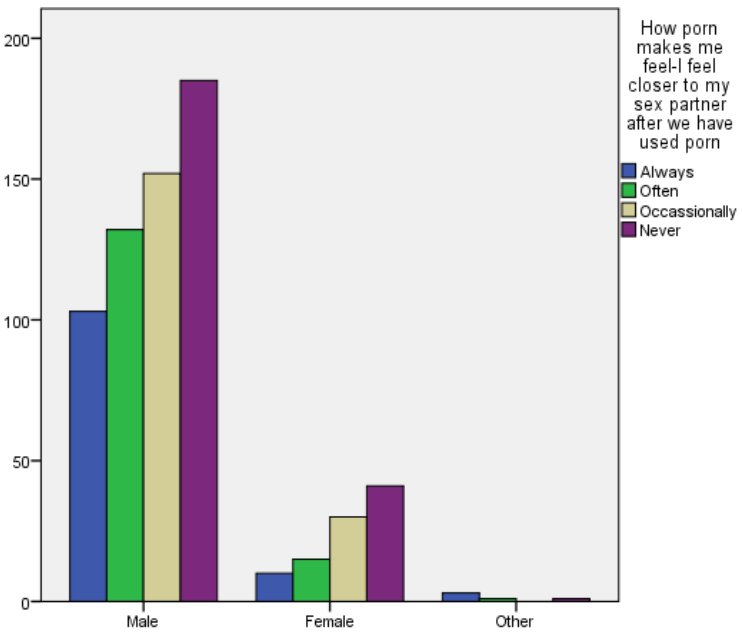
**Figure 25a-e Survey figures showing how men and women felt after watching porn**




a) b)

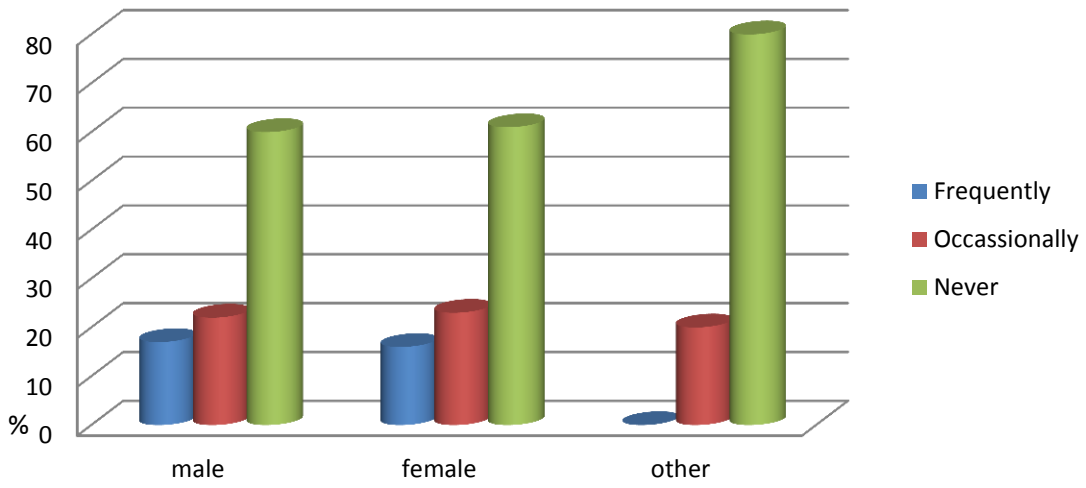



c)




d)

**Figure 26(e): Watching porn makes me feel insecure about my body**




The salient gender similarities exhibited by these graphs refute longstanding notions that women porn consumers have divergent emotional experiences to their male equals. Note how women, just like men, do not feel guilty after watching porn, how women just like men, do not necessarily use porn to bond with their sexual partners, (but to please themselves) and how, like men, women feel sexually satisfied and sexually confident after watching porn. Figure 26(e) even shows that marginally more men (17%) than women (16%) feel insecure about their bodies due to consuming porn. This is in contrast to what various writings (Kobrin 2004, Featherstone 2012, Seema 2015) have stated about women as being more vulnerable to feelings of insecurity and body image than men. I believe there is a reason that women from

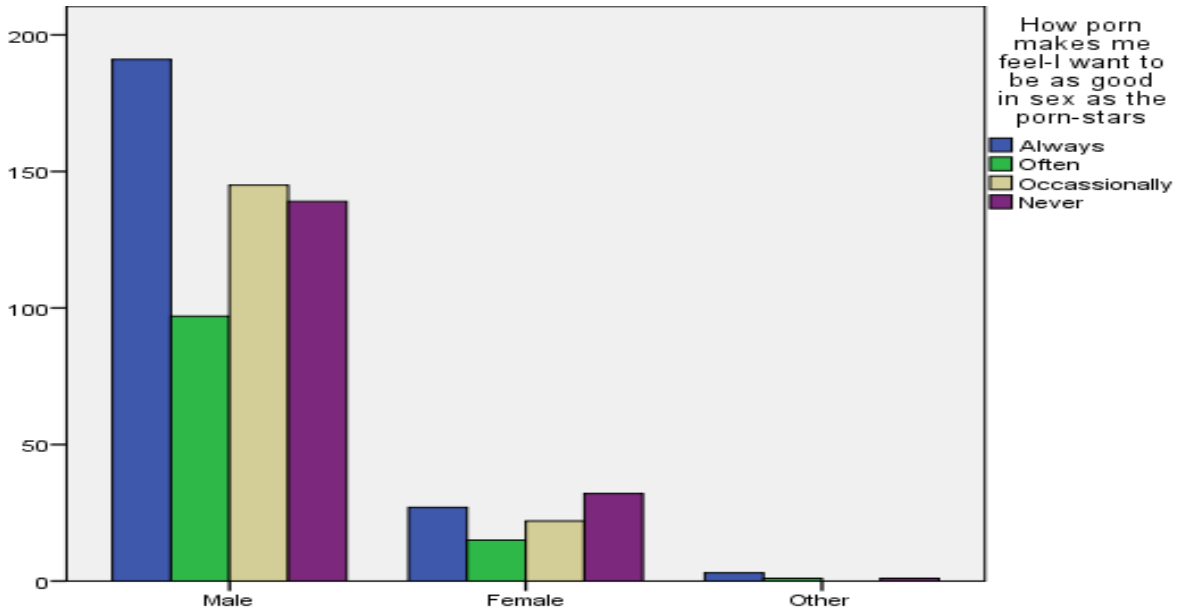
this research survey did not perpetuate old assumptions about the aberrance of female pleasure.

Bordo (1999: 177) argues that women “are not used to seeing naked men frankly portrayed as 'objects' of a sexual gaze." Women are just learning to be voyeurs. Although women may be more accustomed to seeing male bodies, they are not as accustomed to having those bodies "offered" to them.” Bordo’s statement forms the premise from which women often become construed as possessing a semi-Victorian response to nude images. Eck (2003)’s research, for example, concluded that women approached men’s nude images with traces of guilt, hesitance and bashfulness, believing that the affective potency of these images to arouse sexual desire was somehow inappropriate. Another study by Cowan et al (1989) found that women feminists who were shown a number of explicit images responded to these images with apathy and moral condemnation, asserting the images contributed to violence against women.

The difference between these kinds of studies and mine is that the women in my research project were selected using non-probability sampling, in order to ensure they were routine users of pornography. As noted by Attwood (2005: 72) the problem with studies that use probability sampling in porn research is that “The women share a lack of familiarity with porn, coupled with strong views about it.” Consequently, it is more pertinent to observe porn consumption patterns of women who *are* frequent users of porn rather than those who seldom or sporadically come across explicit images. Most women have and perhaps occasionally encounter explicit images in their daily lives. This, however, does not make them porn consumers. Other women are purchasers and users of porn and constitute an active porn market. How the former perceive their pleasure would, naturally, differ from the latter. Researchers have often synonymised their findings (borne out of random samples) with the tendencies of *all* women who encounter explicit material - projecting guilt, fears, shame felt by erratic porn exposure to women porn consumers who may have transcended some of these feelings. Wetterneck (*et al* 2012) and D’Orlando (2011) maintain that the porn consumption cycle follows a very predictable trajectory that begins with overwhelming feelings of pleasure accompanied by guilt, and a compulsive (“addictive”) attachment to pornographic images. With the passing of time, consumers eventually progresses to a stage where consumption develops into healthy and regular integral part of one’s life. Accordingly, it is to be expected that regular porn consumers, such as the ones sampled in this research, would report feeling less conflicted about their porn consumption than novices would.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that gender disparities in how men and women framed their pleasure were altogether non-existent. There was for example one potential area where more men than women expressed the desire to be as good in sex as the porn stars. The following graph presents this data.

**Figure 26 Female & male responses who desired to be good in sex as porn stars**




Even though, at a superficial level, the two gender groups had their peak responses at two opposite ends of the likert scale; "always" for men and "never" for women, the results are somewhat similar. This becomes clear when the numbers of those who answered the question in the affirmative (always, often and occasionally) are summed up in each group. In short 77% of men (N=523) and 65% of women (N=110) said they wished to be in sex as the porn stars.

This difference of 12%, I believe, signposts a deeper underlying rift in the psycho-sexual socialisation of men and women. Brod (1988) explains men's insecurities are inextricably bound to their ability to sexually perform. Inadvertently, most men find themselves conflating their virility and sexual performance with their manhood by "using penile performance as an index of male strength and potency" (Brod 1988: 269). Men inherit a social system that inculcates them "to see physical affection and intimacy primarily if not exclusively in sexual terms" (Brod 1988: 270). On the other hand, womanhood is not conventionally associated with sexual performance but with affection and caregiving. (Bivona & Critelli 2009). In fact, women who express as voracious a sexual appetite as men are often pilloried as promiscuous nymphomaniacs (Swarr 2012). Nonetheless 65% is an encouraging number. These women's expression to be 'good in bed' may be a demonstration that women are starting to take

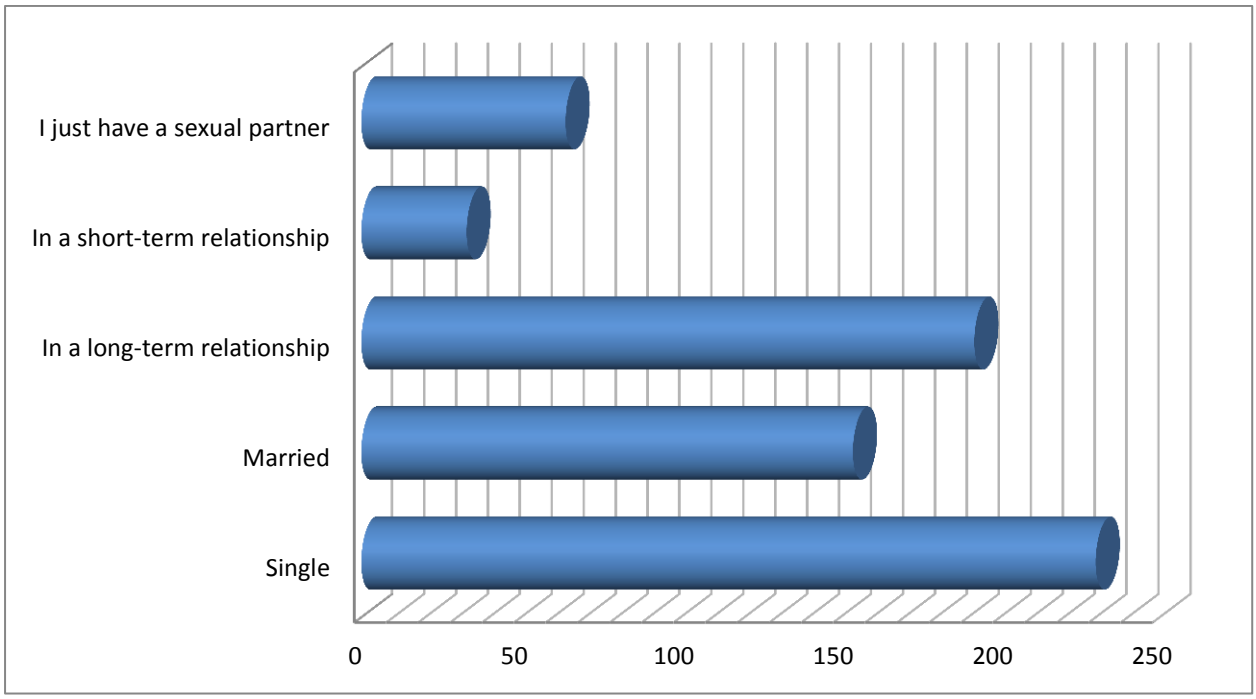
ownership of their sexual aspiration. Still, it may be possible that this figure is far less for women who do not consume porn.

The preceding discussions on the key moments of consumption i.e. pre-porn, porn and post-porn consumption now lead us to an exploration of the various agents with whom consumers prefer to enjoy porn. How porn consumers hand-pick their preferred entourage of friends or partners when consuming porn casts profound light on how those porn encounters can be understood as opposed to the moments they enjoy porn in individual solitude.

## 6.4 In deep secrecy: with whom consumers privately watch porn

Attwood (2009) advances that the new forms of sexual representations made available by pornography have led to sex and sexual experiences aimed at just pleasing the self. Auto-sexual-self game refers to the highly individualised sexual encounters facilitated by pornographic material. This was very evident in the survey data where 78% of the respondents indicated they preferred to view porn alone, a sign that porn consumption is more a private affair than it is a collective one. The following graphs demonstrate this. The first presents the relationship statuses of the respondents. The next ones juxtapose these relationship statuses against the preference of 'viewing porn alone' to see whether coupled respondents preferred watching porn alone or with their partners.

**Figure 27 Relationship statuses of survey respondents**



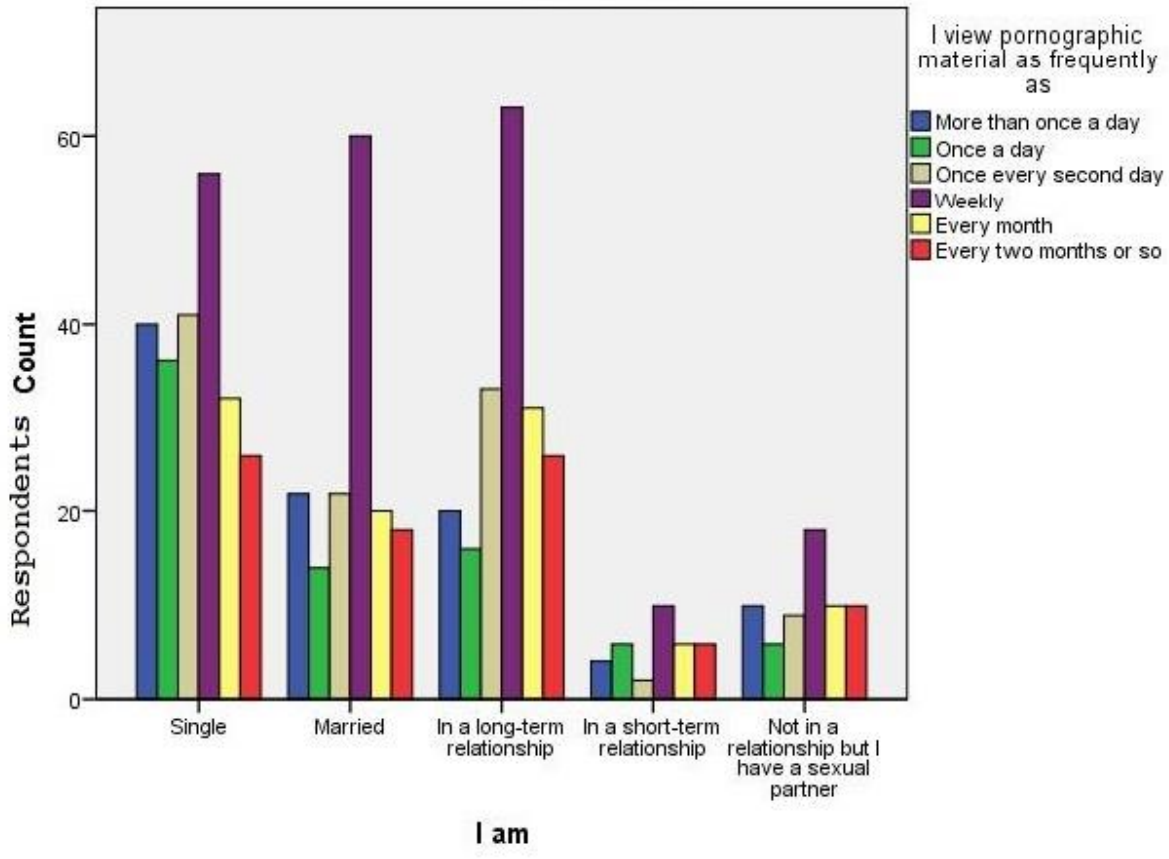

In-tandem with other research writings (Cyrus et al 2007, Kinsey 2002), this data confirms that single people form the largest constituency in the porn-consuming market. There is

strong evidence supporting that in the absence of dyadic sexual exchange, pornography becomes the substitutive equivalent. When I asked one of the survey respondents if he watched porn, he giddily quipped: "Of-course I watch porn! I'm a single man." This respondent however could not be part of the interviewees but only completed the online questionnaire. Emmanuel (29 black male), one of the interview respondents, echoed the same sentiments:

> I have feelings because *Zulu:* umangabe evuka lama feelings (*when these sexual feelings hit*) vele kuzovuka (*I will be reminded*) that thing…. that okay I don't have……I'm not in a relationship, I'm single and I need to see something naked.

This admission and association of singlehood with porn consumption serves to highlight singles are easily predisposed to a sense of sexual loneliness and more likely to quell such loneliness with erotic material. This is consistent with the findings of Cyrus et al 2007 who, in their survey study of 400 mostly single respondents, discovered a strong correlation between porn use and feelings of aloneness. As evident in the following graph, single people watched porn more frequently than coupled respondents.

**Figure 28 Respondents' relationship statuses and their frequency of porn use**



There are a number of significant points worth noting from the crosstabulation. Consensus amongst all relationship groups points to the fact that porn consumption is more a weekly indulgence than it is a daily or even monthly one. The one exception to this pattern is in the "singles" grouped-bar where the "weekly' column, though peaking, is exceeded by the added numbers of people watching porn "more than once a day" (N=40) and "once a day" (N=36). Summed together (N=76), these two columns represent a larger group than the column representing weekly vieweres (N=56). Therefore single respondents watch porn on a daily basis more than they do weekly. Note that even though single respondents dominated the survey in numbers than respective coupled respondents, they still had lower "weekly" viewing numbers (N=56) surpassed by the "weekly" viewing of married people (60) and by respondents in long-term relationships (N=63). Married people and people in long-term relationships watch porn less regularly than singles.

The fact that married and coupled consumers view porn less frequently than singles dispels popular claims that coupled consumers prefer porn over intercourse. Instead of being a substitute, porn seems to be a supplement to consumers' sexual lives. They can have sex with their partners *and* use porn as "negotiated decoding enables the individual to continue to enjoy the pleasures of pornography while securing his emotional investment in his partner," (Attwood 2005: 71). The interview respondents who reported to view porn more frequently in the absence of their partners, confirmed this, suggesting that absence leaves a sexual vacuum that porn acts to fill. Tina (30 white female) was one of such respondents who had their partners temporarily dispatched for work.

> My boyfriend travels a lot. I don't get to see him that often." …..You see so like sometimes if my boyfriend is not around and I will watch porn to keep it going while he's away kind of thing cause he travels for work a lot so it helps me with that to keep my sex drive up

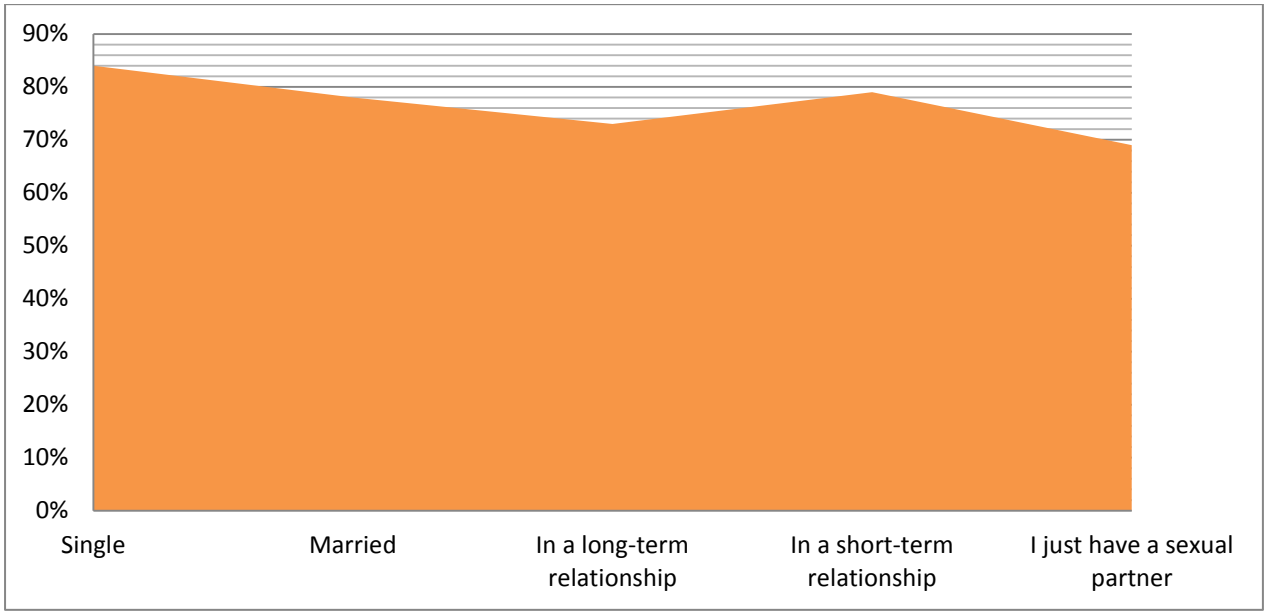
Emmanuel (29 black male) also reported to have watched porn when "I miss my partner" and Tara (50 white female) whose partner was "often not here," watched porn more in his absence. It is not necessarily the absence of companionship that amplifies the frequency of porn consumption but the lack of sexual intercourse accorded by that companionship. In the absence of sexual intercourse, both married and single people consume more porn.

Pornography is not a replacement of one's partner. For Thabo (22 black male) there is an aspect in his porn consumption he feels mimics the feelings he gets with his girlfriend.

> *SiSwati:* Umangiqeda ukuyibukela. Uma ngingedwa ….kubangathi ngiqeda ukubabhizi naye (*Swati: After I finish watching (porn) alone, it feels like I had just been having sex with her (girlfriend).*

The apparent self-sufficing sexual endowment enjoyed by consumers does not only quench individuals' sexual desires but, in Thabo's case, seems to do so in a manner that simulates intercourse with absent partners. The subrogative component in porn to avail sexual yet solitary pleasures *in lieu* of physical contact aligns with Foucault (1985: 40)'s concept of Aphrodisia which are "the acts, gestures and contacts that produce a form of pleasure." Even though sex is in the list of Foucault's examples of Aphrodisia, most other forms in his list such as eating and drinking are not reliant on the tangible collaborative presence of other persons. Pornography, however, manifests a malleable ability to satiate both the sexual sensitivities of couples and singles qualifying as an all-encompassing form of libidinal Aphrodisiac. When Thabo is with his girlfriend he enjoys sex together with her but when he is by himself he still enjoys similar sexual pleasures. Porn consumption guarantees that singlehood does not equate to sexual seclusion or being partnered to sexual confinement. Nevertheless, just as porn does not substitute for sexual intercourse, partners may not be able to replace the role of porn. The fact that 78% of all respondents, including those in relationships, *preferred* to watch porn alone reveals this.

**Figure 29 Survey response: I prefer to watch porn alone**



This graph shows 70% and above of all partnered respondents preferred to be alone when consuming porn. The data exposes a different side to the narrative of single and partnered porn consumers. Though single respondents consumed porn more frequently than coupled respondents, this may not necessarily be an attempt to supplement for an absent partner as such. The preference to view porn alone even when one is in a relationship shows there is a place for intercourse with a companion and, at the same time, a special place for porn.

Furthermore, it seems an obvious *non-sequitur* to conclude that couples consume less pornography due to porn's less substitutive role in the presence of a partner. Consumers do not choose between porn and their partners. It appears more logical, therefore to extrapolate that couples simply enjoy more options to sexually satisfy themselves than singles. Either couples are having sex with their partners or consuming porn (or both as I'm about to show in the coming sections). This way, consumers in relationships allocate time they might have spent in porn to other activities with their mates. On the other hand, single consumers have the lone avenue of porn thereby making it appear as though porn substitutes for a partner when it is just an option; the only one at their disposal during the period of singlehood. Of keen interest to this dissertation are the reasons consumers in relationships preferred to watch porn alone.

## 6.5 Affirmed on the screen: Why consumers prefer watching porn alone

Porn consumption rituals signify beyond mere facts of consumers' ostensible preferences. The simulacra made available through modes of pornography representation have a profound impact on the private construction, projection and discovery of consumers' personal pleasures, gender and identities. Rothman (2013: 25) states pornography provides consumers "with the opportunity to explore their erotic desires, experience sexual arousal and stimulation as well as an affirmation of their identity" (Rothman 2013: 25).

There is an indelible link between what explicit material consumers enjoy and how they perceive themselves. Porn is the site at which the sexual self and the social self collide such that consumers' private porn preferences often become conflated with their public identity. For this reason, consumers struggled less to divulge the fact they consumed porn than they did revealing the *type* of porn they consumed. Dave (42 white male), for example, watches

gay 'twink[6]' porn. He acknowledged that having his colleagues or friends know his porn preference would make him feel vulnerable and possibly humiliated.

> ..it's not a bad thing (*watching porn*). I mean it's not like you are forcing yourself on other people, you know what I mean? The only thing I feel though is that, it's your taste in porn that says a lot about you so, that's why I'd feel vulnerable, you know, if people knew exactly what sort of stuff I like to watch.

Dave's example proves Rothman's (2013) assertion that instances of porn consumption comprise the performance of one's sexual identity. The idea of 'performing' sexual identity and gender "entails that one is subjected to intense scrutiny as it relates to your 'performance' of your particular gender category through a set of rituals" (Rothman's 2013: 23).

Similarly, Judith Butler rebuts the traditional perception that gender (conceived as the cultural interpretation of biology) is different from sex (seen as a biological fact). Instead, Butler advances that sex and gender are two culturally cohesive concepts that cannot be dissociated and that "sexed bodies cannot signify without gender" (Butler 1990: 7). Gender and sex are both socially and culturally constructed. Both Rothman (2013) and Bulter (1990) agree that gender and sexual identity are 'performed' through a melange of signifying rituals that are socially intelligible to society. Since porn consumption befits these set of sexually revealing rituals, the exposure of one's porn taste is tantamount to the disclosure of one's sexuality. Since, however, all gender and sexual identities were not constructed equal, the socially subordinate nature of all sexual things non-heterosexual means most non-heterosexual consumers will deliberately eschew instances of grouped porn consumption, unless they are with people of similar sexuality (this is especially true for consumers who do not yet publically acknowledge their sexuality). This forms yet another motive for which most consumers such as Dave would consume porn in private. Homosexual, bisexual and intersexed individuals who land themselves in situations where they watch pornography with their heterosexual contemporaries will likely not enjoy the kind of porn selected by their straight friends. As a gay man, Litha (26 black male) had his first porn viewing encounter

[6] "Twink content…emphasises young-looking men performers working with men and targets gay men consumers of all age groups" (Tibbals 2014: 131).

with two of his heterosexual friends at age 13. He described the encounter as “extremely” awkward.

> It was the three of us at this boy Jimmy's house. The film was long but nonetheless fascinating. It was some very 70’s looking film. The film was probably *Deep Throat*. My other friend Tom was masturbating next to me, which titillated and freaked me out at the same time. I was glad that I wasn't THAAAAT comfortable. In a way, I am kind of jealous of Tom….Because he was able to masturbate and that he had material that stimulated him. I wish I had been so sure about my sexuality and my body at that age. Tom's sexuality was affirmed on the screen. Mine wasn’t.

When one fails to see one’s sexual identity on the mirror of the porn screen, pleasure becomes elusive. Note Litha’s words “I am kind of jealous for Tom…. he had material that stimulated him.” As a gay man, the heterosexual images that played themselves out in front of Litha did not stimulate him. To have one’s sexuality “affirmed on the screen” is the prerequisite for pleasure in the contract between the watcher and the watched. Just as the mirror screen projects one’s exact image, the porn screen is expected to project the image of one’s sexuality. In Litha’s case this did not occur. The visual speech of pornography must loquaciously articulate the lexicon of consumers’ individual sexual fantasies for them to positively respond to it. In the failure to see himself on the screen in front of him, Litha found a substitute image that “titillated” him in the form of Tom, his friend, who was masturbating next to him. Tom became Litha’s porn equivalent image which is probably why he recalls this spectacle more than the details of the actual porn which are obviously vague in his memory: “It was *some* very 70’s looking film. The film was *probably Deep Throat*.” This description marks the vast emotional distance and disinterest that exemplifies Litha’s recollection of the video.

Litha’s lament about his sexual insecurities at the time suggests he might have acted differently had he felt or known better about himself. “I wish I had been so sure about my sexuality and my body at that age” suggests a difference in probable behaviour or experience.

Still, what remains significant is the fact that Litha's cognisance of his unawareness for his identity was marked distinctly concrete by this moment. Though his identity was not "affirmed on the screen" and though he was not particularly stimulated by the images, the profundity of this moment became one that brought the question of Litha's sexual identity, as a gay man, ever closer to himself. In such a situation, it is the void and the absence of the sexual image from the screen that agitates the move towards self-discovery. Whether through absence or presence, visibility or invisibility, porn consumption becomes a moment of self confrontation between the self and the screen about what precisely one identifies with.

Litha says this encounter both "titillated" and "freaked" him out. These two diametrically opposed emotions signify the importance of consensus and common preference amongst friends who want to consume porn together. For it seems to me the purpose of porn is pleasure or being "titillated." Nonetheless, pleasure seems most unlikely if one of three people watching straight porn enjoys gay porn. Corporate pleasure appears to demand all parties involved to be clear about each other's sexual predilections. This may not necessarily be easy hence the preference for most consumers to view porn alone.
Nonetheless, it is not a guarantee or even a probability that people of similar sexualities would want to consume porn in the same company. As the survey data showed, even coupled respondents preferred watching porn in isolation. Brian (63 white male) shared with me that he once watched porn with his wife and really enjoyed the experience.

> It was different because I could see her reaction and I could tell mine as well. l could see we were being aroused the same way. It was actually, it was quiet enjoyable and it led to uhmm… proper… uhmm…. copulation.

Brian also reported that the experience he had watching pornography as a couple helped enhance intimacy with his wife. Despite this, they never tried to share that moment together again. When I inquired from Brian about the reason for not doing so, he responded:

> I don't know. It's hard to say. I prefer to keep it for myself for now….. I think I can get really selfish with it. I like to keep it to myself and not share it. I don't know why that is.

"I don't know" was not atypical an answer amongst the interview respondents. When asked, for example, why they preferred to watch condom-less porn, both Sam (36 black male) and George (40 black male) respectively responded "I don't know." Similarly, Kholo (29 black male) said he never really knew how long his porn viewing sessions lasted when consuming porn and Sheila (25 black female) honestly "did not know" the answer when I asked her when she did *not* feel like watching porn. The bisexual Emmanuel (29 black male) did not know why he enjoyed straight porn more than gay porn even though he enjoys gay sex. All these instances of uncontemplated gratification prove that consumers may not always be able to expound on some of their behaviour beyond their immediate, instant need and pursuit for pleasure. Nonetheless, in the case of Brian, we can safely surmise that his need to keep porn to himself and to be "selfish with it" is based on a deeply emotional indulgence that is intensified only when he is by himself.

A slew of writers (Barker 2014, Garlick 2010, Williams 1999, Andreas et al 2005: 7, Cooper 2010) have noted how porn users experience porn as a domain of sexual safety and as an outlet of secure sexual exploration for their most hidden sexual desires. Dave (42 white male), echoed this sentiment when he disclosed:

> I mean one of the main prompting factors of going to Adult World is especially like that feeling that you are on a totally safe zone where you can explore a fantasy.

The realm of fantasy for porn viewers is a benign universe in which their unspoken fantasies are given expression. Pornographic material gives visual life to those imaginary erotic scenarios that lie at the fringes of social acceptance. Some of these 'grubby' fantasies porn consumers find difficult to share even with their own partners. Elam (30 black, male) admitted that his girlfriend does not completely satisfy him because "Definitely she can't do all those professional moves." Even though Elam has a thriving sexual life with his girlfriend, he finds his *other* sexual life with pornography somewhat unburdening because he can watch people who engage in the type of sexual activities he fantasises on.

The joy of fantasy however, belies the essentialist necessity to resurrect it or to give it corporeal presence beyond the explicit imagery depicted on screen. Fantasy does not have to

be enacted to be rapturous. The enjoyment of fantasy for porn consumers must not be mistaken for the aspiration to manifest it but rather be seen as "the freedom to indulge in a range of longings and desires without regard to the appropriateness and propriety of those desires, and without regard to social limits on resources, object-choices, perversity, or on the anarchy of the imagination" (Kipnis 2003: 5). Tina (30 white female) who watches BDSM porn admitted this when pointing out the difference between the world of porn and the material world "some of the stuff I watch will probably never gonna happen in my life."

When Brian says "I don't know"…. I can get really selfish with it (porn)" he may very well be articulating his perceived right to feel privately uninhibited to ingurgitate the erotic possibilities and fantasies bespoken through porn. Some of his reveries may, perchance, be considered reprobate by his wife or may, according to Brian's religion, be considered sacrilegious. Either way, he has reason to want to be without his wife when he watches porn. Elam (30 black male) who sometimes watches porn with his spouse admitted that he watched porn with his wife "mainly to cover for my habit of watching alone" implying the genuine gratification he received from porn was actually when he was by himself. The fact that consumers preferred to watch porn alone suggests there might be some fragile truth about preferences or sexuality that is too vulnerable to share. For Litha (26 black male) this truth was his secret foot fetish. For Elam, it was his favourite "moves" he felt his girlfriend would not do or understand and for Elrod (60 coloured male), it was his bisexuality of which his wife was not aware.

Horning offers us another viewpoint on Brian's "I don't know." He asserts that porn gives users a greater sense of control than they actually have with their actual sexual partners. "Porn, which is a commodity that exists in space can be collected, taxonomized, autonomously manipulated the way real sex, an experience that exists in time, cannot" (Horning 2005: 1). The way that users have control in porn is two-fold. Firstly, consumers have power and complete control over their viewing experience. This is not always the case when couples watch porn together. A process of negotiation and compromise has to occur so both parties involved can be content with what is shown on screen. As a heterosexual woman for example Tara (50 white female) never watches Lesbian porn when she is alone. When she watches with her partner, however, she acquiesces to his desire for what she calls "woman on woman" action just to accommodate him. In such a situation it may not entirely be feasible to feel completely sexually free since there is no complete control.

Another means of consumers having control when watching porn is through the manipulation and regulation of the sexual activities shown. Porn avails the consumer with an inexhaustible oeuvre of sexual acts and situations that could possibly never be enacted in the real life of the consumer. By exercising power over *which* of the vast material she chooses to see and *how* to see such material, the consumer controls sexual situations in a way she never would be able to in real life. The consumption of pornography can thus be seen as possession and control over moving bodies, allowing us to slow down, fast-forward, rewind or pause the body in order to catch all the ways in which "affects are communicated by the face, gestures and body movements, to observe the affect thresholds which cannot be perceived in the normal choreography." (Featherstone 2010: 199). Dave pointed this out when he was sharing the different experiences he's had in sex clubs versus those he's had watching porn.

> It's not like you're there at *The Factory* where somebody is…. now is actually gonna walk and...and then put you under pressure on whether you wanna make your fantasy come true, you know what I mean? Like there (watching porn), you are totally in control.

*The factory* is a gay club in Doorfontein, Johannesburg that I had heard about from many of my friends. Though without its own website, there are many stories about *The Factory* and how entrance is granted only once one is fully naked. As a "men's only" club, famous for anonymous sex, *The Factory* is often reported to feature some of the most good-looking men in Johannesburg, a hub of gay sexual fantasies, orgies, threesomes and everything else a person can imagine. Dave mentioned that he had been to the club and often had strangers ask him for sex. It is interesting that Dave considered porn a much better world of his fantasy than a place like *The Factory* where dealing with actual human beings can make him feel "pressure." This confirms that the aspect of control is essential for porn consumers and that perhaps the best fantasies are those that remain fantasies: imagined and on screen. Those can be controlled. Those that seek to transfigure into reality cannot.

Another reason for which coupled respondents chose to consume porn alone was their impression of porn as corrupt and unworthy of their partners' attention. Elrod (60 coloured male) simply stated that "if it (porn) wasn't bad and was something good, I'd watch it with

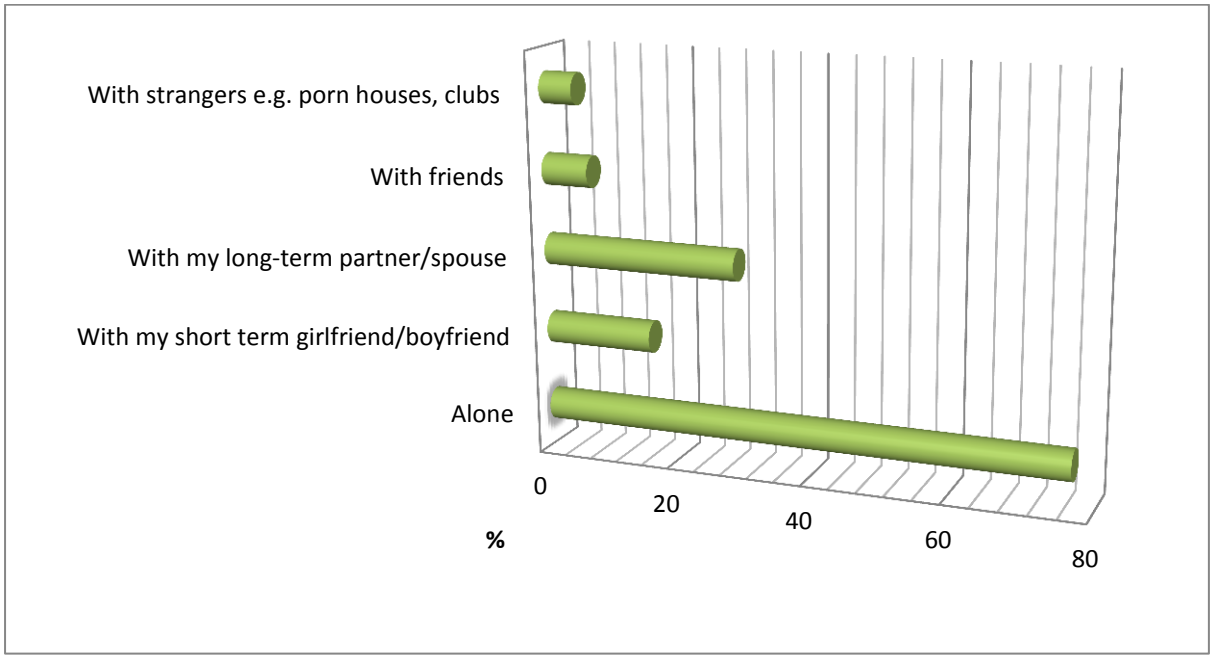
my kids and my wife." Perhaps it escaped Elrod that there were host of other things he couldn't do with his children such as even though they were not necessarily "bad."

The preference to consume porn alone does not mean that consumers do not view porn with other people. Remember Elam viewed porn with his wife to "cover up" for the fact that he watched more alone. There may be more reasons consumers view porn with other people such as partners, friends or even strangers. The following sub section looks at the polysemic meanings of porn consumption when porn is consumed in different spaces with various people. What role does porn function when it is watched by a group of friends, when watched by an individual at work and when watched individually at the comfort of one's home?

## 6.6 The different meanings of porn in various spaces of viewing

The differing and sometimes overlapping private and public consumption conditions enjoyed by consumers reveal the polysemic meaning and fluid nature of pornography. Porn consumed at the discretion of an individual's private home takes on different function to porn consumed by someone at work or by a group of people or friends or by a couple in the bedroom. Earlier I presented data contrasting consumers' relationship statuses with the preference for viewing porn alone. With 70% of all coupled respondents preferring to view porn alone, it is clear that porn consumers in relationships had room for actual intercourse and for porn. The following graph compares respondents preferred company when viewing porn.

**Figure 30 Preferred company when watching porn**




Even when asked to choose the company with whom they preferred to consume porn, most consumers (N=523) still indicated they preferred to be alone. I have stated earlier that porn

consumers feel most in control and safest with their sexual sensibilities when away from the purview of others, including their sexual partners. Here, I now explore a bit further the question of what it means to view porn alone. Other aspects of this graph i.e. what it means to view porn with partners and friends will also follow.

### *6.6.1 The meaning of porn when alone*

Litha (26 black male) associated watching porn alone with sexual autonomy and with absence of restraint.

> Watching it by myself I am in full control and am uninhibited. I can fast-forward or skip certain parts. I don't have to restrain myself.

Ultimately, watching porn in individual isolation yielded the greatest arousal effect and pleasure for consumers. If watching porn with others is linked to some kind of sexual restraint then watching porn alone is about feeling unbridled sexual pleasure. This is what George (40 black male) meant when he said "Look when you with people you lose the flavour."

Respondents also had a greater degree of sexual autonomy in discovering their sexual pleasures when by themselves than when they were with others. Kipnis (2003: 167) asserts that "Pornography's allegories of transgression reveal, in the most visceral ways, not just our culture's edges, but also how intricately our own identities are bound up in all of these unspoken but relentless cultural dictates." Pornography as an extension of human culture and behaviour exposes those visually encrusted parts of our identities to which we might be individually oblivious until we meet them in porn. This is how Sheila (25 black female) puts it:

> You learn things and you can kinda like ....and you can also sort of pin point what you don't like as well… cause you kinda go "what the fuck is this person doing to this person?" **(***laugh)***.** What is happening? Why? I don't see how anyone can get enjoyment out of this! And you can kinda strike it off the roll you know what I mean?…without having to do it like "why am I under this golden child right now? Why is this happening to me? Why

> am I being urinated on? This is *not* making me feel sexy"....I think it's a good place to sort of test your...your sexual temperature

Sheila's words "golden child" is a direct reference to the colloquial term "Golden Shower" which refers to a consensual sexual encounter where one party urinates on the other for sexual arousal. Both parties usually derive immense sexual excitation from this (Jacobs, Janssen & Pasquinelli 2007). Discovering one's 'sexual temperature,' by watching porn is not as nearly simple as it sounds. As indicated by Sheila, it takes a certain amount of time perusing through masses of countless images and videos, evaluating each, discarding many that do not fit one's sexual template and investing in those that do for a few minutes at a time. This means that a consumer becomes a fairly consistent pundit of explicit content. Evidently, the discovery of one's sexual character through porn is dualistic: the identification of items that are resonant with the consumer and the revelation and identification of those personally undesirable. For example, Ndoda (18 black male) had to watch a number of 'soft sex' videos before he could conclude for himself that he was more attracted to what he called "hard and harsh fucking" porn. Even if Ndoda was fortunate enough to immediately discover "hard and harsh fucking videos" without much effort, he still would have noticed that his arousal response was not quite as potent as when he watched porn with less "harsh and hard" sex. Similarly, it took Sheila a reasonable amount of videos featuring conventional-change-of positions sex for her to conclude that she does not enjoy "two people in missionary and then doggy style and then reverse cargo." Instead, she finds pleasure in BDSM sex. The dualistic discovery of one's sexual identity that occurs through porn means there is an experienced clarity about both one's sexual delights and one's sexual disinclinations.

These narratives accounts prove that people often take for granted they know what arouses their sexual feelings until they come across an image or video that unexpectedly restructures that belief. The copious resources of pornotopia means the millions of sexual visuals available for consumption are beyond any one single person's experience such that there is always room to discover something new, always room to discover one's "sexual temperature." It took Dave (42 white male) three years of porn viewing for him to establish that his most powerful sexual response was elicited by the sight of black bodies. As a white man who had been having access to only white porn for years, the initial sight of a naked African body exhilarated Dave more than he ever expected. Ever since then, Dave admits that he predominantly watches porn with dark skinned bodies e.g. African, Brazilians, Asians.

> But I mean it was only like once when I...when I went to one of these, one of to these other places at Baltimore with like more diverse porn then. I thought like "wow, here's a heterosexual video, but I mean it includes some African actors, you know, like Wow!"...And then I started watching it and I just thought Gees! This is good! I mean, I'm actually finding this more stimulating than just watching white guys and white actresses and...that...that's how it started.

Dave admits that all his sexual partners since then have only been black. Could this be a fortuitous fluke of fate or did porn familiarise Dave to a new side of himself he never had the chance to explore in the racially divided South Africa? As a white male born in 1971, Dave grew up in the socially and politically acrid era of Apartheid. Apartheid laws criminalised fraternising between white and black people. This means that black bodies were not as common in Dave's social circles as white bodies.

Sheila's concept of 'sexual temperature,' is a neologism for a hypothetical scale measuring how paraphilic or normative one's sexual predispositions are. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013) Paraphilia is the experience of intense sexual stimulation to atypical scenario's, objects, or individuals e.g. urolagnia, scatophilia, picquerism and some forms of BDSM such as whipping, hot-waxing. Also note that the American Psychiatric Association distinguishes between paraphilia and paraphilic disorder. Even though these sexual practices are generally considered "atypical", they are not necessarily paraphilic disorders unless they cause great distress and humiliation to the owner or if they are performed without consent on another person (American Psychiatric Association 2013).

If we take the above examples of Dave, Sheila and Ndoda as proof that people often need time to discover their sexual temperature, we can consider pornography as one such sexual instrument that helps a person identify her sexual personality. It is, for example, well-known historical knowledge that the 19th Century British physician and sexologist Havelock Ellis suffered from impotence until the age 60 (Brink 1980). At the age of 60, however, Ellis finally discovered his own sexual trigger that ended years of impotence: the site of a urinating woman. Arguably, with today's innumerable 'golden shower' videos on the internet, Ellis's 'sighting' would most probably have occurred through a different mode of seeing: the window of porn rather than an actual window. Consequently, it wouldn't have taken the good

doctor more than four decades to discover his sexual proclivities and to end his life of impotence.

Furthermore, the idea of a hypothetical gauge that assesses a person's "sexual temperature" conjures thoughts of a sexual scale that was developed by the researcher Alfred Kinsey and his friends. The Kinsey scale (also known as the homosexual-heterosexual scale) was developed "in order to account for research findings that showed people did not fit into neat and exclusive heterosexual or homosexual categories (….) for many people, sexual behaviour, thoughts and feelings towards the same or opposite sex was not always consistent across time" (The Kinsey Institute 2015: 1). The scale is marked according to the following categories: 0- Exclusively heterosexual, 1- Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual 2- Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual, 3- Equally heterosexual and homosexual, 4- Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual, 5- Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual, 6- Exclusively homosexual. An 'X' was also formulated to designate 'asexuality (The Kinsey Institute 2015).

One interviewee who proved that porn could act as a type of sexual scale was Danny (18 black male). Even though Danny had his first porn encounter at age 13, he had never seen gay porn until he was 17 years of age. He accidentally stumbled upon gay porn when his friend sent him a link to an unknown porn site. He felt shocked to realise he had arrived at a site for "ebafaneni bodwa" (Zulu: *guys only*). Danny, however, did not exit the page but kept watching and realized that he was actually "turned on."

> Zulu: Umngane wam, wa-senda ilokuzana…i-web-link. Ngangingalindele ukuthi ngibone kanje! Mangiqala ukuyibuka ngaqale ngaphatheka kahle. It turned me on. Ngasho ukothuka. (*Zulu*: *My friend sent this thing…. a web-link. I did not expect to see what I saw. When I first saw it, I felt* good. *It turned me on. I was shocked).*

Danny, however, sees himself as a heterosexual man. Even though he admitted to re-visiting the gay site again after that, he does not perceive himself as homosexual or even bisexual. This demonstrates the mercurial nature of sexuality and that there are existing indices between and within the purported homosexual-heterosexual confines. Kinsey at al (1998: 639, 656) stated that "sexual behaviour is neither normal or abnormal, socially acceptable or

unacceptable, heterosexual or homosexual (…) there are gradations in these matters from one to the other extreme." Nonetheless, it is also hard to believe that Danny would ever admit to being homosexual even if he believed he was. This is simply because he lives in the rural localities of Kwazulu Natal where ethnic and traditional ideals of manhood harshly preclude homosexuality.

Apart from acting as a measure of sexual orientation and sexual variance, there were many other types of sexual lessons that respondents felt were illuminated by their exposure to porn when they were only by themselves as seen from the table below.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Learnt foreplay, not just to go straight to the sex. |
| 2 | Discovered how to put on a condom |
| 3 | Discovered oral sex i.e. fellatio and learnt how it's done. |
| 4 | Porn can relax the body and help one fall asleep. |
| 5 | How to "muff "a girl i.e. cunnilingus |
| 6 | Learnt sex should not be done in just one position |
| 7 | Thrusting at different angles when penetrating yields different pleasures. |
| 8 | Learnt to love sex instead of seeing it as bad |
| 9 | *All* physical and action components learnt from porn |
| 10 | "Doggy" sexual position |
| 11 | Learnt and fell in love with "hard fucking" i.e. rapid strokes |
| 12 | Discovered and appreciated the beauty of black bodies |
| 13 | BDSM |
| 14 | Even as a straight man, male gay sex can be sexually arousing. |

**Table 8 What Interview respondents said they discovered by viewing porn alone**

Consuming porn in private allows consumers space to be honest about what sexual aspects truly excite them without feeling exposed or judged. Although these were some of the benefits of consuming porn in private, it does not mean porn served no other effectual function in corporate and non-private situations. The following sub-sections explore why people consumed porn at work and with sexual partners.

### *6.6.2 Why consumers viewed porn during work*

People who watched porn during work did not do so to reach peak sexual arousal, to discover themselves, for masturbatory pleasure or to acquire sexual dexterity. For these consumers, porn served as an effective diversion from work pressures as admitted by George (40 black male): "Sometimes I do it to relieve a bit of a pressure from work or any negative force that keeps me down." Apart from commercial work pressures, studying stresses and academic, intellectual exertion prompted consumers to sometimes seek relief through porn. Kholo (29 black male) who had returned to university after many years of commercial work, revealed

that he found reprieve from academic pressures by taking a break to watch cartoons on *Youtube*. He admitted, however, that when he was feeling exceptionally stressed or anxious, cartoons would not suffice.

> You know when you have like that *hectic* assignment… and you like "let's deviate to something else and this time I don't want to watch cartoons on *YouTube*."

Tina (30 white female) expressed similar sentiments:

> When I'm studying…(*laughs*)…. When I'm sitting in-front of the computer and am like "oh my God I can't deal with this!" that usually happens.

Porn consumption at work and at university environments has often been framed as a problem that needs to be eradicated. Laughton & Rensleigh (2007)'s research which looks at students' porn access at the University of Johannesburg recommends that content filters and policies should be used to reduce porn viewing on university campuses. Laughton & Rensleigh (2007), however fail to highlight that, from their own sample, the number of students accessing porn through university facilities are, in fact, a statistical minority i.e. less than 12%.

Similarly, an article by Armour (2007: 1) lampoons the dilemmas of easy porn access in the corporate environment but at the same time admits that "of those who acknowledged viewing porn sites at work, only 6% of men and 5% of women acknowledged that they had done so intentionally." This figure is actually similar to this study's survey data. Only 6% of the survey respondents reported to view porn at work while only 5% said they watched at university or college or school. Please refer to Figure 16.

The internet is replete with remedies on how to eradicate the great malady of porn consumption from work spaces yet few writings ever consider motivations for people who view porn at work. Considering that consuming porn at professional institutions is a major risk factor (one can get a warning or a dismissal) it is worth contemplating why people do so. Through what we can gather from the interview data, George, Kholo and Tina, it is clear that porn watched at an environment of work is not really for pleasure but for temporary diversion and escape. Even though it may be the pleasure of arousal that sanctions such escape, the pleasure itself is simply a means rather than an end. The words "hectic" (by Kholo), "can't

deal" (by Tina) and "negative forces" (George) implicate certain moments of work, either commercial or academic, with adverse and unpleasant experiences. Employees who consume porn at work may not be happy with particular labour conditions, may not enjoy their work or may have other reasons for needing constant distraction from their immediate environment.

Similarly, students who view porn at school may be lacking motivation to do the work, may be struggling in general or might not be enjoying their particular field of study. This helps frame these kinds of porn consumers as more than just intractable or lazy individuals. Dave (42 white male) who recently finished his studies and currently works as a call centre agent also expressed the same feelings as Tina, Kholo and George.

> …when I was like under like quite a lot of pressure doing the studying I found that wow …..watching one of these DVD's was like…was like a total…. was like a total mind liberation…..okay to some extent work pressure too.

If porn consumption at working environments is associated with stress and a need to escape, as seen from all these respondents, then perpetual porn consumption should be seen as a strong indicator of general unhappiness or lack of satisfaction within that environment. A simple deductive syllogism looks like this:

**Porn watched at work is due to momentary stress (and the need to escape)**

↓

**Regularity of stress-related behaviour signals unhappiness and dissatisfaction**

↓

**Therefore regular porn-viewing at work is an index of dissatisfaction or unhappiness**

The concept of job satisfaction has been used to refer to "the result of the worker's appraisal of the degree to which individual needs are fulfilled by the work environment" (Aletraris 2010: 1132). Constantly seeking to emotionally distance oneself from one's work environment through porn easily orates poor job satisfaction. According to Aletraris (2010: 1132) job satisfaction is strongly related to "absenteeism, levels of stress, employee well-being." As we have already seen, porn viewing within formal institutions is a marker of stress.

This realisation demands new focus on porn consumption research at work institutions. Research of this nature needs to hone in on the real problems by asking productive questions rather than punitive ones. How do such consumers generally feel about their respective working environments? Does porn consumption at the work place always assume meaningful value or could it also simply be habitual or routine? Which types of stresses often make consumers feel like porn at work personal, professional or both? Armour (2007) suggests that some consumers may consume porn at work simply because the possibility of being caught gives them a greater sexual thrill. Even though this was not found to be the case in this research, it could be a question worth asking in a different research project on institutional porn consumption. However, only serious and a non-judgmental approach into this matter could help answer some of these questions.

### *6.6.3 Gender, sex and sexuality: What is porn among friends?*

Previously, I mentioned a number of reasons for which consumers exchanged porn. One of these reasons was for the consolidation of social ties. This section explores the nature of these ties in greater detail particularly in relation to gender performativity. Porn watched amongst a group of friends or acquaintances was not for escapism but for the solidification of social ties. Porn watched in such a context was also not for sexual enjoyment. Duma (23 black male) for example drew a useful distinction between watching porn for entertainment and watching porn for sexual stimulation. The latter, he says, occurs when he is by himself and the former when he is with his friends.

> If I'm with my friends or whatever it's a group of us watching then it's not for sexual purposes uhmm…We just watch it for entertainment. I don't even get aroused most of the time uhmm.. But when I'm alone, obviously I get aroused.

Authors such as Hite (1981), Attwood (2005: 70) and Artz (2012) have already noted that porn can function to "promote male bonding, as well as for the purposes of individual sexual stimulation." Porn bolsters friendship or collegial bonds through the affirmation of consumers' sexualities. Whatever sexual numbers are shown must cater to the viewers by palpably embedding themselves to a sexual orientation category. To view porn with friends is an act of allying both with fellow consumers and with the sexual orientation of the sex

depicted. It is for this reason that straight men will watch porn with other straight men (Jacobs, Janssen & Pasquinelli 2007) and gay men with other gay men (Artz 2012). Thus, Duma, when looking at porn with his gay friends, does not really have to be sexually aroused to continue participating in such collective consumption. He simply has to be present as a tacit performance of his avowal and vote for his friends' sexuality and for his own social membership.

It was not surprising then to discover from the data that even familial bonds were insufficient to bring together biological brothers to the same porn viewing when they were of different sexual orientations. Duma, is one of five biological brothers. Two of the brothers, of whom Duma is one, are gay while the rest of the three are heterosexual. Duma, his gay brother and one of his straight brothers are open consumers of porn. Duma anecdotally reported what happens when he and his gay brother attempted to "make" their straight brother watch gay porn with them. .

> Uhmm……. So I have a gay brother right? So we share pornography and whatever and my oldest brother he's straight and we're always trying to make him watch our porn…..Cause we say it *(laughs)*….. it shows that he accepts us…..we force it on him and he watches reluctantly. Yeah, kind of like that…. it's always kind of a funny settlement.

Even though Duma's straight brother does watch gay porn with his gay brothers, he has to be "forced" to do so in order to "show" that he "accepts" their sexuality. Moreover, even though he does watch, he does so only "reluctantly" and not willingly. Sometimes the gay brothers' "forceful" approach on their straight sibling does not work, confirming that such a "funny settlement" is not one that suits everyone. Furthermore, from Duma's jubilant and jestful tone, it is clear that the times these brothers 'ambushed' their brother were playful moments of humour, facilitating a different kind of bonding based on brotherly banter rather than serious sexual camaraderie. Even though family ties may not be enough to establish keen socio-sexual camaraderie through mutual porn consumption, it becomes clear that collective porn viewing becomes an act of affirming one another. For a heterosexual man to watch his gay brother's gay porn is to accept the gay brother's sexuality but for a heterosexual man to watch heterosexual porn with his heterosexual friends is to accept *and* belong to a sexual clan.

The second interesting point to highlight is that porn watched as a collective, though affirming of sexuality may not necessarily be affirming of particular individual tastes and it must not be fully sexually enjoyed (one cannot afford to lose himself in it as one would when alone). Recall Duma's words earlier "If I'm with my friends or whatever …. it's not for sexual purposes. I don't even get aroused most of the time." Litha (26 black male) expressed something similar:

> In a group I find there is pressure not to enjoy it too much, lest you be singled out…. Plus, with others there's pressure to watch penetrative sex which really isn't the most sexually stimulating part for me.

Simon (31 black male) has a similar perspective:

> With friends you got to hide your feeling because they will laugh at you. We make fun of it. By myself it turns me on.

Porn watched by a group of men works to sustain forms of masculinity. Some scholars (Pyke & Johnson 2003, Johansson & Hammarén 2007, Garlick 2010) have written about masculinity as partitioned between dominant and non-dominant forms, canonising a "distinction between hegemonic and subordinate forms of masculinity, the latter comprising homosexuality and other 'softer' forms of masculinity" (Rothman 2013: 23). Even though traditional literature has classified homosexual men like Duma and Litha as "subordinate" masculinities (Rothman 2013), it is clear that they, just like heterosexual men, adhere to performative group conduct that enacts and legitimate their sexual identity and camaraderie. Connel (2005: 845) has argued against the dualistic categorisation of masculinities into dichotomous groupings such as "dominant" and "subordinate." She advances the concept of "multiple masculinities" to denote numerous forms of maleness that take into consideration "race, class, gender and generation" not just sexuality. She also adds that all masculinities, even traditionally marginalised ones such as Duma and Litha's, are always dominant in their own context where all parties are subjected to governing norms.

Litha and Duma's testimonies highlight specific social codes that must be adhered to by participating gay men. Note that in collective porn viewing circumstances, there is a stoic decorum that must be preserved: e.g. to enjoy porn too much is to "bring attention" to oneself

by appearing sexually gullible, easily excitable or inexperienced. Notice also that only a specific type of porn is granted the space of prominence: penetrative sex. According to (Maes 2011) men tend to associate erotic or non-penetrative sexual pornographic depictions with feminine or emotional attributes. Erotic porn according to Maes (2011: 388) has "imaginative scenarios, featuring life-like characters in realistic situations. Much attention is paid to the personal experiences (…), and 'feelings, passions, sensuality, intimacy, and the lead-up must be emphasised." Watching non-penetrative sex in a male group setting could easily be construed as 'soft' i.e. emotion and intimacy driven rather than sex centred. The fact that Duma and Litha continue to participate in such group viewings despite not enjoying the porn is testament to the fact that collective porn consumption serves a different function to individual consumption: to socially and sexually belong and be affirmed. Apart from this, there were numerous interview respondents from this research who suggested that sensual or non-penetrative porn was simply too 'fake.'

Milani (2013: 16) has argued that South African homosexual men do not necessarily 'rebel' against normative ideals considered 'normal' but may "instead happily reproduce different normalities" which may sustain the fabric of sexually normative values. Homosexual masculinities, based on their own prevailing group norms may not necessarily be less coercive than heterosexual ones. Consider the pressure 'not to enjoy' porn when in such groups, the reliance on penetrative, "hard" material rather than 'soft" porn. Notice the shaming of members who fall out of line; what Litha calls being "singled out" and Simon being "made fun of."

Nonetheless, there still remains significant differences between homosexual group viewings and heterosexual ones. See the stark contrast between the aforementioned homonormative settings with the following heteronormative one described by Elrod (60 year coloured male):

> A few years back when I was still working, was drunk with my friends ….we watched outside his car, or inside his car and watched it …we would sit there for about half an hour, one hour…it was more fun watching it with these guys uhmm because they would joke and they would share about themselves and their experiences you know.

Authors such as Connel (2005) and Schippers (2007) have pointed out how hegemonic masculinities are anchored in self-aggrandising behaviour. Unlike homosexual bonds,

heterosexual male ties are not merely collectively ritualised but are oftentimes practices that become publically flaunted. Getting "drunk, showing off, going wild and defending one's prestige" are examples of such practices (Connel 2005: 838). There are undeniable traces of such behaviour in the scene painted by Elrod which mark this type of masculinity as hegemonic. Unlike the previous homonormative viewings that were held in closed environments, notice that Elrod's porn viewing sessions with his friends were held in rather open areas: inside and outside cars and with much laughter and joking. Observe also that Elrod's consumption camaraderie, contrary to the homosexual one, was further marked by boastful inebriation. According to De Visser & Smith (2007: 597) "drinking is an important element of young men's social lives and a measure of masculinity." These authors found in their research that there was a strong association between alcohol consumption and masculinity and that many men "believed that alcohol consumption is a marker of masculinity" (De Visser & Smith 2007: 595).

Elrod says his friends "would share about themselves and their experiences." Given the sexual context of the environment, the "experiences" that were being exchanged amongst the men were most likely sexual encounters, 'exploits' and 'conquests' they had with women. The fact such narratives were accompanied by laughter and "joking" suggests the women in such narratives were spoken of in bemused fashion. This supports Schipper (2007: 87) who points out that heterosexual masculinity operate through the belittlement of women and other masculinities. As seen in this instance, collective porn viewing works to affirm sexual identity through displayed veneration of macho forms of behaviour. Heterosexual masculinity, for heterosexual men who view porn together, is not just a sexual identity but a sigil of honour. This differs drastically to the meaning of porn when viewed by couples.

### *6.6.4 The role of porn when viewed by couples*

Finally, porn consumed in the privacy of a couple's bedroom also acquired different meaning to porn watched alone at home, at work, school or somewhere with friends. Coupled respondents confessed to watching porn with their partners when they wanted to prepare for sex and when they wanted a novel and exciting sexual encounter. For the latter porn was watched during the couple's sexual exchange but for the former couples watched porn before sexual intercourse. Joseph (45 black male) and his wife for example only watched porn before they had sex.

> I'll watch all these most of the time in my house in my bedroom alone. Unless as foreplay with my wife …we have established that we

> sometimes need it to start our sexual sessions sometimes.

Joe Kort, a renowned clinical sexologist, social worker and lecturer has argued in his paper *De-pathologising porn* that "in many relationships, porn use may satisfy needs that have nothing to do with psychological pathology or sexual dysfunction" and that "porn can be incorporated into a relationship" as part of a healthy sex life (Kort 2009: 1-2). Note the word "need" in Joseph's statement implies that porn in his marriage has become an essential component of his sex life. The fact that this happens "sometimes" cautions against erroneous presumptions that such a need is obsessive or unhealthy. Joseph and his wife do not always have to consume porn but the fact that they sometimes do means they have acquired ample reserve of sexual options from which to choose when having sex. This refutes arguments that people and couples who watch porn for sexual stimulation place their sexual-lives at the behest of porn dependency. Joseph and his wife have obviously perfected identifying the necessary times for when to watch porn and for when they don't need it.

Joseph's succinct description of porn as sexual "foreplay" brings attention to the fact that explicit content perform tangible work on the body. The subtext of Joseph's account is that in the eventuality that one struggles or fails to bring oneself to arousal, pornography can. For couples like Joseph and his wife, the inevitability of failed arousal makes porn an equal inevitability. This explains why Joseph would say "we sometimes need it." The nature of pornographic material to ignite sexual feelings is articulated by Pule (22 black male) who admits to having sex with multiple women. Porn is part of Pule's shrewd strategy in getting women who visit him 'warmed up' for sex without necessarily asking them:

> Porn actually takes someone to another dimension. Yeah, so I just play it then I ignore her. I do my stuff then definitely sure when I come back, Yeah, her world will be changed….because you know you'll see when you come back she will be like touching you Yeah…That's why porn plays a very serious role in my life.

Whether one admires Pule for his cunning or derides him for his manipulative tactics in getting women interested in sex (and by extension in him) what is clear is that pornography

does ‘trick’ the body into preparing for sex. Knowing this has enabled Pule to use porn in turn to ‘trick’ women to wanting sex with him.

Apart from prompting sexual readiness, porn watched by couples also functioned as a form of sexual adventuring. When I asked Sheila (25 black female) when she watched porn with her long term partner, she responded “It depends on how adventurous you wanna get that day.” Sexual adventuring means couples felt that by watching porn during sex, they could try new techniques they had never tried before and experience something new. The key word here is “new:” the idea that porn will lead to different, better and greater sexual pleasures. Emmanuel (29 black male) recalls a day when his partner, for the first time in their relationship, asked to introduce porn during sex.

> So one day umangaba’engivakashele uzile (*Zulu: when he visited me, he came)* with this...with this disc wathi’ kimina (*and said to me)* “today we are going to do things differently,” ngathi mina (*and I said)* like how? Wathi yena (*and he said)* “I’ve got a DVD. Can we try it?”

Note the words “today we are going to do things differently” by inference meaning today we will experience sex ‘differently.’ Sexual adventuring is an initiative of, not only trying to feel differently, but also of attempting to enhance and improve a couple’s sexual pleasure. This way, porn acts a type of sexual therapy, an unofficial bedroom sexologist, who knows more than the couple and can couch the couple into something sexually transcendent. Referring to a married couple that he counselled through the use of porn Kort (2009: 8) argues “Discussing the use of porn and each other's sexual fantasies allowed them (the married couple) to develop a new kind of ease and empathy for each other, based on a shared and explicit understanding of the private sexual fantasies that wouldn't have been revealed.” From what Kort says, it seems that couples, through sharing porn, have a chance not only to sexually enhance their sexual life but also their emotional connection and empathy for one another.

## 6.7 Conclusions

This chapter explored the dialectic of the private and public in a trilateral thematic pattern applicable to porn consumption in South Africa. Firstly, although pornography is public, it depicts sexual acts and sexual behaviours that are normally performed in private (Iqani 2012: 133). The migration of these private acts into the public realm in the mode of pornography

transmutes them into commodity form. Pornography is a commodity borne of the economic cycle of production, distribution and consumption and does not exist outside the spectra of economic activity. As such, the attainment of pornographic material always involves financial costs. Nonetheless, the circulation and consumption of pornographic material in society transcends economic and financial directives as consumers take pleasure in sharing pornography. Porn is not just bought but is constantly traded, shared, borrowed, pirated and freely given away. The socio-sexual-circuit is a model that helps us theorise how porn in society, despite many who have no financial means, is consumed so easily, rapidly and how it permeates through age barriers. In this chapter, I have proposed this is due to more than just the expedience of the internet. The internet, I argued, has transformed the porn viewing experience by offering more privacy and more genre, sub-genre options. To rely solely on the advent of the internet to explain the popularity of porn would betray the fact that pornography flourished even before the internet era. The sexual circuit I proposed in this chapter explains the social factors making this possible: active social networks, sexual curiosity, gratification and eagerness to share and lack of financial resources.

Consumers' private bodily gratifications and identities are mirrored by publically available commodified images of sex. The publicness of sex simulacra through pornography has a profound private impact on the construction, the projection and sometimes the discovery of consumers' personal pleasures and identities. There is therefore an indelible link between what explicit material consumers enjoy and how they perceive themselves. Porn is the site at which the sexual self and the social self collide such that consumers' private porn preferences often become conflated with their public identity. For this reason, porn consumers struggled less to divulge the fact of their porn consumption than they did revealing the type of porn they consumed.

Lastly, the differing and sometimes overlapping private and public consumption conditions enjoyed by consumers reveal the polysemic meaning and fluid nature of pornography. Porn consumed at the discretion of an individual's private home proves to be about extracting the greatest arousal effect while growing in the understanding of one's 'sexual temperature.' Porn watched amongst friends serves to entertain (not arouse), affirm one's sexuality and to help one belong to a sexual clan. Porn watched at work served as an effective distraction and escape. I suggested that the association between frequent porn consumption at work and job satisfaction was an association worthy of future research endeavours. Lastly, porn consumed at the discretion of a couple's home serves to enhance intimacy and sexual adventuring.

The following chapter will now explore the ways in which consumers' porn pleasures and experiences are embroiled in negotiatory interplay with power. The pleasure/power dialectic means that various forms of regulations and control are always lurking side-by-side the aforementioned types of pleasures discussed in this (public/private) chapter.

# 7 POWER AND PLEASURE: THE COUNTER BALANCES OF ENJOYMENT AND CONTROL IN PORN

In the previous chapter I looked at how the publication of conventionally private sexual behaviours transmutes those sexual acts into commodity form. Pornography is ultimately a commodity produced, distributed and consumed for pleasure. I also explored the ways in which this public commodity lends itself to consumers' various private sexual proclivities and identities. Public porn images facilitate not just the expression of private fantasies but the discovery of people's unexplored sexual predilections.

This section will traverse the ways in which power intersects porn pleasure such that all pleasurable experiences through porn are overlaid by omnipresent, permeating injunctions of power. The pleasures of porn form a quasi-connubial relationship with hegemonic vectors of power at various levels of society. While pleasure promises exploration, liberation and enjoyment, power manifests itself in all attempts to curb and regulate such enjoyments (Foucault 1985). At the pinnacle of power regulation lies the state and its legal impositions which dictate the types of porn images that cannot be viewed while also establishing the permissive framework through which porn may be consumed. In total, power in porn consumption manifests itself in three ways: state regulations (the law), institutional and social structures (family, church, schools) and means of (porn) production. The following sections will begin by tracing porn consumers' histories with past laws of South Africa. Thereafter, a detailed treatise of consumers' experiences and views with present laws shall be explored.

## 7.1 Porn consumers' experiences with past Apartheid laws

In South Africa, the pre-democratic dispensation that existed prior 1994 instigated a very draconian legislative framework on matters pertaining to sex and pornography. Pornography, in particular, only acquired legal status in the year 1996, two years subsequent the country's democratic transition from Apartheid. The Publications Act of 1975 made two types of material illegal: communist propaganda and pornography (Stemmet 2007). As a result of this, consumers who started watching porn prior 1994 were aware that their enjoyment of porn put them at the risk of imprisonment. Tara's (50 white woman) first porn experience happened in the year 1981 when she was 18 years of age. She says she could not shake off the fear of the police storming in the room and arresting her and her boyfriend while watching together.

> This young man that I was in the relationship with somehow got his hands on a porn film and it was very hush-hush because if the police found out

> about it, you would be arrested, thrown in jail and I was only 18 and…and came from a very conservative family that never broke the law... never ever, ever, ever had one dishonest bone in their body let alone a criminal record. And so we drove to somebody's house, closed all the curtains locked all the doors. I was nervous that I was doing something illegal… Police could knock on the door at any stage and arrest me because having a pornographic film or watching it was against the law in South Africa in 1979…. I think it was. Uhmm…So my first feeling was "if the Police knock on the door!" I was listening all the time for a …a Police van or siren roaring up.

Even though Tara concedes she "was very interested. I watched it absolutely attentively," she also admits "Sexually, I wasn't aroused." The legally volatile environment at the time and Tara's fears of arrest mired the pleasure of her first porn experience (though cognitively, she still remembers a lot of details about that first film[7]). Leonard (1993: 631) attests to this when he says "Any given erotic fantasy is effective only to the extent that it maximizes pleasure while minimizing the problematics of any relationship between excitement and power that is always an organizing factor in the production of pleasure" (Leonard 1993: 621). Tara could not maximize on her pleasure experience while unable to minimise the ever-present portentous setting in which she found herself.

Governments and states have, throughout history, been known to impose what Foucault (1978: 20-25) calls the "restrictive economy" on sexual matters, a "policing of sex." Apartheid South Africa was no exception. One of these policing methods the regime deployed to police sex was the censorship of explicit materials. In an atmosphere of censorship, pleasure is truncated by constant apprehensions of arrest, detention, levying, a criminal record and even public humiliation. It is for this reason that Elrod (60 coloured

[7] "The nuns were obviously having a lot of fun. There was a lot of laughter and giggling. There was no abuse or hurt to the nuns the ….the men, they were young and had lovely bodies. It was broad daylight and it was a very grainy picture black and white was of course…it was in French. I couldn't hear a word of what they were saying. It was the nuns running through a forest they got out of a combi and they ran through the forest and discarding their habits as they ran and then they met some men in the forest and there was some uhmmm coupling on the grass in a wood in France. "

male) admitted to feeling less guilty and fearful for watching porn *after* pornography was de-criminalised in 1996.

> That did subside as I grew older (guilt over watching porn) ….and that time it was banned you see and, you would have been into trouble if you were caught with a magazine …I got more used… and then it was legalised.

Both Tara and Elrod's accounts suggest that state policies which aim to regulate bodies and physical actions ended up regulating feelings. In its failure to prevent its citizens from accessing pornographic material, the state's prude policies had souring effects on the sexual enjoyment of its porn consumers. Tara says that they "closed all the curtains locked all the doors." The viewing conditions reflected the unlawfulness of that moment. It beggars belief whether unrestrained sexual pleasure could ever thrive in atmosphere full of dread. While the adage goes "forbidden fruit tastes the sweetest," there seems to be another untold story to this narrative of forbidden fruit: fear accompanies its sweetness. The Apartheid state had other prohibitory statutes through which it attempted to police sexual bodies and sexual feelings. One of these bylaws, *inter-alia* a sundry of many others, was the immorality Act of 1927 (later amended in 1950) to ban all sexual interactions and marriage between races in the country especially between white and black people (Glücksmann 2010). Other laws such as the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 "forced physical separation between races by creating different residential areas for different races" (Glücksmann 2010: 14). Essentially, this meant different racial groups had very little exposure to each other apart from approved working encounters and what each group. What many people knew about 'the other' race was what the government said or what they read in newspapers or saw on television (when television finally made it to South Africa in 1976. Even when dialogue and physical interaction occurred, sexual engagements were illegal.

It was in such a politically ominous milieu that pornography covertly bridged the gap of normalised social separation between different races, perhaps even in a way that most media forms couldn't. Simon (31 black male), for example, who started seeing porn at age 16 says that he and his friends were shocked and amused at the sight of naked white bodies.

> We were laughing cause we never saw whites naked before. It was funny cause we could see they were like us… because where I'm from that time there

> was no white people so seeing them fucking and naked it felt so good.

Simon mentioned the place he grew up is Bushbuckridge, a small town in the Mpumalanga Province. The authors Raamutsindela & Simon (1999) confirm that Bushbuckridge was a black residential region that harboured feuds and simmering hostilities between the Pedis, Shangaan-Tsonga and the Pulana ethnic groups. Growing up in such an environment, Simon would have been aware of the ethnic rivalries of the region: the clashes for linguistic preferences in schools, protests over land claims and condemnation of inter-ethnic romance (Raamutsindela & Simon 1999). With these being the most pressing issues of the time, Simon at age 16 wouldn't have had much reason to be bothered about white people since there were no whites around him. He would have seen white people mostly from popular American action movie figures such as *Rambo* and Jean Claude Van Damme but he would never had known, or perhaps imagined what exactly they looked like naked. In South Africa, black and white people even had separate TV channels with black television featuring black content. Most white content accessed by black people was mainly from the United States. Given the level of geographical, institutional, cultural and social segregation that had, over the decades, deprived South Africans racial acquaintanceship, only a sense of mystery, and superstition could prevail. The theory of "Contact Hypothesis" can be used to explain this:

> "Social psychological research on segregation has mainly worked within the theoretical framework of the 'contact hypothesis. This hypothesis holds that the mutual isolation of groups encourages the development of negative attitudes and stereotypes..." (Dixon, Tredoux & Clack 2005: 403).

The Contact Hypothesis also proposes an inverse of this: i.e. when different groups people of regularly interact, prejudice, ignorance and stereotypes are reduced. Nevertheless, the segregation that defined Apartheid was predicated on racial difference and the bioculturalist distinction of racialised bodies. Posel 2001:53) speaks of bioculturalist as referring to "aligned readings of bodily difference closely with differences of class, lifestyle and general repute." It was perhaps bound to happen that whatever misconceptions and myths that Simon and his friends had about white people would be premised on cultural and even bodily difference. According to Posel, the Apartheid project sought to entrench a façade of human difference based solely on bodily deviations (mosty pigmentation) with the extraction that corporeal differences were the cause of all other socio-economic dissimilarities and injustices.

> The ideological logic of Apartheid depended upon thinking about all blacks as essentially different from all whites and coloureds, and, correlatively, all blacks as sharing essential features that united them into one race (Posel 2001: 64-65)

The Apartheid state institutionalised the deification of bodily difference as an index of all other differences. One was relegated to a sub-standard level of existence simply because one *looked* darker than everyone else. Given this logic, black children and teenagers, in particular, had reason to believe there must have been something ineradicably different between the bodies of white and black people to merit the vast existential gap between them. It is not really clear *how* Simon and his friends had envisioned white bodies to vary from their own. What is clear is that they had expected to see inimitable differences between their bodies and white people's bodies. The realisation that white people "looked like us" (had bodies and genitals that looked like theirs) was not only revelatory to them but most probably became a bathetic demotion of "whiteness" from its exalted social pedestal to an inoculating reality of white people's routine normalcy. It makes sense they would laugh, having expected to see a lofty spectacle only to discover the commonly familiar.

Not only did different racial populations of South Africa dwell in separate geographical locations but they were granted separate services (bathroom, benches, transport, diners etc.) even in spaces where they worked side by side. A stark portrait of South Africa's jagged social, cultural and economically landscape is given by Dixon, Tredoux & Clack (2005: 396, 397).

> A visual record of the multifarious forms that racial separation assumed during the Apartheid era...we find illustrations, for example, of urban Apartheid, the homeland system, the racial organisation of institutions of education, industry, transport and many other areas of social life… At one level, the Apartheid system was famously impressed upon the global organisation of urban life in South Africa, taking the form of group areas, infrastructural barriers, buffer zones, and other features of the Apartheid city.

Suffice to say that this nation-wide segregationist arrangement imposed by the state turned South African people into strangers whose encounters, even after the democratic dispensation, became marked by constant fear and suspicion (Nattrass & Seeekings 2001). Dave (42 white male) admits that even at age 22 (year 1994) he did not have any black

friends or personally know any black people. Dave's first sight of a naked African human being was through pornography.

> ….and I started to notice things about African guys then that I...I didn't or wouldn't have noticed before, you know"…… I mean stuff that I would obviously notice on white people. So, then I started to notice these things like wow, you know, made observations that I never made before… I mean like how dark skinned are you, like how light skinned are you. Uhmm...like, how much hair does he have on his head. I never had the opportunity to look at a Black guy naked before. The crowd that I mixed with was basically heterosexual and white.

As stated earlier, Dave's romantic and sexual liaisons since this encounter have become mostly black, a clear indication that in some way, this experience significantly impacted his predilections. Of more significance is the way that such images drastically altered his perception of black bodies and black people. Stuart Hall (2005: 445) accents that the stereotype "all black people are the same" or that "you can't tell the difference because they all look the same" is "a predicate of racism." Therefore, in confessing that he never saw or noticed variations in the physiological features of black people Dave is, fundamentally admitting the manner in which he had typecast black people as being all the same.

However, in the kind of sexually and racially separationist and repressive society epitomised by old South African laws, Dave's psychological myopia was, perhaps, to be understood, maybe even to be expected. This is why his life-changing epiphany vis-à-vis black porn is a critical embodiment of the contestations between the restraints of power and the recourses of pleasure. Porn acts as a bridge between the institutionalised racial divide of "strange" bodies, allowing each safe familiarisation to the socially unattainable and bringing an experience of sexual and racial novelty that's been deprived in the real politicised world. Evidently, porn does what no other media genre can do: expose all our raw corporeal truths so plainly that all veils of mysticism about other people's 'anomalies' are stripped away. Porn reveals the profound yet basic truth that no matter how estranged people may be to each other (poor, privileged, brown and light alike), they are all human, connected by the undeniably common bodily features and structures that define all bodies; all humans. In light that Dave's

experience led to a change in his love life, friendships and entire social organisation, we can safely conclude his sexual 'awakening' became his social transformation.

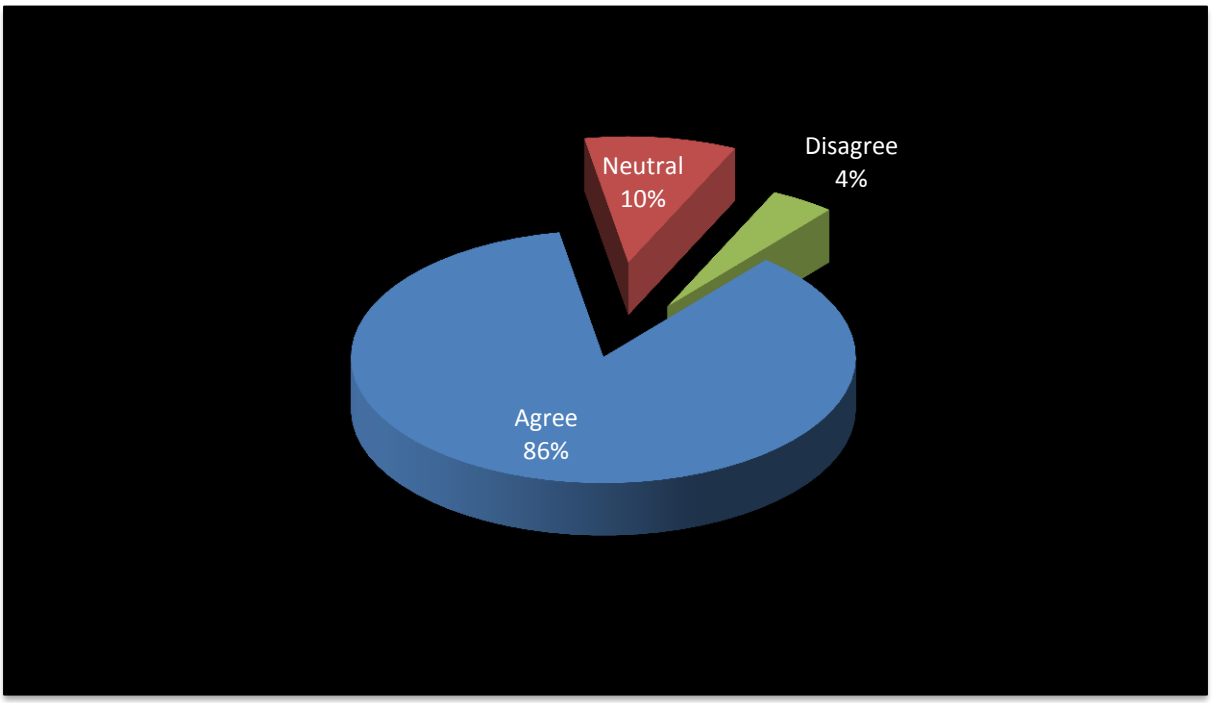
Dave and Sam's accounts about how, for the first time in their lives, saw the human in the estranged racial other are antithetical to writings which have claimed that porn promotes viewers to see sex in racist terms. Stager (2003: 54) for example reveals the three ways in which porn characters are labelled and promoted in their videos are: by their body types, by their race and their age. Similarly (Dines 2006) agrees that mainstream pornography seeks to deliberately construct a racially polarised sexual universe defined by eroticised black and white bodies engaged in sexual intercourse "dominant performers are black men and white women with titles such as *Black poles in white holes, Huge black cock on white pussy, and Monster black penises and tight white holes"* (Dines 2006: 285).

Admittedly, the porn industry does often thrive and capitalise on racially-centred body difference. For this reason, there is significant merit in studying porn texts since "questions of power and the political have to be and are always lodged within representations of textuality" (Hall 2005: 15). However, there is no evidence that consumers are somehow hoodwinked into reducing other human into sexualised black or white bodies. Though it is unclear how many others may have similar stories such as Dave and Sam, exposure to different bodies proves the ability to bring consumers closer to the perception of those (different) bodies as human, in Sam's words, as being "like us." Porn regulation policy changed in South Africa with the advent of democracy. The following sub-section looks at how current laws shape porn consumption in present day South Africa.

## 7.2 Vectors of opposition: How current South African law affects porn Consumption

South African jurisprudence rightly affirms "the dehumanising nature of child pornography and the concomitant exploitation and abuse of children" (Watney 2005: 21) which is punishable by a maximum of 10 years of imprisonment under the Film and Publications Amendment Act 2009. When asked about their opinion on this law, most porn consumers consented that minors shouldn't be featured in porn. Of the 676 survey respondents who answered the question "Pornography should never feature anyone under the age of 18" N=582 agreed, N=66 were neutral and N=28 disagreed as shown in this graph.

**Figure 31 Porn should never feature anyone under the age of 18**




The effect of the law takes on very tangible power over consumers' perception on porn matters. Many interviewees were unable to see the issue of underage porn exposure outside the proscriptions of the law. When asked for their opinion they simply regurgitated their knowledge that "it's against the law." Despite the fact that the South African constitution has grown more egalitarian towards matters pertaining sex and pornography, there are still protuberating incongruities in how South African laws governing sexual behaviour and those regulating porn production and consumption clash with each other. Even though most of the research respondents conceded to the fact that under 18 year olds should not be allowed to access porn or feature in it, the 4% who disagreed with this view are not actually ill-reconciled with the law nor should they necessarily be considered paedophiles. Sheila said:

> It's like pubs…. having no under 18's and you are looking around you are surrounded by teenagers, you know what I mean? They have access to it! A 17 year old is probably watching porn right now. So…..*(laughs)*...uhmm …and probably and….potentially get into trouble for doing it. So, I think let's loosen the strings a bit. I think it's ok honestly and I don't think there should be like a set limit and I think it's up to the discretion of …of

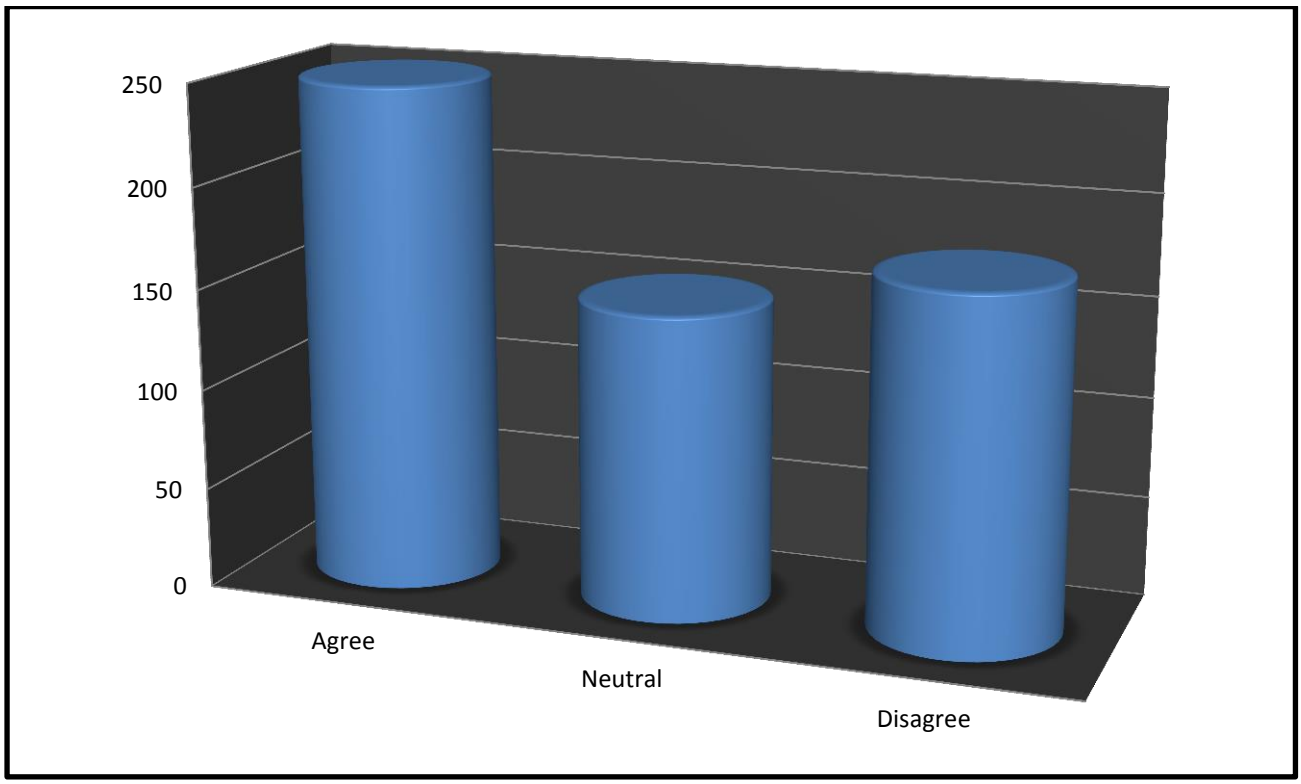
> ……the…the home-makers, and the care-givers and
> the family it's up to them.

Even though Sheila's position seems to be in stark contrast to the Film and Publications Act, it is actually in correspondence with the Sexual Offences and Related Amendment Act 2007 which puts the age of sexual consent at age 16. According to this act, consensual sex between people of 16 years old is legal (Sexual Offences and Related Amendment Act 2007 section 16).

The Film and Publication Act 2009 (Section 1) disallows access of pornographic material to under 18 year olds. On the other hand The Sexual Offences and Related Amendment Act 2007 (section 15 &16) gives permission to 16 year old teenagers to have consensual sex with whomever they chose (Artz & Roehrs 2009). This raises a question: Which, according to the prioritisation of the law is more undesirable between porn at age 16-17 or sex at age 16-17? In 2015, the Sexual Offenses and Related Matters Amendment 2007 was amended i.e. Sexual Offenses and Related Matters Amendment Act Amendment Act 2015. This was to exculpate 12-15 year olds engaging in sex with each other from being guilty of breaking the law. As it stands presently in South Africa, adolescents from 12-15 years and above may engage in sexual activities with each other but may not do so with adults. The farcical aspect of these contradictory laws is the presupposition that they can function affably side by side. What is to be made of laws that allow 12-15 year olds to have sex but makes them legally liable if they see sexual imagery? What happens when a 17 year and a 15 year old decide, as often teenagers do, to shoot their sexual liaisons and share this with friends or post it online? Surely the painstaking attempts of the state to sieve out porn as a wholly different entity from sex leaves riddles about the efficacious capacity of such efforts. It is within this context that Sheila's statement should be understood i.e. if a 17 year old is having sex she is also most likely consuming porn. The fact that she may 'get in trouble' for it means she has to go to some lengths to keep porn consumption a secret. This obviously has the potential to create unnecessary feelings of guilt. Here we become first hand witnesses of how state power wields control over and limits sexual pleasures, even in instances where it seems such laws are contradictory.

There is an interesting relationship to regulatory dissonances and the fact that most porn consumers feel there is insufficient porn in South Africa. The following graph shows that majority of the survey respondents felt there wasn't enough pornography in the country.

**Figure 32 Porn in South Africa is not available enough**




Perhaps this is not so surprising. Although, the South African government legalised porn in 1996, it still imposed impervious protocols for local online porn providers. All internet service providers needed to register with the Film and Publications Board (Watney 2005). Websites hosting sexual content had to undergo pre-screening by the Film and Publication Board to clear them from any illegal material. If any website, judged according to the standards and discretion of the Publication Board, was found to contain explicit material that appeared to be of criminal nature (e.g. bestiality, disrespect for human dignity, incest, rape, violent sexual behaviour and child pornography, all simulated or real), such a service provider would be declined publication. The unpredictable subjectivity of the Board in deciding, what may, for example, be perceived as "violent sexual behaviour" or an ostensible act of "incest" or "disrespect for human dignity" meant that many South African online porn providers wishing to host porn from the country's (co.za) domain faced the vexing challenge of the board's bias. How does one measure what is "violent sex" (e.g. tying, spanking) and what degrees of violence can be tolerated? How does "incest" visually register itself on screen and becomes distinguishable from sex that is not? What are the elastic parameters that constitute disrespect for human rights (e.g. spiting on someone, ejaculating on someone while they are on their knees?). As a result, the South African Constitutional Court in 2011 ruled that pre-screening content before publication was unconstitutional (Freedom House 2015). Despite this, any online platform that receives a "take down" notice under the Electronic and

Communications Transaction Act of 2002 is legally obligated to comply. A “take down” notice marks the content *ipso facto* unlawful. That internet service provider is therefore legally compelled to remove the material or face ligation.

This has translated to a situation where South African porn scarcely has any online presence. As a result, South African porn producers opt for the route of least resistance: hosting their online porn using international service providers. Tau Morena for example, a producer and reputed trail-blazer of local black porn, hosts his porn site *Sondeza.com* using an American domain. As such, a simple online search of the phrase “South African porn” yields a torrent of American domain entries such that many interview respondents admitted not to know where to find South African porn.

Sheila (25 black female)

> I don’t know where one could find South African porn, even to begin with so.....I don’t....I ‘ve never...I don’t think I have ever come across South African porn. Ever!

Elrod (60 coloured male)

> Locally produced porn is not easily available or maybe I just couldn’t get my hands on it.

Suraj (23 Indian male)

> I watch international (porn). It's difficult to find local stuff on the net.

The internet is notably acclaimed for the expediency of making information and porn effortlessly accessible (Copper 2010, Barker 2014, Garlick 2011). This is not the case with locally produced porn. South Africa is a nation bereft of access and circulation of its own porn. Consumers mostly watch that which saturates the web and speedily presents itself during quick online searches i.e. international porn, mostly North American, mostly White. Some respondents such as Brian and Tara did not even know that South Africa porn existed.

Brian (63 white male)

> It's usually just on the internet. I'm not aware that there is any locally produced. I must be honest. I've….it always just seemed to be American or German.

Tara (50 white female)

> I don't know *(laughs)* it's just that when I search the sites I seem to find international. I wouldn't mind local. I don't have…..have a version.

The Unites States is one of the biggest global producers and distributors of pornography. With over 11 000 porn films annually (Chan 2014, Iqani 2012), the renowned San Fernando Valley has become a notorious metonym for the national porn industry as a whole. With giant American online porn distributors flooding cyber space, it is no wonder fledgling porn industries such as South Africa would have less than obscure online porn presence especially given many of the intransigent laws of the country. State regulations are therefore one of the most forceful ways in which power manifests itself as a mechanism against pleasure. Nevertheless, social institutions such as churches, schools and families can work to asphyxiate porn enjoyment as well.

## 7.3 Watch and pray: How the injunctions of religious institutions affect porn consumers

Power, according to Foucault (1985: 93) does not simply trickle down in hierarchical fashion from the state to its citizens but "it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the later are always local and unstable….Power is everywhere." While it is important to study the encroachment of state powers on citizen's sexual liberties, various other types of power "substrates" have as much effect.

Certain institutions within civil society (schools, churches, religious groups, conservative politicians, family structures, interest groups) often exert forms of moral and ideological injunctions against pornography consumption. This is commonly done by mobilising and

disseminating damning ideas and messages about pornography e.g. porn as harmful, degrading or sinful. Foucault (1985) iterates that discourse becomes an instrument of power, able to limit and regulate people's ways of perceiving and behaving. As a result of such pressures, pleasure and enjoyment in porn is often known to live side by side with guilt and sometimes feelings of shame (Tarrant 2011, Andreas et al 2005, Ciclitira 2004, Grubbs 2010).

This was no truer than for those consumers who had very strong religious persuasions such as Kholo 29 Black male). Before Kholo came to university for his first year, he was a youth leader in his church. Under his leadership, he told me the church saw an unprecedented growth in youth church membership and an exuberant participation in youth activities. As someone who usually guided other youths away from sins (supposedly porn being one of those sins) it brought him much guilt to know that in private, he was actually enjoying porn. He feels that watching porn hampered his relationship with God.

> Yoh! It really disturbed my relationship with God. I would watch and after that pray and ask for forgiveness. I stopped because I felt it was a sin.

Even though Kholo did temporarily stop watching porn[8] it took him months to actually do so. This means that during all that time he watched, he was conflicted. This is why he would need to "pray and ask for forgiveness." Prayer for religious consumers is a guilt placating device granting absolution from feelings of remorse. The guilt itself is a tangible marker of the consumer's conformism to the socially and institutionally espoused discourse that frames porn as immoral. Emmanuel (29 black male) is a music leader in his church. When I asked him why he thought some people were against pornography he identified two sources of discourse that encumbers people's pleasure of porn: society and religious institutions.

> …they are running away from the truth, honesty. Ja, we do. Because at the end of the day, one thing that I can tell you ukuthi (*Zulu: that*) if you can check, ukuthi (*that*) you can only find that kena (*Sotho: actually*) 90, 98% yabantu emhlabeni (*Zulu*: *of people in this world*) they do watch porn… So most of them they hide because sikhule kuthiwa (*Zulu:*

[8] Currently Kholo still watches porn even though it is not as much as it used to be. He did stop watching porn for months but then went back again.

> *we grew up hearing*) it's wrong this thing. Vele (*Zulu: actually*), I don't blame them somehow… I don't blame them because sikhule kushiwo kanjalo (*Zulu*: *we grew up being told like that*) and the worst part of it. We are Christians, so sazi ukuthi (*Zulu*: *we believe that*) this is wrong. "If you watch this thing, you really need serious prayers," do you understand? "Because really if you… you don't, you don't repent neh? You will go straight to hell!" And it's one of those things and sometimes emaSontweni yilapho sifundisana khona (*Zulu: at churches that's where we teach ourselves this*).

South Africa forms part of a global culture that is suffused by a ceaseless proliferation of nudity and sexual imagery; from advertising, film, music videos, magazines, newspapers, billboards and the internet. Theorists and writers such as Boyle (2010) and Paasonen, Nikunen & Saarenmae (2007) have termed this "pornification" of society, contending that sex images have journeyed from the private to the public. It remains clear that schools, state, family, and even churches are compelled to take an ideological position on the reality of sexual visibility that is integral to contemporary culture. The church, in particular, has opted to valorise the need to talk about sex, to assimilate itself into a "discourse of sex" (Foucault 1976) which "tended to make the flesh into the root of all evil" (Foucault 1976: 12). The church, rather than eschewing matters of sex and porn, has made its mandate to act as an institution of moral authority and instruction on how its members ought to perceive and practice sexuality. From a sinful thought, to a lustful word, to a carnal touch and a lascivious gaze, all matters "between the body's mechanics and the mind's complacency" (Foucault 1976: 12) are openly addressed in a moralising discourse that seeks to define how and how *not* to be a sexual being.

It is this kind of discourse that Emmanuel speaks of when he says "We are Christians. We believe that this is wrong. It's one of those things at churches that we teach ourselves." Emmanuel's statement links three important aspects: teaching, believing and Christianhood. The character of Christianhood, from what we can gather from Emmanuel, is not based not on sheer idyllic sentiments of *a priori* faith but emanates from an indoctrinating discourse that *a posteriori* delineates the parameters of faith and belief. To be Christian is not just to believe but it is to be "instructed" such that one knows what and how to believe. Recall that

Jesus' apostles were called the twelve disciples, a term denoting studentship. When Emmanuel says "we are Christians, we believe it is wrong," he is weaving together an adhesive affiliation between being Christian and being anti-porn. To be Christian is to be anti-porn. Of course this may not be true for everyone who considers himself Christian but it certainly is for him and for many of his Christian friends. Most importantly, the position that "it is wrong" is shaped by the messages "what we teach ourselves" in the church, not just by the fact of believing. Remember to believe is to be taught. It is easy to see how one who may not believe porn is sin can be perceived as untrue, such a one failing to embrace the full tenets of what faith custodians teach. What is also interesting in Emmanuel's choice of words is the internalising "we" which implicate him in the grand moral project of pathologising porn consumption as sin. Emmanuel highlights that consuming porn may not be the same as believing 'it is good.' One can consume porn, enjoy it and feel guilty later. However, to consume it, enjoy it and feel no guilt is being unrepentant and deserving of Hell. This is the extent of the church's effective anti-porn campaign.

In expounding on why porn, according to the Christian faith, is a "disgrace" Pule (22 black male) offered an exegesis of one of the most recognised Biblical narratives known to the modern world: the story of Adam and Eve.

> Sex was something that was forbidden a little bit by God…. Let me quote for you. .. Adam and Eve… They were not supposed to eat that tree they said is in the middle of the garden. Do you know the garden of Eden? The garden, Ja. It's a body of a human being…..That tree is in the middle of the body. They were not supposed to taste that tree. So eventually the snake went to Eve where she was sleeping then the snake….. I don't know how it did it but it did it….. I'm revealing the secret of the Bible to you. The snake did it you see? So she, Eve, felt that "damn this thing is good!" She went to Adam and she said "hey muna (*Sotho: Hey man*!) feel this tree here" then he felt it…. in terms of Christianity porn is a disgrace.

Most Biblical narratives, including the legendary story of Genesis are often cited to perpetuate heteronormative and patriarchal value-norms of sexuality. Some of these include

the subordinate position of women in church positions, the rejection of homosexuals from church services and the eulogised authority of men as heads of Christian families. Yet, what is brazenly striking in Pule's case is that anti-porn discourse, even when educed from scripture, does not necessarily produce anti-porn people. Pule is by no means anti-porn. In fact, he was one of the people who asked me for help in joining the local porn industry. With over 90 porn DVD's scattered everywhere in his place, declaring the ability to enjoy porn in whatever emotional state (angry, hurt, sad, happy) and consuming it even oh his way to work, Pule would pass as the most passionate porn consumer out of all my interviewees. Yet, he is still able to say that porn, according the faith which he practises, is a disgrace. When I asked Pule how he was able to reconcile his unapologetic love for porn and his unflinching religious belief of its sinfulness he answered:

> Reality changed. First of all let me make an example- Science and Christianity. They never bonded, never. But then if you can check reality- Christianity is adapting science and technology little little little little. Ja, so that's why I have a belief that one day they will also be aware of porn and then they will understand it.

Pule's differentiation between reality and scripture is most interesting because it is not necessarily a demotion of scripture more than it seems to be its enshrinement to a separate ethereal realm of its own. Pule *believes* in scripture. He neither discards it nor adopts a liberal scriptural interpretation to help him frame porn as anything other than sin. Nonetheless, his conviction in the demanding imposition of reality gives him the ability to both accept his love for porn while believing in the perfection of scripture. Believing in scripture, it would seem, does not demand its attainment but simply its recognition. Pule's position suggests that sacred texts and traditions may not always occupy the role of guides or life manuals. They also attain status of epistemic talismans, forms of knowledge acting as reminder of one's spiritual heritage. For some other porn consumers, however, religion and scripture had an entirely different meaning and had consequences of guilt, regret and shame.

These are the kinds of feelings that Lihle (27 black male) expressed to have felt after masturbating to porn. That is why, as a Christian believer he takes a moment to pray and ask for forgiveness. He goes further to describe his internal tussle with himself:

> (*Zulu*) Ngizizwa ingathi kukhona into engiyonile uyayibon's into ekanjalo? *I always feel like there is something I have done wrong you know what I mean?* Kuba ngathi ngiyona, unembeza kube ngathi ngenze isono. *It's like I am doing something wrong and my conscious feels like I have committed sin.* Ngiye ngikhuleke. *I normally pray.*

Power is diffused and embodied in knowledge and 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1991). In such instances, power is given ammunition to intercept pleasure. Religious knowledge, for many like Lihle still carries persuasive moral authority that warrants behavioural conformity. Just like state regulations, such power carries with it material implications for the ways in which consumers experience pleasure.

Patterson & Price (2012: 80)'s research which "examines whether the cost of using pornography is greater for individuals who have a higher level of religious participation" found that "The happiness gap is larger for individuals who regularly attend church and who belong to religious groups with strong attitudes against pornography." These authors measure the happiness gap as "the difference in the average happiness reported by individuals who do and who do not report using pornography" (Patterson & Price 2012: 80). This confirms that devoutly religious porn consumers are generally less emotionally enriched by their porn consumption than 'secular' consumers. Kholo (29 black male) calls the guilt he felt when consuming porn "a burden."

> I felt like, like there was like a burden that has been removed from me I don't know… after having destroyed them…..after watching I would…… wooo feel very guilty! I don't want to lie.

Patterson & Price (2012: 88) propose that "behavioural models such as cognitive dissonance seem to answer why active church members experience greater reductions in happiness when they consume pornography." Festinger (1962: 221) defines cognitive dissonance as the "distressing mental state caused by inconsistency between a person's two beliefs or a belief and an action." One who personally annunciates the parochial sexual standards of the church[9]

[9] Some of the very well-known scriptural dictums adopted by the church are against pre-marital sex (1 Corinthians 7:2, I Corinthians 6:18), adultery (Proverbs 6:32-34), lust (Job 31:11-12) and the prohibition against

expects himself to exemplify those standards in behavioural practice. The discordance between one's faith and one's actions translates not only in one's personal failure but to perceived weakness and disappointment of God. This is what Foucault (1978: 23) refers to when he says "the Christian pastoral also sought to produce specific effects on desire, by the mere fact of transforming it fully and deliberately-into discourse: effects of mastery and detachment, to be sure, but also an effect of spiritual reconversion, of turning back to God."

Church attendance alone was enough an important factor to shape the pleasures of consumers. Dave (42 white male) for example mentioned that no one in church ever mentioned anything about porn yet when he was attending church regularly; he felt the need to reduce his porn consumption.

> I know there was also a period when I was like determined not to watch any porn at all… I mean at that time I was like….sort of like attending like a lot of like church services and stuff. I didn't feel guilty about the fact that I would watch it from time to time, I just felt that "wow, like once a week you go to church but maybe like two or three times a week you watch porn."

Dave's reason for limiting his porn consumption was not based on a guilt-ridden conscious premised on the immorality of porn but the sentiment his consumption should not surpass the time dedicated to church. To cut back on porn consumption because it shouldn't exceed one's church attendance implies the two somehow clash or are in competition. Even at a subliminal level, it appears church is able to be a disparaging power against porn. Without being told, consumers like Dave are able to discriminate the primeval social separation between religion and sexual enjoyment. The fact that Dave felt no guilt whatsoever about his porn consumption and yet made the decision to cut back exposes the extent of the socially ingrained dissension between church-defined spiritual happiness and sexual pleasure. The perennial discourse that has historically defined church as an authority on piety means those who attend church are most likely to perceive porn as immoral even if, like Pule, they do not allow that to guilt them and even if, just like Dave remorse is not a factor in their porn

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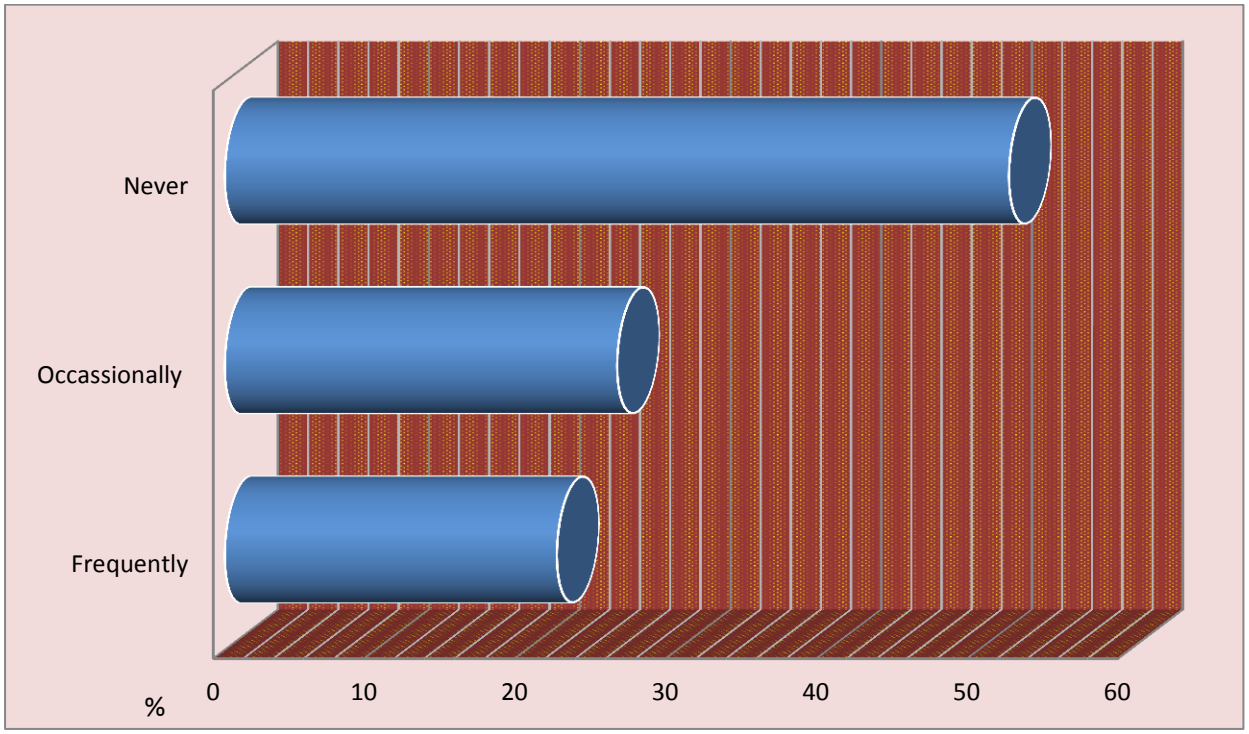
the very act of sexual "looking" (Matthew 5:28 for example says "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." The visual consumption of any of these prohibited sexual carnalities which saturate the pornosphere is construed as a sin but even more importantly the act of "looking" at any bodies in a sexual way to induce lustful feelings, which is the prerogative of porn.

curtailment. Religion bears tangible effect either in consumers' behaviour, feeling and/or perception. Nevertheless, it became clear from the survey data the consumers who experienced guilt due to their porn consumption were a minority in comparison to those who enjoyed porn without any negative feelings.

**Figure 33 I feel guilty after using porn**




## 7.4 How constructions of gender and violence impinge on porn consumption

Kipnis (2003: 2) states that "Like any other popular culture genre (like sci-fi, romance, mystery, true crime), pornography obeys certain rules" Some of these conventions have the ability to distract and disturb consumers. Part of this research was concerned with discovering whether or not porn consumers were sensitive towards genre conventions such as stereotypical, unequal gender depictions and violent treatment of women. Gender sensitivity is a term that has garnered great traction in the business and management world and is about "redressing persistent gender inequalities and stereotypical generalizations (….) It seeks to take into consideration the visions, concerns, needs, experiences and talents of women and men, girls and boys with a view to unlocking their full human potential and creativity" (Sanghamitra 2011: 22). The key word here is "full human potential." Gender sensitive porn consumers would be wary of (and sometimes even abjure ) reductionist portrayal of women as mere sex objects, choosing porn which abdicates the supremacy of the phallus and showing appreciation for porn which co-opts women into an equal partnership where their full human agency is given visual articulation.

The survey data revealed porn consumers' sexual proclivities tended to evade graphic displays of force and dominance. This was made clear by the response to two questions pertaining forced-sex and bondage-porn, both of which mostly feature women in physically subdued positions. Respondents showed very little liking to both types of porn as seen in the following two graphs.

**Figure 34 Porn should never feature non-consensual or forced sex**

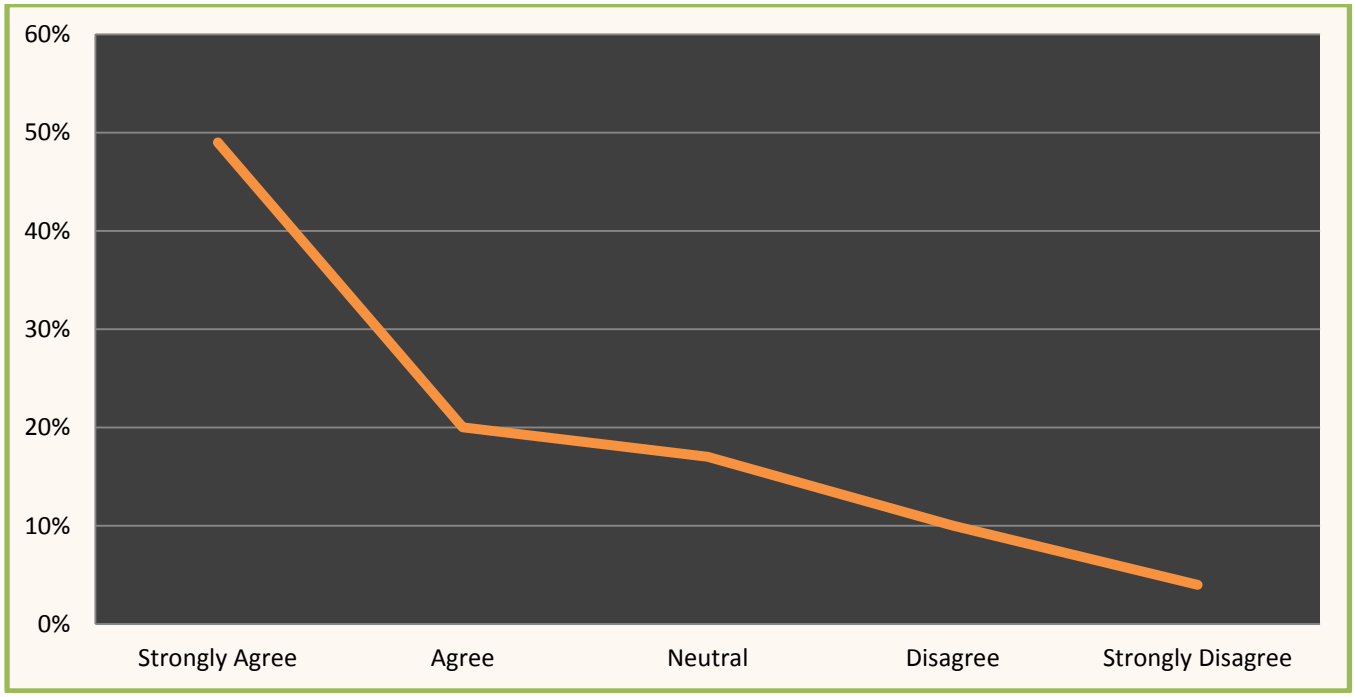
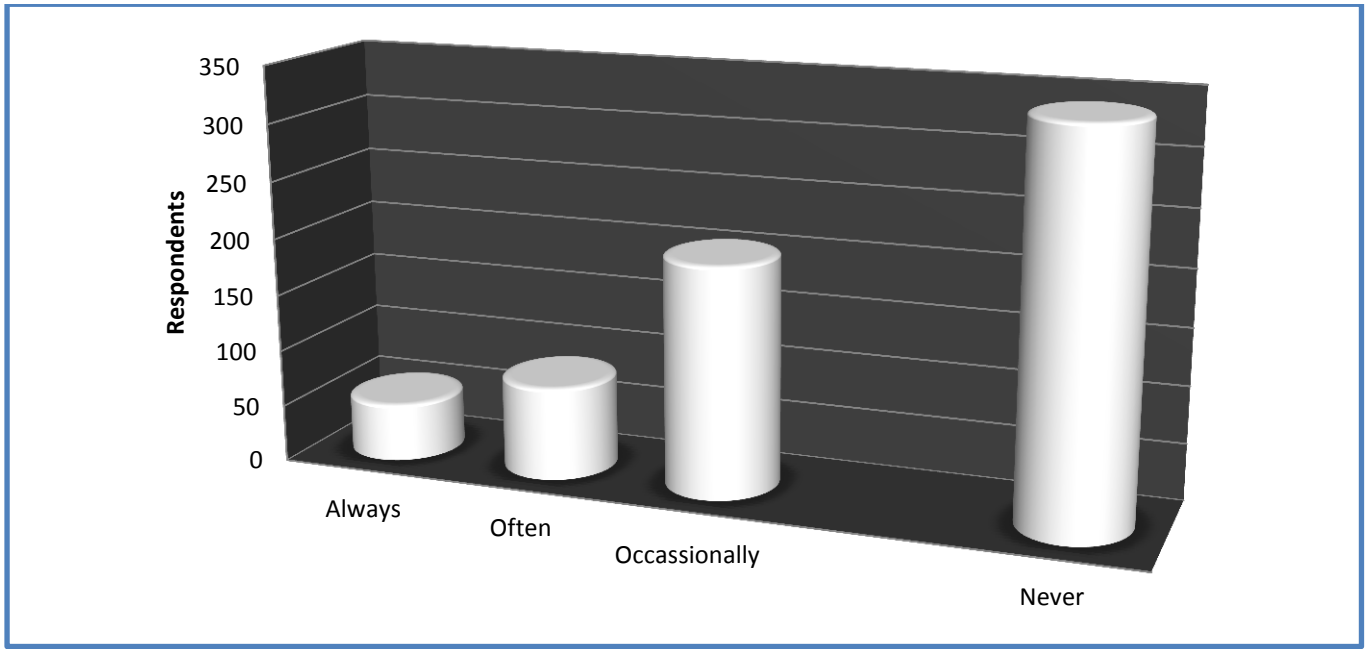



**Figure 35 The type of porn I watch: Bondage porn**



Most porn consumers do not appreciate visual depictions of violent nature. Nonetheless, this can't necessarily be read as an indication of consumers' gender sensitivity nor does it signal their rejection for gender inequality. Simulated displays of forced-sex and bondage are not necessarily key features of everyday mainstream porn but ones central to scripts of subjugation in BDSM practices, a less popular yet fast proliferating porn sub-genre. That BDSM porn still lies at the peripheries of mainstream culture is a fact acknowledged by a number of authors (Anne Tibbals 2014, Herbet & Weaver 2015, Weiss 2006, Williams 1999, Garos *at al* 2004). According to Hebert Weaver (2015) out of a representative survey of 19,307 Australians conducted in 2008 only 2.2% of men and 1.3% of women indicated to be engaged in BDSM practices. A phone call I made to Adult World, the biggest adult-chain store in South Africa, to enquire about the popularity of BDSM materials revealed that the nationwide chain store only has a meagre collection of videos of BDSM due to the lack of popularity of bondage sex in South Africa. Consequently the two graphs shown above may simply be a reflection that porn consumers' sexual penchants are shaped by normative cultural trends. As stated by Garos et al (2004) depictions of rape, murder, body piercing are still taboo and: "given the taboo nature of such acts, it is unlikely that exposure to sexually explicit material would alter (consumers') long-standing and deeply held prohibitions" (Garos at al 2004: 73).

Taboos according to Martyniuk et al (2015) constitute the very fabric of socio-cultural arrangements that make up everyday life, are embedded within social structures, become entrenched in subjects' thought patterns and manifest in forms of behaving, including the way in which consumers select and use porn. Taboos on sex therefore comprise a form of socio-cultural power that circumvents the ways in which consumers can feel pleasure for certain images. This, I argue, cannot be flagged as a marker of porn consumers' gender sensitivity but rather a reflection of the culture in which consumers reside and by which they are subtly and gradually inculcated.

An examination of interviewees' views on less aggressive sexist portrayal of women in porn shows ambivalent responses. By sexism here I refer to Garos at al (2004: 74)'s definition "sexist prejudice on evidence that men and women have not achieved parity." The "money shot" can be read as just one visible signifier of unequal female/male position where the woman (conventionally) kneels at the feet of the man to have her face or mouth shot by spurts of semen from the ejaculating penis. Of course the 'money shot' is not for the eyes or pleasure of the porn actress but for both the male porn spectator and the ejaculating male actor himself (Williams 1999).

> She may even close her eyes if the man comes on her face; and, try as she might, she cannot possibly see the ejaculate when he comes, as frequently he does... The man, in contrast, almost always sees himself ejaculate; the act seems much more clearly intended for his eyes and those of the viewer (Williams 1999: 101).

The 'money shot' is just one reminder that though mainstream porn relies on the bodies of women to sell desire, it is not necessarily fashioned for their own enjoyment. Apart from being the object of sexual desire with little agency of her own, the female body becomes the dumping site of the male's sexual fluids and she, as the genre insists, must feign enjoyment that his orgasmic pleasure is also her own, that the "solitary male "truth" coincides with the orgasmic bliss of the female" (Williams 1999: 101).

What this research sought to find out was whether consumers identified the simple yet iconic example of the 'money shot' as a convention depicting women as sexual objects or not. I used the 'money shot' merely as a gateway into a dialogue about gender inequality in porn. This helped to reify the rather 'open' and generic terms "gender inequality" or "gender imbalance," embedding these floating concepts to a concrete example. The advantage of using 'the money shot' as a filter for users' perceptions of gender inequality was that it is such a pervasive visual trope of sexual climax in porn that all the respondents knew it. An examination of interviewees' attitudes on the depiction of women in porn revealed that consumers saw these women as sexual subjects exercising choice rather than as sexual objects.

Emmanuel

> Uhm as long as you're okay with it…. it's up to you it's your choice (….) uhm… I mean the…the person abayenza kuye (*Zulu*: *to whom they do*) that thing!

Sheila

> I'm in two minds about it. Like….a part of me is kind of like "can this sort of precipitate the kind of rape culture we have?" and also..... then the other side of me is sort of like "but it's between consenting adults. If you want to be in porn, be in

porn." You know what I mean? No one is stopping you. Those women are making money. Let's not……This makes a lot of money. That woman that you are like feeling sorry for is a millionaire.

Tara

As long as the women wants to then it's fine. Ja.

Tina

I'm a feminist and I'm still trying to come to terms with whole porn thing. I like porn but am I liking what the male's dictating as pleasurable? Nowadays there's a lot of women who are in porn because they enjoy sex and they wanna be in porn and they like having sex that way specially in BDSM. You know but that's what they want. If that's what you want then it's cool, you know… I feel like if you want to be dominated then that's fine but if it's against your will….some…. I've seen porn where you can just see the girls they're not really into it. That's not cool and I probably….. If I came across porn like that I wouldn't watch it.

Pule

Some of the things that I realize now that some of the women love it (…) You see because like there is this girl who said to me "I won't forget you." I said why?" She said "because I tasted your sperm." So then I was like "ok that means most of the girls enjoy some of those things."

Duma

People view like women as a collective. If you feel empowered enough to have someone come into you face and you have no problem with that then it's ok.

Note how consent is the central thread of logic which helps exonerate physical acts of unequal gender relations for the consumer (*Tara* As long as the women wants to *Emmanuel* It's up to you it's your choice, *Sheila* it's between consenting adults, *Tina* they enjoy sex and they wanna be in porn *Pule* most of the girls enjoy some of those things). Ciclitira notes that "women continue to be the primary object of porn in both the written and visual text, with female sexual willingness as the premise of pornographic scenarios" (Ciclitira 2004: 285). It seems unlikely that porn consumers would be willing to consider gender inequality beyond the premise of willingness and how that premise alone does not annihilate inequality. The establishment of the narrative premise (willingness of actors and characters involved) does not necessarily make the narrative situation itself less gender disproportionate. A pleasure economy that thrives on innumerable images of subdued women eulogises gender inequality and must surely be questioned even if it does function under the auspices of choice. However, from the interview data it becomes clear that the sole concern of porn consumers is consensual participation. Consumers are not necessary interested in asking broader critical questions about gender equality and media gender misrepresentation if they perceive that no individual parties are physically harmed.

Duma reads the 'money shot' as an example of women's sexual empowerment. Sadly, the premise of willingness elides considerations under which 'empowerment' in porn is availed to porn actresses i.e. under profit-making commercial imperatives as noted by Lamb (2010).

> The pornography inspired version of sexual empowerment, (even though admittedly, playing around in pornographic ways can evoke a spirit of experimentation and even mockery) is tied to a multi-billion dollar industry that has at its centre exploitation, not the eradication of shame with free sexuality. The use of women's and girls' bodies for male pleasure is antithetical to equity and mutuality in sex, two hallmarks of sex that make sexual practices just and respectful (Lamb 2010: 316).

Ironically, although Sheila accepts how women are treated in porn as a matter of their own choice, she also makes the crucial connection between 'choice' and the rewards of lucrative financial rewards (This makes a lot of money. That woman that you are like feeling sorry for is a millionaire). Sheila however, does not make the connection between the 'money making' industry and the types of options *given* to women by that industry. It is not, for example woman who 'chose' that the man's semen must end up in her mouth. This is a genre convention based on profit-making directives which pander to a male-oriented sexual

aspiration and a largely male market. In porn, "Girls and young women make choices, but they do not do so in conditions of their own" (Gill 2011: 72). Choice in porn is offered under a framework that demands women perform sexually submissive roles and permits 'choice' only under such terms. As stated by Lamb (2010), the porn industry is not driven by any sublime sensibility for gender empowerment or equity but kowtows to the capitalist exploitation of male and female bodies for profitable gains. It is from this larger commercial imperative that women's bodies are assigned their sexual roles and on such terms that they can 'choose' to be sexually visible.

In trying to understand why porn consumers are forgiving of gender imbalance in porn, I refer to Jost & Kay (2005)'s concept of 'system justification' which explains why a large number of both women and men justify gender inequality in porn.

> From a system justification perspective, the belief that every group in society possesses some advantages and some disadvantages should increase the sense that the system as a whole is fair, balanced, and legitimate (…) This type of "role justification" contributes to the perceived legitimacy of the status quo by characterizing cultural divisions (Jost & Kay 2005: 499-500).

The *prima facie* fairness of the sexual act in porn hides deeper industry machinations of power which are invisible to the screen. At first appearance, women in porn enjoy being dominated. They are ever sexually pliant and strive for the verisimilitude of enjoyment through moans, groans and screams of ecstasy. A close examination of numerous mainstream porn videos would seem to suggest that men and women in porn simply perform different yet complimentary roles. Men control and women are controlled. It is this ostensive ruse that seeks to cast a convincing façade of fairness and enjoyment. It is the surface picture of porn (not what lies behind the scene or dictates porn conventions) which persuades consumers that porn yields true sexual pleasure for the women who perform in it. Pule, for example concludes, after ejaculating into a woman's mouth during sex, that "most of the girls enjoy some of those things." Nonetheless his conclusion that "women love those things" is only drawn from this one instant and not from the thousands of porn pictures he has seen. The act itself or its visual display thereof does not evidence the woman's pleasure hence Pule's need to substantiate his deduction ("women enjoy those things") with his own personal experience. If his sexual partner liked it then surely *all* women must enjoy it. Questions of the origin of this convention and whether women actors really had a say in its devising are lost on Pule.

Note also Tina's words: "Nowadays there's a lot of women who are in porn because they enjoy sex and they wanna be in porn and they like having sex *that way*." Tina of course is correct. According to Griffith et al (2013: 626)'s study of 177 porn actresses, 69% (119) marked 10 out of 10 as their enjoyment of sex, a number indicating greater enjoyment of sex than non porn individuals (Griffith et al 2013). Unfortunately this still does not mean that women choose or co-create porn conventions with the (mostly male owned) porn producers. It also does not mean that porn actresses enjoy all aspects of the 'sexual numbers' they *have* to perform in order to stay in the porn industry. Duma advocates seeing women in porn as individuals who make individual choices rather than as a homogenous group. However, this does not change the fact that conditions under which porn actresses enjoy sex are still determined by men and mostly for men. Women may not be homogenous but they do constitute a people. The inclination, for consumers to not question a medium that portrays more than half of society's members in such a derogatory manner cannot simply be explained away by the concept of actresses' enjoyment but by coming to terms with the reality that porn consumers engage themselves in an act of - in Jost and Kay (2005)'s term - 'system justification.' This is by no means a moral judgement but a simple observation that porn consumers seem to have no propensity for probing inequality at macrocosmic structural levels if the immediate picture evidences no signs of bodily harm.

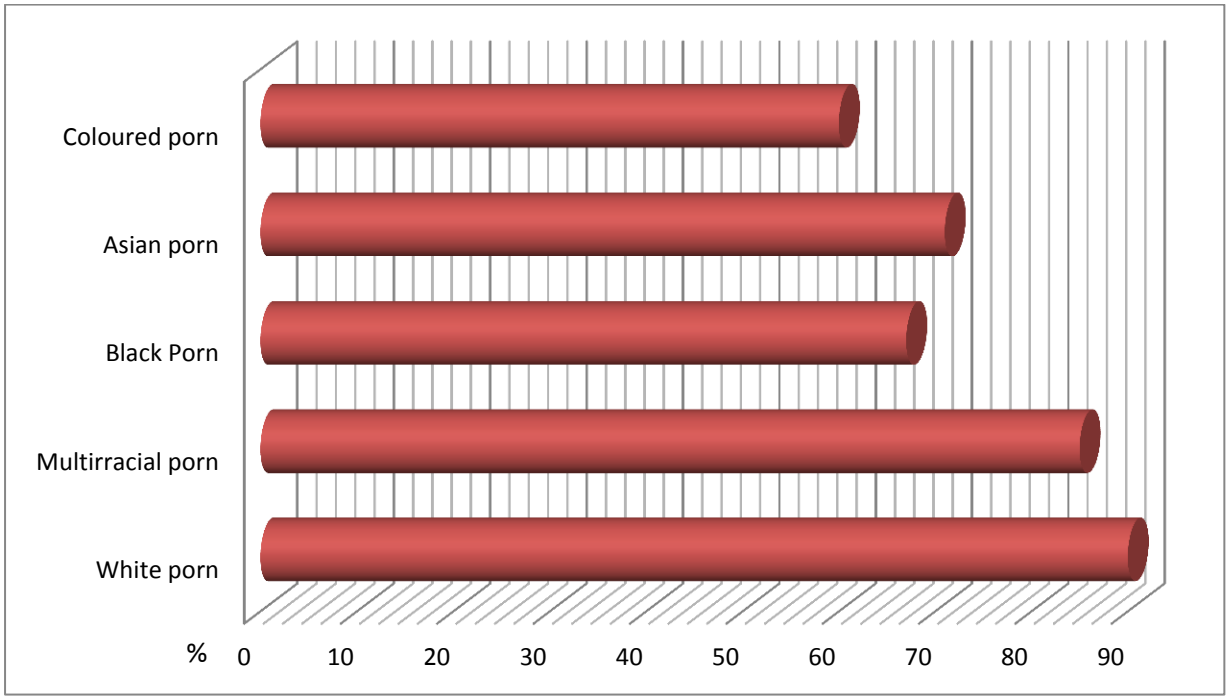
I argue that the regiments of pleasure in porn call upon the viewer to "suspend his critical perception" and to defer to his pleasure faculties just like fictional universes hail the spectator to 'suspend his disbelief.' The fictional world of pornography, just like any other fictional assemblage, seeks to persuade the viewer of the "naturalness" of its universe (Garlick 2010). 'Suspension of disbelief' was the coinage of Coleridge (1847) to the ability and requirement of art readers to wave their judgement in order to receive entertainment pleasure from what they know as factually untrue. A viewer is thus capable of experiencing genuine emotions from a film or video *proviso* waving his judgement during the duration of its presentation, not necessarily before or after. This explains why Tina and Sheila amongst a host of many women and feminists can oscillate between emotional experiences of pleasure and ambivalence. Sheila: "I'm in two minds about it…" Tina: "I'm a feminist and I'm still trying to come to terms with whole porn thing. I like porn but am I liking what the male's dictating as pleasurable?" The consumption of porn permits the co-existence of both ambivalence and pleasure since its demand is only to be enjoyed "now" at the waiver of critical perception. Power and pleasure therefore can be seen as distinct yet equally dominant centres of experience located at opposite ends of the porn consumption fulcrum.

By enacting a sexually pleasurable world of ‘unreal’ yet ‘naturalised’ female subjugation, the porn narrative world ‘naturalises’ inequality and invites the viewer to share in the pleasure regime of its naturalisation. By submitting to the idea of actresses ‘choice,’ porn consumers submit to that world’s enticement to and to be led mostly by affect. This is called forth by the ‘natural order’ of porn where women always want and are willing to please, as stated by Garlick “Mainstream porn presents its viewers with images of a (natural) world under control—a world in which the naturalised sexuality of both women and men is experienced as unproblematic (Garlick 2010: 609). Mainstream porn seems to create a market base of three types of gender-conscious consumers. The first are those who either see no problem in the depictions of unequal gender relations based on the premise of actresses' ‘choice' and enjoyment. The second are those who acknowledge the inequality, just like Tina and Sheila, but chose to "suspend their critical perception" also on the premise of choice, enjoyment and physical harm. These consumers are mostly. The third type of porn consumer are those who do not watch mainstream porn but choose alternatives e.g. female-friendly porn, ‘porn by women for women.’ I did not have any of this kind from the survey respondents perhaps because I only had four female interview respondents. These consumers would be able to identify depictions of gender inequalities and to connect them to greater global structural machinations. Since none of the interview respondents reported to watch female friendly porn, this can signify the popularity of mainstream porn and help create an understanding of why mainstream porn remains so prevalent despite unremitting gender disparities. Other than gender inequalities, there are other configurations of power in the making and distribution of porn that pose a challenge for the way in which porn is consumed particularly in South Africa. Racial power is one of such configurations where most available porn is white, while the majority of the South African population is black.

## 7.5 Slippery slopes of race: Why most South Africans consume white porn

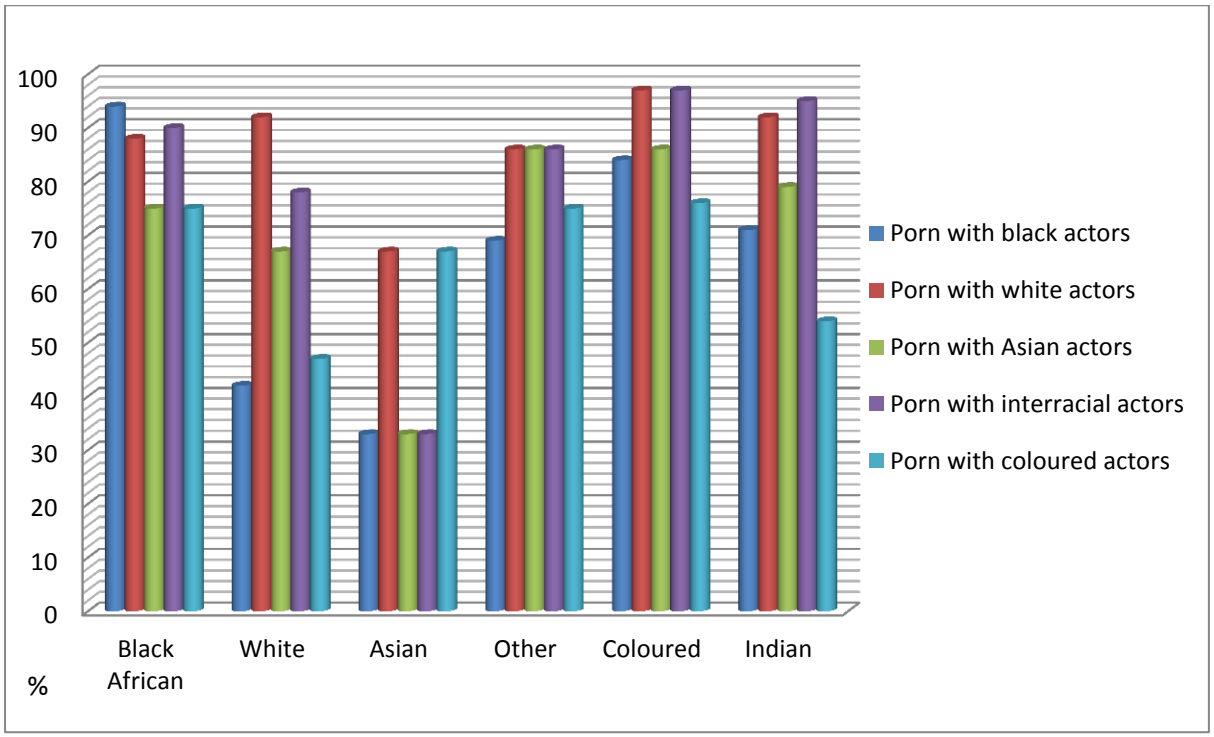
The question of race and racial preference in porn consumption becomes a poignantly pertinent one in South Africa where politics are mostly fractured along racial lines. The history of the country is one defined by systematic racial segregation. Wealth, resources, municipal services, types of entertainment and living arrangements still have identifiable racial demarcations. As such, it was immensely relevant for the survey to probe questions of racial preference in South African porn consumption. The following graphs show the types of racial porn typologies that were most popular to South African porn consumers.

**Figure 36 Race typologies: the type of porn I watch**




With 90% of the entire 676 survey respondents indicating they frequently view white porn, it is clear that white pornography is very popular porn in South Africa. When these figures are demographically apportioned, however, the story of which porn type is consumed by which racial group the most becomes even more telling as illustrated by the following cross-tab.

**Figure 37 Racial demographies: The type of porn I view**



A number of observations from the cross-tab are worth noting. White porn is very popular among all population groups even more so amongst white and coloured respondents all peaking above 92%. Secondly black porn is most popular only amongst black consumers and is the watched by white consumers. Lastly, white porn (at 90%) and interracial porn (at 85%) are the two most watched porn types across all racial groups. The universality that underscores white porn, in particular, as a staple sexual commodity is something worth discussing.

Considering that most available porn in South African adult stores is predominantly white, it is of no surprise that majority of South African consumers frequently view white porn. This is unfortunately the same for porn accessed from the internet. The ubiquity of white bodies on the internet makes it highly unlikely for black people to only watch black porn, even if they wished. As Dines (2006: 296) points out "white ownership of media and pornography has defined and continues to define the contours" of porn production and by extension consumption. Litha pointed this out when he said: "Just search the words gay porn and you're bombarded with white men. In fact, you can even leave out the word porn: white gay men RUN THIS." To extend on Litha's remark, the patterns of production ownership that permeate the gay porn industry in globally and in South Africa are patterns that replicate themselves in the heterosexual porn business where white producers dictate the types of content to be mass produced for consumption. Dines (2006: 289) further notes that "While there are both black and white pornography producers and directors, the audience for internet porn is overwhelmingly white." Litha's statement "you can even leave out the word porn" puts emphasis on the fact that in South Africa specifically, the "whiteness" of gay porn can be linked to the whiteness of commercial gay culture generally (Sonnerkus 2013, Livermon 2012, Milani 2014). Sonnekus & Van Eeden (2009: 84) argue that "by not transgressing the acceptable norms within which gay culture gains social significance by heteronormative, capitalist role-players, the overwhelming presence of white, middle-class, 'straight'-acting gay men inevitably reproduces traditional (raced) power relations." One of the most symbolic epitomes of white dominance over South African commercial gay culture was the notable clash between the mostly white-led gay pride contingent of 2012 with black gay activists. The white-led procession wanted to parade the streets of the city in the usual extravagant celebratory fashion but the black demonstrators felt the Gay Pride march should have taken a more politically conscious stance by stopping and keeping a moment of silence to honour all brutally murdered lesbians (McLean 2013). Threats, insults and chaos ensued when these two gay camps refused to accommodate each other's demands. Unsurprisingly, members of the more resourced white-led group made threats to members of the less resourced black group.

According to Shome (2000: 367) "whiteness remains the organizing principle of the social fabric and yet remains masked because of the normativity that this principle acquires in the social imaginary." Global media forms have deified whiteness as the default standard of beauty through the unrelenting frequency with which white bodies are exhibited and favoured above other raced bodies. Porn is no exception to this. Even when internet users unwittingly come across porn through pop-ups, those images tend to be white. A simple browse through porn sites is most telling of this "hegemonic everydayness" (Shome 2000: 367) of whiteness where racial difference is accorded niche status and exoticised exception worth its own separate category e.g. "Asian porn," black Porn, Arabic Porn. "White porn" on the other hand has no special category because most porn is *de facto* white and by extension normal. In many ways this means white bodies, with their ability to be everything, to be everywhere, disguised under facile values of individualism and meritocracy are hardly avoidable. For this reason it is understandable that 90% of the porn sample watched white porn. For most interview participants for example (Sheila, Duma, Litha, Zethu, Dave, Elrod, Suraj, Sam, Tara, Joe, Kholo, Brian, Lihle, Tina, Senzo, Elam, Simon) the first porn they were exposed to was white.

Beyond the power dynamics of media ownership and production and how these shape porn consumption, I wondered if elements of racist bias or stereotyping could have been an additional a factor in the manner in which consumers preferred one race typology over another. By racist stereotyping, I mean the proclivity to negatively or positively prefer one racial group based on reductionist race-based epithets. According to Jost (2005: 498) not all stereotypes are negative but even those "favourable in content are yet prejudicial in their consequences." Why, for example, is black porn one of the least watched amongst *all* porn types? Note that there are more white survey respondents who view interracial and Asian porn than those who view black porn. Why do white participants exhibit such little interest in black porn? For the most part, each racial group found its own race more sexually appealing and arousing than other races. Notice how 92% of white people view white porn and 94% of black people view black porn. The exceptions are coloured respondents watched more white porn and interracial porn than their own respective race caterings and Indian respondents who consumed the same amount of white porn as white consumers (92%) Asian, Indian and coloured respondents have a greater predilection for white porn than their respective porn caterings while interracial porn has the second largest viewership amongst all races. These numbers require an exploration of more than simple questions of unequal porn production

and distribution disparities. Questions regarding the provenance of sexual preferences also need to be raised.

As much as white porn has been established as the most pervasive of all porn types, the internet still provides a pornotopic mixture for all different sexual tastes, providing "different strokes for different folks" (Williams 1999: 6). Consumers therefore have a huge degree of choice. This means answers to questions about favoured racial porn types have to include considerations of personal preferences. The thorny issue of racial preference can thus not be avoided. It is substantially pertinent to explore particularly because of the significance of the historical relations between white and black South Africans.

I asked interview participants what they thought about their own race preferences. Many interviewees claimed to have no particular racial preference in selecting porn even though, on further probing, they all admitted to watching one particular race more than others. Interview respondents rejected the idea that predilections for one race porn-type over another had anything to do with a racist outlook. Most of them pointed to personal sexual preference as an explanation for race-based porn selection.

Sheila

> Well, do you think its racist for a person to say that I, a white person, "I *only* date white girls?" It's ...it comes down to preference ...again. Honestly, it's somebody's preference. As long as he is not asking you for your Pass and...and making you call him "Bass" whatever, you know what I mean? As long as he is not infringing on your God given human rights...well state given human rights.....then whatever.....to each his own.....whatever. It's not my problem. I don't really care. You watch whatever you wanna watch. You see…..The line between racism and preference is so thin...Uhm....but I mean if it's an honest to God preference it's an honest to God preference.

Elam

> No I don't think its racist, its jus one's taste, just like you might prefer watching English soccer to the South African league.

Duma

> No I don't think it's racist at all uhm……. People like different things and don't necessarily mean that because you like this or that you're this way…. Uhmm… I have a friend who just watches black porn. He doesn't like……I mean my neighbour… neighbour slash friend. He says he likes just black porn uhm……which doesn't mean that you're racist because he's had white girlfriends and stuff like that…

There is scholarly evidence to substantiate the views of these respondents. As Duma points out, "People do like different things" and, in Elam's words, have the right to prefer "English soccer to the South African league" even if they, themselves are South African. Curra (2010) points to the fluidity of human sexuality as reason against 'normalising' people's sexual preferences. He states that:

> If anything natural or "normal" can be found in human sexuality, it is that we humans find a great many things sexually arousing and that our sexual identities are subject to a great deal of flexibility and variability (....) shared sexual identity is not identical to shared sexual experience. People pigeonholed in the same sexual identity category (e.g., heterosexual or homosexual) are characterised by a range of different experiences, outlooks, and temperaments (Curra (2010: 227).

The aim therefore of exploring this question of racial preferences is not to advocate a prescriptive standard on how raced bodies ought to sexually respond to other raced bodies. Homogeneity in sexual identity or racial identity can lend itself to heterogeneous racial and

sexual proclivities as pointed out by Curra (2010). Note, for example how Duma's black friend prefers black porn yet has had white girlfriends.

On the other hand it is evident that racial identity is strongly associated with sexual preferences e.g. for particular kinds of raced porn sub-genres. Recall black responds watch more black porn and white respondents viewed white porn the most. Writers have called this "same race sexual preference" (Gerald et al 2014, Durrheim et al 2011, Fishman & Iyengar 2008). Gerald et al (2014: 3) states:

> …literature on interpersonal attraction would likewise lead to the expectation that romantic relationships between blacks and whites would be rare. It is well established that proximity and similarity are positively associated with attraction and liking…. Both are likely to be substantially greater within than between ethnic/racial groups.

In South Africa, most ethnic and racial groups still inhabit racially and ethnically designated geographical spaces bequeathed to them by the Apartheid government. Since it is proximity and similarity which helps shape subjects' sexual race preferences, the prospect that whites would sexually prefer whites and blacks sexually prefer black seems almost inevitable. In this context, Sheila's view "to each his own" makes perfect sense. Nonetheless, as someone who lives in one of the most racially divided countries in the world, one whose "society is obsessed by race" (Durrheim et al 2011: 276), I find it necessary to probe deeper than the ostensible paradigm of 'similarity and proximity.' Are there any dimensions of racist bias (note *racist* not racial) that exist in the racial selection of porn material? Some of the data and literature seem to suggest so.

In South Africa, questions of racist bias merit an examination for a number of reasons. Literature indicates that perceptions of white people tend to be negative and prejudicial towards their black counterparts. According to Durrheim's *at al* 2011's study which collated quantitative research data findings on racial perceptions in South Africa from 1934-2011:

> Not only did black groups express lower levels of prejudice toward outgroups but their attitudes were not clearly race based. Whereas the attitudes of English and Afrikaans speaking white respondents was marked by a 'colour

> bar' — reflecting positive attitudes toward all white groups and negative attitudes toward all black groups (Durrheim's at al 2011: 264).

The year 2016 in particular has seen a deluge of racist incidents being exposed by the South African online media. These incidences reveal that some white South Africans still secretly perceive black South Africans as inferior. Examples of these are: Realtor Penny Sparrow calling black people monkeys on Facebook, High Court Judge Mabel Jansen claiming child rape is normal in black culture, 26 year old Matthew Theunissen angrily labelling black people "a bunch of kaffirs," "black fucking cunts" who should go "fuck themselves," a white guest-house owner who admitted denying blacks residence because they are not people (SABC 2016). This increase in the visibility and exposure of racist attitudes, in South Africa, underscores deeply rooted racial fissures amongst the country's citizens. At an ostensible level, the survey data also seems to suggest that white South African porn consumers adopt a 'colour bar.'

Recall the survey statistics from Figure 38 revealed that 88% of black respondents viewed white porn. In sharp contrast, only 42% of white respondents indicated to view black porn. Even in their sexual proclivities, white consumers mostly avoid black porn. Earlier I noted the "everydayness" of white porn and its suffusing hegemonic presence on the web. However, this everydayness is in parallel existence to an infinitesimal online galaxy of pornotopia. Therefore *all* porn types including different racial typologies such as 'black' are profligately accessible to any internet user. Why then, would white South African respondents show such little interest in black porn? Clearly, the question is no longer one of non-availability of porn or distance versus proximity. Tara (50 white female) was honest enough to admit that her preference for white porn as a white woman had racist attachments:

Tara

> Being born and bred as a white South African uhm…….I'm probably inherently or…. at some level racist my self uhm……So for me if Indian people *only* want to watch Indians well then somewhere in my sub-conscious…. somewhere in my genetic make-up that's normal and if…if Chines people *only* want to watch Chines people well then

> that's normal so if black people *only* want to watch black then it's normal.

What Tara says is profoundly revealing. It shows that porn consumers can deploy the legitimacy of 'sexual preference' as a means to rationalise their own feelings of race distancing i.e. I prefer *only* white people in porn, therefore others (Chines, Indians and blacks) can do the same if they wish. It's normal. However, as I have pointed out, black people in particular are auspiciously diverse in their sexual tastes, 94% watching black porn, 88% white porn and 90% viewing interracial porn. They do not *only* watch black porn. It is this racial exclusivity which rejects other races I find worth questioning. Wing Sue (2003: 23) defines racism as "any attitude, action or institutional structure or social policy that subordinates a person or group because of their colour." The word "subordinate" can be applied in numerous contexts. There is physical subordination. There is sexual subordination. There are also professional subordinates. In this instance of porn consumption, however, I am referring to attitudes of consumers that subordinate blackness to precincts perceptual of strangeness and ugliness, the belief that black bodies, black porn does not merit attention. Any conscious wholesale rejection of particular raced bodies or wholesale elevation of *one* constitute a form of racial subordinating as stated by Dave:

Dave

> I would say it's racist because you are excluding a possibility of anybody else being a sexual stimulation for you….. So I would say, Ja. I would say that is basically racist because then you are *only* preferring one and your own.

Tara's attempts to justify her exclusion for other races as sexual stimuli is telling of her denial to accept that she's probably more than just "probably racist." The fact that she is willing to admit to a 'probability' of racism and still brand choices stemming from that as 'normal' reveals her acceptance of racism as a customary part of life for a white South African person. It's normal.

Sheila earlier conceded that each person has the right to watch what she wishes "to each his own." Later on however, she also admitted "You see...The line between racism and preference is so thin...Uhm....but I mean if it's an *honest to God* preference it's an honest to God preference." The idea that there are "honest to God" preferences suggests there are "not-so-honest-to-God" preferences. The slippery slope of race and sexual attraction are difficult

to thread precisely because, for the most part, people do not choose what they find sexually attractive. Still, while we must fully respect porn consumers' sexual preferences, even those consigned to racial types, it is also useful to question the provenance of raced sexual preference in porn consumption. Raced-based sexual preferences are not supernaturally allotted to individuals from the ether. They are assimilated through socio-cultural osmosis, just like a human cell is infused with solvent molecules from its surrounding environment. Levin (2003) proposes that sexual desire is mechanised by the confluence of three factors i.e. biology, psychology and culture. Biology composites physiological anatomy and hormonal bodily regulation, psychology encompasses moods and interpersonal affection/connection and culture comprises cultural mores, societal expectations, school teachings, family influences and media exposure. Since biology does not encode racialised sexual preference, it is the structures of culture and psychological connections that coagulate ways of sexual perception and arousal that needs focus. Litha confirms this when he says:

Litha

> Our fantasies are structurally shaped by institutions. This means that in many ways we erotisise power. So, that's why certain bodies aren't glorified in our culture; for so many, sexiness is equated with physical perfection which is inherently unfair. One of the biggest lies ever sold to us is that beauty is something one can see with the naked eye. But one can't see it, because beauty is a social construct; we are all maimed and disfigured by heterosexism, patriarchy and white domination. I guess porn illustrates those very tensions within us. Our porn won't change if we don't.

Litha's statement that "we erotises power" forms the pivot of this chapter. His observation about the circumscriptions of beauty, heterosexism and whiteness articulate the inevitable indictment of power imposed on the pleasures of porn consumption. Since I have already offered a discussion on heterosexism in the previous chapters, I will now focus on whiteness. Richard dyer (2008: 9) asserts that "racial imagery is central to the organisation of the modern world.

..(….) it is never not a factor, never not in play." This statement proves itself true even for the topic of porn where whiteness is so dominantly omnipresent that it's "not seen as whiteness but as normal" (Dyer 2008: 12). Litha's poignant statement "we are maimed by white domination" illustrates how people's preferences are formed in the grip of unrelenting pervasive structures which venerate whiteness. Litha's own first porn exposure for example was shaped by the reality of dominant white porn. The maiming effect of whiteness is seen, for example, in its monopolising ubiquity but also in everyday practices and discourses that locate blackness as its opposite, inferior other. Sexual preferences, especially racial ones, even when manifest in the selection of porn by consumers can never be 'innocent' or free from collusions of power.

### 7.5.1 *More race: Why interracial porn is popular among porn consumers*

Amongst other aspects I have already discussed, Figure 38 also reveals the popularity of interracial porn with 85% of survey respondents indicating they view interracial porn. This confirms what Olgas & Gaddam (2011) found in their quantitative study of over a million internet searches that interracial porn was the most searched for porn sub-genre online.

The term 'interracial porn' suggests sexual acts performed by people across various racial divides. However, interracial porn mostly features actors of two races from two polar extreme ends of the race continuum: black men and white women in straight porn and black men and white men in gay porn (Neal 2013).

In interracial porn, black men are exoticised as hypersexual bodies whose sexual prowess resembles inexhaustible creatures of nature. The hypersexulisation and exoticisation of black bodies forms the crux of interracial porn. "In heterosexual non-interracial pornography, it is the woman's body that is scrutinised, talked about, focused on, and visually interrogated. In interracial porn, it is the black penis that becomes the star of the show" (Dines 2006: 291). The devotional alacrity with which black bodies are exploited by this sub-genre does not escape all porn consumers' observations. Litha (26 black male) for example mentioned he did not watch interracial porn. His reasons had to do with the treatment of black people.

> For me, I feel sad when I see a black man being penetrated by a white man because I feel the black man is being re-colonised in some way; as if the white guy is playing out his fear and loathing towards blacks by the sheer brutality of the act. But I feel just disgusted and offended when the white

> man is being penetrated by the black man because it's like this white guy is living out his Mandingo fantasy. I'm not quite sure who it is in that case I'm more offended by.

The historical colonisation of African people by Caucasians entails a baggage of complicated (sexual) encounters between blacks and whites which currently carry unavoidable skewed power relations. Litha's Fanonian description of a black man re-colonised through the act of sexual penetration by a white man captures the still-reverberant historical conceptions of white conquerors *vis-à-vis* black captives. What Litha's statement also makes equivocally clear is that interracial porn is entangled up in power relations that are almost impossible to sidestep. If the black man penetrates a white person, he is potentially fulfilling a white person's 'Mandigo' fantasy and is being used to that effect. He is nothing but a lionized sexual 'thing' for the sexual gratification of the white partner. If a black man (or black woman) is being penetrated by a white man he is being pillaged for his own humiliation. Both these narratives bear historical shades which cannot be discursively circumvented in the face of images which so palpably resemble remnants of colonial history even in the present.

Furthermore, there are reasons to believe the unreasonable demands imposed on all male porn stars to possess large penises are unfairly amplified when male black actors are involved. Neal (2013: 23) points out that "Anatomically, these men possess athletic physiques, very dark skin, and penises that are much longer than the average five to seven inches." Porn consumers also harbour the impression black porn stars have larger penises than their white counterparts. George (40 black male) for example stated that he watched black porn because "black people…they're big boned." Emmanuel (29 black male) reiterated the same view when he said "I've never, Uhmm saw a white guy with a good penis." Sam (36 black male) said he had seen a lot of white porn but preferred black porn "Ja, I did but hey white people their dicks are so small." It may not matter much to porn consumers that the average length of African men's penises is 4.6 inches (Fanon 2008: 130-131). The black man in porn is constructed as the ultimate phallus and the star attraction of interracial porn. This does not mean that other races are less significant or do not exist "but that blacks are the "idealised" other, and different racial groups float between the two poles of the colour line" (Dines 2006: 290). It is easy for the mostly male porn consuming public to ogle at these bodies with envious admiration.

Citing an *AVN* statistical report which reveals that one in every four porn videos fit into interracial porn, Dines (2006) acknowledges the popularity of this sub-genre. Dines, however analyses this purely in terms of a "white racist imagination" and its appeal to a large white consumer base. There is no denying the overt racist "othering" overtones blatant in interracial porn and its exotic appeal to white consumers. Still, what this study shows is that in South Africa, interracial porn holds purchase value across *all* races, not just to white.

Dines' assertion that it is the consumption of white people that lends interracial porn its prevalence is not entirely true, at least not in the South African context. All racial groups flock to interracial porn for varying reasons. Given that the white woman's body is the site of privilege and symbol of white posterity and nationhood, black male consumers, in particular, find validation in the visual occasion of the white woman being dominated by a black man. Black men in porn "customarily inhabit a position of power even though that position is one that has roots in racialised fetishism" (Neal 2013: 23). Interracial pornography offers an opportunity for the black man to both witness and live out his fantasy. Indeed, Fanon (2008) attested to the longing of the black man who wished to acquire prestige and status by sexually conquering the white woman. He also spoke of the white woman who yearned to be conquered by the black man. This subgenre offers both (black man and white woman) an outlet for their sexual fantasies. White, Asian and Indian men are also able to amass pleasure and "indulge their private sexual fantasies while allowing racist and stereotypical beliefs regarding black men to persist" (Neal 2013: 23). Since different racial groups float between the two poles of the (black/white) colour line as stated by Dines (2006), interracial porn can hold varying interstices of pleasure for all races as shown by the survey data.

There is reason to believe that the popularity of interracial porn underlines a hard truth about the nature of sexual pleasure. In as much as people find sexual pleasure in a plethora of various sexual practices, sexual pleasure is also located in actual or perceived unequal power dynamics between consenting sexual subjects. As Cooper (2010: 99) says "Sexuality is not neutral. A warring dynamic based on power and subjugation has always existed between men and women, and the egalitarian view of sex, with its utopian pretensions, offers little insight." Sexual intercourse, especially in porn, may not always be about the sharing of mutual bodily pleasure. Porn proves sexual activity can be about different situations involving giving pleasure (where focus is on the one who pleasures the other) taking pleasure (where she is commanding the other), receiving pleasure (where focus is on the one who receives pleasuring) and sharing pleasure (where there are no ostensible power imbalances). It is clear

that interracial porn thrives on situations of unequal power dynamics, particularly racial ones. As stated by Neal (2013: 23). "Historical and cultural tensions surrounding issues of masculinity, race, violence, sexuality, and miscegenation commingle in both all-black and interracial pornography." The fact that most porn consumers find these tensions pleasurable can be said to reveal both the complicated nature of sexuality and the genre's ability to identify and sublimate any and all cultural insensitivities.

## 7.6 Families and schools: How social repression constrains sexual pleasures

The moralising ideology which entrenches anti-porn sentiments does not originate only from churches. Apart from "moral and religious conservatives, who argue for the ban on pornography based on the reasoning that it is perverse and damaging to the moral fabric of society" (Artz 2012: 10), families form the hub of incubating perceptions about sexual matters. As Senzo (31 black male) said "our homes are our first school." Even before an individual is mature enough to take the religious path, he has already formed a position on sex, inculcated in his impressionable mind by the primogenitor called family. Sheila (25 black female) puts this very well:

> It's like the misinformation that's kinda filtered through your life the second that you can cognisize any information. That's the first message you get… the second you start to feel anything in your body.....Like mothers slapping their children's hands away from their....from their private parts…..because children that's what they do. They are exploring like "Ok, I looked at that girl and now I feel like this." Uhmm..."why?" And they try to answer their own questions and as soon as they try to touch any parts of themselves, it doesn't even have to be an erogenous zone you've got like a helicopter mom or a school or whatever coming down on them saying "that's bad, that's bad! You shouldn't touch yourself. You shouldn't explore your own body. It should be like a mystery to you."

The internal turmoil that tends to be intricate to the first porn experience of the porn consumer cannot be divorced from the way in which consumers, at their budding age, are

ideologically moulded to comprehend sex as a domain *non-grata*. It is at one's formative years, not during adulthood, that one begins to conceptually carve out the accepted and forbidden ways of seeing and touching his and others' bodies. Foucault (1978) distinguishes between the state's penal laws and prohibitions maintained by social institutions such as families. Legal guidelines are state-enforced and articulate parameters that govern porn production, distribution and consumption but sexual repression is socially instituted through the deployment of silence "repression operated as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to silence affirmation of nonexistence, and, by implication, an admission that there was nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, and nothing to know" (Foucault 1978: 4). Sheila mentioned that as a teenager, she was discovered to be a consumer of porn; first by her school and later by her mother. Having discovered her stash of porn in her dorm room, the school decided to punish Sheila without any explanation regarding reasons she shouldn't possess or watch porn. She says the school "cube-gated me. It was a punishment where you had to stay in your....your doom cube for three weeks, no outside contact, nothing except for going to school and stuff." Later, at age 14, Sheila was also discovered by her mom when she accidentally forgot to take out an explicit VHS cassette she was watching from the video player. Though her mother did not punish her, she never had a meaningful talk about sex or the video apart from asking Sheila if she "wanted to do the stuff that the girls were doing in the porno." Perhaps, it was Sheila's response "well...you and dad must have done it as some point to make me" that made her choose not to talk about the video further. In either case, sexual repression shows itself in the failure of adults to take the opportunities of discovering Sheila's porn to address the issue of sex directly. Sheila's example confirms Foucault (1978: 4)'s words regarding the denial of sexual repression "Everyone knew, for example, that children had no sex, which was why they were forbidden to talk about it. One closed one's eyes and stopped one's ears whenever they came to show evidence to the contrary."

This attitude of "nothing to say, nothing to see, and nothing to know" (Foucault 1978: 4) tosses many a youth like Sheila into the wilderness of sexual ignorance where they are left to find the way on their own, many times through watching porn. The sexual repression that forms part of many schools and families on matters of sex means children are basically deprived of vital sexual information that would, not only equip them in a sexualised culture, but demystify and debunk sexual myths which give rise to curiosity and risky sexual behaviour. According to LoveLife (2015: 1) survey "nearly two thirds of young South Africans (63.3%) say they receive no information whatsoever about sex from their parents."

This is despite research evidence that an open discussion with children about sex reduces STI's, teenage pregnancy and risky sexual behaviour (LoveLife 2015: 1).

Ramlagun (2012)'s study which looked at how teenage girls between 16-17 years in Durban used porn also confirmed that most of these girl's parents were mute on the topic if sex. As Ramlagun (2012: 34) says "The inability of parents and teachers to talk about sex constitutes a part of the conceptualisation and regulation of young peoples' identities. Discussion about sex is avoided and discouraged…"

Sex education in South African schools has previously been reduced to the quotidian facts of human biological reproduction and human anatomy, failing to address the full scope of children's sexual questions on contraception, sexuality, STI's and gender. In 1999 the South African Department of Education passed the National Policy on HIV and AIDS Education, with the aim of tackling questions of sex as well as sexuality at secondary schools (Francis 2013). Despite this, a number of South African publications (Ahmed et al 2009, Francis 2013, Kings 2012) have noted with grave concern that the moralistic reservations of most educators impede the delivery of knowledge content devoid of personal bias and personal values.

> …teachers perceived their role as being one of teaching values and morals. They choose what to teach on the basis of their own values and beliefs…(There was) an indication of the discomfort felt by teachers whose personal views conflicted with the requirements of the curriculum: .. The approach to teaching sexuality education was, to a large extent, based on the teachers' own values and belief systems (Francis 2013: 71).

Some teachers even skip parts of the curriculum that differs with their own moral standing e.g. contraception, homosexuality (Francis 2013). For this reason the South African cultural environment is epitomised by sexual repression (from both home and school) which deprives young people the opportunity to openly learn about sex and sexuality. Parents argue that it is the school's role to teach children about sexuality but educators insist this should be the role of the home-maker (Francis 2013). It is these political and social crevices that endow porn the social thriving it enjoys amongst young people. Figure 11 shows that 44% of the entire survey population were between the ages of 18-27.

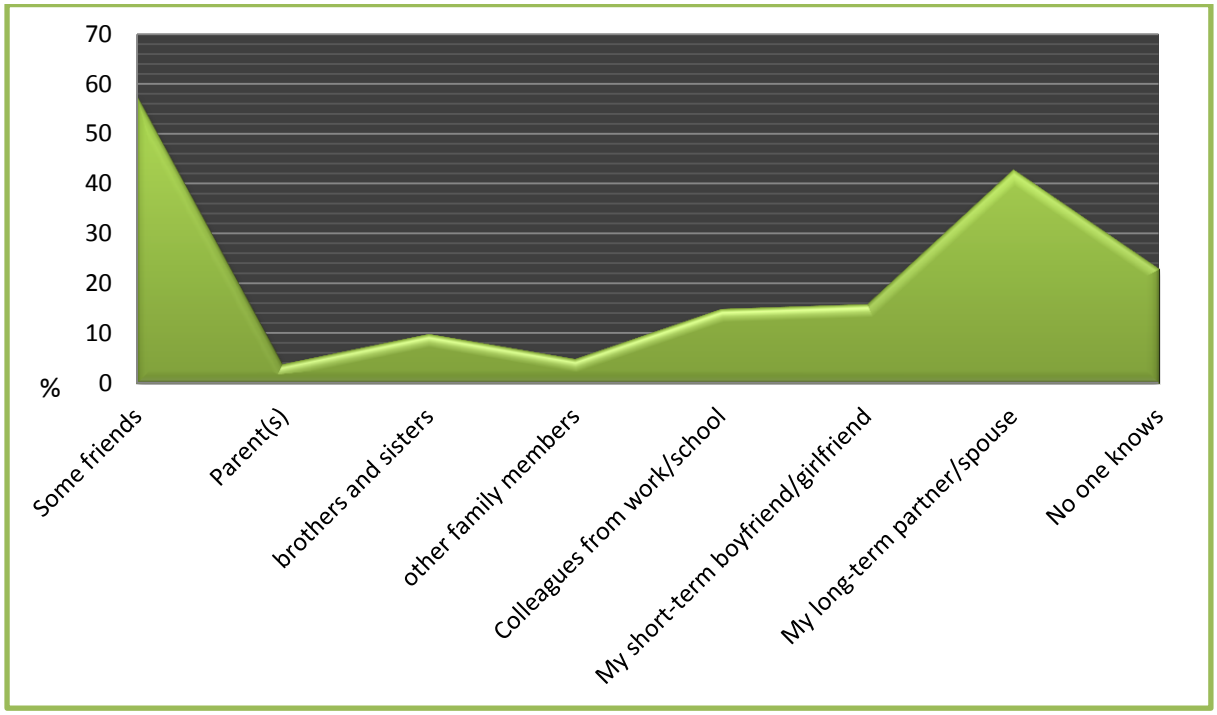
In fact, the graph shows a pattern of steady increase in porn consumption as consumers get younger and a decrease in consumption as people grow older. One factor that can be attributed to this pattern is the sexual curiosity that is part of maturing, particularly in a context that offers no reliable sexual education. Senzo (31 black male) noted this:

> Because after the home, you then go to churches, you go to crèches you go to schools, you go the community, you go the society, you know…. So, you know, if it's not taught…. because everywhere where I go all these avenues, the family, the school, the community, the society it's not saying anything….. There is a need because sexually is part of who we are as humans and so we can't separate ourselves from, you know, from porn because it's about sexuality and we are also sexual beings.

Senzo's statement captures the difficulty of trying to separate porn from sex. There is little doubt that all pornography-related discussions avoided by families are directly eschewed because of the difficulties in talking about sex. Sex as "an encounter conjoining flesh and technology" (Attwood 2006: 79) means avoiding talking about porn is avoiding talking about sex. Sadly, the incapacity, of parents in particular, to speak about sex, inadvertently translates to the perception that children, even when they mature into adults, cannot really share sexual matters with family.

It is no wonder that families form the group to which many consumers chose to divulge their porn habits the least. Even at adult age, consumers do not share with their families that they consume porn. According to the survey data, the largest group to which consumers reveal their porn habits are their friends followed by their long-term partners as shown by the following graph.

**Figure 38 The people who know about my porn consumption are:**



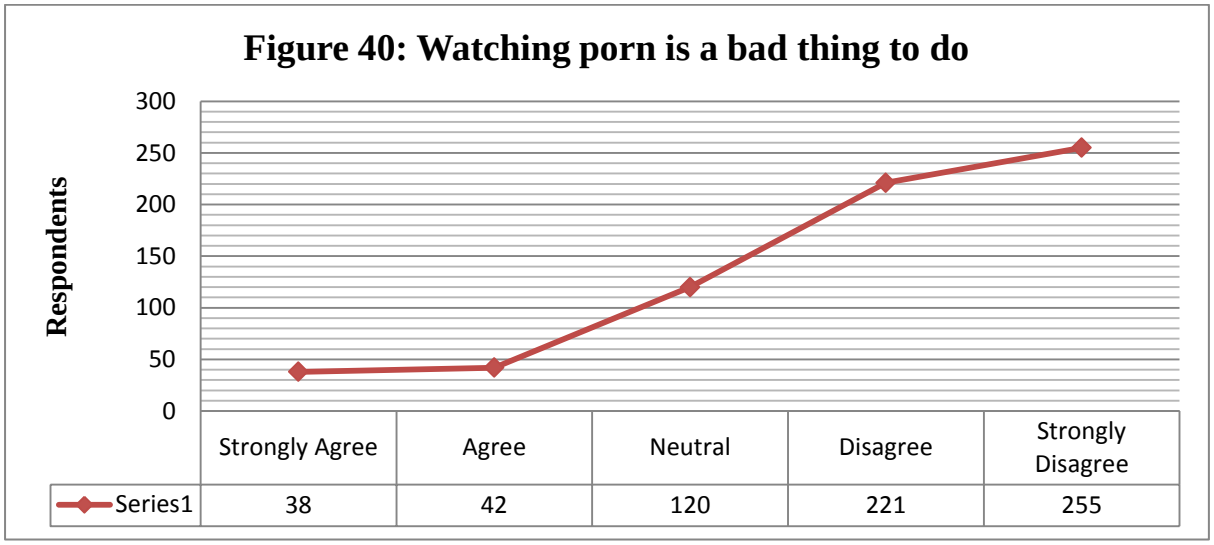

It is interesting that even spouses, girlfriends/boyfriends and sexual partners were not as high in the list of people who know about consumers' porn habits as 'friends.' This suggests porn consumers feel that teachers, parents and elders would be judgmental or negative towards their porn consumption than friends. When I asked Litha (26 black male) whether at age 15 when he watched porn for the first time, the experience felt "wrong" or not, he responded:

> Hmmm. Not wrong, just not allowed. Does that make sense? It was kind of like my sexuality. I've never felt myself to be depraved, just disallowed.

The obvious authority figures with power to allow or disallow are parents, teachers, guardians and other elders. Even though Litha did not feel 'wrong' he still knew that his sexual identity and his consumption of porn were not issues he could discuss with the adults in his life. Seeing the evidence that families are "disallowing" of porn, it makes sense that even when a consumer, such as Litha, conceives of porn as part of his sexuality, he would, for the sake of avoiding disapproval, negative judgement or punishment keep his consumption a secret. Research by Afifi, Joseph & Aldeis (2008) found that parents do not talk about sex with their children because they feel vulnerable about divulging private information about themselves. Many parents therefore feel they are protecting their relationship with their children by not talking with them about sex. Afifi, Joseph & Aldeis (2008: 690) also found that parents who

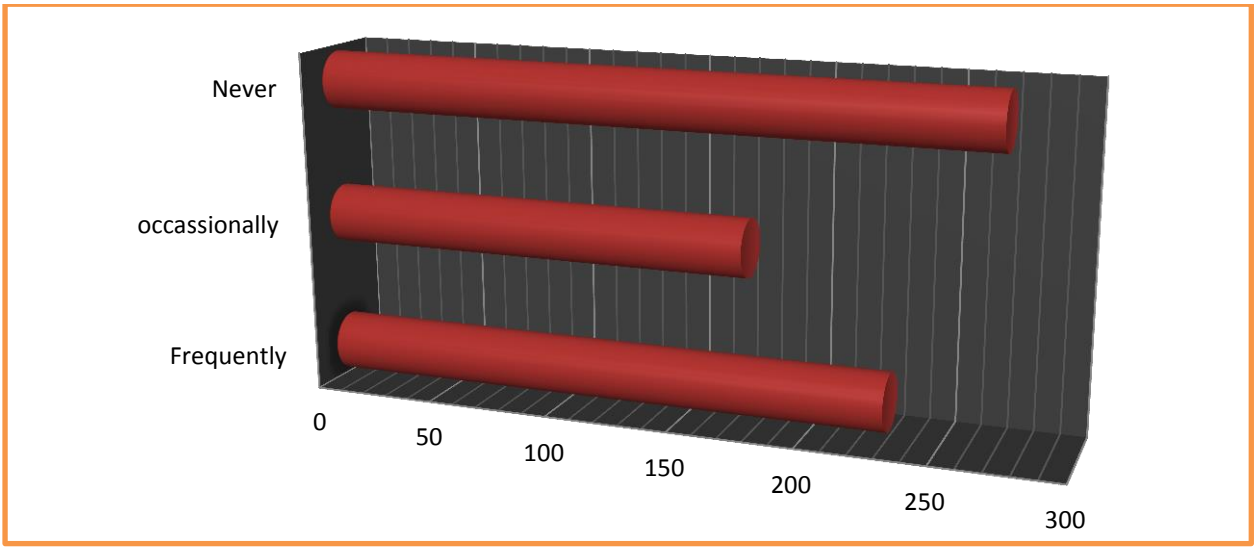
do talk about sex with their adolescents experience a large amount of "anxiety and avoidance during the discussions" fearing that the nature of such discussions may change the way their children see them as parents. Despite many porn consumers never having had assuring talks with their parents and guardians about sex or porn, there is clear evidence from the survey data that shows porn consumers do not take on the disparaging views of their immediate elders. As can be seen in the following graph, 71% of porn consumers (adding the "disagree" and "strongly disagree" together) *do not* believe that watching porn is "a bad thing to do."

**Figure 39 Watching porn is a bad thing to do**




This did not mean, however that these porn respondents felt comfortable with the general public knowing about their porn consumption. When asked to indicate the applicability of the statement "I don't mind if people know I consume porn" to themselves, most indicated that the statement "never" applied to how they felt.

**Figure 40 I don't mind if people know I consume porn**



At first I found this data somewhat inconsistent. How can consumers who say there is nothing morally amiss with consuming porn take issue with people knowing, especially if they consider their pleasure innocuous? Surely if one sees no ethical solecism, one should feel exempt from guilt or embarrassment. The maxim goes: "Those with nothing to hide have nothing to fear." However, as Litha pointed out: porn may not be immoral but it certainly is morally "disallowed" in many homes by many people. To be open about it would be to attract needless condemnation. Litha, justifiably, had every reason to fear his parents and other people from finding out about his porn venture. He was a minor at the time, had no legal autonomy to choose for porn for himself. He could have been punished. Conversely, the survey respondents who partook in this research were of adult age and had legal right to see porn as often as they wished without fear of punishment. For what reasons would *they* 'mind' people knowing?

It was the interview data that helped clarify this matter. Respondents felt that, although using porn was not a "bad" thing, it would be inappropriate for people to know. Porn consumption, as pointed out by Emmanuel (29 black male) and Thabo (22 black male), is a privileged indulgence.

Emmanuel

> It's a private matter of course. It's a private matter. It's like having sex with your girlfriend.

Thabo

> *Zulu*: Ngingafila guilty kakhulu (*I would feel very guilty*) …Ngoba eyi…eish Vele kahlekakahle lento vele angithandi vele ukuthi ngithole ngiyizwe ebaleni yabo vele lento asiyinto yepublic uyabo? (*because eish, actually, this thing, really.. I would not like for this to be discussed in public. You see, this thing really is not a public matter, you see?*).

In my earlier chapter I had stated that porn consumption had spatial-temporal dimensions. There are carefully selected times and places that are conducive and pleasurable for porn consumption. As proven by the data, believing that porn is not 'bad' is not necessarily synonymous to being willing to divulge one's porn practices. Yet, this cannot automatically

be attributed to consumers' feelings of shame, guilt or embarrassment but to the cognisance of appropriate social norms and boundaries. The boundaries here are not between what is "right" or "wrong" but concern what belongs to the "private" and what belongs the "public." I would like to go further than the explication of the private as simply as space of veiled obscurity, hidden from collective purview (Iqani 2012) but suggest that in this instance "the private" also represents "an essential constituent of individual autonomy" (Lacey 1993: 94) where individuals can feel in control of themselves and with the exploration of their desires *sans* the fear of judgement. As Kipnis (2003) asserts pornography is a fantasy genre. The fragile life of a fantasy which we know tends to "encompass unacceptable, improper, transgressive contents" (Kipnis 2003: 5) can only thrive in a sequestered safe setting; the private. The objection, therefore, of porn consumers to the public knowing about their porn practices can be read as their way of creating a safe enclave for their enjoyment of their fantasies. For example, Litha stated when I asked him how he would feel if his friends were to find out about his secret foot fetish.

> I would feel angry and cheated, in addition to being embarrassed. I live a life where I share and express so much about and of myself that there are very little parts of me that I keep to myself. When I came out of the closet, I've lived a life without having one secret. That, in a way, made me lonely. It's nice having a part of my sexuality that is just mine: not my friends', not my boyfriends', just mine.

Kipnis (2003: 5) contends that "pornographic fantasy is worth fighting for" because porn fantasies mirror the most secret and sacred aspects of sexual desires, fantasies and of ourselves. Porn fantasies, she argues, not only reveal the contours of our culture but they reveal us. Both Litha concedes to the need of protecting and keeping his porn consumption private. Litha reveals that only porn can accurately articulate the veneers of his most innate sexual proclivities in a benign and shielded fashion. However, Litha also raises a salient point here: there are mementoes of our sexual selves, vestiges of our erotic inclinations that appease best when enjoyed and practiced alone. The pleasure therefore lies not just in the practice or indulgence of these private sexual palates but in also having a controlled sense of their privacy and sole ownership "just mine." The omnipresent risk of public exposure (of such private sexual gems) acts as a threat to that relished personal possession one feels.

Nonetheless I cannot ignore evidence from the data that porn consumers also keep their consumption secret to avoid embarrassment. Note Litha's words "I would feel angry and cheated, *in addition to being embarrassed"* and pay attention to Thabo's statement "Ngingafila guilty kakhulu" (*Zulu*: I would feel very guilty). Note that both Litha and Thabo do not believe that porn is "bad." The question becomes: "of what would they feel embarrassed (Litha) or guilty (Thabo)?"

Semantic clarification becomes important here. According to Sabini & Silver (2009: 5) shame, embarrassment and guilt are similar mental experiences in that all three signal the acknowledgement of an "infelicitous" act. Still, the three differ in very significant ways. The difference between shame and embarrassment "does not lie in the immediate experience of the person ashamed or embarrassed, but rather in whether the apparent flaw revealed by the incident is real or apparent (Sabini & Silver 2009: 6). In other words, when a porn consumer admits to feeling shame from a particular flaw or act (i.e. the fact that he likes porn), he implicitly accedes that the flaw is a genuine moral weakness but when he admits to feeling embarrassed he only perceives the flaw as only superficial; seeming real only in the eyes of others. Thus, the question of embarrassment in porn consumption is not one of moral weight but one of social judgement. When, "recognizing that one is the object of negative judgment and that the audience has some evidence for this judgment" this produces feelings of embarrassment (Sabini & Silver 2009: 6).

Interestingly enough, unlike Litha, Thabo admitted feelings of guilt to the idea of people finding out about his porn interests ("Ngingafila guilty kakhulu" (*Zulu*: I would feel very guilty). Nonetheless, one should be cautious not to misconstrue Thabo's words with a confession of a (self-perceived) genuine moral flaw. Sabina & Silver (2009: 7) point out that language permits people to say they "feel" many things that they may, in reality, not be e.g. "I feel fat," "like a million dollars" and even "on top of the world."

> ….guilty seems to go with pretty, fat, ugly, stupid, and old. As is true with guilty, being pretty, fat, ugly, stupid, and old are not matters of feeling. And saying "I am old" is not the same thing as saying "I feel old." just as saying one feels guilty is not the same as saying I am guilty. Being old, guilty, and so on are matters of fact not feeling (Sabini & Silver 2009:7).

Hence, Thabo's revelation that he would "feel very guilty" is not to say that he believes he actually *is* guilty. As stated earlier, Thabo does not believe that consuming porn is immoral. He therefore has nothing to be guilty of (even from a legal perspective) even though he may feel as such if publically exposed.

This, therefore, is one of the ways in which power delimits pleasure in porn consumption: through implicit and explicit articulations of social censure and disapproval. Even though "So much of what might have formerly been stigmatised as "perversion" has since been constructed by commodity culture into acceptable and accessible productions of purportedly innate pleasure" (Leaonard 1993: 616), such sexual liberties always carry specific, sometimes, tacit cultural embargos. Porn Consumers know this well. Consequently, they are deft at strategically honing ways to circumvent barricades of power aimed at deflating and diminishing their pleasure. This tendency to withhold porn as a secret manifested itself even during the data collection process when it became evident that the interview respondents struggled disclosing some aspects of their consumption even to me.

## 7.7 Social desirability bias: What porn consumers struggled to reveal

Fisher & Katz (2000: 105) define social desirability bias as "The tendency of respondents to provide socially desirable answers." In so doing, research respondents lessen the probability of appearing as socio-cultural anomalies and maintain their cultural 'insider' status. Social desirability bias has traditionally been treated as a research findings liability due to the fact it conceals the truth of what research participants truly think and feel. Fisher & Katz (2000) take a different stance to this position and point out that social desirability bias can be treated as a means of identifying and dissecting cultural values. By noting what porn consumers found most difficult to answer truthfully, we can extract the kinds of values underscoring consumers' cultural norms.

> …the values that are the most socially desirable within a culture have the greatest consequences for self-presentation. Successful impression management requires that individuals identify what is normative and provide responses consistent with the norm (Fisher & Katz 2000: 108).

Interview respondents, in particular, were most evasive when asked about the amount of time they spent on viewing porn per session. Respondents, whose sessions were longer than an hour laboured to candidly state the amount of time their session lasted. Instead, they exercised a degree of linguistic dodging by using careful verbal inferences that implicitly

insinuated that their sessions tended to be lengthy. When I asked Elam (30 black male) for example how long his porn sessions lasted he answered:

> It takes me half the length of the DVD multiplied by the number of DVD's at hand.

When I carefully pressed Elam further for an *approximation* of this rather cryptic description, he could not answer. Feeling a sense of his discomfort, I decided to guess for myself and suggested two hours. He agreed. This, however, left me feeling suspicious that I might have underrated his sessions and offered a lower amount of time which he was happy to accept rather than to reveal the real length of his porn sessions. Another respondent who evaded giving me a direct answer to the question of his porn sessions was Joseph (45 black male).

> Full movie-types, I'd move from one scene to the other - choose scenes- and switch maybe a total of about an hour at a time. Short clips, I'll watch entire clips and sometimes repeat a few times.

Joseph is recounting *how* he watches porn rather than answering the question: "how long do your porn sessions tend to last?" His viewing *modes operandi* suggests a longer duration than an hour. Note that the combination of what he calls "full movie types" and "short clips" would naturally be above an hour since the "full movie types" alone, according to him, last "an hour at a time," (also very vague:- what does "at a time" mean i.e. per session or per "full movie type?"). Like Elam, when I requested an estimation of this entire viewing process, he simply expounded on his answer, explaining that he did not "watch a movie and short clips one after the other." Upon further gentle nudging, "so a rough estimate would be?" he responded "an hour and a half." Joseph's avoidance to generalise a single approximation suggests he preferred not to give *this* particular kind of information. Kholo (28 black male) was by far the most resistant person in answering this question. After stating that his porn sessions lasted for five minutes, I felt interested to know the general longest time he spent on porn.[10]

**Me:** and what's the longest you normally watch?

[10] Kholo was generally very evasive with most of his answers. It felt to me like he sought to present what he thought were socially acceptable answers. This made me realise I that I generally needed to probe deeper into some of his responses.

**Kholo:** Yoh! I don't know hey.

**Me:** Just a rough estimate, 30 minutes maybe?

**Kholo:** Ja maybe.

**Me:** okay, okay, you've never watched for an hour?

**Kholo:** (*chuckles*) I don't know.

At this point it became clear to me that Kholo was really uncomfortable with this line of questioning so when he claimed not to know for the last time, I decided to move to other questions. Fisher and Katz (2000: 106) uphold that "Respondents are motivated to bias their responses to the degree that the value is strongly prescribed within the social system and therefore has important social implications." This means porn consumers associate longer hours of porn consumption with non-prescribed social standards, entailing some meaningful "social implications." These evasive manoeuvres motivated by social desirability, avail the opportunity to read into the unspoken fears of porn consumers and to appreciate the source of such fear, which is being identified a "porn addict."

### *7.7.1 Consuming the consumer: why porn users fear being labelled "porn addicts"*

A number of writings (Cyrus et al 2007, Wetterneck et al 2012, Mark & White 2009, Ford & Durtschi 2012, Ley, Prause & Finn 2013) acknowledge that high frequency and longer hours of porn consumption are often associated with the concept of "porn addiction." Nonetheless, some of these same authors e.g. Ley, Prause & Finn 2013, Wetterneck et al 2012 also attest to the highly contestable nature of the term, pointing out that even though "porn addiction" has tremendous traction in numerous media fora, writings, socio-political movements and various anti-porn proponents, it has been rejected by actual clinicians and medical experts.

> Scientists investigating high-frequency of sexual behaviours rarely describe these behaviours as an addiction. In fact, most scientists have overtly rejected the addiction model (….) Simply because a behaviour is appetitive and frequently engaged does not mean the behaviour is a problem, let alone an addiction. Even when consequences, distress, or dysfunction follow such behaviours, interaction with third variables, such as relationship status or culture, must first be examined" (Ley, Prause & Finn 2013: 2,4).

It is for this reason that authors like Wetterneck et al (2012) and (ey, Prause & Finn (2013) have opted to use words like ”impulsive,” “compulsive” and “obsessive” porn use rather than ‘addictive.’ Ley, Prause & Finn (2013: 9) even go further to caution against the use of “porn addiction,” pointing out that”

> The label supports moralistic judgments, the stigmatisation of sexual minorities, and the suppression of certain sexual expressions and behaviours. The concept of porn addiction is one mechanism to exert social control over sexuality as expressed or experienced through modern technological means. Mere conflict between a person’s preferences and social standards should not be used to characterize pathology.

Nonetheless, the notion of “porn addiction” still resonates powerfully in many social circles as a convenient semantic device deployed to articulate a constellation of negative behaviours (such as listed by Ley, Prause & Finn (2013) i.e. appetitive behaviour, frequency of use, distress, dysfunction) all ostensibly caused by excessive porn consumption. Accordingly, the doctrine of “porn addiction” retains high purchase value, not just in frequent media use but also amongst porn consumers. Porn users are astutely cognisant of the persistent dialogic currency of “porn addiction” and what it has been pervasively decreed to entail. To be addicted to porn means to have no control over one’s porn usage. It means one is effectively a clinical case desperately in need of psychological even psychiatric intervention. To be “porn addicted” means to suffer from a dilapidating and dysfunctional personal and social life (Cyrus et al 2007, Mark & White 2009, Ford & Durtschi 2012) inherently making one’s porn consumption an unhealthy practice.

The interview schedule had no mention of “porn addiction.” It was a word I never used while interviewing any of the respondents so it was very interesting for me to see how many times respondents brought it up. Evidence from the interview data shows that porn consumers were wary of the dogma of “porn addiction” and, without any solicitation, were quick to extricate themselves from being associated to the idea. Take a look at the responses of Duma (23 black male), Zethu (22 black female) and Tara (50 white female).

Duma

> I don't want to say I crave it because I don't want to sound like an addict (*laughs*). I think you know the image of uhmm…sort of geek on his laptop sitting in for….I don't know….days and days on end. I think that's *does* happen. People get consumed by porn and that's the only thing they do. I have a friend who…. he himself said that he was addicted to… even though I took it lightly. I was like "please not addicted to porn" cause he's always watching it and he's got gigabytes and gigabytes of this stuff.

Zethu

> … Because it's just part of entertainment, you know. It's not something that's wrong, that must be stopped…. I don't……I think…..For me it's not addictive so it's not a problem for me.

When I asked Tara if she felt satisfied after her porn sessions, she responded.

Tara

> ….. Oh I don't know. I can't… I can't say satisfied or like a need ….I mean certainly not an addiction it's not like I want more.

These consumers are speaking in accord to the popular cultural script of "porn addiction" which operates to pathologise porn consumption when deemed above a particular benchmark. "Cultural scripts are a powerful new technique for articulating cultural norms, values, and practices in terms which are clear, precise, and accessible to cultural insiders and to cultural outsiders alike" (Goddard & Wierzbicka 2004: 153). This means that even within the porn-consuming community, there are cultural "insiders" and "outsiders." Porn is not simply to be consumed for pleasure. It is to be consumed for pleasure with fair restraint and cultured moderation, failing which one risks being perceived an unhinged hedonist, a deviant even a pariah. Wetterneck et al (2012: 12) confirms that porn consumers are most likely to:

> "deny sexual 'addiction.' Thus, when assessing problematic porn use, clinicians may focus on negative life outcomes related to its use, rather than relying solely on the report of perceived positive and negative effects."

Notice from the interview respondents, the conscious attempts to isolate themselves from such a problematic consumer, "the porn addict." Duma uses the word "geek" to describe this consumer who, ironically, is also consumed by porn. He sits for "days and days on end" watching porn and this is the *only* thing he does. Duma, of course, is not such a consumer and it is important for him to dispel even the impression that he could be one. He referred to "craving porn" but wanted to safeguard against that being construed as a marker of addiction. The starkly distancing language here, the hedge created between "the geek" and Duma, the 'normal' consumer is pivotal in sustaining users' "cultural insider" status as porn consumers vis-à-vis the porn-obsessed" weak sexual "addict."

Zethu's vindication from the stigma of "porn addiction" is expressed through the way in which she detaches herself from what she calls the "problem" ("for me it's not addictive so it's not a problem). Again, there is a polarising contradistinction created in the usage of the words "for me" (which she mentions twice) and "the problem." "The problem" does not affect "me" by extension it certainly affects "others" out there but not me. I am not like some other porn users out there because I do not have the "addiction problem."

The studious care with which porn consumers disentangle themselves from the notion of "porn addiction" also reveals their fear of losing the ability to govern their own sexual pleasure pursuit. The aspect of "interfering with important life aspects" is not the only symptomatic marker linked to "porn addiction" but also "a lack of ability to control use" (Wetterneck et al 2012: 6). This fear of being "swallowed up" by porn (as one interview respondent put it) means that porn consumers perceive themselves as vulnerable to the same sexual liberties they seek to enjoy. Note Dave's (42 white male) carefully calculated visits to Adult World are motivated by the fear of becoming "a sort of addict."

Dave

> I was there only once…I think…. in February and once again in July and again in August (Adult World). So I mean like it's a case of… I do want to go from time to time to see like what's new but I

> don't want to become like a…..sort of like an addict
> that I have to go all the time. .

Note how Dave speaks as one who does not trust himself not to become "an addict" if he goes to Adult World frequently. He admits "I do want to go from time" nonetheless the only factor keeping him from going there as frequently as he would like is the fear that he might become "an addict" and might *have* "to go all the time." This implies he would have lost control over his own porn usage. His decision not to frequent the adult shop is therefore a safeguard measure against this. Dave has to protect himself from what he conceives as both enjoyable yet dangerous pleasure of porn. Andreas G. et al (2005: 15)'s study which looks at men's compulsive porn use also found that those men who had, over time, gained control over their porn use felt this was an almost "unmanageable" mammoth task, confirming that consumers do "lose" themselves in porn hence the need for some to "protect" themselves.

However, to use high frequency or lengthy hours of consumption as a marker of "porn addiction" is misleading. It is not necessarily that porn is addictive any more than comedy, horror or video games films are addictive. As pointed out by Ley, Prause & Finn (2013: 2) "Simply because a behaviour is appetitive and frequently engaged does not mean the behaviour is a problem, let alone an addiction." A good example of this point is Pule (22 black male). Pule watches porn every day. He admits that he watches porn everywhere, at his place, in the taxi to work, at work and even when he is in his parents' house. He makes no attempts to even hide his porn and enjoyment thereof. He says that his parents have also started to show interest in porn because of his honesty. He possess a collection of over 90 porn DVD's and numerous porn videos on his phone. Friends, neighbours and family members often borrow explicit material from him. Pule is very proud of his porn and even calls himself a "porn addict." Nonetheless this is very difficult to believe. Pule has a robustly functional life. He has a girlfriend, friends and family functions, works and is even a leader at his local church. There is no description about his life that indicates his porn consumption is interfering with his life in any way or that the only thing he does is to watch porn.

So where does one place Pule on the scale of "porn addiction" or to use the proper term, porn compulsivity? The answer, of course, is nowhere. Rosenberg & Kraus (2014) go to great lengths to unscramble the meanings of the often conflicted terms of "porn addiction" "porn compulsivity" "frequency of use," "craving" and "passionate attachment." According to Rosenberg & Kraus (2014: 102) Pule simply has a "passionate attachment" to pornography.

meaning that he has "Persistent but non-pathological use of pornography" (Rosenberg & Kraus 2014: 102).

Perhaps the one respondent who gave the most compelling description of being 'consumed' by porn is Kholo (28 black male), who admitted that he had a porn compulsivity problem; what he called "porn addiction." Like Tara's lengthy excerpt in the previous chapters, Kholo's richly detailed narrative was worth including in its entirety.

Kholo.

> There was a time when I was addicted to porn I must say Ja and I actually….that's when I was fascinated by the roughness …. I was probably watching it every night hey… I decided that I don't want this because it (*chuckles*) started to run my life now….. I actually destroyed all the DVD's… I just felt like, I don't know… I just felt like it was taking over me because now, life was about sex, masturbation and porn, porn, porn, porn cause I…. I couldn't sleep without having watched it hey. Yes. I felt like it was taking over my life I felt like I don't want this. I felt like I want…..I want to decide what I want to do. I don't want this to decide for me. It started by enjoyment but it felt like slavery. Yeah, it felt like I was bound to this, if I can't sleep without having watched it. Back then I didn't have my own computer, or a laptop so I would have to wait until they all go to bed and watch those DVD's on the TV and hope they don't wake up to go to the toilet (*laughs*) and the more you see is the more you want to see, and the more you want to see, is the more you see (*chuckles*)… And then there's a scratch on the DVD and you're so irritated! Because now (*laughs*) it freezes, you try all kinds of tricks (*chuckles*) by wiping it, putting uhm… fish oil, or cooking oil, putting it in the freezer…. they think

> that works…I don't know (*laughing*)…. Whatever, you know, but you won't sleep. Even if you sleep at 3am and you wake up at 5am! That's how porn is. It literally swallows you up.

Even though "porn addiction" may not be the accurately applicable term for people given to porn compulsivity or obsessionism, it is apparent from Kholo's experience that there really is a disconsolate feature in porn consumption which mirrors that of addiction in many ways. Andreas (et al 2005: 10) lists a cluster of symptoms for people predisposed to online porn compulsivity. These include:

> (a) experiencing a sense of well-being or euphoria while online, (b) feeling unable or unwilling to stop online surfing, (c) increasingly desiring and spending more and more time online, (d) neglecting interpersonal relationships with intimate partners, friends, and family, (e) experiencing feelings of emptiness, distress, and irritability when prevented from pursuing online activities, (f) lying to employers and family to cover up the extent of online activities, and (g) experiencing general problems with school or work responsibilities

Orzack (2004) has a set of other symptoms not included by Andreas (et al 2005). These are: carpal tunnel syndrome, dry eyes, migraine headaches, back aches, eating irregularities, neglect of personal hygiene and sleep disturbances due to change in sleep patterns.

At least three of these "symptoms" described by Andreas (et al 2005) are recognisable in Kholo's porn compulsive past e.g. "increasingly desiring and spending more and more time online." Describing his craving for ever more sexual viewing, he states "the more, you see is the more you want to see, and the more you want to see, is the more you see" meaning his appetite for porn was comparable to an insatiable hunger cycle that kept demanding to be fed with a boundless buffet of sexual imagery. Even though Kholo maintains that "the more he saw was the more he wanted to see and the more he wanted to see was the more he saw," it is not likely that the origins of this ouroboros course of return is traceable to "seeing" then "wanting" but rather, the other way around i.e. it is the "wanting" that began the "seeing." That the "seeing" intensifies the "wanting" is only an attribute of the potency of sexual imagery to heighten sexual desire. In other words, without the "wanting" to see, there would

be no "seeing." This helps us understand that it is not the pornographic image itself that necessarily leads to porn compulsivity. It is rather the sexual desire and craving of the consumer which inaugurates the "seeing." This supports Egan & Pamar (2013: 394)'s assertion that "greater use of pornography on the internet may reflect a vulnerability to compulsive problems related to basic disposition, and that problems associated with this behaviour can be managed with generic clinical approaches to obsessional and compulsive disorders." People with trouble resisting the compulsive lure of porn might simply have dispositions that make them more vulnerable to compulsive problems in general. It is the plague of addictive personality, the "vulnerability to compulsive problems" which requires "generic clinical approaches" and not that porn on its own is addictive.

Kholo also mentions that at some point he felt like a "slave." Being in a position where one is "feeling unable or unwilling to stop" porn consumption is another one of Andreas (et al 2005)'s indicators of porn compulsivity. A slave is subject to someone (or something) else's control as Kholo felt he was under the control of porn (or rather the surging emotions he enjoyed from porn). Ley, Prause & Finn (2013: 3) affirm that "sexual films (….) engage the brain in ways consistent with high arousal, motivated states." Porn helps trigger strong sexual impulses. It is understandable that being "hooked" to such overpowering appetitive emotions would lead to one feeling beholden to them. "I just felt like it was taking over me because now, life was about sex, masturbation and porn, porn, porn, porn (…) I felt like (….) I don't want this to decide for me. It started by enjoyment but it felt like slavery." In comparing the clinical term "addiction" to porn compulsivity Ley, Prause & Finn (2013: 4) concede that there are some similarities between the two. One of these is "the shift from using the drug for pleasure to using the drug due to need." At some point Kholo's original fervour became an onerous compulsion to a point he felt enslaved, unable to rein in his desire for more. Deprived of the initial gratification, imbued with impulsive psycho-sexual necessity, his porn consumption mutated from pleasure to a problem. "It started to run my life now (….) I couldn't sleep without having watched it."

Recall again Kholo's words: "and then there's a scratch on the DVD and you're so irritated! Because now (*laughs*) it freezes, you try all kinds of tricks (*chuckles*) by wiping it, putting uh… fish oil, or cooking oil, putting it in the freezer." This parallels one of Andreas (et al 2005)'s indicators of porn compulsivity "experiencing feelings of emptiness, distress, and irritability when prevented from" viewing. Kholo's unrelenting attempts to have the porn DVD play not only reveal frustration or "irritation" but a high level of desperation. This is why he would go as far as to deprive himself sleep when unable to view porn. In this sense,

not only does porn "consume," a consumer (emotionally overwhelm), in Kholo's words, but it also becomes one visual modality which takes sole ownership of a consumer's sexual catharsis than any other visual medium. No other genre can perform the same work as porn.

Kholo says "I couldn't sleep without having watched it" meaning his mental and emotional faculties were indebted and held ransom, so to speak, by the stress of craving porn. "I couldn't sleep without having watched it" also means "I *could* sleep after I watched it" supporting Meyer (2000)'s assertion that a craving is a "dysphoric mood state which could be momentarily reversed by the desired drug," in this case porn. Consequently, we can argue, that porn compulsivity derives its vigour from the dictates of craving. One interesting question we have to ask, however, is how widespread is the problem of porn compulsivity amongst porn users?

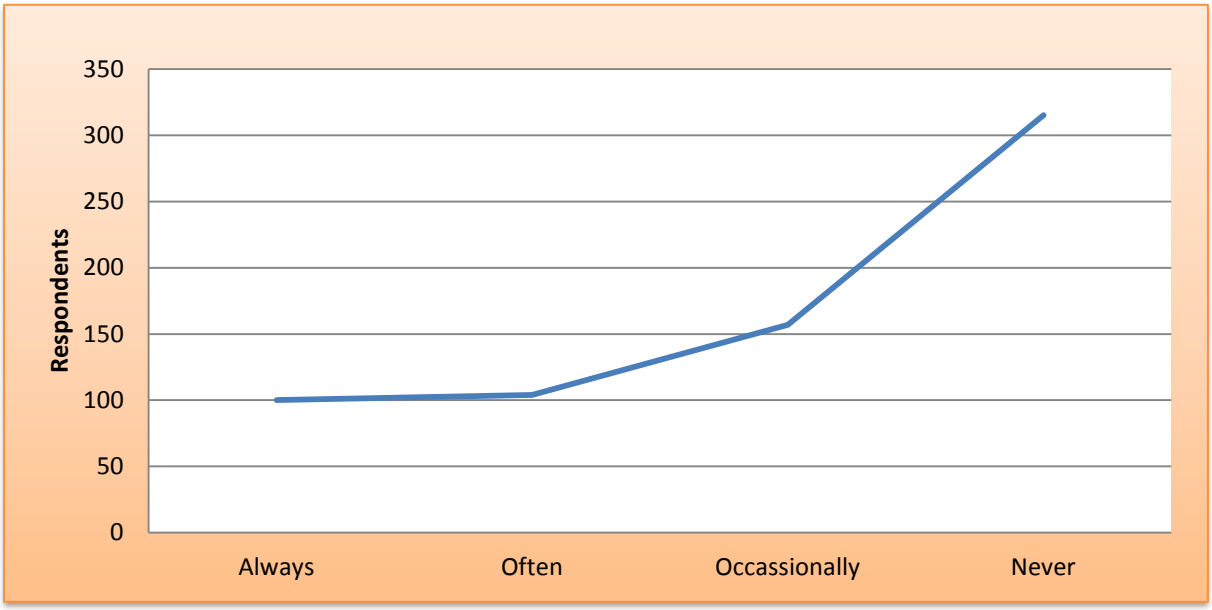
### *7.7.2 How prevalent is porn compulsivity among consumers?*

There have been a number of inconsistent reports from different researchers in the United States about the rampancy of porn compulsivity. While a book by Carnes (1991) estimated that 6% of Americans suffered with porn and sexual compulsivity, Ley, Prause & Finn (2013: 3) estimate that only "0.58 % of men and 0.43 % of women in the USA" were affected by porn compulsivity. Another study conducted by Wetterneck et al (2012: 10) found that out of the 94 questionnaire respondents they surveyed, a staggering 35.6% reported positively to the question "I think I am addicted to internet pornography" while Rosenberg & Kraus (2014)'s data showed that out of their 221 undergraduate students, only a mean score of 1.3 out of a scale of 1-4 for the question "I am emotionally dependent on using porn."

This demonstrates a lack of a reliable measurement for the concept of porn compulsivity. The stark dissensions and irreconcilably divergent data in the many research publications on porn "addiction" prove that one of the problems with concept is the lack of a standard, integrated tool of measurement. This partly explains why most scientists have overtly rejected the "addiction model" when talking about porn. The recent revision of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) similarly does not include sex addiction, citing "To include this as an addiction would require published scientific research that does not exist at this time" (Ley, Prause & Finn 2013: 2). Objections from the medical fraternity point out that porn is in no way a chemical substance that renders the body's biochemical functioning dependent on it and therefore makes it hard to measure or analyse aside from ostensible patterns of behaviour, types of brain activity, and self-reported accounts. Just as other research projects examining porn compulsivity, the survey data collected also gathered inconsistent results.

The graph below presents the number of survey respondents who reported to watch porn because they just couldn't help themselves.

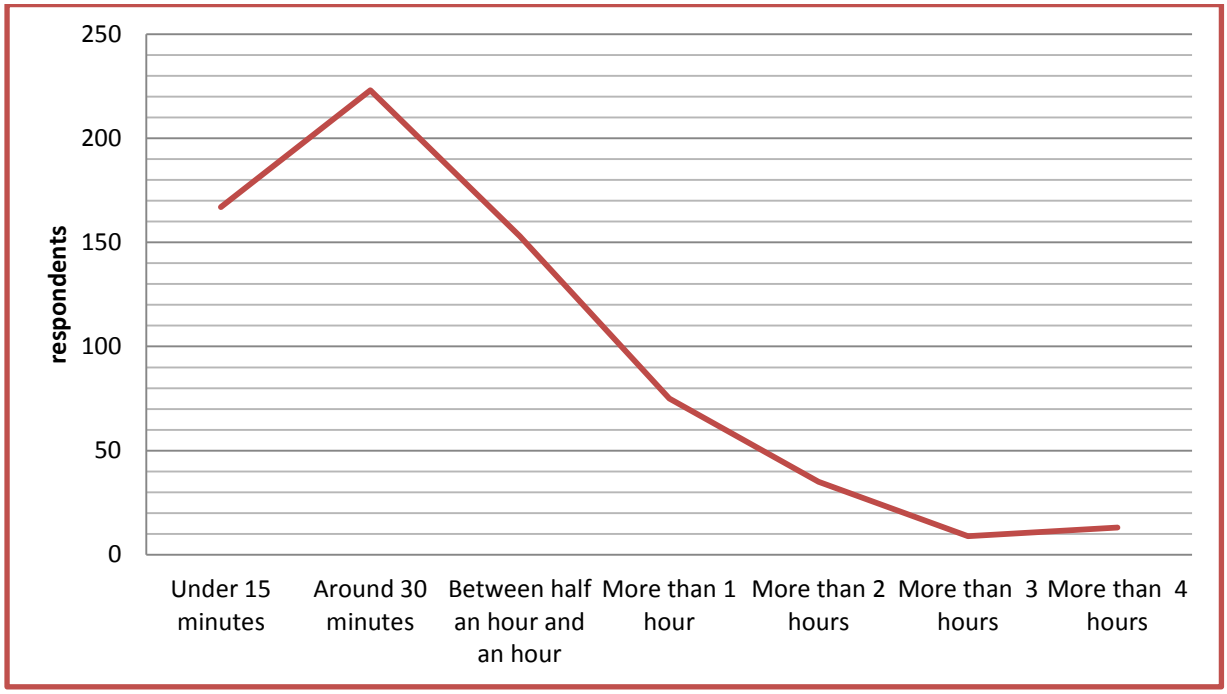
**Figure 41 I watch porn because I can't help myself**




Remember that "feeling unable or unwilling to stop" consuming porn was one of Andreas (et al 2005: 10)'s indicators of porn compulsivity. Note that 29% *frequently* watched porn because they felt they "can't help themselves." In some ways this is consistent with the other research publication mentioned earlier (Rosenberg & Kraus 2014, Wetterneck et al 2012, Ley, Prause & Finn 2013, Carnes 1991) in that it demonstrates consuming porn compulsively is an exception rather a rule. Majority of porn consumers are obviously able to manage their porn consumption. This is also confirmed by Rosenberg & Kraus (2004: 1014) who found that out of their 220 survey respondents, majority responded positively to the statement "For me, using porn is a passion that I can manage to control" Similarly, Cooper, Delmonico & Ron (2000) found that out of their 9,265 survey responses only 17% were cybersex compulsives.

To further demonstrate this point, I present the following graph which illustrates the duration of the survey respondents' porn sessions. It is clear that porn consumption is inversely proportional to time i.e. as time increases, porn consumption sessions decrease. Recall that spending excessive amounts of time on porn is one of the indicators of porn compulsivity mentioned by Andreas (et al 2005: 10). It is also clear from this data however, that most porn consumers' porn sessions do not last for more than an hour.

**Figure 42 Each of my viewing session lasts for**




Using this data, I formulated a generic porn-session ratio for consumers using porn for "more than an hour" per 675 porn consumers. An interesting 11% of the respondents (N=75) indicated that their sessions lasted for "more than hour." So if, 75 consumers out of 675 consumers view porn for "more than an hour" that simply means our ratio will be following:

- 75 per 676
- 75:675
- (divide each of these numbers by 75)
- 75/75:676/75= 1:9
- R=1:9

One out of nine respondents from the survey data watches porn for more than an hour per session. The interview data however revealed two other important factors: i.e. porn sessions are not really fixed or constant every time. They vary according to the needs and schedule of each consumer. Joseph (45 black male) for example said that his sessions ran longer when he was watching new porn and ran shorter when he was watching familiar material. Sheila (25 black female) said her sessions depended on how much time she had on her hands. If she had to rush somewhere yet felt she could afford a few minutes of self-pleasuring, her sessions would be short. During weekends when she had no special appointments she could spend more than an hour. Senzo (31 black male), interestingly said that his sessions were always short when he felt happy but could brood over porn for two hours when he felt melancholic. The interview data, interestingly, also revealed that porn consumers are reluctant to reveal the

real amount they spend on porn during per session, as stated earlier. When performing the same calculations to determine the ratio of porn consumers who viewed porn for 30 these are the results:

-223 consumers view porn for a duration of about 30 minutes

-223 per 676
-223:676
-223/223: 676/223
R=1:3

Therefore one out of three porn consumers in the survey sample consumes porn for only about 30 minutes. It cannot be denied that there is a dark side to porn consumption. What has colloquially been termed porn addiction or problematic porn use or simply porn compulsivity is a real experience for a number of porn consumers who feel trapped in a web of cravings they feel they cannot control. Even during the course of this research I received a message from one consumer who confided that he was finding his porn habit emotionally and physically stressful. I referred him to the right counsellors (this was part of the conditions of my research clearance certificate). Despite this, what the above survey data also reveals is that majority of consumers do not suffer from porn compulsivity nor do they find their enjoyment of porn problematic. As noted by Egan & Pamar (2013), people with trouble resisting porn might simply have dispositions that make them more vulnerable to compulsive problems in general.

## 7.8 Conclusions

This chapter has looked at the ways power structures encumber pleasures of porn consumption. I argued that power manifests in three ways: state regulations, institutional, social structures and factors shaping porn production.

I began by tracing anti-porn attitudes and effects of the draconian laws of the past Apartheid regime which criminalised porn. Such laws were not necessarily effective in eradicating porn consumption. Nonetheless, with feelings of fear and apprehension reported by those who used to watch porn during Apartheid, it is clear the law succeeded in dampening consumers' viewing conditions. Tracing the history of Apartheid laws is important in understanding how some porn consumers experience and frame their consumption today. For people like Tara, it is acceptable even in 2016 to not watch black porn since, as a white woman, she was raised during Apartheid to repel blackness. For respondents such as Dave, African, Brazilian,

Mulato and interracial porn are staple favourites today due to the sexual magnetism that has since stayed with him after he saw his first naked African in porn more than 20 years ago. For others such as Simon who had not met any white people, seeing white naked bodies brought home the realisation that "they (white people) are just like us."

Although it has been 20 years since porn has been decriminalised in South Africa, various strains of anti-porn sentiments sporadically rear their head in present regulations such as the Film and Publications Act. The Act only makes it permissible for 18 year olds to possess and view porn while another South African law, Sexual Offences and Related Amendment Act 2007, gives age of sexual consent to 16 year olds. The implicit message here is that porn is 'worse' that sex. Even though 86% of surveyed porn consumers agreed with the law that prohibits 18 year olds from featuring in porn, I argued that the remainder who did not agree cannot necessarily be seen through a paedophilic lens. Teenagers legally having sex might be keen on posting amateur footage of their sexual activities on porn sites. In this chapter I also highlighted the unreasonably stringent laws which make it impossible for South African websites to host porn. This, I argued, explained why most surveyed consumers expressed there wasn't enough porn in South Africa.

Institutional and social structures, schools, families and churches also imposed highly intransigent embargoes on porn pleasures. The survey data revealed that family members were the least likely to know about porn consumers' porn practices. Even though over 52% of the surveyed responses indicated they did not feel guilty after consuming porn, 48% was split between those who reported to occasionally feel guilty and frequently feel guilty. This section also revealed that respondents who attended church were amongst those who reported feelings of guilt the most. All these data suggest that social ideologies inculcated by schools, families and churches leave a powerful hold that makes users feel porn consumption, though legal, is still private and personal. There certainly is a level of vulnerability that porn consumers exhibit when discussing their porn consumption. One such area of vulnerability is the fear of being perceived a "porn addict." This section revealed, however, that only 1:9 porn consumers viewed porn for over an hour. Despite this, the fear of being perceived as an out of control, powerless addict was very real for interview respondents.

Lastly, porn production factors which privilege the visibility of white, commercial heterosexual American porn greatly affected the type of raced bodies South African consumers could access. The fact that more than 70% of all South African races, in a predominantly black populace, view white porn raises questions about the commodified nature of sexual desire and the pervasiveness of whiteness as a privileged site of power. Porn

production and porn consumption practices must be studied, deconstructed, questioned and challenged in order to avoid being maimed and disfigured by heterosexism, patriarchy and white domination.

# 8 CONCLUSIONS

This last section summarises the key findings of the research project, highlights the contributions made by this dissertation to the nascent field of porn studies and maps out promising areas for future research. In this chapter, I first recapitulate the original aims of the study and the research questions the thesis strived to address. I link this to a brief treatise of the methodologies used and expound on the empirical innovations contributed by this project to the field of porn research. I then discuss the various theoretical concepts and ideas developed by the dissertation. How this study contributes to global, African and South African media studies will also be explored. Lastly, I offer a list of research questions that arose from this work.

Though South African law sanctions pornography as a form of free speech, the research lacuna in the area of porn-use betrays both its constitutionality and popularity within the country. Through offering a treatise of porn consumption, this project aimed to ameliorate the scholastic paucity in the South African academic landscape. Porn consumption practices are telling of people's sexual preferences, beliefs and racial predispositions. Apart from occupying the niche domain of porn consumption, this research meant to exhume idiosyncratic sexual and socio-cultural arrangements distinct to the South African environment. The following are the research questions the study endeavoured to address

1. What are the different media channels through which people access and consume or interact with porn in South Africa? e.g. download, share.
    a. Where and when do most people access the porn they consume?
    b. What other practices are associated with porn consumption in South Africa?
2. How do South Africans define pornography?
    a. Which typologies of porn do viewers say they prefer and why?
3. What are the reasons people give for consuming pornography?
    a. How does watching pornography make porn viewers feel?
    b. What role does porn consumption play in viewers' personal lives?
4. What are porn consumers' views on how accessible porn should be in South Africa?

The use of mixed research methods in the form of a large survey and in depth interviews enabled the extraction of comprehensive and in-depth data which made it possible to address these questions. Having garnered 676 survey responses and 25 in depth interview respondents, the survey data aided in painting an expansive image of consumers' salient

behaviours. Although the survey helped supply rich abundant quantifiable data, such richness also came with limitations. The stringency of the survey approach meant consumers were forced to select applicable answers only from the ones provided. The survey, for example only gave respondents three definitions of porn to choose from. Admittedly, there are more possible definitions, yet the scope of the survey focused on three. As a result, the use of a mixed research method helped ameliorate against this limitation. While the questionnaire provided extensive data, the interviews helped to expound on it. It was the interview data for example that revealed *how* porn consumers viewed the issue of race in porn (while the survey simply asked which racial categories they watched). It was also the interview data that uncovered that porn consumers are uncomfortable revealing the exact length of their porn sessions (where the survey gave them approximations to simply click on). The combination of the survey and the interviews therefore proved quite strategically beneficial for this study.

The sample frame of this study required all research participants be 18 years and older, be living within South Africa and be porn consumers. For this reason, those who participated were first screened. All participants were guaranteed their ethical right to anonymity and confidentiality. Where anonymity seemed impossible, such as in face-to-face interviews, confidentiality was assured. The use of social media also proved invaluable to this study. Researchers wishing to investigate sensitive topics through interview participants will benefit immensely by not imposing a singular mode or style of interviewing. Out of the 25 interviewed porn consumers, 11 chose to be interviewed over the phone, eight asked to have a face-to-face session with me, three opted for an online text chat and the other three preferred a WhatsApp interview. This research project is proof that interview respondents of sensitive topics may be willing to share information although they may not be willing to do so on a face-to-face basis. It is vital to offer interviewees options so they may feel most comfortable if they are to be expected to divulge delicate information about themselves. In particular, the use of WhatsApp as a research tool is one contribution made by this project to the area of porn studies. Much research has already cast an investigative eye on the use of social media and the role it plays in people's lives. Quantitative works which focus on social media metadata, how people use social media and on digital anthropology abound. However, little methodology writings currently exist on how mobile application platforms, such as WhatsApp can constitute research devices themselves. Apart from fostering a socially familiar conversational atmosphere, WhatsApp made interview respondents feel confident enough to later send me additional information they thought they neglected to mention during our initial interview.

Empirically, this project demonstrated that social media prove to be much more efficient for promoting surveys than classified sections in commercial newspapers. Facebook, in particular, created an opportunity for potential respondents to engage with the research topic by asking me questions and making suggestions. Given the stigma of porn, porn research and unwillingness of institutions to assist researchers in this field, researchers should seriously consider creating Facebook pages and Facebook groups for their respective research projects. Research work need no longer be the sole and lonely burden of the researcher. Research pages help draw a cadre of savvy participants and potential respondents who not only ask questions, make contributions but also help promote and advertise the research on their own social media pages. This helps to dramatically multiply awareness of the research project, more so than it would have been possible when alone. This research sought 500 survey responses yet received an additional 167 more. This was by no means only due to my marketing efforts but by the coalition of throngs of members who joined my research page.

To conclude the discussion on the empirical contribution of this work, a word on interviewing approaches is in order. Interview literature states that interviewers should begin their interviews with easy questions. In the sensitive field of porn consumption, this project has shown that "easy" questions are those that have to do with behavioural patterns. Interviewees struggled to answer questions about how they felt when consuming porn. Having said this, the most evaded interview question was not one related to feeling but behaviour i.e. "what is the approximate length of viewing sessions." Future researchers might therefore consider melding this question with the cluster of 'difficult' questions and framing it in a creative, non-threatening way. This dissertation has therefore accorded a rough registry of the types of questions of which interview researchers should be wary.

I have shown that majority of South African consumers identified porn as genital nudity coupled with visible sexual activity. This means neither one of these alone i.e. genital nudity (e.g. when idle) or sexual activity (e.g. simulated) warranted attention as porn in the true sense of what porn consumers seek when they speak of pornography. The model of porn as 'genitals in action' implies that naked visibility of the entire body is not as important as visible genitals in sexual activity. Porn to consumers means body parts must be seen penetrating other body parts. Consensual sex was of paramount significance to consumers. Equally important to them was the belief that porn models enjoyed the sex in which they engaged. These three prerequisites i.e. consent, visible genital activity and actors' enjoyment served as a palimpsest of evidence, as perceived proof that both the sex and the pleasure were "real." Though porn consumers acknowledged porn was staged, they still sought ways to

ascertain ”realness” in the re-enactment. This implies arousal is induced by the “persuasion” of one’s sexual susceptibilities. When consumers saw ‘genitals in action,’ they then looked for signs that porn actors enjoyed the sex. Porn according to this formulation is *the consensual display of genitals in sexual action (coitus, oral sex, masturbation) functioning to induce arousal through persuasive constructions of ‘real’ sex and actors genuine pleasure.*

The following are a few important points to extrapolate from this definition about the expectations of porn consumers from porn.

1. It is not enough for consumers to see a naked person or exposed genitals when those genitals are not performing a sexual act.
2. Consumers mostly prefer depictions of consensual sex.
3. The enjoyment of sex by the porn performers is important to porn consumers.

There have been various anti porn scholars who argued that porn consumers, particularly male ones, derive pleasure from the oppression, degradation and physical injury of female porn actresses. Andrea Dworkin’s censorship efforts relied heavily on this assumption. The contribution of this research to Porn Studies as a whole is the empirical evidence demonstrating that the arousal of porn consumers relies on the perception that all participants in porn gave consent and also enjoy the sex.

Porn consumers may not be people who tolerate blatant forms of injustices or sexual violations such as non-consensual sex or paedophilia, but from the survey data and interviews it became clear they are most likely to be complicit in perpetuating existing forms of racial and gender inequalities. Heteronormative predispositions were most prevalent even amongst gay and bisexual respondents who stated to have viewed and preferred heterosexual porn and disliked gay porn. Porn consumers across all races viewed heterosexual, white porn while most consumers used the logic of ‘sexual preference’ to rationalise race-based or heteronormative standards in their porn selection. This dissertation showed that power structures such as race, religion and social institutions such as families and schools were integral in the processes of forming sexual perceptions. I therefore argued that accepting and respecting porn-consumers’ sexual preferences did not necessarily preclude the necessity to question the provenance of such sexual preference. This is even much more so when talking about race-based sexual preferences in South Africa.

Over 90% of the survey respondents viewed porn at home. Fridays and Saturdays were the days that consumers viewed porn the most. Porn consumption thus proved to be a form of recreation that favours conditions of comfort, security and surplus time. I introduced the idea

of porn consumption possessing spatial-temporal attributes meaning that pleasure from porn mostly thrives under very specific conditions of time, company and location. Whereas, for example, consumers did occasionally view porn in the company of friends, such viewing was not necessarily for sexual pleasure but for the consolidation of social ties cemented in mutual sexual tastes. While porn viewed with friends functioned to affirm bonds, porn viewed by couples was used as sexual exploration and to improve dyadic sexual pleasure. Porn viewed privately by an individual provided the greatest arousal effect and yielded the most sexual pleasure while porn consumed during work or studying was for temporary relief and distraction from stress.

Porn consumers reported very positive feelings when viewing porn. Such feelings were often deployed in functionalist ways such as aiding in sleep, inducing calm, relieving boredom and assisting in masturbation. Though, like most porn consumption studies abroad, this project identified masturbation as the dominant motivation for porn use, I argued there is sufficient reason to distinguish between intentions of use and intentions of intentions. Though porn consumers reported a litany of reasons for consuming porn, all their motives, including masturbation, are linked to the eventual reality that sexual affect enables respondents to feel better than the time they started watching. It is from this position of improved affective emotional temperament that consumers can fall asleep, masturbate or destress.

Other practices associated with porn consumption in South Africa were the rampant swopping and divesting of porn files and porn DVD's. Most consumers in the survey indicated they did not keep or store porn. Consumers, for example who did not want to easily access porn from their own residence and those living with children tended to give their porn away. Sharing porn also became a form of sexual advice, a way of validating one's sexual tastes and a reflection of limited financial resources. In this dissertation, I developed the model of a *socio-sexual-circuit* as means of charting the ways in which porn flows in the market and social economy. Consisting of buyers, borrowers and bargainers, the socio-sexual-circuit proffers that porn attainment occurs within and outside of the commodity market ethos. In South Africa, the data showed, white porn consumers than black bought, owned and downloaded their own porn material while black respondents reported financial limitations and a custom of borrowing, pirating and sharing porn.

The idea of the sexual circuit explains more than South African examples of how explicit media circulates. It is a social network theory that also sheds light on global patterns of porn flows. The fact that most people's first porn encounter remains outside the ambit of economic transactions confirms the centrality of social networks and the interconnectedness that makes

circulation possible. I also pointed out that levels of porn exposure were as high as 80% among teenagers even before the 1980's. The concept of a sexual circuit therefore challenges concepts such as the Triple-A-Engine as the sole means of explaining porn prevalence. The Triple-A-Engine, I argue, is useful in deliberating the ways in which the internet has made porn consumption more expedient, not necessarily popular or prevalent. The formulation of the sexual circuit also challenges other concepts in the field of Porn Studies such as pornification or pornigraphication. These terms argue that explicit images have increasingly migrated from the private sphere to the public sphere. This concept assume that the 'private' and 'public' are two mutually exclusive domains of visibility. What one sees in private regains unique purchase when seen in public; that seeing in public somehow endangers the sanctity of the private. It validates panic over what is seen in public over what is seen in private. Pornification does not consider that public visibility is an extension or even a demand created by private spaces. The public is a disclosure of what has been seen in private. Seeing nude images, even in public, does not shock because they have already been looked at before. What shocks and bewilders is the revelation that others are seeing too. The socio-sexual circuit is testament, not just of the fact that everyone sees sexual images but that in all of history, nudity and sex have had charged combustibility. Pornification is the fear that others may just like nude images *too much*. The sexual circuit turns around and calmly points out that 'their' enjoyment is not so different from mine.

Rather than premising research endevours on sweeping claims about the generic diffusion of sexual imagery (from the private to the public), academics in Porn Studies need to consider idiosyncratic social, cultural and political arrangements prevalent in each research environment. What this research suggests about the South African context, for example, is that pornography circulates and disseminates through mostly social constituents who pirate, borrow, swop and share porn. This is because of a large national populace that lacks financial resources, in a country with scant internet penetration, governed by a restrictive legal economy that encumbers porn access online. By extension, a scrutiny of porn access and distribution patterns elsewhere may yield different findings depending on contextual specificities. The conceptual framework of the *socio-sexual circuit* is therefore a significant contribution to Porn Studies research and proposes that each consumption toponymy may prove itself to be dominated by either buyers, borrowers, bargainers or a permutation of these.

The concepts of the 'private/public, 'pleasure/power' and 'mediation' formed the theoretical foundation upon which this dissertation grounded its empirical data analysis. Pornography is

expressed through mediation, exists in the public realm yet is consumed in the private realm and is coated with sexual pleasures that are contested by ideological power. In South Africa, the top three sources of porn are home internet (49%) mobile phones (27%) and DVD's (20%). South Africa's internet porn access at 49% is far lower than that of most developed states such as the USA, Finland, Australia whose internet porn access are above the 75% mark. Considering the low levels on internet connectivity in South Africa, online porn access seems to both mirror and expose the reality of a digital divide which clearly impinges on African access of information generally.

This research project contributes immensely to African and South African media studies. Part of the challenge in African media studies has been the dearth of quantitative data upon which qualitative research can build its in-depth focus. In most parts of the global north, socio-cultural research already has a rooted statistical *episteme* to build on. This is not the case in Africa, more so when the topic of concern is porn and porn consumption. This South African project has attempted to lessen the shortage of statistical information pertaining porn consumption behaviour in an African context. This dissertation revealed for example that one out of three consumers viewed porn for an average of 30 minutes while one out of nine consumers viewed porn for more than an hour. These 'citable' statistical figures not only illuminate consumption trends in South Africa but help to dispel rampant accounts of "porn addiction" which function to pathologise porn consumption globally.

As part of the 'mobile only' continent mobile phones play a major role in African porn access. This is especially so when considering majority of people in South Africa do not have home internet. I pointed out it is principally the use of mobile phones that has extended the body's capacity for sexual affect and made arousal a probable eventuality at every location where such technology affixes the body. One of the respondents, Pule (22 black male) reported viewing of pornography everywhere: at home, at work and even through his mobile phone in a shuttle full of passengers. This attests to the ways flesh and machine are conjoined in practices that remap both affective possibilities and the spatial re-consignments of sexual arousal. The mobile phone's ubiquitous attendance to the body not only alludes to technology as having become an extended limb but suggests the body, being enduringly conjoined with mobile (porn) technology, is in itself an instrument of pleasure. It takes mediated access through the mobile phone to accentuate the body's feature as a pleasure instrument.

Apart from revealing the multi-spatial and polysemic dimensions of porn consumption, the public/private dialectic also shed light on the types of social bonds and relational mobilisations fostered by porn consumption. Consuming porn with friends, partners and/or

colleagues required a level of emotional trust. Consumers were least likely to divulge their porn consumption to family members or form a sense of trust that allows for discussing sexual matters with family. Interestingly, porn consumers expressed more trust for their friends than even their sexual partners or family members when it came to their porn practices. This suggests porn consumers perceive family members and partners as more judgmental about porn than everyone else in their lives. All respondents reported that viewing porn with friends and/or colleagues was more about socialising than sexual arousal. Nonetheless, group porn consumption fermented highly gendered practices which encouraged very specific ways of being. Male heterosexual group consumers exhibited highly hegemonic masculinised behaviour marked by inebriation, boasting and public display. Male homosexual group consumers viewed porn in private spaces, reported no narratives of sexual conquests to one another yet identified normatively with penetrative sex.

This dissertation reflected on the internal, private world of participants when consuming pornography. I proposed and laid out three transient phases individual porn consumers underwent in the process of consumption. These were the pre-porn phase, the porn encounter and the post-porn experience. In discussing the pre-porn phase, I endeavoured to unveil the constellation of emotions that drew consumers to porn and found the motivation to consume porn did not necessarily begin with a thought but rather with an impulse. This urge was brought about by a number of conducive factors such as feeling alone, missing one's partner or simply feeling aroused. Looking at the moment of porn consumption revealed that porn users lacked words to describe their emotions at the moment of viewing. The difficulty consumers faced in describing, in precise linguistic terms, their emotional dispositions exemplified a distinctive "unspeakability of pleasure" or the inability to articulate pleasure into a string of words. The post porn encounter was the only phase marked by sensations of despondency. Some porn consumers reported feelings of guilt and unhappiness after using porn, an indication that not every aspect of porn consumption is pleasurable. Still, the survey data revealed such experience was prevalent to a minority of 20%.

The last analytical "pleasure and power" chapter evaluated the ways in which porn consumption pleasures lie at the behest of various social, legal and religious injunctions. Majority of porn consumers felt there wasn't enough porn in South Africa. The legal framework which regulates porn access and porn consumption makes it impossible for porn consumers to access locally produced porn online. As a result of this, South African porn consumers mostly viewed international porn while others expressed surprise even at the mention of South African porn.

While 86% of the survey respondents agreed with the law that minors should not be allowed to feature in porn, I argued that the 4% who disagreed had more than good cause to do so. In a country where age of consent is set at 16 years, it becomes untenable to criminalise the same 16 year olds (who are sexually active) for possessing or viewing porn or for 'creating' it in the form of amateur content which they may post online. South African jurisprudence not only diminishes the online visibility of local content but creates a legal conundrum for such citizens.

Religion was also a significant influence on how some consumers felt about their porn practices. Although majority of the survey respondents (71%) disagreed with the statement "watching porn is a bad thing to do" religious interviewees all expressed some moral conflict with their porn consumption. Some had attempted to stop consuming porn but failed. Others enjoyed porn but still maintained that it was still a sin. Nonetheless, feelings of shame and guilt associated with religious beliefs tended to subside with time.

From this research report, various areas of possible future research became apparent. The first pertains to consumers who view porn while working or studying. I pointed out the distinct conditions of stress under which consumers reported to view porn when working or studying. I proposed that the feelings of general unhappiness accounted by porn users and their desire for (emotional) reprieve at work could be a significant link associated with both personal challenges and/or job dissatisfaction. Porn consumers are aware that institutions, including educational ones, prohibit porn consumption when using institutional resources. Unfortunately, this topic has tended to be framed in judgmental ways which negate any merit for scholarly exploration and insight.

Research is also needed to examine various aspects of the porn paucity reported by respondents: how do consumers imagine a specifically 'South African' porn product should look like? What kinds of values (racial inclusivity, gender equity, cultural sensitivity, language relevance and specificity etc.) do South Africans ascribe to a distinct "South African porn economy" and the role this should or could play for local consumers? Research that speaks to the abstract yet lofty goals of policy-makers in conjunction with everyday practices of citizens would be pivotal in exposing the ways power curtails sexual pleasure in South Africa. The fact that South African consumers cannot find locally produced content online is an indictment of government's presuppositions that citizens' sexual practices need to be policed and that the state knows best how to do so.

Lastly, there was very little provision from the interview data regarding the collaborative consumption of porn by women. All the narratives regarding porn swopping and sharing involved male consumers. Although research into female porn consumption is steadily rising, little regarding female collaborative consumption is known. Do female porn consumers use porn as a means of bonding and communicating sexual advice either with their friends or partners? How does porn consumption and/or sharing by a group of women lend itself to the formation and manifestation of diverse femininities? Research into group female porn consumption is long overdue not just in South Africa but in the global knowledge economy as a whole.

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# 10 APPENDICES

## Appendix 1. Pornotopia

(Taken from Parispornmovies.com)

A
Acrobatic Adorable, Adultery, Aerobics, African, Afro, Aged, Airplane, Alien, All Holes, Alluring, Amateur, American, Amputee, Amsterdam, Anal, Anal Beads, Anal Creampie, Anal Dilation, Anal DPed, Anal Fisting, Anal Fuck, Anal Gape, Anal Toying, Angry, Animation, Anime, Antique, Anus, Arabian, Argentinian, Armpit, Army, Artistic, Asian, Ass, Ass Worship, Ass-to-mouth, Assfingering, Assfucking, Asshole, Asslick, Audition, Australian, Austrian

B
Babe, Babysitter, Backroom, Backseat, Backstage, Balcony, Ball Busting, Ball Kicking, Ball Licking, Ballerina, Balloon, Balls, Banana, Banging, Bar, Barebacking, Baseball(Bat), Basement, Basketball, Bathing, Bathroom, BBC (Big BlackCock), BBW, BDSM, Beach, Beads, Bear, Beauty, Beaver, Bed Sex, Bedroom, Beer, Behind The Scenes, Belgian, Belly, Bend Over, Best Friend, Beurette, Bicycle, Big Ass, Big Clit, Big Cock, Big Natural Tits, Big Nipples, Big Pussy, Big Tits, Biker, Bikini, Bimbo, Birthday, Bisexual, Bitch, Bizarre, Black, BlackButt, BlackGirl, Blindfolded, Blonde, Blooper, Blowbang, Blowjob, Blue Eyed, Boat, Body Painting, Bodybuilder, Bodystocking, Bombshell, Bondage, Boobs, Boots, Booty, Booty Shake, Boss, Bottle, Bound, Boyfriend, Bra, Braces, Braids, Brazilian, Breasts, Breath Play, Breeding, Bride, British, Brunette, Brutal, Bukkake, Bulgarian, Bunny, Bus, Bush, Business Woman, Busty, Busty Teen (18/19), Butt, Buttcam, Buttfucking, Butthole, Buttplug, Buxom

C
Cage, Cameltoe, Canadian, Caning, Car, Cartoon, Cash, Casting, Catfight, Catsuit, Caught, Caught Masturbating, CBT (Cock Ball Torture), CEI (Cum Eating Instr.), Celebrity, Centerfold, CFNM, Chained, Champagne, Changing Room, Cheating, Cheerleader, Chilean, Chinese, Choking Play, Chubby, Chubby Teen (18/19), Chunky, Cigarette, Cinema, Clamp, Classic, Classroom, Classy, Cleaner, Cleavage, Clinic, Clit, Close Up, Clothed Pissing, Clothed Sex, Clown, Club, Coach, Coed, Collar, College Girl, College Party, Colombian, Comic, Competition, Compilation, Condom Play, Contest, Cop, Corset, Cosplay, Costume, Cotton Panties, Couch, Cougar, Country, Couple, Cowgirl, Crazy, Creampie, Creampie Compilation, Creampie Eating, Croatian, Crop Whip, Crossdressing, Crotchless Panties, Cuban, Cuckold, Cucumber, Cum, Cum Brushing, Cum Covered, Cum Drenched, Cum Eating, Cum Gargling, Cum In Her Eyes, Cum In Mouth, Cum Inside, Cum Swallowing, Cum Swapping, Cumshot, Cumshot Compilation, Cunt, Curly Haired, Curvy, Cute, Czech

D
Dancing, Danish, Dare, Dark Hair, Dating, Deepthroat, Delivery Guy, Denial, Dentist, Desi, Desk, Desperate, Diaper, Dick, Dildo, Dirty, Dirty Talk, Disco, Doctor, Doggystyle, Doll, Domination, Dominatrix, Dominican, Dorm, Double Anal, Double Blowjob, Double Fisting, Double Fucking, Double Penetration, Double Pussy, Double Toying, DPed, Dress, Dressing Room, Drilled, Drinking, Drooling, DTD (Deep Throat Dick), Dungeon, Dutch, Dyed Hair, Dyke

E
Ebony, Ebony Lesbian, Ebony MILF, Ebony Shemale, Ebony Teen (18/19), Egyptian, Electrified, Elevator, Emo, Encouragement, Enema, English, Erotic, Erotic Art, Ethnic, European, Exhibitionists, Exotic, Experienced, Extreme

**F**
Face, Face Fucked, Face Sitting, Facial, Facial Compilation, Fake Tits, Fantasy, Farm, Farting, Fat, Fat Guy, Fat Mature, Fat Teen (18/19), Feet, Felching, Female Ejaculation, Femdom, Feminization, Fetish, FFM, Fighting, Filipina, Fingering, Finnish, First Time, First Time Anal, Fishnet, Fisting, Fitness, Flasher, Flat Chested, Flexible, Flogger Whip, Florida, Fondling, Food, Foot Fetish, Football, Footjob, Foreplay, Forest, Four Fingering, Foursome, Freckled, French, Friend, Fucking, Funny, Fur, Futanari

**G**
Gagged (Bite Or Ball), Gagging, Game, Gangbang, Gaping Hole, Garden, Garter Belts, Gay, Gay BlackMale, Gay Teen (18/19), Gay Vs. Straight, German, Ghetto, Girdle, Girl Fucks Guy, Girl Nextdoor, Girlfriend, Giving Head, Glamour, Glasses, Gloryhole, Gloves, Goddess, Golden Shower, Golf, Gorgeous, Goth, Grandma, Grandpa, Granny, Greek, Grinding, Groping, Group Orgy, Group Sex, Gym, Gymnast, Gynecologist, Gyno Exam

**H**
Hair Pulling, Hairless, Hairy, Halloween, Handcuffed, Handjob, Handjob Compilation, Happy Ending, Hard Fuck, Hardbodied, Hardcore, Hawaiian, Hawt, Hazing, HD, Hentai, Hermaphrodite, High Heels, Hippy, Hirsute, Hitch Hiker, Hogtied, Holiday, Home, Home Made, Homeless, Hooters, Hospital, Hot Mom, Hotel, Hotpants, Housewife, Huge Cock, Huge Dildo, Huge Tits, Huge Toy, Humiliation, Humping, Hungarian, Hunk, Husband

**I**
Ibiza, Indian, Indonesian, Innocent, Insertion, Instruction, Interracial, Interracial Gangbang, Interview, Intro, Iranian, Irish, Israeli, Italian

**J**
Jacuzzi, Jail, Japanese, JAV (Japanese Adult V.), Jeans, Jerking, Jewish, Jizz, JOI (Jerk Off Instr.), Juggs, Juicy, Jungle

**K**
Kinky, Kissing, Kitchen, Knockers, Korean

**L**
Labia, Lace, Lactating, Lady, Ladyboy, Lap Dancing, Latex, Latin, Latin Teen (18/19), Laughing, Leashed, Leather, Legs, Lesbian, Lesbian MILF, Lesbian Orgy, Lesbian Teen (18/19), Lezdom, Librarian, Lick, Lifeguard, Limousine, Lingerie, Lipstick, Live Cam (Recorded), Loads Of Cum, Lockerroom, Lollipop, Long Hair, Long Legged, Long Nails, Lotion, Lovers, Lucky

**M**
Machine Fucking, Maid, Malaysian, Maledom, Mardi Gras, Married, Mask, Massage, Masseuse, Massive Tits, Master, Masturbating, Masturbation Instruction, Masturbation Solo, Mature, Mature Amateur, Mature Lesbian, Mature Teacher, Medical, Medieval, Mega Tits, Melons, Messy, Messy Facials, Mexican, Midget, MILF, Military, Milk, Miniskirt, Mirror, Missionary, Mistress, MMF, Moaning, Model, Mom, Money, Monster Cock, Monster Tits, Motel, Mouthful, Muff Diving, Mummification, Muscled

**N**
Natural Boobs, Natural Pussy, Nature, Naughty, Neighbor, Nerdy, Nipple Slip, Nipples, Noisy, Norwegian, Nude, Nudist, Nun, Nurse, Nuru Massage, Nylon, Nympho

**O**
Obese, Office, Oiled, Old Farts, Old Man, Old Vs. Young (18-25), Oldy, On Her Knees, On Top, Open Pussy, Oral, Orgasm,

Orgy, Oriental, Outdoor, Own Cum

**P**

Paddled, Pain, Pakistani, Pale, Panties, Pantyhose, Park Sex, Parody, Party, Passionate, PAWG, Peeing, Pegging, Penetrating, Penis, Perfect, Perfect Body, Perky, Peruvian, Perverted, Phone, Photoshoot, Piano, Pierced Nipples, Pierced Pussy, Piercing, Pigtail, Pillow, Pinay, Pink Pussy, Piss Drinking, Pissed On, Pissing, Pizza, Plumber, Plump Teen (18/19), Plumper, Poker, Police, Polish, Ponyplay, Ponytail, Pool, Poor Girl, Pornstar, Portuguese, Posing, POV (Point Of View), Pre-cum, Pregnant, Pretty, Princess, Prison, Prolapse, Prostate, Public, Public Masturbation, Public Sex, Puffy Nipples, Punished, Punk, Pussy, Pussy DPed, Pussy Eating, Pussy Licking, Pussy Stretching, Pussy To Mouth, Pussylips, Pussypump, PVC

**Q**

Queen, Quickie

**R**

Ranch, Raunchy, Ravage, Reality, Rectal Exam, Red Bottom, Redhead, Repairman, Restaurant, Retro, Revenge, Reverse Cowgirl, Reverse Gangbang, Rich, Riding, Rimjob, Role-Play, Romanian, Romantic, Rough, Rubber, Rubbing, Russian

**S**

Saggy Tits, Sailor, Sandwich, Satin, Sauna, Schoolgirl Uniform, Scissoring, Scottish, Screaming, Secretary, Security Guard, Seduce, See Through, Self Facial, Self Fisting, Self Fuck, Self Suck, Sensual, Serbian, Sex Tape, Share, Shaved, Shaving, Shemale, Shemale Fucks Girl, Shemale Fucks Guy, Shemale Vs. Shemale, Shoe, Shoejob, Shop, Short Hair, Shorts, Shower, Shy, Silicone Tits, Sissy, Skank, Skinny, Skirt, Slap, Slave, Slim, Sloppy, Slut, Small Cock, Small Tits, Smoking, Snatch, Sniffing Panties, Snowballing, Soccer, Socks, Sofa Sex, Softcore, Solarium, Solo, Sologirl, Sorority, South California, Spacegirl, Spandex, Spanish, Spanked, Speculum, Sperm, Spit, Sport, Spreading, Spring Break, Squirt, Sri Lankan, SSBBW, Stewardess, Stockings, Store, Story, Stranger, Strap-on, Strap-on Femdom, Strap-on Guy, Strap-on Lesbian, Strap-on Shemale, Street, Stripper, Stripping, Stroking, Stud, Student, Stupid Girl, Submissive, Sucking, Sunbathing, Superhero, Surprise, Swedish, Swimming, Swimsuit, Swinger, Swiss, Swollen Pussy

**T**

Table, Taiwanese, Talk, Tall, Tan Lines, Tanned, Tattoo, Teacher, Tease, Teen (18/19), Tennis, Tentacle, Tgirl, Thai, Theater, Thick, Thin, Thong, Threesome, Throat, Throat Fucked, Tickling, Tied Up, Tight, Tight Pussy, Tiny Dick, Tiny Tits, Titjob, Titless, Tits, Titty Fuck, Toes, Toilet, Tokyo, Tongue, Toon, Topless, Torture (BDSM), Tourist, Toys, Trailer Girl, Trampling, Tranny, Tranny (Post-Op), Transformation, Transsexual, Transvestite, Trib, Tricked, Trimmed Pussy, Truth Or Dare, Tugjob, Turkish, Twink

**U**

Ugly, UK, Ukrainian, Uncensored, Uncut Dick, Underwater, Underwear, Undressing, Uniform, University, Unshaved, Upskirt

**V**

Vacation, Vacuum, Vagina, Vaginal Cumshot, Vampire, Van, Vegetable, Venezuelan, Vibrator, Vietnamese, Vintage, VIP Room, Virgin, Virtual, Vixen, Voluptuous, Voyeur

**W**

Waitress, Wanking, Watching, Watersport, Wax, Webcam (Recorded), Wedding, Weird, Wet, Wet T-shirt, Whaletail, Whip, White, Wife, Wife Swap, Wild, Window, Wine, Workout, Worship, Wrapped Bondage, Wrestling, WTF

**X**

Xmas

**Y**

Yacht, Yoga, Young (18-25)

**<u>APPENDIX</u> 2. (From: Factor analysis: motivations for Internet pornography use)**
Taken Bryant and Jae Woong (2008) *Gender, Sexual Affect, and Motivations for Internet Pornography Use*

1. To get turned on before having sex
2. As something to do with your girlfriend or boyfriend
3. To get turned on while having sex
4. As something to do at a party with a group of people
5. For a laugh with just a boyfriend or girlfriend
6. As an activity during a bachelor party
7. As a group activity with a bunch of friends
8. To learn new sexual positions
9. As an arousing visual aide to look at while masturbating
10. To pass the time when bored
11. To relieve stress
12. To relieve sexual frustration
13. Because you felt like you had to
14. As a hobby
15. As something to do when you were procrastinating
16. Because you couldn't stop yourself
17. To fantasize you are the person having sex with the actors in the pornography
18. To fantasize that you are one of the individuals in the pornography

## APPENDIX 3: (Official pilot questionnaire)

South African survey of porn consumption

Q1 Do you live in South Africa?

- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (2)

Q2 Have you watched porn in the last 6 months?

- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (2)

Q3 What is the year of your birth?

Q4 How would you describe yourself in terms of population groups?

- ❍ Black Africa (1)
- ❍ Coloured (2)
- ❍ Indian (3)
- ❍ White (4)
- ❍ Asian (5)
- ❍ Other (6)

Q7 I am

- ❍ Male (1)
- ❍ Female (2)
- ❍ Other (3)

Q8 Which definition of pornography comes closest to your own understanding

- ❍ Any material that shows full nudity even if there are no sexual acts depicted (1)
- ❍ Any material depicting nude sexual acts even if the genitals are not visible (2)
- ❍ Any material depicting nudity AND sexual acts with genitals visible (3)

Q9 Pornography should never feature anyone under the age of 18

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q10 Pornography should never feature non-consensual sex (even if faked)

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q11 If pornography features only adults in consensual sexual practices, any adult should have access to it

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q12 Porn in South Africa is too easily available

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q13 Porn in South Africa is not available enough

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q14 Porn in South Africa is at acceptable levels of availability for my needs

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q15 Viewing porn is a bad thing to do

- ❍ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ❍ Disagree (2)
- ❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ❍ Agree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Agree (5)

Q16 I view pornographic material as frequently as

- ❍ More than once a day (1)
- ❍ Once a day (2)
- ❍ Once every second day (3)
- ❍ Weekly (4)
- ❍ Every month (5)
- ❍ Every two months or so (6)

Q17 Each of my porn-viewing sessions takes, an average of

- ❍ Under 15 minutes (1)
- ❍ Around 30 minutes (2)
- ❍ Between half an hour and an hour (3)
- ❍ More than 1 hour (4)
- ❍ More than 2 hours (5)
- ❍ More than 3 hours (6)
- ❍ More than 4 hours (7)

Q18 I would like to watch more porn

- ❍ True (1)
- ❍ False (2)

Q19 I would like to watch less porn

- ❍ True (1)
- ❍ False (2)

Q20 I would prefer my co-workers not to know I watch porn

- ❍ True (1)
- ❍ False (2)

Q21 I don’t identify with the men/women I see in porn

- ❍ True (1)
- ❍ False (2)

Q22 I do identify with the men/women I see in porn

- ❍ True (1)
- ❍ False (2)

Q23 Where is most of the porn you own stored?

- ❍ On my computer hard-drive (1)
- ❍ On my mobile phone (2)
- ❍ At a safe place at home (3)
- ❍ On a remote file-sharing website (4)
- ❍ I watch porn but I don’t keep it (5)

Q24 I watch straight/heterosexual porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q25 I watch Gay porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q26 I watch bisexual porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q27 I watch porn with Black actors

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q28 I watch porn with only White actors

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q29 I watch porn with only Asian actors

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q30 I watch multi-racial porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q31 I watch rough sex porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q32 I watch romantic/sensual porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q33 I watch vaginal penetration porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q34 I watch anal penetration porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q35 I watch double penetration porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q36 I watch Amateur porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q37 I watch public sex porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q38 I watch porn with my favourite actors

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q39 I watch solo masturbating porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q40 I watch MILF porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q41 I watch YOUNG people (age18-25) porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q42 I use porn to get turned on before having sex

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q43 I use porn to get turned on while having sex

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q44 I used porn as an aid for masturbation

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q45 I use porn to get aroused but not to masturbate

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q46 I used porn as an activity with short term girlfriend/ boyfriend

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q47 I use porn as an activity with a long term partner/spouse

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q48 I use porn to have fun with some friends without having sex

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q49 I used porn for entertainment at a party

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q50 I use porn because I feel pressured to watch by my sex partner

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q51 I use porn because I feel pressured to watch by friends

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q52 I use porn to fantasize I am one of the actors in the porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q53 I use porn because I just can’t stop myself

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q54 I use porn to learn new sexual techniques and positions

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q55 I use porn to pass time when I’m bored

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q56 I use porn to relieve stress and distract myself from problems

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q57 I use porn to relieve sexual frustration

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q58 I use porn as a hobby

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q59 I use porn to have fun at a bachelor party

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q60 I use porn to satisfy my curiosity about sex

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q61 I feel sexually satisfied after I view porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q62 I feel closer to my sex partner after we have used porn together

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q63 I feel sexually confident after I use porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q64 Using porn makes me feel knowledgeable about sex

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q65 Using porn makes me happy

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q66 I feel guilty after I use porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q67 I do not feel guilty after I use porn

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q68 Using porn makes me feel insecure about my body

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q69 I have access to enough porn that suits my preferences

- ❍ Always (1)
- ❍ Most of the Time (2)
- ❍ Sometimes (3)
- ❍ Rarely (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

Q70 I prefer to to watch porn with

- ❑ Alone (1)
- ❑ With my short term girlfriend/boyfriend (2)
- ❑ With my long-term partner/spouse (3)
- ❑ With friends (4)
- ❑ With strangers e.g. porn houses (5)

Q71 I prefer to view porn at:

- ❑ At Home (1)
- ❑ At a friend's place (2)
- ❑ At work (3)
- ❑ At an adult shop (4)
- ❑ At a porn club (5)
- ❑ At my school/university/college (6)
- ❑ In paid-for accommodation away from home (7)

Q72 Which days of the week are you most likely to view porn?

- ❑ Monday (1)
- ❑ Tuesday (2)
- ❑ Wednesday (3)
- ❑ Thursday (4)
- ❑ Friday (5)
- ❑ Saturday (6)
- ❑ Sunday (7)

Q73 I get most of my porn from

- ❑ I download it from the internet at home (1)
- ❑ I buy DVD's from adult stores (2)
- ❑ I pay to watch at adult shops or porn clubs (3)
- ❑ I download it from the internet at work (4)
- ❑ I share digital files with friends on computer-to-computer connections (5)
- ❑ I download it from the internet at school/university/college (6)
- ❑ I download it from the internet using my cellphone (7)
- ❑ I share digital files with my friends using our mobile phones (8)
- ❑ I buy magazines from adult stores (9)
- ❑ I watch porn using a pay TV channel (10)

Q74 The people who know about my porn-watching habit are

- ❑ Some friends (1)
- ❑ Parent(s) (2)
- ❑ brothers and sisters (3)
- ❑ other family members (4)
- ❑ Colleagues from work/school (5)
- ❑ My short-term boyfriend/girlfriend (6)
- ❑ My long-term partner/spouse (7)
- ❑ No one knows (8)

Q75 Thank you for your time. Please feel free to include your comments on how this pilot survey can be improved.

## APPENDIX 4 (the final online survey questionnaire)

**SA National Survey of porn consumption**

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this survey. This study is being conducted under the auspices of The University of The Witwatersrand. Its aim is to find out more about the ways in which pornography is consumed in South Africa. To participate in the survey, you must be at least 18 years old, living in South Africa and should have viewed or watched sexually explicit material in the last 6 months. This survey comprises 7 sections and should take you no more than 10 minutes. Kindly take time to answer ALL the questions.

- ❍ Agree and continue (1)
- ❍ No, thank you. (2)

If No, thank you. Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q2 Have you watched porn in the last 6 months?

- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (2)

Q1 Do you live in South Africa?

- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (2)

Q3 What is the year of your birth?

If What is the year of your birth... Is Greater Than 1995, Then Skip To End of Block

Q4 How would you describe yourself in terms of population groups?

- ❍ Black African (1)
- ❍ Coloured (2)
- ❍ Indian (3)
- ❍ White (4)
- ❍ Asian (5)
- ❍ Other (6)

Q7 I am

- ❍ Male (1)
- ❍ Female (2)
- ❍ Other (3)

Q79 I am

- ❍ Single (1)
- ❍ Married (2)
- ❍ In a long-term relationship (3)
- ❍ In a short-term relationship (4)
- ❍ Not in a relationship but I have a sexual partner (5)

Q8 Which definition of pornography comes closest to your own understanding

- ❍ Any material that shows full nudity even if there are no sexual acts depicted (1)
- ❍ Any material depicting nude sexual acts even if the genitals are not visible (2)
- ❍ Any material depicting nudity AND sexual acts with genitals visible (3)

Q9 Pornography should never feature anyone under the age of 18

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neutral (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q10 Pornography should never feature non-consensual or forced sex (even if the forced sex is staged or faked)

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neutral (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q11 If pornography features only adults in consensual sexual practices, any adult should have access to it

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neutral (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q13 Porn in South Africa is not available enough

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neutral (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q14 Porn in South Africa is at acceptable levels of availability

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neutral (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q15 Viewing porn is a bad thing to do

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neutral (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q78 Financial limitations prevent me from watching as much porn as I would like to watch

- ❍ Strongly Agree (1)
- ❍ Agree (2)
- ❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ❍ Disagree (4)
- ❍ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q76 How porn makes me feel

| | Always (1) | Often (2) | Occasionally (3) | Never (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel sexually satisfied after I view porn (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel closer to my sex partner after we have used porn (2) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel sexually confident after I use porn (3) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Using porn makes me feel knowledgeable about sex (4) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Using porn makes me happy (5) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel guilty after I use porn (6) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I would prefer my co-workers not to know I watch porn (7) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I don’t mind if people know that I use porn (8) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I would like to watch less porn (9) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I would like to watch more new porn (10) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I don’t identify with the men/women I see in porn (11) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I do identify with the men/women I see in porn (12) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Watching porn makes me feel insecure about my body (13) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I have learnt a lot about sex by watching porn (14) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I want to be as good in sex as the porn-stars (15) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q16 I view pornographic material as frequently as

- ❍ More than once a day (1)
- ❍ Once a day (2)
- ❍ Once every second day (3)

- ❍ Weekly (4)
- ❍ Every month (5)
- ❍ Every two months or so (6)

Q17 Each of my porn-viewing sessions takes, an average of

- ❍ Under 15 minutes (1)
- ❍ Around 30 minutes (2)
- ❍ Between half an hour and an hour (3)
- ❍ More than 1 hour (4)
- ❍ More than 2 hours (5)
- ❍ More than 3 hours (6)
- ❍ More than 4 hours (7)

Q23 Where is most of the porn you own stored?

- ❍ On my computer hard-drive (1)
- ❍ On my mobile phone (2)
- ❍ At a safe place at home (3)
- ❍ On a remote file-sharing website (4)
- ❍ I watch porn but I don’t keep it (5)

Q24 The kind of porn I watch/view

| | Always (1) | Often (2) | Occassionally (3) | Never (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Straight porn (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Gay porn (2) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Bisexual porn (3) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Transsexual porn (4) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Porn with Black actors only (5) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Porn with White actors only (6) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Porn with Asian actors only (7) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Porn with Coloureds only (8) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Porn with multi-racial actors (9) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Rough porn (10) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Romantic/sensual porn (11) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Amateur porn (12) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Masturbation porn (13) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Bondage Porn (14) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Porn with my favourite porn stars (15) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Vaginal penetration porn (16) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Anal penetration porn (17) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q75 I use porn mostly to:

| | Always (1) | Often (2) | Occassionally (3) | Never (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| To get turned on before sex (1) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| To get turned on while having sex (2) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| As an aid for masturbation (3) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| To get aroused but not to masturbate (4) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| As an activity with short term girlfriend/ boyfriend (5) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Because I just can't stop myself (6) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| As an activity with a long term partner/spouse (7) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| To learn new sexual techniques (8) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| For entertainment at a party (9) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel pressured to watch by my sex partner (10) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| To pass time when I'm bored (11) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| To fantasize I am one of the actors in the porn (12) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| To relieve stress and distract myself from problems (13) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| To relieve sexual frustration (14) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| As a hobby (15) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| To satisfy my curiosity about sex (16) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| To have fun at a bachelor party (17) | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q70 I prefer to watch porn with

- ❑ Alone (1)
- ❑ With my short term girlfriend/boyfriend (2)
- ❑ With my long-term partner/spouse (3)
- ❑ With friends (4)
- ❑ With strangers e.g. porn houses (5)

Q71 I prefer to view porn at:

- ❑ At Home (1)
- ❑ At a friend's place (2)
- ❑ At work (3)
- ❑ At an adult shop (4)
- ❑ At a porn club (5)
- ❑ At my school/university/college (6)
- ❑ In paid-for accommodation away from home (7)

Q72 Which days of the week are you most likely to view porn?

- ❑ Monday (1)
- ❑ Tuesday (2)
- ❑ Wednesday (3)
- ❑ Thursday (4)
- ❑ Friday (5)
- ❑ Saturday (6)
- ❑ Sunday (7)

Q73 I get most of my porn from

- ❑ I download it from the internet at home (1)
- ❑ I stream and watch from my home internet but never download it (2)
- ❑ I buy DVD’s from adult stores (3)
- ❑ I pay to watch at adult shops or porn clubs (4)
- ❑ I download it from the internet at work (5)
- ❑ I stream and watch from my work internet but never download it (6)
- ❑ I share digital files with friends on computer-to-computer connections (7)
- ❑ I download it from the internet at school/university/college (8)
- ❑ I stream & watch from my school/university/college internet- never download (9)
- ❑ I download it from the internet using my cellphone (10)
- ❑ I share digital files with my friends using our mobile phones (11)
- ❑ I stream and watch using my phone internet but never download (12)
- ❑ I buy magazines from adult stores (13)
- ❑ I watch porn using a pay TV channel (14)

Q74 The people who know about my porn-watching habit are

- ❑ Some friends (1)
- ❑ Parent(s) (2)
- ❑ brothers and sisters (3)
- ❑ other family members (4)
- ❑ Colleagues from work/school (5)
- ❑ My short-term boyfriend/girlfriend (6)
- ❑ My long-term partner/spouse (7)
- ❑ No one knows (8)

**APPENDIX 5 (Initial interview schedule)**

**DISCUSSION POINTS FOR UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW**

**INTRODUCTORY (GENERAL)**

1. Would you kindly confirm your age, sex and race?
2. Do you think it's important that we talk or study porn consumption? Why?
3. So how would you personally define porn? What is porn according to your own understanding?
4. Are you single, married, in long-term relationship, short term relationship, or have a sex-partner?
5. If in a relationship, does your partner know you consume porn?
6. When did you start watching pornography?
7. How was the experience?

**MAIN**

**FEELINGS**

8. When do you generally feel like watching porn?
9. When do you NOT feel like watching porn?
10. Do you think viewing porn is a bad thing?
11. Would you say you enjoy viewing porn?
12. How would you describe your experience of viewing porn?
13. How do you feel after watching porn? e.g. guilty, happy, satisfied etc
14. Did you ever try to stop watching pornography at any time?
15. Do you think if you had more money or unlimited internet access you would watch more porn?
16. Do you wish to watch more new porn?

**PRACTICES AND PREFERENCES**

17. Where do you view porn?
18. How do you access porn? E.g. through friends, buying DVD's etc.
19. Do you view porn alone?
20. How often do you view porn?
21. How long does each session normally last?
22. Do you keep porn? if yes where?
23. Do you watch locally produced porn or internationally made porn? Why?
24. Which porn do you view the most?
25. Do you have any favourite porn stars?
26. Do you have any preference for race when watching porn?
27. Do you think it's racist to prefer only one particular race when viewing porn?

**USES/INTERACTIONS**

28. Would you say porn helps you in any way?
29. How do you use porn? e.g. socialize, bond with your spouse? Masturbate?
30. Would you say porn has taught you anything about having sex?
31. Are there other people who know that you watch porn? Who?
32. Does porn ever become a discussion with any of your friends?
33. How would you feel if your colleagues found out that you view porn?

**PERSONAL BELIEFS**

34. Do you think porn should feature only adults in consensual sexual acts or should people below18 years be featured too?
35. Do you think most porn portrays women unjustly?
36. Do you think only adults should have access to porn?
37. Do you think its ok for porn to stage and depict forced sex (rape)?

**CONCLUDING**

38. Why do you think some people and groups oppose pornography so much

**APPENDIX 6 (final 52 question-item interview schedule)**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**INTRODUCTORY (GENERAL)**

1. Would you kindly confirm your age, sex and race?
2. Are you single, married, in long-term relationship, short term relationship, or have a sex-partner?
3. If in a relationship, does your partner know you consume porn?
4. So how would you personally define porn? What makes a picture or video porn?
5. When did you start watching pornography?
6. How was the experience?

**MAIN**

**PRACTICES AND PREFERENCES**

7. Where do you view porn?
8. How do you access porn? E.g. through friends, buying DVD's etc.
9. Do you view porn alone? Why?
10. How often do you view porn?
11. How long does each session normally last?
12. Do you keep porn? If yes where?
13. Do you watch locally produced porn or international porn? Why?
14. Which type of porn do you enjoy watching?
15. Does your sexual orientation determine which type of porn you watch?
16. Do you prefer to watch sex with or without condoms? Why?
17. Do you have any favourite porn stars?
18. Have you ever taken interest in reading on how porn is made?
19. Do you have any preference for race when watching porn? Why?
20. Do you think it's racist to prefer watching ONLY ONE particular race when viewing porn? Why?
21. Would you watch porn on religious days e.g. Sundays?

**USES/INTERACTIONS**

22. Would you say porn helps you in any way?
23. How do you use porn? e.g. socialize, bond with your spouse? Masturbate?
24. Is there anything you have discovered **about yourself** or **your sexual tastes/desires** by watching porn?
25. Are there any **sexual practices** that you enjoy which you think you would not have **discovered** without watching porn? Would you mind mentioning them?
26. Would you say porn has **taught** you or still **teaches** you anything about having sex?
27. Are there other people who know that you watch porn? Who?
28. Does porn ever become a discussion with any of your friends?
29. How would you feel if your colleagues found out that you view porn?
30. Would you have a problem if you found out that your partner watched porn too?
31. Do you consider yourself liberal minded for watching porn?
32. Do you think that people who watch porn can be considered liberal people?

**FEELINGS**

33. When do you generally feel like watching porn?
34. When do you NOT feel like watching porn?
35. Does your mood determine which porn you watch?

36. Does your mood determine how long your sessions last?
37. Would you say you always enjoy viewing porn?
38. How would you describe your feelings when viewing porn?
39. How do you feel after watching porn? e.g. guilty, happy, satisfied etc. why?
40. Do you ever feel like you want to stop watching porn? Why?
41. Did you ever try to stop watching pornography at any time?
42. Do you think if you had more money or unlimited internet access you would watch more porn?
43. Do you wish to watch more new porn?
44. How do you feel about rough porn, bondage porn or violent porn e.g, BDSM

**PERSONAL BELIEFS**

45. Do you think viewing porn is a bad thing? Why?
46. Do you think porn should feature only adults in consensual sexual acts or should people below18 years be featured too?
47. Do you think most porn portrays women unjustly?
48. Do you think all adults (including prisoners and the mentally disturbed) should have access to porn if they so choose?
49. Do you think its ok for porn to stage and depict forced sex (rape)?

***Concluding***

50. Why do you think some people and groups oppose pornography so much?
51. Do you think it's important that we talk or study porn consumption?

## APPENDIX 7 (one-page information sheet).

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

*Title of Study: "Practices of pleasure: Investigating pornography consumption in South Africa"*

Invitation to participate

My name is Siyabonga Koba. I am a PhD student in the department of Media Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. Please continue reading this information sheet to know more about the nature of the research and what it entails.

What is the purpose of this study?

This research seeks to understand the various ways in which pornography is consumed in South Africa. The word "consumption" is preferred because it includes a host of actions in the process of using porn such as acquiring, using and storing pornographic material and the motivations behind such usage. In short, this paper investigates how and why people use porn.

Why I have chosen this topic

This research is important because porn consumption has the potential to reveal greater underlying matters such as sexual beliefs, racial predilections, gender dynamics, sexual preferences, and personal needs in the context of South Africa. Pornography is an under-studied topic in academia for many reasons. This is particularly the case in South Africa where very little research has been done on the topic to date.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The findings of this study will be reported in my postgraduate thesis, and will be available at the Wits library and possibly published in the online database of the University of The Witwatersrand www.wiredspace.wits.ac.za or other academic journals once completed.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you chose to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep. I will then ask you to sign a consent form which simply indicates you agree to participate. If, at any time, you change your mind, you are free to withdraw from participation. You won't be required to provide reasons.

Will my participation in this study be confidential?

All the information collected in this study will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. Your personal identity will not be required and none of your personal details will be collected or stored. None of the things you will say during the interview will be traceable to you at all.

Will the interviews be recorded?

All interviews will be recorded only with your permission. The purpose of the recording is to help me to accurately quote the things you say. If, however, you don't wish to be recorded, note-taking will be used.

Who has reviewed this study?

This research will be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the University of The Witwatersrand. *Should you have any questions, concerns or wish to confirm any of this information please feel free to email my supervisor*: Mehita Iqani: Mehita.iqani@wits.ac.za

***Thank you for taking time to consider participating in this study***

**APPENDIX 8: (Consent form)**

**CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWEES**

***Topic Study: Practices of pleasure: Investigating porn consumption in South Africa***

I (name and surname)_____ agree to partake in the above-mentioned study willingly. I have been made aware:

1. I am free to pull out of the research anytime I feel uncomfortable
2. The importance and aim of this study
3. My personal identity will not be used for this research
4. Once the research has been completed, I will be able to access it from the Wits library and possibly on the Wits University publication database http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/search
5. I have been made aware of the type of questions I will be asked prior the actual interview.
6. I am free to ask any questions when I have them.

Date_____2013

Signature_____

## APPENDIX 9 (audio-recording form)

## 11 Audio Recording Consent Form

I, _____,

Hereby provide / do not provide permission (please select option) for Yolo Siyabonga Koba to audio record our interview.

I am aware that I may ask her to stop recording at any point during the interview.

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

# 12 SAMPLES OF INTERVIEWS

## 16th Interview 06-09-2013

George: 40 years old. Male. Africa. In a long term relationship. Started watching porn at age 12. WhatsApp interview

9/6/2013 19:08: Siyabonga: Would you please confirn your age, race and sex please?`
9/6/2013 19:08: George: Yep!!
9/6/2013 19:09: George: m 40,african n male
9/6/2013 19:10: Siyabonga: What's your relationship status? Married, single, in a long term relationship etc?
9/6/2013 19:11: George: I would say its a long term
9/6/2013 19:12: Siyabonga: Ok. How do you define porn? What is porn according to you? What makes a picture or video porn?
9/6/2013 19:16: George: Porn its when 2 people are stark naked n havin sex that is veri much explicit n a picture or a video that shows 2 people havin sex
9/6/2013 19:17: Siyabonga: Ok. You said you were in a long term relationship. Does your partner know that you use porn?
9/6/2013 19:19: George: I think so cos she saw 2 movies n she asked me n was a little bit embarrassed
9/6/2013 19:20: Siyabonga: Hahah. Why were you embarrassed?
9/6/2013 19:21: George: Yes i was cos she didnt expect dat from me
9/6/2013 19:21: Siyabonga: Ow. Ok. Did you answer her?
9/6/2013 19:22: George: Nope i became aggressive just to pass on the question
9/6/2013 19:23: Siyabonga: Hmm...ok. Why is that? Do you feel ashamed that you watch porn?
9/6/2013 19:24: George: When m wit my friends or alone m not ashamed but definitely not wit her
9/6/2013 19:25: Siyabonga: Why is that?
9/6/2013 19:26: George: She wil think m doing it wit other women
9/6/2013 19:26: Siyabonga: Hmmm... Ok. I hear you. Can I ask you something. Do you thing watching porn is a form of cheating?
9/6/2013 19:28: George: I dont think so for me its a form of entertainment n u learn new tricks
9/6/2013 19:28: Siyabonga: Ahh!
9/6/2013 19:29: Siyabonga: Do you feel that porn has taught you some things about sex?
9/6/2013 19:31: George: Yes lyk positions n how to satisfy yo woman
9/6/2013 19:31: Siyabonga: Would you mind sharing just one or two of those things you learnt?
9/6/2013 19:32: Siyabonga: 1 or 2 Examples
9/6/2013 19:36: George: My brother ive learnt so many things cos i watched porn since i was 12 n i cant figure it out the examples must i share
9/6/2013 19:37: Siyabonga: Ok. No problem. Let me ask it this way. What are some of the techniques and moves you feel you would not have know without porn?
9/6/2013 19:38: George: Doing it on a snooker pool or in a pool
9/6/2013 19:39: Siyabonga: Ok. How about Oral sex?
9/6/2013 19:42: George: I knew dat when i was 16 in my township(mamelodi) we called it morphing sum called it blow job n by da way its fun n my woman reach climax without being penetrated
9/6/2013 19:43: Siyabonga: Oh! How about anal sex?
9/6/2013 19:44: George: No no its painful none of my women liked it
9/6/2013 19:45: Siyabonga: Ok. You said you learnt about oral sex at age 16. Did you learn that from porn?
9/6/2013 19:46: George: Yes was a naughty then i stole my uncle video cassette n watch it that how i learned sum of da trade

9/6/2013 19:48: Siyabonga: You also said earlier that you learnt from porn the idea of having sex on a snooker table and the pool? Did you ever try that yourself?
9/6/2013 19:49: George: No man i dont hav that luxury i only do it in my house
9/6/2013 19:50: Siyabonga: Hahaha!!!
9/6/2013 19:50: Siyabonga: Ok!
9/6/2013 19:51: Siyabonga: Is there anything you have learnt ABOUT yourself and about your sexual desires by watching porn? Anything that you feel revealed about your favourite sexual tastes?
9/6/2013 19:52: Siyabonga: Anything you feel porn revealed about your favourite sexual tastes?
9/6/2013 20:00: George: Yes when i watch porn i become more aroused than usual but i think its in my mind n sumtimes i perform betta after watchin n most of da tym i take tym to ejaculate until she comes
9/6/2013 20:00: Siyabonga: Ok. Thanks for that.
9/6/2013 20:01: Siyabonga: So you last longer after watching porn?
9/6/2013 20:01: Siyabonga: How often do you watch porn?
9/6/2013 20:02: George: Thrice or so a week but mostly it depends on my moods
9/6/2013 20:03: Siyabonga: Ok. Would you tell me about that a bit. How does it depend on your mood?
9/6/2013 20:04: Siyabonga: For example..Would you say for example that when you are happy you watch more?
9/6/2013 20:05: Siyabonga: Or when your are sad you watch more?
9/6/2013 20:05: Siyabonga: When do you FEEL like watching
9/6/2013 20:05: Siyabonga: ?
9/6/2013 20:08: George: As ive said its al in my mind but most when m in a gud mood n its happen veri often
9/6/2013 20:08: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 20:08: Siyabonga: When do you NOT FEEL like watching porn?
9/6/2013 20:10: George: Most mondays m tired cos of da past weekend
9/6/2013 20:10: Siyabonga: Ok. So when you are tired you don't feel like watching porn?
9/6/2013 20:11: George: Exactly cos porn need extra energy to concentrate
9/6/2013 20:12: Siyabonga: Do you ever watch porn when you are depressed?
9/6/2013 20:13: George: Sumtimes i do to relieve a bit of a pressure from me
9/6/2013 20:13: Siyabonga: Pressure? What kind of pressure? Work pressure? Emotional pressure?
9/6/2013 20:15: George: Work or any negative force dat keeps me down
9/6/2013 20:16: Siyabonga: Ok. Does porn work? Does it make a difference in relieving the pressure?
9/6/2013 20:18: George: Definitely it does takes away al my problems away for a while
9/6/2013 20:18: Siyabonga: So where do you access porn? Do you watch DVD's, do you watch clips on your phone? Do you watch from the internet at home?
9/6/2013 20:20: George: I access porn mostly on clips and DVD's not much on internet
9/6/2013 20:20: Siyabonga: Phone clips from your phone right?
9/6/2013 20:22: George: Yes my man
9/6/2013 20:23: Siyabonga: Ok. So that means that you store some clips on your phone? Do you keep it or do you simply watch the clips then delete them?
9/6/2013 20:25: George: Most i keep them but afta a while i delete but i keep dvd's forever.
9/6/2013 20:26: Siyabonga: Ok. Where do you keep the DVD's?
9/6/2013 20:28: George: I keep them in my house safe in cupboard for safety sake
9/6/2013 20:28: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 20:28: Siyabonga: And don't you ever worry that someone may see the clips on your phone?
9/6/2013 20:30: George: I always keep my fone next to me so i dont wori
9/6/2013 20:30: Siyabonga: Hahah! I understand.

9/6/2013 20:30: Siyabonga: Do you think watching porn is a bd thing to do?
9/6/2013 20:30: Siyabonga: Bad
9/6/2013 20:31: George: Nope i dont think so as long u keep it away from kids
9/6/2013 20:31: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 20:32: Siyabonga: How long do your watching sessions normally last?
9/6/2013 20:33: George: An hour or so then m satisfied
9/6/2013 20:33: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 20:33: Siyabonga: Do you ALWAYS enjoy watching porn or are there times when you don't enjoy it?
9/6/2013 20:35: George: I enjoy al da tym especially from black people never mind whites they bore to death sori for bein racist
9/6/2013 20:35: Siyabonga: Hahaha!!
9/6/2013 20:36: Siyabonga: Do you mean that you watch ONLY black porn?
9/6/2013 20:37: George: Definitely black people i enjoy watchin them they excite me a lot plus they're big boned
9/6/2013 20:38: Siyabonga: Ok. So do you ever watch white porn even if its just a little?
9/6/2013 20:40: Siyabonga: Or do you ONLY ONLY watch black?
9/6/2013 20:41: George: Yes but for only 15 minutes or so
9/6/2013 20:42: Siyabonga: Ok. Do you think its racist if a white person would say that he ONLY watches white porn....ONLY?
9/6/2013 20:44: George: Striclty only black n i think its up to an individual wat he or she want to watch
9/6/2013 20:44: Siyabonga: Ok. Do you have any favorite porn stars?
9/6/2013 20:46: George: No but i can single out a woman called cherokee but these a lot especially the americans i lyk them big tym
9/6/2013 20:47: Siyabonga: Ah! So that means you watch a lot of international porn rather than Local SA porn?
9/6/2013 20:50: George: Yes americans r da masters of da game i dont go local cos they dont giv it al
9/6/2013 20:51: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 20:51: Siyabonga: So how would you describe the experience of watching porn? That moment when you are watching, how is it like?
9/6/2013 20:54: George: Feels excitin n da atmosphere puttin u in an excellent mood
9/6/2013 20:54: Siyabonga: Exciting? How?
9/6/2013 20:54: Siyabonga: Sexually exciting?
9/6/2013 20:56: George: Obvious sexually excitin n experiencin new moves
9/6/2013 20:56: Siyabonga: Ok. How does that sexual excitement feel?
9/6/2013 20:57: George: The feelin is lyk wanting more n more
9/6/2013 20:58: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 20:58: Siyabonga: And how do you feel AFTER watching porn?
9/6/2013 21:01: George: Feelin horny n more aroused n wanting a woman to satisfy u
9/6/2013 21:01: Siyabonga: Oh! Ok. Wanting to release.
9/6/2013 21:02: Siyabonga: Do you ever masturbate to porn?
9/6/2013 21:02: George: Most of the time n its healthier
9/6/2013 21:04: Siyabonga: Ok. So would I be correct in saying that you use porn to 1. masturabate 2. Enhance you sex with your partner,3 to elevate pressure and stress? 4. To learn sex techniques?
9/6/2013 21:08: George: U r correct but make no.2 yo no.1n no.1 yo no.2
9/6/2013 21:08: Siyabonga: Oh! Hahaha! I understand. Earlier you said that some of your friends know that you watch porn? Do you ever watch some porn with your friends? Or do you always watch alone?
9/6/2013 21:11: George: Sumtymes wit dem or alone
9/6/2013 21:11: Siyabonga: We will need at 25 more minutes to finish the interview is that ok?
9/6/2013 21:11: Siyabonga: At least 25 more minutes sorry
9/6/2013 21:15: George: No problem as long u satisfied wit answers
9/6/2013 21:15: Siyabonga: great thanks.
9/6/2013 21:15: Siyabonga: How is the experience of watching porn alone different to when you watch alone?

9/6/2013 21:16: Siyabonga: Sorry
9/6/2013 21:16: Siyabonga: How is the experience of watching porn alone different to when you watch with friends?
9/6/2013 21:18: George: The feeling is the same but u cant masturbate in from of them
9/6/2013 21:18: Siyabonga: Hahah!
9/6/2013 21:18: Siyabonga: Ok
Do you enjoy it the same?
9/6/2013 21:20: George: Nope
9/6/2013 21:20: Siyabonga: Why is that?
9/6/2013 21:22: George: Look when u wit people u sumtyme lose da flavour
9/6/2013 21:24: George: U sleepin?
9/6/2013 21:24: Siyabonga: Not at all.
9/6/2013 21:24: Siyabonga: Why?
9/6/2013 21:25: Siyabonga: I am just noticing that your responses are taking longer. Are you busy?
9/6/2013 21:27: George: Nope m not sori was on a quick col
9/6/2013 21:27: Siyabonga: Ow ok.
9/6/2013 21:28: Siyabonga: Hmm....so what did you mean by "lose da flavour?" Why do you think you lose the flavour when watching with other people?
9/6/2013 21:28: Siyabonga: □
9/6/2013 21:29: George: I meant u dont concentrate at al u know how guys behave
9/6/2013 21:29: Siyabonga: Hmm...so you are not as comfortable around them?
9/6/2013 21:30: Siyabonga: Tell me....
9/6/2013 21:32: George: It depends as ive highlighted guys tend to behave awkwardly when they become excite n its gud to watch it alone u become relaxed
9/6/2013 21:32: Siyabonga: Ok. When you watch with your friends would you watch DVD's or phone clips?
9/6/2013 21:33: George: Mostly is dvd's
9/6/2013 21:34: Siyabonga: Ok. Where would you watch? Would it be at one of your friend's place or your place?
9/6/2013 21:34: George: Mostly at my place
9/6/2013 21:35: Siyabonga: Ok. Do you ever talk about porn?
9/6/2013 21:35: Siyabonga: In any way?
9/6/2013 21:36: George: A bit not much wit certain guys or maybe if i want to buy a dvd
9/6/2013 21:36: Siyabonga: I mean with your friends?
9/6/2013 21:39: George: Yes i do most of da tymes
9/6/2013 21:39: Siyabonga: And what things do you often say for example?
9/6/2013 21:40: George: Checkin out new actresses
9/6/2013 21:41: Siyabonga: Ok. So you just comment of the actresses?
9/6/2013 21:41: George: Definitely cos we want to see new ladies
9/6/2013 21:43: Siyabonga: Do you only talk about it when watching?
9/6/2013 21:44: George: Yes or maybe a guy just saw a new movie wil try n check it
9/6/2013 21:48: George: r u okay n afta da interview i wil send da invoice or bank account
9/6/2013 21:49: Siyabonga: Hahaha!!!!
9/6/2013 21:49: Siyabonga: I am sorry, my phone did not ring so I was still waiting for your response.
9/6/2013 21:49: Siyabonga: How would you feel if you found out that your partner also watches porn alone and secretly during her own personal time?
9/6/2013 21:50: Siyabonga: How would that make you feel?
9/6/2013 21:52: George: I wil get cross i mean she must tok to me first or at least we must watchin 2getha
9/6/2013 21:53: Siyabonga: Hahah!
9/6/2013 21:53: Siyabonga: Why? Why must she tell you?
9/6/2013 21:53: George: m the man of da house
9/6/2013 21:54: Siyabonga: Hahah! I understand
9/6/2013 21:54: Siyabonga: How would you feel if your colleagues at work found out that you watch porn?

9/6/2013 21:55: George: I dont mind them m not commitin any crime
9/6/2013 21:55: Siyabonga: So you would not be embarrassed?
9/6/2013 21:55: George: No its normal for me
9/6/2013 21:55: Siyabonga: Have you ever tried to stop watching porn?
9/6/2013 21:56: George: Neva did i cos i dont any rong watchin it
9/6/2013 21:56: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 21:57: Siyabonga: Do you think if you had more money or unlimited internet access at home you would watch more porn?
9/6/2013 21:58: George: Nope i watch it in moderation
9/6/2013 21:58: Siyabonga: Which type of porn do you like watching the most? Straight! Gay! Bisexual, inter sexual?
9/6/2013 21:59: George: Straight only
9/6/2013 21:59: George: Others they make me poke!!
9/6/2013 21:59: Siyabonga: Ok. And do you watch ONLY penetration porn?
9/6/2013 22:00: Siyabonga: Or do you sometimes watch porn without penetration?
9/6/2013 22:00: George: Only penetration
9/6/2013 22:00: Siyabonga: Vaginal penetration or anal penetration OR both?
9/6/2013 22:01: George: Strictly vaginal
9/6/2013 22:01: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 22:02: George: Can i make a quick col n i wil cum bac to u
9/6/2013 22:03: Siyabonga: No problem!
9/6/2013 22:03: Siyabonga: 
9/6/2013 22:03: Siyabonga: Thank you for staying till this long.
9/6/2013 22:05: George: xo m done u can text
9/6/2013 22:05: Siyabonga: Ok
9/6/2013 22:05: Siyabonga: How do you feel about bondage porn? Where people get bound
?
9/6/2013 22:06: George: For me its boring i watch hardcore porn
9/6/2013 22:07: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 22:08: Siyabonga: Well there is also hardcore sex in Bondage porn. People are tied up and the penetrated. What do you think about that?
9/6/2013 22:09: George: Ohk i didnt get u its not so funky cos for me it seems they dont enjoy!
9/6/2013 22:10: Siyabonga: Oh! Ok.
9/6/2013 22:10: Siyabonga: But do you think its wrong?
9/6/2013 22:11: George: Its up to the individual as long as they enjoy there's nothing rong
9/6/2013 22:12: Siyabonga: Do you sometimes watch orgy sex where groups of people have sex in huge numbers?
9/6/2013 22:13: George: Sumtimes i do not always
9/6/2013 22:13: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 22:14: Siyabonga: So I suppose the porn you watch the most is between two people only?
9/6/2013 22:14: Siyabonga: Do you watch threesomes?
9/6/2013 22:15: George: It depends on scenes on the dvd sumtymes is threesome
9/6/2013 22:15: Siyabonga: Ok
9/6/2013 22:15: Siyabonga: Do you prefer to watch sex without condoms or WITH condoms?
9/6/2013 22:16: George: Without its cul
9/6/2013 22:16: Siyabonga: Why is that?
9/6/2013 22:18: George: I dont know maybe its how i started watching them they neva used condoms
9/6/2013 22:18: Siyabonga: Ok. Have you ever taken an interest in reading about how porn is made or produced?
9/6/2013 22:19: George: Nope i want ready made movies
9/6/2013 22:19: Siyabonga: Ok
9/6/2013 22:19: Siyabonga: Earlier you said that you started watching porn at age 12
9/6/2013 22:20: Siyabonga: Can you tell me what happened?
9/6/2013 22:20: Siyabonga: Where did you get the porn?

9/6/2013 22:22: George: Was excited n little bit shocked n from my uncle room
9/6/2013 22:22: Siyabonga: Was it a magazine or a video?
9/6/2013 22:23: George: Video cassette
9/6/2013 22:24: Siyabonga: How did you feel after watching it? Did you feel guilty or bad?
9/6/2013 22:25: George: No just normal
9/6/2013 22:25: Siyabonga: Ok. Ok we are down to the last 3 questions. . Do you think that porn should feature people under the age of 18 if they want to be featured?
9/6/2013 22:26: George: Ya under 18 as it has been
9/6/2013 22:27: Siyabonga: There are only 3 questions left. Would you prefer that we finish them tomorrow? I sense you are tired.
9/6/2013 22:28: George: It seem u r tired not me if u r we can 2 moro
9/6/2013 22:29: Siyabonga: Not tired at all. So can we finish now then?
9/6/2013 22:30: George: Yep
9/6/2013 22:30: Siyabonga: So imagine there is this 16 year old who wants to act in porn. Do you think he should be allowed?
9/6/2013 22:30: George: Nope dats underage
9/6/2013 22:31: Siyabonga: Ok.
9/6/2013 22:31: Siyabonga: Do you think ALL adults should have access to porn?
9/6/2013 22:32: Siyabonga: even prisoners and mentally disturbed people?
9/6/2013 22:33: George: Its a no no for mentally disturbed n prisoners cos they wil wreak havoc n adults its bout choice
9/6/2013 22:34: Siyabonga: Ok. Do you think its ok for porn to depict forced sex or rape to arouse viewers?
9/6/2013 22:34: George: Al of da above its rong
9/6/2013 22:35: Siyabonga: Last question. Why do you think so many people are against porn?
9/6/2013 22:36: George: They r against reality its a matter of self control dats it
9/6/2013 22:37: Siyabonga: Reality being porn?
9/6/2013 22:38: George: Porn is sex n everybody is doing it
9/6/2013 22:38: Siyabonga: Hahah! I get you. Thank you so much for your time. 
9/6/2013 22:38: Siyabonga: We have finished.
9/6/2013 22:39: George: Ohk surely u did get yo answers
9/6/2013 22:39: Siyabonga: Well of course! Thank you very much.
9/6/2013 22:40: George: I just saw yo pix r u on da left or rite
9/6/2013 22:42: Siyabonga: I am the guy holding up a water bottle. If you want to check out Phase1 you check out this link when you have time. http://is.gd/JBT8mP. Do you have any questions about the research?
9/6/2013 22:43: George: U said u doin masters at wits y da research ya porn n yo name is
9/6/2013 22:46: Siyabonga: Its a PhD not masters. Name is Yolo Siyabonga Koba. Well, I am doing research on porn because it the least researched field in academia yet it affects so many people. It makes so much money. That means billions of people watch it.  so why are we academics running away from it? 
9/6/2013 22:49: George: Thats y i said reality must kick in cos its a billion dollar business
9/6/2013 22:50: Siyabonga: Exactly! Thank you so much again for your kindness!
9/6/2013 22:51: George: U welcome
9/6/2013 22:52: Siyabonga: 

Friday, August 23, 2013 - 6:58 PM

Litha: 26 Male, Black. Single. Lives In Johannesburg. Started watching porn at age 13 but first saw Xx rated porn at age 15. Litha is an actor who features on a South African

TV programme.

**Judah Studdy**
Good evening! :)

**Litha**
Evening!!!
So THIS is gtalk. Interesting.

**Judah Studdy**
yep!
Thank you for agreeing to the interview :)

**Litha**
No problem.

**Judah Studdy**
shall we begin?

**Litha**
Leggo.

**Judah Studdy**
great!
so

**Litha**
So...

**Judah Studdy**
would you mind confirming your age, sex and race for me please?

**Litha**
No, I don't. I'm 26, male and black.

**Judah Studdy**
thanks.
do you think it's important that we talk or study about porn consumption?

**Litha**
Absolutely. I was reading your motivation for this area of interest and I agree. Sexual attitudes are revealed through how sex is consumed as a product of culture.

**Judah Studdy**
Thanks. :)
so what is porn in your understanding?
what makes a picture or video porn?

**Litha**
Well, I would say its the explicit display of any sexual activity for the purpose of sexual gratification. That's a very broad definition, but for me, anytime the genitals are displayed for the purpose of sexual arousal would constitute porn.

**Judah Studdy**
cool!
would you mind telling me your relationship status...?
are you married. single, in a long term relationshio, short term relationship, have sex partner?

**Litha**
Lmao! I'm in a relationship with Christ.
But seriously, I'm currently single. Steadfastly so...

**Judah Studdy**
hahaha!!
ok
when did you start watching porn? can you remember?

**Litha**
Hmmm. I would say 1998/9. It was when e-tv first started airing those soft core late-night films (though back then it actually came on at 21:00, till the censors made them move it to a more inappropriate hour).

**Judah Studdy**
lol

**Litha**
But the first time I saw explicit XXX-rated films was much later...

**Judah Studdy**
ok.

**Litha**
Probably in 2001.
But...
The first time I watched gay porn was in second year varsity, if you can believe it.

**Judah Studdy**
would you clarify how old you were at both times..i.e. when you first watched the ETV porn and when you watched your first XXx rated film?
hmm....

**Litha**
Oh, I'm sorry: in their respective order; 13...15...21/2.

**Judah Studdy**
Ok. Thanks. so the first Xxx rated porn you watched was straight porn?
how so?
why?
was it because it was the first readily available?

**Litha**
Not only straight, but white. At the time I went to an all white school and was still in the closet. I was with my two white male friends. I didn't have access to other material because as a child, avenues of getting adult entertainment were denied me.

I couldn't even get an erection, because the image was so removed from me.

I couldn't relate to those white heterosexuals.

**Judah Studdy**
wow! I can imagine.

**Litha**
Even trying to identify with the females was tough because the male gaze was too imposing.

And at the time I hadn't discovered masturbation.

So to me, it was more like watching a documentary.

**Judah Studdy**
hahahaha!! I hear you. Can you tell me a bit more about that experience. How long was that film? Where were you guys watching? How many were you?

:)

**Litha**
It was the three of us at this boy Jimmy's* house. The film was long but nonetheless fascinating. It was some very 70s looking film. Hmmm. In hindsight, Jimmy probably got that stash from his dad (I was raised by a single-mother at the time, which then explains my lack of access to porn perhaps). The film was probably deep throat. I remember Jimmy's black domestic worker judging us...me in particular.

**Judah Studdy**
hahaha!!

**Litha**
I remember feeling more shame that I was with the only black kid in the room, than that this woman old enough to be my mother was seeing me watch porn.

**Judah Studdy**
fascinating! Would you say that for most of that hour you felt akward?

**Litha**
Extremely, but I embraced that awkward experience. My other friend Tom* was masturbating next to me, which titillated and freaked me out at the same time. I was glad that I wasn't THAAAAT comfortable.

**Judah Studdy**
lol

**Litha**
In a way, I am kind of jealous of Tom.

**Judah Studdy**
why?

why jealous?

**Litha**
I wish I had been so sure about my sexuality and my body at that age. It wouldve probably saved me from the subsequent years of self-loathing and doubt.

**Judah Studdy**
ok.
I hear you.

**Litha**
Tom's sexuality was affirmed on the screen.
Mine wasn't.

**Judah Studdy**
so you are saying that because he was able to masturbate or because of something else?
are taking his masturbating in front of the screen as an affirming of his sexuality?

**Litha**
Because he was able to masturbate and that he had material that stimulated him. I think that's healthy.

**Judah Studdy**
:)

**Litha**
Deprivation is the word I'd use to describe my burgeoning sexuality. Oh well.

**Judah Studdy**
I hear you
before we move on
any other thing you would like to share about that experience?

**Litha**
That it wasn't a negative experience for me. In fact, looking back it was probably the first spark into me being the race, gender and sexuality concious man I am today. Seeing Tom and Jimmy showed me what pleasure looked like and could feel like.

**Judah Studdy**
cool! erlier, you said something interesting about feeling shame and you said it was about being the only black kid in the room. Why was that a source of shame for you?
in relation to the maid...

**Litha**
She looked at me as if I was her son. I generally always had that feeling when I was saw my white friend's domestic workers. A kind of knowing that their son was probably not allowed in that living room. Maybe shame isn't the word. Guilt, perhaps.
I felt it was also awkward for her having to serve me.

**Judah Studdy**
Ok. I hear you.
were there any OTHER feeling perhaps of guilt BECAUSE you felt that porn was bad?
or wrong?

**Litha**
Hmmm. Not wrong, just not allowed. Does that make sense?

**Judah Studdy**
yes!

**Litha**
It was kind of like my sexuality.

**Judah Studdy**
hmmm.....ok

**Litha**
I've never felt myself to be depraved. Just disallowed.

**Judah Studdy**
I hear you.
so where do you watch porn when you do watch porn currently?

**Litha**
In my room, usually before I fall asleep.

**Judah Studdy**
where do you access it?
phone?

**Litha**
Yeah. Blackberries are amazing.

**Judah Studdy**
hahah!
and do you JUST watch porn by yourself?
:)

**Litha**
Define by myself.

**Judah Studdy**
ALWAYS?
aren't there times when you watch with some else?
someone else?

**Litha**
I'm still not clear, and let me tell you why.

**Judah Studdy**
ok

**Litha**
Am I alone in my room, yes. Always. Although sometimes my friend, who considers himself a connoisseur will show me the videos he downloads on his phone while at his house.
But...

**Judah Studdy**
ok

**Litha**

Porn for me has changed since the days when I would watch e-tv alone in a dark room while everyone was asleep. The website where I download porn has so many social network features that I am never alone in my experiencing of certain materials.

**Judah Studdy**
ok.
:)

**Litha**
Videos are 'liked' by visitors of the site, which helps me sort through just the avalanche of videos that are available. People comment on the video, and even help me if I need information on, say, the stars of the film.

**Judah Studdy**
yes

**Litha**
Also, people review the video in the comment section and full on discussions can happen. Unlike with Tom and Jimmy I now can participate in a real discussion of sex with others who think and desire like me. I even sometimes challenge statements I find problematic with other viewers, so it becomes a site of mini activism.
Pornography in 2013 is a social activity.

**Judah Studdy**
I hear you
ok
because of the existence of cyber communities
I hear you and completely agree

**Litha**
Exactly! Yes.

**Judah Studdy**
so what you are saying is that even if you are watching by yourself you never really feel you ARE JUST by yourself? Am I correct?

**Litha**
100%. I don't feel alone, both socially and spiritually. Plus, the share icon means I can share the material with my friends.

**Judah Studdy**
do you sometimes do that?
share some videos with your friends?

**Litha**
They do. My friends and I have a BBM group where they give me links or post pictures of us to discuss.
We always discuss the...er...texts and compare to our sexual experience. So we'll say "I start off in X position because penetration is a lot easier." Etc.

**Judah Studdy**
Ok.

**Litha**
Also, my friends often show me their sex partners sex pics.
Does that count as porn?

**Judah Studdy**
hmm...
do they appear naked?
fully naked?
semi-naked?

**Litha**
Not really. Just their erect penises. Selfies really.

**Judah Studdy**
Selfies? ...please clarify

**Litha**
Selfies are basically any picture (sexual or not) that you take of yourself with your phone or camera.

**Judah Studdy**
awsome! Did not know...

**Litha**
So if a guy sends you a dick-pic, its basically a selfie.

**Judah Studdy**
So its a Selfie only when its sexual in nature right?

**Litha**
In fact, a lot of pornographic blogs show guys flashing their private parts while looking the mirror holding their cameras
No, not always.

**Judah Studdy**
if its a picture of his face its not a selfie?

**Litha**
If you take any picture of yourself...if you are both cameraman and model...its a selfie.

**Judah Studdy**
oh. Ok. I get it
I understand the cyber group dynamic but tell me something. Apart from that, would you or have you watched porn with someone in your own material, presence?

**Litha**
A lot of FB profile pics are selfies.
I have before.

**Judah Studdy**
how was that like?
apart from the childhood experience

**Litha**
I've been to clubs that openly display gay pornography (see what I mean about porn being a social activity). It feels okay, but you don't wanna be THAT guy who came to a sex club to watch porn. Eventually you gotta move.

**Judah Studdy**
ok.

**Litha**
Um...I've watched porn with friends. They'd get bored but I'm always very interested. And turned on.
I'd never watch porn with my boyfriend though.

**Judah Studdy**
hahaha!! Funny because I was coming to that in a few minutes
why wouldn't you watch poen wth your boyfriend?

**Litha**
Because a part of me is scared that the guys that he finds hot won't look anything like me.
I'm scared it'll breed suspicion and self-doubt.

**Judah Studdy**
hmm...
I hear you

**Litha**
The thing is, even though I now have access to black gay porn, more often than not, the men depicted are a particular kind, a trope.

**Judah Studdy**
true.

**Litha**
In black porn, there's a certain rigid aesthetic. All the men are pretty much reduced to a kind of thug primitivism. I'm nothing like that. I'm scared that my boyfriend will not realise that, and another part of me is scared of him realising it; him realising that I'll never be THAT guy.
And I will especially not watch inter racial porn with my boyfriend. Nuh-uhh!

**Judah Studdy**
hahaha!! I hear you. So would you have a problem with your boyfriend watching porn EVEN by himself then? (not with you). Any why the heavy objection to inter-racial porn?

**Litha**
No, I wouldn't mind. He can even tell me about it. I just don't want to be there when he's watching it. I don't even want to see his stash.

**Judah Studdy**
ok

**Litha**
The idea of him fantasising of being with a white guy will send me!

**Judah Studdy**
oww!

**Litha**
First of all I hate inter racial porn. I always suspect the black guy is being exploited somehow.

**Judah Studdy**
hmm...how so?
is it when the black guy is neing penetrated
OR
being penetrated sorry
Or as a general suspicion you have no matter who is doing the penetration?

**Litha**
I read an article once about black (heterosexual) porn stars who spoke of how they are treated in the industry. They said that white porn stars not only generally get higher wages, but will also demand higher wages for sleeping with a black guy or girl. I can't imagine it being different for gay porn.
Hmmm...

**Judah Studdy**
hmm...
I hear you
did you want to add anything before we go on?

**Litha**
For me, I feel sad when I see a black man being penetrated by a white man because I feel the black man is being re-colonised in some way; as if the white guy is playing out his fear and loathing towards blacks by the sheer brutality of the act. But I feel just disgusted and offended when the white man is being penetrated by the black man because its like this white guy is living out his mandingo fantasy. I'm not quite sure who is it in that case I'm more offended by.
I'd prefer inter racial porn if they flipped-flopped - ie switched sex roles.
Now THAT'S what I call affirmative action! ;)

**Judah Studdy**
hahahaha!!!
fascinating stuff
Thanks for that
:)

**Litha**
No problem. Anything else?

**Judah Studdy**
Do you consider it racist for a white person to watch ONLY white porn?
or a black person to watch ONLY black porn?

**Litha**
No, not at all.

**Judah Studdy**
why not?
note that I said ONLY

**Litha**
But I doubt the latter exclusively watches only black porn.
Why not? Because it makes sense that one would find their racial kind more sexually appealing than any other race.
As a black gay guy I'd love to watch only black porn, but that's just impossible.
And therein lies white privilege.

**Judah Studdy**

")

:)

**Litha**

Whites can see their sexual selves in a variety of sexual contacts but blacks...not so much. In black gay porn, they don't show any kind of warmth or sensuality towards each other. Instead they degrade and humiliate each other, and call each other names often derogatory racist ones. Add to that the fact that the porn is of a much lower visual standar than white (or inter racial, which, for me, is already a complicated viewing experience) porn, and you have yourself a film text that treats you, the black viewer, with contempt for even watching it.

Its like your mother or a maid is reprimanding you for having viewed it, perhaps. Hmmm...

**Judah Studdy**

I get it. So is that why you said its impossible for a black guy to watch ONLY black porn?

**Litha**

Sorry, I meant a variety of sexual CONTEXTS.

**Judah Studdy**

I understand

:)

**Litha**

Because just search the words gay porn and you're bombarded with white men. (In fact, you can even leave out the word porn: white gay man RUN THIS). Whites generally run the gay industry, particularly white Americans, where blacks are the minority. And bear in mind, I'm using the word black, not the American use of the word which – thanks to the one-drop-rule - shows us images of biracial men who are called black.

Our image as Africans is rarely affirmed, even in porn. And when it is, it is in the most humiliating light.

**Judah Studdy**

I get you.

**Litha**

And, yes, I am aware of the irony of discussing respectability politics and porn, but its another reason why a lot more research needs to be done in the field of pornography. We can't talk about transformation, if peoples very fantasies are circumvented by white supremacy.

**Judah Studdy**

so true!

I completely agree.

why do you say its' "ironic" to talk about respectability politics and porn?

do you think porn is not respectable?

**Litha**

Not that its not respectable, but because porn (like all images) is about fantasy. And it is also a fact that we are all - black, white, gay, straight, bisexual- turned on by things that are unfair. To ask that there be some kind of intervention is cutting into the very fibre of the principal of healthy sexual outlets. And that's the irony and flaw in my rant.

**Judah Studdy**

hmm...

so are you saying that sex in its very nature is loaded with "unfairness" or power dynamics OR which we should accept OR you saying that it is IMAGES that are?

let me phrase that again

so are you saying that sex in its very nature is loaded with "unfairness" or power dynamics which we should accept OR you saying that it is IMAGES that are?

**Litha**

No. Not sex. Not images. But fantasy.

**Judah Studdy**

owww

ok

I get you

awsome

**Litha**

Our fantasies are structurally shaped by institutions. This means that in many ways we erotisise power.
So, that's why certain bodies aren't glorified in our culture; for so many sexiness is equated with physical perfection. Which is inherently unfair. One of the biggest lies ever sold to us is that beauty is something one can see with the naked eye. But one can't see it, because beauty is a social construct; we are all maimed and disfigured by heterosexism, patriarchy and white domination. I guess porn illustrates those very tensions within us.

Our porn won't change if we don't.

**Judah Studdy**

completely agree.

I know I asked you to set aside 1hr3omin of your time for this interview but it has obviously exceeded that time. I hope I am not keeping you from any other plans you might have. What would you like to do? Do you want us to continue another time or shall we continue? I would LOVE to continue but that would mean at least another hour of your time. Would that be ok?

with you?

**Litha**

Yeah, sure. I'm good for another hour.

**Judah Studdy**

You are a reservoir of information and that's why this interview has run over it's normal time

ok thanks

:)

I get you. One last question on the issue of race before we move on

**Litha**

Ok.

**Judah Studdy**

earlier you said that it makes sense for people to get attracted to people of their own race. But what about those black people who find themselves attracted almost exclusively to white porn?

could that be considered a sign of self-loating?

loathing sorry...

lol

**Litha**

Absolutely. Particularly for heterosexual black men, because white women are the ultimate symbol of STATUS. Its important to remember that the one-drop-rule was borne out of the anxiety of white slave owners, who loved all of the privilege and status that comes with being white. They feared that if they keep on raping their slaves that the purity of their white blood would be compromised, stained. There needed to be system that would allow the white rac to multiply and continue in their quest for domination. Hence the elevation of white women. And this is why, regardles of patriarchy, that white supremacy benefits white woman - in fact, more than- white men. This is because white men

are bound by the genetic fact that the only way for white men to exist is through white women. And this is why white woman are the ultimate symbol of pro creation, because they are the mother seed of the white race, and their only way into existence.

This is why white porn stars make the most money out of every other group.

**Judah Studdy**

Yes. I hear you.

**Litha**

Where does this leave the black man, a man so disenfranchised that he has forgotten his own worth?
The only real status that he has in the world is over black women (the bitches who made him black and put him in this blasted position) and his offspring who come from him. When he only watches white porn its not the woman he wants, but rather the STATUS she can give him and his offspring!

In the case of black same gender loving men, their relationship with porn is a bit more interesting.

**Judah Studdy**

oh. how?

is it because of what you said earlier?

that they don't have a wide ranging offer of porn that can cater to their needs?

**Litha**

The only gay people who have power in the world are white gay man. This is further perpetuated by the myth that being gay is unafrican, and comes from white men. What black gay men really want is power over the world. And remember, porn is the viewing of eroticised power relations. Black gay men watch white on white porn and identify with those subjects, imagining themselves having that kind of power, and enjoying their sexuality without restriction and shame. They not only want white men, but they actually want that power.

That's my theory anyway.

**Judah Studdy**

wow!

I hear you

**Litha**

This also explains why black women make the least money in porn.

Because her womb only produces more blackness. Which is devastating in an anti-black world.

Ask yourself; when have you ever seen a porno with a dark skinned black woman wearing her natural hair.
Hardly ever. In order for the black porn actress to compete and survive is to do some formation of the white girl drag.

Its sad actually.

**Judah Studdy**

Most of the people I have spoken to so far do not read on how porn is produced and the politics of the porn industry. I see you have also taken an interest in reading about how porn is made? Why is that?

**Litha**

Because I consume pornography. And because I'm race concious. Plus, I am in the entertainment industry. These thir important that I am aware of the mechanisms of pornography particularly from a critical point of view.

**Judah Studdy**

Great!

Earlier on you spoke about how you had seen or viewed porn at gay clubs in the presence of many other people. Could you tell me how the experience of viewing porn by yourself is, compared to the experience of watching it in a group for you? You also spoke about instances where you had watched porn with your friends. How is that different to when you watch porn by yourself?

**Litha**

In a group I find there is pressure not to enjoy it too much, lest you be singled out. Watching it by myself I am in full control and am uninhibited; I can fast-forward or skip certain parts. I don't have to restrain myself. Plus, with other gay men there's pressure to watch penetrative sex, which really isn't the most sexually stimulating part for me.

**Judah Studdy**

oh! Tell me which porn is most stimulating for you please.

what is your "favourite porn"?

**Litha**

For me, I really love kissing. I think for me that's the best part. Because in porn one sees the kind of kissing that isn't really permissible on standard film and television. I think that is hot. Which is sad because black gay porn rarely has such scenes. I love the sensuality of four play. For me its the act of physically loving someone. Which is hot. I also have a very intense and secret foot fetish, so I can literally bring myself to orgasm at the site of a fully clothed barefoot man.

If I feel embarrassed it is because of that.

**Judah Studdy**

ok

**Litha**

Because if being gay is about wanting full on penetrative sex, then in some way, I feel shame in falling short of that standard.

**Judah Studdy**

hmm....

ok I hear you.

So in other words you wouldnt watch "foot-fetish" porn in front of your friends or other gay people?

**Litha**

No, I wouldn't. Lol.

**Judah Studdy**

I understand.

**Litha**

Even though my friends also have foot fetishes all round.

They actually don't know that I do too.

Its weird.

**Judah Studdy**

hmm....

hmm....I understand.

who knows about your porn-watching?

**Litha**

Pretty much everybody.

**Judah Studdy**

if you can just list them for me

so your family knows?

**Litha**

Well, my sister and my brother know.

**Judah Studdy**
ok

**Litha**
Not mom.

**Judah Studdy**
and your friends as you said earlier

**Litha**
Yeah.

**Judah Studdy**
but it sounds like they don't know ALL about WHICH type of porn you like
how would you feel
if your friends accidentally caught you watching "foot-fetish porn?"
would it be embarrassing?

**Litha**
That's true. I would feel angry and cheated, in addition to being embarrassed. I live a life where I share and express so much about and of myself that there are very little parts of me that I keep to myself. When I came out of the closet, I've lived a life without having one secret. That, in a way, made me lonely. Its nice having a part of my sexuality that is just mine: not my friends', not my boyfriends'. Just mine.
And thank God for porn 2013, I know its a secret I share with millions of other people.

**Judah Studdy**
hahaha!!

**Litha**
For me porn is such a relief, a huge weight off my shoulders.

**Judah Studdy**
we gonna talk about that in a minute.
Does your sexual orientation determine which type of porn you watch
for example
as an openly gay man, do you ALSO ever watch straight porn?
or bisexual porn

**Litha**
I don't watch straight porn. I tried once, but the site of a vagina freaked me out.

**Judah Studdy**
hahah!

**Litha**
And for me watching a naked woman isn't porn.

**Judah Studdy**
Do you prefer to watch sex with or without condoms?

**Litha**

With. Always. Without condoms I step away from the fantasy, and I enter documentary territory. I find myself worrying about the actors.

**Judah Studdy**
I understand
because of STI's and HIV right?
or is there another reason?

**Litha**
Exactly. Especially in black gay porn.

**Judah Studdy**
ok
Do you have any favourite porn stars?

**Litha**
I used to love Eddie Diaz, but now I'm a fan of Scott Alexander.
Those guys are hot. But the only way those black guys are porn stars is for their inter racial work.

**Judah Studdy**
so when you search for porn, do you mostly search for those specific porn actors?

**Litha**
Not really, and not recently. I'm always open to discovering new talent.

**Judah Studdy**
ok
do you keep porn?
or store it?

**Litha**
No, I delete it once I've watched the download.

**Judah Studdy**
why?

**Litha**
The memory on my phone is very limited. Plus I get bored really quickly. I don't even a single hollywood DVD.
*own

**Judah Studdy**
ok

**Litha**
The idea of watching anything repeatedly doesn't excite me.

**Judah Studdy**
ok
How often do you view porn and how long does each session normally last?

**Litha**
Maximum 15 minutes.

**Judah Studdy**
ok
and how often do you watch?
e.g
once per week
once everyday
?

**Litha**
It really depends on my sleeping patterns. I watch porn to aide masturbation, which helps me sleep.
My sleep patterns are irregular.
This month has pretty much meant that I've watched a scene a day.
But they have all been images not videos. Feet.

**Judah Studdy**
because you have been struggling to sleep more?

**Litha**
Exactly. It always helps.

**Judah Studdy**
ok
That takes me back to what I said we would return to.
earlier you said that porn
is a relief
and a weight off your shoulders
can you tell me of the number of ways you would say porn helps you?

**Litha**
Well, it gives shape to what at times feels like my confusing sexuality. Its a moment of privacy and a chance for me to reflect on what actually turns me on. It aides me in sleep. And like I said, I feel less of a weirdo. I would worry if the things that do turn me on were illegal or worse, not available. Wouldn't that be terrifying?

**Judah Studdy**
hahaha!
I hear you.

**Litha**
Coming out of the closet means that I now am very protective of my sexuality. Its mine to enjoy regardless of my relati
The porn I watch is a testament to this. Porn empowered me.
Even from the very beginning.

**Judah Studdy**
.hmm...porn as empowerment. So that means that you don't believe that porn should feature people under the age of 18, even those who would love to act in porn since this is illegal?

**Litha**
Children should never be the stars or the producers of pornography.
Then its not sex.
Its torture and trauma.

**Judah Studdy**

I agree

Are there any sexual practices that you enjoy which you think you would not have discovered without watching porn? Would you mind mentioning them

**Litha**

Rim jobs. If I hadn't seen them in porn, I would find them completely obscene. Now, they are a key feature in my sexual reportois (sp).

Even blow jobs.

**Judah Studdy**

So you would say that porn has TAUGHT you about sex?

taught you some things about sex?

**Litha**

Porn has taught me things about myself.

**Judah Studdy**

That was my next question

lol

Is there anything you have discovered about yourself or your sexual tastes/desires by watching porn?

**Litha**

Sex itself is still very much a mystery to me.

That for all my liberalism, I'm actually quite conservative. I never watch or enjoy images threesome, foursomes, or moresomes because I guess I believe that sex is for two people who love each other. (Or 2 people who love sex).

But not judging anyone who likes other kinds of porn as well.

**Judah Studdy**

hmm

I understand

so you never watch foursomes at all?

or threesomes then?

**Litha**

Nah. Not my thing.

**Judah Studdy**

ok

Do you consider yourself liberal minded for watching porn?

Do you generally think that people who watch porn should be considered "liberal minded"?

**Litha**

Not really. The porn that I watch is pretty vanilla. There's some really crazy stuff out there; animal porn, snuff films...et

**Judah Studdy**

what do you think of bestiality or "animal porn"

?

**Litha**

I think its grossly inhumane and abusive to the performer and animal alike. But that's my opinion.

**Judah Studdy**

I hear you
earlier you said that your sessions last you about 15 minutes

**Litha**
I guess what I'm saying is that porn doesn't dictate my politics. My politics dictate my porn.
Yes I did. Maximum.

**Judah Studdy**
are there times when you exceed this time? Never?

**Litha**
I'm sure I have.

**Judah Studdy**
when? can you think back to those times?
what caused you to exceed your average time?

**Litha**
When I was with friends or in public. See, there I watched more porn than I could actually stomach.

**Judah Studdy**
So but you never exceed 15 minutes when you are alone?

**Litha**
Never.

**Judah Studdy**
hmmm....

**Litha**
Like I said, 15 is the maximum.

**Judah Studdy**
How would you describe your feelings when viewing porn?
that moment
of watching
what is it like?
:)

**Litha**
Disappointing.
Nudity is always disappointing.
Sex is always disappointing. Even when its great.
This is because it never quite matches the ideal, the fantasy.
And I think maybe that's why I don't hold onto it for long.

**Judah Studdy**
Ok
I hear you

**Litha**
Hey, is there anyway to wrap this up? I'm getting a little tired.

**Judah Studdy**
Would you like us to talk again maybe tomorrow or another time? We only have a few questions left now (about 5). I don't want you to be tired when answering the questions. Would love it if you were at your best. I can sense you a bit tired.
lol
read my mind

**Litha**
Yeah. When?

**Judah Studdy**
just tell me what time suits you. Tomorrow I have another online interview at 12pm. They normally last for about 1hr30 minutes....
so we could make it anytime after 2
or before 11 am
anytime after 3 sorry

**Litha**
The day is bad for me. What about same time tomorrow?

**Judah Studdy**
that's great too!!
7pm right?

**Litha**
Sounds like a plan!

**Judah Studdy**
Thanks :)
Sweet dreams. See you tomorrow

**Litha**
Kewl! Goodnight

**27-08-2013**

**Judah Studdy**
Good day!
are you still available today at 7pm?

Tuesday, August 27, 2013 - 7:04 PM

**Judah Studdy**

Good day!
are you there?

**Litha**
Here!

**Judah Studdy**
hi
:)
was just about to send you an email
are you ready?

**Litha**
Hi! So sorry. I was eating.

**Judah Studdy**
its ok

**Litha**
Ready.

**Judah Studdy**
would you mind if we started in 15 minutes? I need to wrap up this last interview...
so you can also finish eating
lol

**Litha**
Okay!

**Judah Studdy**
Ta
Ok. I think we can start if you are ready!
:)

**Litha**
Ready!

**Judah Studdy**
Thank you!
Do you think that porn should feature people under the age of 18? As in act in it, if they wish to?

**Litha**
No.
Not at all.

**Judah Studdy**
ok. why?
imagine this 17 year old
who says he wants to act in porn
why shouldn;t he be allowed?

**Litha**
Because they can wait one more year. If we allow him to do it, then there's a slippery slope to contend with.
Today 17.
Then 16.

**Judah Studdy**
lol

**Litha**
Then 15.

**Judah Studdy**
ok

**Litha**
And you see where I'm goingm
*.

**Judah Studdy**
yes
Do you think that any adult who wants porn should access to it?
should have access to it?

**Litha**
Look, I don't think there should be government grants for it, but sure. In fact, they probably already do. Thanks to mobile internet connection access to porn is so effortless.
And I personally believe the internet is a human right.

**Judah Studdy**
so you are saying that even prisoners and mentally disturbed individuals should have access if they wish so?
access to porn?

**Litha**
Yes, I do.

**Judah Studdy**
ok
have you ever tried to stop watching porn?
at any point?

**Litha**
To deny them is to say don't masturbate or enjoy your sexuality. People have a right to it.
No. Why should I?

**Judah Studdy**
lol
lol

**Litha**

Let me explain something;

**Judah Studdy**
yes please do

**Litha**
To me, porn is a means towards masturbation. Yes, I can get off without it, but porn helps. To say others shouldn't have access to it, is to say people shouldn't have a sexuality. Porn, to me, is an acknowledgement of sexual desires and curiosity. What is wrong with that?

We show images of violence without thinking twice. Murder is a typical plot point in comic books. Yet, something that can be expressed lovingly, and is a part of human development is treated like the ultimate sacrilege.

Honestly, I think people oppose pornography for the same reason they oppose, say, homosexuality; because they think they have to.

**Judah Studdy**
Thanks

I agree.

Tell me how do you feel about BDSM porn?

**Litha**
Well, its not my cup of tea, but it could be fun.

**Judah Studdy**
lol

ok

Do you think people who watch porn should be considered mentally liberated people?

let me rephrase

Do you think people who watch porn CAN be considered mentally liberated people

**Litha**
Please do.

**Judah Studdy**
for watching porn?

**Litha**
Nah, not necessarily. Practice and ideology do not always match.

**Judah Studdy**
ok.

Do you ALWAYS enjoy watching porn or are there times when you feel that the act of watching is not so enjoyable?

**Litha**
Not always. Porn is like coca-cola; its only good when you crave it. Otherwise, it can be boring.

**Judah Studdy**
lol

have you found yourself in one of those moments before? When it was just boring?

**Litha**
Yeah. Its usually just after I orgasm. And other times its when I don't find what I'm really looking for.

So, the actors aren't particularly attractive.
The sex seems painful.
Or I find something offensive.

**Judah Studdy**
ok. Thank you very much! We are practically done! :) I Have asked you all the questions I needed. :)

**Litha**
Oh wow!

**Judah Studdy**
hahaha!!

**Litha**
How'd I do?

**Judah Studdy**
I told you all that was left were just 4 or 5 questions
You were FANTASTIC!
that's why we had to finish
you were the longest online interview I have ever had
over 4hrs

**Litha**
I'll take that as a compliment. It was fun.

**Judah Studdy**
Thank you!
I spoke to Luyanda today

**Litha**
No problem. Oh? I'm sure she must have been interesting!

**Judah Studdy**
It definitely is a complement. She said that she got info about the research from you.
She was definitely amazing! Just want to say thank you.
listen

**Litha**
Yeah?

**Judah Studdy**
if you remember anything else that you want to share or anything you might have forgotten, feel free to drop me an email.
:)

**Litha**
Thank you. I'll keep that in mind. Good luck with other interview subjects!

**Judah Studdy**
Thank you! :). With this research, I need all the luck! lol
enjoy your evening

**Litha**
You too!