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Porn 2.0 straight from the horse's mouth

Consumption and Production of User Generated Content

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Abstract

The research of pornography has always been sorrowful and affected by many accusations of researchers being 'Porn apologists dressing up personal convictions to look more objective by attaching the word "studies" to the title of their journal' or often according to anti-porn advocates they were 'expressing their own opinions rather than producing research' and were likely to write 'fulsome articles [...] declaring "porn is wonderful for men" (Atwood & Smith, 2014, p. 8). Their work was 'ill-considered post-modernist and populist positioning, rather than critical analysis (Atwood & Smith, 2014, p. 8). On the other hand being critical of pornography did not stand in neutral light either. In pornography context being "critical" was always associated with being anti-porn in the sense of producing 'criticism of pornography', with fault-finding and condemnation being of primary importance, but this research is not anti-porn neither pro-porn oriented wishing to contribute to greater understanding of consumer culture rather than identifying faults of it. Consumers in the research of pornography are objects of a great controversy (McKee, 2005a). There are ongoing debates of how pornography damages individuals (Hamilton, 2004, p. 4) with the attention to relationship issues, violence, sexual abuse or crimes, particularly on young individuals. Such opinions are usually raised in public debates by politicians, journalists, church leaders and academics; however the voice of consumers and prosumers of user generated pornography is missing. The only time it is heard is while those who consider themselves as "addicts" are seeking to stop watching pornography (Taylor, 2005). Thus consumers and prosumers of user generated content (UGC) are misrepresented, stigmatized, objects of epistemic violence. In our study we offer qualitative study from the perspective of consumers and producers employing consumer culture theoretical framework. We investigate prosumer culture of UGC content challenging academics criticism of porn consumers and their actions revealing new areas of study and broadening the understanding of UGC content representing previously unheard consumers and prosumers.

Keywords: porn, pornography, user generated content, Porn 2.0, netporn, amateur, consumer culture, prosumer,

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CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

1.1 Pornography - What is it and where did it come from?

The word pornography resembles the modern Greek πορνογραφία (pornographia), which derives from the Greek words πόρνη (pornē "prostitute" and πορνεία porneia "prostitution" (Hyde, 1964), and γράφειν (graphein "to write or to record", derived meaning "illustration", cf. "graph"), and the suffix -ία (-ia, meaning "state of", "property of", or "place of"), thus pornography means "a written description or illustration of prostitutes or prostitution" (Liddell & Scott, 1996).

The contemporary understanding of "pornography" or "porn" is not explicit. The term 'pornography' usually refers to representations designed to arouse and give sexual pleasure to those who read, see, hear, or otherwise interact with them. In a more general sense, the term "pornographic" constantly shifts in meaning along an immense gamut moving between two equally slippery concepts, the erotic and the obscene (Slade, 2000). An erotic, sometimes referred to as "soft-porn", representation is usually considered socially acceptable and is at times associated with upper-class sensibilities in the sense that it can even be considered as art. Gloria Steinem, among others, claims that the differences between the pornographic and the erotic are not always obvious. Al Goldstein maintains that, the distinction between the erotic and the pornographic is biased by gender, class and personal preference. "Eroticism is what turns me on. Pornography is what turns you on" (Slade, 2001).

The main problem with defining pornography, and with differentiating pornography from erotica, is that the historical, social and cultural milieu does play a role (D'Orlando, 2011). The perception of what pornography is and what it is not changes over time and it varies across cultures, what was considered pornographic 10 years ago in western cultures is perhaps no longer perceived that same way today. However, overall there is a notion of an ongoing de-tabooing of pornography and a pornification / pornografication of society (McNair, 2014). Furthermore, the perception of what pornography is or is not is often linked to an individual's cultural, moral and religious beliefs, so that different people in the same country and in the same epoch differ on the categorization. Finally, since various groups (feminists, conservatives, religious figures, etc.) put up a fight against pornography, the definitions are strongly influenced by the different cultural traits of the different groups and by the motivations behind their objections (Rea, 2001).

According to Rea (2001, p. 130), the definitions of what pornography is fall essentially into six different types, namely: '(1) those that define 'pornography' as the sale of sex for profit. (2) those that define it as a form of bad art. (3) those that define it as the portrayal of men and/or women as, or only as, sexual beings

or sexual objects. (4) those that define it as a form of obscenity. (5) those that define it as a form of (or contributor to) oppression, (6) those that define it as material that is intended to produce, or has the effect of producing, sexual arousal.' The latter three categories of definitions are the ones that tend to be the most prominent.

For majority of Americans, pornography means peep shows, striptease, live sex acts, hardcore videos, adult cable programming, sexual aids and devices, explicit telephone and computer messages, adult magazines and raunchy fiction. Conservatives might add prime-time television programming, soap operas, Music Television (MTV) and rock music, romance novels, fashion magazines and all R-rated movies (Attwood, 2010). Sometimes sexuality and violence are represented together, which leads some critics to think of sexual representations as inherently aggressive. Others, noticing that most sexual representations contain no violence, condemn only those examples that do mix the two. Some see pornography as an expression of sexual liberation, which is beneficial for society, others claim that 'porn takes on the mythic quality of the biblical plague ... deadly in its spiral of addiction' (Attwood, 2010, p. 18). Walter Kendrick points out that pornography "is not a thing but an argument" (Slade, 2000).

By now it is clear to see that porn as such is not a recent phenomenon, nor was it born out of nothing, but rather it has evolved throughout history. Perhaps it is the recently increased accessibility that sometimes leads us to think of it as a very modern day phenomenon and/or problem.

1.2 The evolution of porn

The pornographic industry has undergone a long journey of transformation since the first erotic novels appeared in the 18th century (Wiki). After the invention of photography, the main milestone in the development of the porn industry was the appearance of printed magazines, started by Playboy (1953) and followed by Penthouse (1959) and Hustler (1973) (Dines, 2010). Before Playboy, pornographic magazines were not circulated through mainstream channels of distribution, so access to them was limited (Dines, 2010). Interestingly, the idea behind Playboy was not to invite readers to 'masturbate to the centerfold but rather to enter the world of cultural elite, to discuss philosophy and to consume food associated with the upper-middle class' (Dines, 2010, p. 7). Vivid Entertainment, once the world's largest porn studio launched in 1984, contributed to the development and the spreading of pornography in the moving picture format (generating estimated revenues of 100 million dollars). The crucial factor for the sudden growth of the porn industry was the technological development that allowed consumers to buy and consume porn in private (Dines, 2010).

However, it was the birth of the Internet as a publically accessible medium in 1993 that would truly revolutionize the industry with its powerful 'triple A' engine of Accessible, Affordable and Anonymous sexual possibilities (Copper, 1998), which created countless new opportunities (Smith & Attwood, 2014, p. 7). The introduction of the Internet redefined the consumption of pornography - it brought porn even further into privacy of homes as it made it exponentially more easily accessible (Martin, 2010). The comfort and privacy that it gave consumers led to a dramatic increase in the covered audience (Bakker & Taalas, 2007). However, importantly, it did not create a new audience for the porn industry, but rather made pornography more available to a former audience (Bakker & Taalas, 2007). As stated by Dines (2010, p. 49) – “Where users once relied on a local porn store with limited selection, now they can avidly check hundreds of sites within minutes.”

During the age of top down approach of Web 1.0, with limited content creators and a vast majority of users acting merely as consumers, the transformation of the porn industry was not as radical as it would soon thereafter become with the appearance of Web 2.0.

During the days of Web 1.0, many well established offline porn businesses adjusted to the technological shift and moved parts of their business online where they continued selling 'adult entertainment' content e.g. the Playboy magazine extended publications onto other carriers e.g. video/DVD, pay-tv, Internet and mobile phone, and they licensed pictures and movie clips from its huge online database (Bakker & Taalas, 2007) or Vivid Entertainment, with more than sixty videos per year being released and distributed through a range of platforms (Dines, 2010). Porn, as an early adopter (Barss, 2010) proved a reliable, highly profitable market segment that accelerated the development of new media technologies from VCRs to DVDs to file-sharing networks and video-on-demand for cable, streamed video over the Internet for PCs, and recently the videos for cell-phones (Dines, 2010).

Messina (2006), defines the late 1990s as the turning point for novel, amateur online porn. Using digital cameras and online networks, people could now publish their own images and join groups of like-minded individuals. This self-made porn countered the aesthetics of the mainstream porn by catering to a wide variety of tastes, styles and kinks, and provided aficionados with possibilities to interact and exchange material. Online platforms have undoubtedly rendered amateur porn more visible and popular than ever before. It is nevertheless important to note that amateur practices have flourished in a variety of media from photography to film and video – not to forget the traditions of erotica writing spanning from page to screen.

Kevin Esch and Vicki Mayer (2007, p. 101), situate the rise of amateur porn in the “video revolution” of the early 1980s, when millions of people bought their first home video camera and budding film-makers decided to make their own pornography (Paasonen, 2010). Some of these products were distributed for others to watch (for example, through swap-and-buy services) and in the late 1980s the popularity of amateur porn even managed to damage the sales of commercial porn. As Laurence O’Toole (1998, p. 180) points out, the industry answered that trend by basically swallowing it up: “Amateur” became a cluster of long-serving members of the industry cooking up a show “at home”, yet marketing it as if it was part of the original pioneering amateur spirit (Paasonen, 2010). Amateur porn was soon established as a sub-genre of commercial pornography, partly intermingling with other emerging categories such as gonzo (videos with little narrative using hand-held cameras and point-of-view shots, as introduced by Jamie Gillis, John Stagliano and Rocco Siffredi in the late 1980s) (Paasonen, 2010). While amateur porn was plentiful in the newsgroups of the 1980s, its distribution platforms have since undergone considerable transformation, as websites featuring amateur images and videos have burgeoned since the 2000s. These sites, easily accessible via search engines, frame and regulate amateur practices through their guidelines, norms and categorizations (Paasonen, 2010, p. 1302).

However, the true revolution of the porn industry was yet to come and would be caused by the combination of technology advancement in terms of high-speed connection to the Internet and the transformation from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0.

The business approach of “one-to-many” became obsolete and was replaced by a non-hierarchical “many-to-many”, where consumers talk to other consumers in non-institutional spaces (Livingstone, 2008). In porn’s transition from material to online spaces, its location was reconfigured as a ‘private space within a public environment’ (Patterson, 2004, p. 120; Attwood, 2010), and its consumption became part of a multitasking mode as consumers move between ‘socializing, buying commodities, searching for information, chatting, peeping, cruising, masturbating and maintaining friendships’ (Jacobs, 2004b, p. 73; Attwood, 2010). The era of Web 2.0 changes introduced the participatory generation of media-making (Paasonen, 2010). A medium where consumers collaborate, share and generate new content on Web 2.0 websites such as www.youporn.com or www.xhamster.com. For instance, the same way users of Youtube.com upload their videos and share it with their peers, while other users comment on the content and rate it, making the most popular content easier to access for a wider audience youporn.com works, but its content is wholly porn-related. Another great example of Web 2.0 is the website Wikipedia.org where users can share, create, edit as well as erase information. Therefore the websites are in a constant process of blurring the formerly clear line between users and content creators characterizing Web 1.0 (Mowlabocus, 2010).

Contemporary porn consumers “actively organize and control their porn in ever more individual ways” (Mowlabocus, 2010, p. 73). These changes lead to clouding the boundaries between producer, performer, consumer and distributor and result in making the traditionally linear relationship between production and consumption more complex (Mowlabocus, 2010). These dynamics brought pornography into the era where the consumers of porn also became content creators - “prosumers”. Prosumption, as defined by Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) involves both production and consumption instead of focusing on solely one or the other. Toffler (1980, p. 265; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010), argues that contemporary society is moving away from the aberrant separation of production and consumption (...) through reintegration in ‘the rise of the prosumer’. Prosumption is not an invention of Web 2.0, but, as stated by Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) ‘given the massive involvement in, and popularity of, many of these developments (e.g. social networking sites), it can be argued that it is currently both the most prevalent location of prosumption and its most important facilitator as a ‘means of prosumption’.

Broader changes in web use started the new era of online pornography now referred to as Porn 2.0 or Netporn (Paasonen, 2010), for which the central position of user generated content (UGC) and fine line between producer and consumer is characteristic (Paasonen, 2010, p. 1297).

This has been clearly manifested in the popularity of amateur pornography and alternative porn sites that encourage user interaction and creation (Paasonen, 2010, p. 1298).

The Porn 2.0 term refers to an era of platforms, similar to the aforementioned youtube.com, which offers multiple new ways of interaction with pornography. The audience became “We the media” (Slayden, 2010). Consumers generate their own amateur porn content, they communicate and interact with each other e.g. comment on content of other consumer, rate it, through what they create their preferred lists and promote the most popular content, performers etc.

The size of the porn industry is valued at \$57 billion worldwide, whereof \$12 billion is generated by the US. Daily pornographic search engine requests are around 68 million, which constitutes a massive 25% of the total search engine requests (vs. 13 % in 2010 (StopPornCulture.org, u.d.). This translates into 72 million visitors to pornographic web sites annually (PornographyStatistics, u.d.).

9 out of 10 Internet porn consumers only access free material, be it samples of for-pay material, illegally copied versions of pay material, or amateur material. Due to the vast amount of free porn that is now available online, the global porn revenues have declined by some 50% since 2007 (Covenant Eyes, 2014), even though the consumption of porn has not decreased.

Any one area of interest that would attract 25% of total search engine requests would surely be subject of considerable debate. In the case of porn, due to its highly controversial nature, one would perhaps expect it to be even more so. There certainly is a debate; however, we find that the debate on porn is one that is exceptionally poorly nuanced as it is often portrayed in black (anti) or, less often, in white (pro) spectrum. What is perhaps of even more interest to note is that, in any debate regarding a topic that has this vast an amount of consumers (and considerable amount of prosumers) as that of porn, one would think that the voice of those consumers / prosumers themselves would be one of the strongest, if not the strongest, in the debate. However, this seems not to be the case.

Our research project is neither pro nor anti porn. Our aim is not to take a stand between the two. Rather, we simply wish to find out more about the reasons for why so many of us engage in consumption / prosumption of porn and to hear some of the voices of these consumers / prosumers in an effort to, perhaps, better understand them, their experiences and their feelings about porn.

1.3 The public debate on pornography

Pornography has indisputably become part of everyday life, influencing our society and our behavior but it is certainly not considered as a matter of neutral character. One of the key ways in which public discussions on porn are framed is around pro/positive and anti/negative views. Is sex a good or a bad thing? Many would say good, some would say bad. Is porn a good or a bad thing? Some would say good, many would say bad (at least in the public debate). Is sex liberating and empowering or is it dangerous and oppressive? Again, many would agree with the former statement rather than the latter but if the question was asked regarding porn rather than regarding sex it seems many more would agree with the latter.

The contemporary debate around internet pornography tend towards the latter i.e. 'the perilous vortex of danger and corruption (...) rearticulating concerns about the negative effects of pornography on beliefs, attitudes and behaviors; especially the encouragement of violence against women, the endorsement of sexist and misogynist views, the destruction of childhood innocence and the commoditization of relationships' (Attwood, 2010, p. 1).

However, there are also voices, that argues that sex and even pornography, allow not only women, but also minorities (gay, fetish etc.) that do not adhere to the reigning hetero-patriarchal ideals the same opportunities as those enjoyed by men who do adhere to the heterosexual norm (Trouble, 2014).

The complexity of the phenomenon of porn has led to increasing attention in media. In 2009, Gary Wilson (Ted Talk) conducted “The Great Porn Experiment” where he revealed the porn addiction and its influences on individuals e.g.: social anxiety, erectile dysfunction and/or mismatching perceptions. Others, such as Jared Diamond (Ted talk), pointed to the violence of porn. According to covenanteyes.com (Covenant Eyes, 2014), 88% of scenes in porn films contain acts of physical aggression and 49% of the scenes contain verbal aggression. Likewise, the strengthening feminism movements in the western world encourage the boycotting of pornography due to the inequality and violence against women displayed in porn.

Jameela Jamil in her documentary “Porn: What’s the Harm” shone the light on the effects on children who are exposed to pornography.

The attention received in media, and in society overall, contributes to the de-tabooing of the industry. The discussion has also entered the medium of mainstream Hollywood films e.g. in the 2013 movie ‘Lovelace’ – which draws on the story of the famous porn actress Linda Lovelace who is used and abused by the porn industry at the behest of her coercive husband, until she ends up taking control of her life. Likewise, in the movie ‘Don Jon’, this gave the general public an insight into the potential problems related to excessive porn consumption. Don Jon describes the life of a young man who, having grown up on Internet pornography is addicted to porn. This has severe effects on his social and personal life as he struggles to understand that pornography is fictional and as such may not serve adequately as a reference point for real life and real relationships.

Related to the topic of the un-realness of pornography, many media have been paying attention to the inadequacies of sexual education in general for the younger generation and sometimes more specifically when it comes to shining a light on the potential negative effects of porn consumption and the danger that comes from forming an illusive perception of sex based on how it is presented in porn (Albury, 2013). The first generation who grew up on Web 2.0 porn is only now reaching adulthood, which implies that we are still only in the early stages of fully grasping the long-term implications this technology and societal revolution will bring about.

It is, however, not only the consumers who are affected by pornography but also the creators themselves as they face struggles rooted in the societal stigma related to porn. A 2012 survey of porn actresses demonstrated that 79% of them have used marijuana, 50% have used ecstasy, 44% have used cocaine and 39% have used hallucinogens (Family Safe Media, u.d.), which can be compared to 14.7% (age 12 or older) of the general population who have used cocaine at least once in their lifetime (Stop Cocain Addiction, u.d.). Furthermore, social anxiety, depression and social exclusion are significantly more common among porn content creators than in the general population.

Some movements e.g. Stop Porn Culture (StopPornCulture.org, u.d.) and Fight The New Drug (FighttheNewDrug.com, u.d.) call for boycotting pornography, while others, e.g. some of the user created content providers, seem to try to change pornography at its source by producing content that reflects the contemporary criticism. One of the most representative examples is an initiative started in 2009 by Cindy Gallop – Make Love Not Porn (MLNP) (www.makelovenotporn.com), which sets out to naturalize the current porn scene and de-taboo the industry per se. The actual porn users become content creators whose goal is to try to revolutionize the industry, suppress the artificial and ‘perfect’ image of sex, by creating and uploading videos about and for regular ‘real’ people, having ‘real sex’ (MakeLoveNotPorn.com, u.d.).

Academia has traditionally not given porn a lot of attention, at least not in proportion to the size of the phenomenon in society as outlined above. Currently the Journal of Consumer Research includes only 9 articles in which the word pornography is mentioned in their text. More recently, however, we have witnessed an increase in this attention, which led to the publication in the spring of 2014 of the first scholar journal devoted to the subject of pornography – Porn Studies.

Most scholars who study pornography address issues of gender, race, class, the body, sexuality, citizenship, power (Burke, 2014) and the “pornografication” of children (McNair, 2014; Smith & Attwood, 2014).

However, it seems that, even within academia, it is difficult to look at porn from a neutral standpoint. Thus, the research of pornography has always been sorrowful and affected by many accusations. Researchers who produced work that is not clearly anti-porn were liable to be accused of being e.g. ‘Porn apologists dressing up personal convictions to look more objective by attaching the word “studies” to the title of their journal’ (Attwood & Smith, 2014). Often according to anti-porn advocates they were ‘expressing their own opinions rather than producing research’ and were likely to write ‘fulsome articles (...) declaring “porn is wonderful for men”. Their work was ‘ill-considered post-modernist and populist positioning, rather than critical analysis’ (Smith & Attwood, 2014).

On the other hand, being critical on pornography did not stand in neutral light either. In the context of pornography, being “critical” was always associated with being anti-porn in the sense of producing ‘criticism of pornography’, with determined fault-finding and condemnation being of primary importance.

Despite the many challenges of porn studies within academia, the research area of porn has gradually been receiving more attention and acceptance among the general public and within academia alike.

However, the actual consumers of pornography themselves, and perhaps even more so the prosumers, are still objects of a greater controversy within pornography research (McKee, 2005a). There are ongoing debates of how pornography damages individuals (Hamilton, 2004; McKee, 2005a) with the focus to relationship issues, violence, sexual abuse or crimes, particularly on young individuals (McKee, 2005a). Other concerns are absorbed by the matter of the exposure to pornography which might turn individuals into sex offenders (Fewster, 2004), including pedophiles and gang rapists (Hamilton, 2004); indeed, that 'no man who regularly uses pornography can have a healthy sexual relationship with a woman' (Hamilton, 2004; Symons, 2004, p. 4) (McKee, 2005a). While others such as Pell (Pell, 2004, p. 83; McKee, 2005a); argue that pornography contributes to a general increase in violent behavior in society and that it is addictive (Lust junkies, 2004, p. 68; McKee, 2005a).

Such "anti" opinions are usually raised in public debates by politicians, journalists, church leaders and academics; however disquieting few of them do bother to ask the consumers of pornography about their personal experiences (sometimes with the exception of telling a single story about a single person, often anonymous, whose experience fits the argument put forward). In the utterance of politicians, academics and other leaders it is very rare to hear the insights of regular consumer of pornography (McKee, 2005a). Alan McKee is one of the pioneers of representing the voice of consumers, his research settings are national bound and the study neglects UGC as well as a proper representation of prosumers. Clarisse Smith has focused strictly on the consumption of male pornography by women, while Knudsen, Susanne. V., Lotta Lofgren-Martenson, and Sven Axel Mansson, represented only young adults. From the perspective of consumption of UGC, the study of Van Doorn, which did not represent the voice of consumers, provided a netnographic research of UGC videos. To our knowledge there is no study including the users and producers of user generated content, representing their voice regarding the consumption.

Almost the only voice of consumers raised, is those, who consider themselves "addicts" and are seeking to stop watching pornography (Taylor, 2005; McKee, 2005a).

Why do we believe this to be a fundamental flaw in the public debate on pornography? It is not that we necessarily believe the arguments put forth by the politicians, journalists, church leaders etc. to be false. For all we know they might be justified.

However, we do believe that this blatant lack of the consumer / prosumer voice in the debate on such stigmatized matter as porn implies a significant risk of them being misrepresented due to uneven political strength. As long as the consumers / prosumers do not have a more significant share of voice we believe that there is a considerable risk that the debate leaves something of importance still unsaid. Do the consumers and prosumers themselves perceive this as a problem? We do not know. But we do know that

misrepresentation, whether positively or negatively twisted, is, in itself, always a problem. Although some assumptions might be correct misrepresentation narrows the view upon consumer society and distorts the image of one of the major consumption products, which is consumed on every day bases in society. Production and consumption of such a significant product such as pornography is therefore stereotyped and stigmatized whether the misrepresentation occurs within academia or elsewhere in the public dispute.

The interpretations of data emerge from academia, therefore presented as knowledge, can be described as epistemic violence. Epistemic violence, as stated by Toe (2010, p. 295), 'refers to the interpretation of social-scientific data on the "Other", (here porn consumer/prosumer) and is produced when empirical data are interpreted as showing the inferiority of or problematizes the "Other", even when data allow for equally viable alternative interpretations'. Interpretations of inferiority or problematizations are interpreted as actions that influence the "Other" negatively. Stereotypes, a commonly accepted form of misrepresentation, narrows down and limits our capabilities of ever getting a full and fair understanding of a phenomenon, a group of people, a sub-culture etc.

In the specific case of porn, this potential misrepresentation could prove a significant problem, as it not only leads to a too narrow stigmatized understanding of a particular consumer society but it also risks distorting the image of one of our society's major consumption products (again, some 25% of all search engine requests relate to sex or porn in one form or another).

Having observed this paradox we gained the motivation to write this thesis with the ambition that it be a critical attempt to better understand the consumer culture of Porn 2.0, "a taboo industry". We acknowledge that, even if we were to have a measure of success, the best we can hope for is that it will take us one small step toward opening a discussion and accurately answering the question:

Why do people involve in production and consumption of Porn 2.0 (UGC)?

CHAPTER 2. Literature Review

2.1 Consumption

In academic literature, a focus on porn as film genre and sex 'on screen' (Lehman, 2006; Williams, 2004; Williams, 2008; Hines & Kerr, 2012; Mendik, 2012; Hunter, 2013) has remained important, while the new area of work 'off screen' consisting of new online media "Porn 2.0" has emerged. Although some researchers, such as McKee, have begun to focus on the meanings of porn for their consumers, and consumption of pornography, the work still remains scarce (Smith & Attwood, 2014, p. 14).

McKee (2005a) creates a context in which we can get an understanding of the research of pornography consumption, pointing out that consumers of pornography are commonly used as subjects for experiments, but are rarely presented as agents of their own perception who can offer insights into pornography and shed light on their own consumption and the effects they themselves perceive as the result of this consumption (McKee, 2005a). Furthermore, McKee (2005a) specifies that researchers, when considering consumption, had mainly focused on the asocial behavior of those consumers and aggressions towards women. Due to this focus of interest, the research had tended to be largely uninterested in the conscious processes of thinking about pornography on the part of consumers and neglecting new perspectives such as consumption, until the publication of the McKee's study (McKee, 2005a).

McKee (2005a) was one of the first academics, together with Clarissa Smith (2002), to represent voices of consumers through a qualitative study. In his complex study on pornography consumption, McKee (2005a) started out by quantitatively examining the production of pornography in Australia—what kinds of people were producing it, why, and how much of it were they producing (Albury, 2005). Secondly, he looked at the content of mainstream pornography, analyzing the content of fifty of the best-selling pornographic videos in Australia (McKee, 2005b). Thirdly, he provided qualitative data about consumers of pornography in Australia and how they themselves perceive this consumption and the effects it is having on them (McKee, 2005a).

In the qualitative part of the study, McKee (2005a) focused on factors identified as being relevant to the consumption of, and attitudes towards, sexual issues: gender, geographical location, age, level of formal education, and sexuality by interviewing 46 consumers. (Smith, et al., 2003, p. 103). He concluded that the consumers of pornography in Australia, as much as any other citizens, are intellectually aware and reflective individuals who can contribute to public debates about the genre (McKee, 2005a). The users' reflections were quite sophisticated and contributory to public debates by moving far away from the idea that all

pornography has a single “effect” thereby becoming a factor in the depolarization of the debates on pornography (McKee, 2005a).

Another important study in the research of pornography consumption was published by Clarissa Smith (2002), who interviewed 16 female consumers of the British pornographic magazine *For Women* (2002), in which she focused on the motivations of porn consumers and that theorists have tended to imagine that ordinary consumers of pornography are unable to have any response beyond sexual excitement: ‘Only academic, radical feminist or moralist viewers seem able to experience responses other than the “purely” sexual: they can talk of their boredom (Smith, 2002, p. 1). “Ordinary” porn users are never disappointed, embarrassed, put off, worried or appalled’ (McKee, 2005a; Smith, 2002; Nagel, 2002).

Furthermore, when compared to previous literature on the topic, Smith’s findings are much less polarized and she concludes that women have consumed pornography for a variety of reasons (McKee, 2005a). With her work, as McKee suggests, Smith pointed to a new direction of research in pornography that represents porn consumers and allows them to express their thinking of some previously much problematized areas within pornography. Smith’s research led journalist David Loftus to make the perhaps most significant publication about consumption of pornography, although outside of academia (McKee, 2005a). In *Watching Sex* (2002), Loftus analyses interviews with over 140 male consumers of pornography. Loftus’ findings are surprising when compared with the data previously generated within social science research of the motivations of male consumers and their view on pornography (McKee, 2005a).

David Loftus emphasizes, that there were common discourses of stereotypes of man interviewed in his study. Precisely: ‘I talked to men for whom some of the above is not true. I talked to others for whom none or all of it is true’ (Loftus, 2002).

Smith (2007) continued with her research on the effects of pornography consumption on females in her book: “*One For the Girls!: The Pleasures and Practices of Reading Women’s*”, published in 2007. In her book, Smith examines the consumption of soft-core pornography magazine *For Women*. Smith is clear that her aim in the production of this book is to address the aforementioned absence of female readers in the discussions of sexually explicit materials (Johnson, 2008). Indeed, Smith’s text undoubtedly attempts to redress the balance – the silence of female consumers of women’s pornography – by contemplating such responses within wider contexts of lived experiences, institutional practices and social schemas of production at a specific moment in time in order to attain a broader understanding of the possibilities of pleasure (McKee, 2005a).

Knudsen, Lofgren-Martenson, and Mansson (2007) in their book “*Generation P?*” also contribute to the field of consumption of pornography, focusing particularly on adolescent individuals as pornography consumers.

Their book gives a rough, pragmatic and neutral account of the subject of youth and pornography, which is usually a relationship that receives affective, even outraged reactions (Vänka, 2009). Knudsen, Lofgren-Martenson, and Mansson (2007) also claim that pornography is a familiar phenomenon to most youths in the Nordic countries, thereby confirming world statistics on porn usage and that adolescents see pornography as a normal part of their lives. They find through the study that even though adolescents are familiar with pornography and consider it to be an important part of their lives, they importantly do not relate to it without critical attitude (Vänka, 2009). Also they address ambivalence between genders: that girls do not like pornography as much as boys do; that girls do not watch porn alone to masturbate whereas boys do; and that girls are not turned on by porn as much as boys are (Vänka, 2009).

The paragraphs above summarize the little work done on consumption of pornography representing only particular groups of consumers and in select geographical areas. However, our field of interest goes beyond regular consumption of pornography. In this research project we wish to particularly pay attention to the rise of consumption of user generated content (UGC) porn, although we suggest that the studying of UGC consumption is inseparable from studying pornography consumption overall.

In the following paragraphs we review the literature available on research of user generated content.

2.2 User Generated Content (UGC) Research

The majority of the work on user generated pornography has been done through the lenses of cultural studies, communication and media. These studies mark a shift from the previous understanding of media texts as a kind of 'stimulus' to the study of the ways in which actual audiences understand and engage with various kinds of sex media (Smith & Attwood, 2014). Some recent literature indicate a broadening of porn studies; Susanna Paasonen (2013) focuses on how digital production, distribution and consumption have affected porn as a genre, with particular emphasis on understanding the sensations that pornography evokes (Smith & Attwood, 2014).

Paasonen (2010) looks in particular UGC and she summarizes that the recent rise of amateur porn and its subgenres, such as gonzo and reality porn, have caused important transformations in the production and consumption of pornography. Most consumers access free content online – pay sites with premier content are used by far fewer people (Paasonen, 2010, p. 1297; Edelman, 2009). This statement substantiates the importance of UGC and its economic impact on professional, mainstream porn, which has seen a 50 % decline in global revenues since 2007 (Covenant Eyes, 2014) when the first UGC websites started appearing (www.youporn.com).

The study of UGC (Netporn) became one of the alternative points of entrance into analyses of porn culture. As outlined during two conferences on the subject of UGC organized in Amsterdam in 2005 and 2007, as well as the Netporn-I listserv and the C'lick Me Netporn Reader (Jacobs, et al., 2007), the concept of UGC refers to pornography that is specific to online platforms and networks. UGC entails the blurred boundaries between porn producers and consumers; the proliferation of independent and alternative pornography, as well as the expansion of technological possibilities brought forth by digital tools, platforms and networked communications (Paasonen, 2010, p. 1298).

2.3 The rise of amateurs

Kevin Esch and Vicki Mayer (2007) suggest in their work that the rise of amateur porn started during the 'video revolution of the early 1980s, when millions of people bought their first home video cameras and started producing their own pornography (Paasonen, 2010).

Some authors are prone to detach the concept of UGC from the commodity logic characterizing pornography as a genre (Paasonen, 2010). Nishant Shah (2007) defines UGC as pornography that is separate from the production of mainstream pornographic material on the Internet in that it is constituted by reciprocal user interaction "the performers and the audience are the same people" (Shah, 2007; Paasonen, 2010, p. 1302), which stands in opposition to mass-produced and mass-market oriented mainstream pornography with monetary motivation (Shah, 2007). Peer-to-peer exchanges, personal uploads, profile sharing, online friendships and various modifications connect users to one another, thus erasing the dualism of producers and consumers, performers and audience members, or senders and receivers, thereby creating prosumers as applied in the context of broadcasting or social media (Attwood, 2002; Lillie, 2002; Reading, 2005; Tola, 2005; Paasonen, 2010)

In addition, on UGC sites, users generate content, share subcultural knowledge and form affective ties with the sites and other prosumers and consumers. As Attwood (2007, p. 445) argues, both consumers and prosumers become members of 'a taste culture which functions to bind them together in relations of economic and cultural production and consumption which are also relations of a community'.

UGC porn, as distributed in self-organizing online networks, has been identified as a gift economy in which 'deviance is the norm' (Halavais, 2005, p. 21). A UGC scholar, Katrien Jacobs, associates amateur pornography with peer-to-peer practices based on the principles of pleasure (Tola, 2005; Jacobs, 2004a; Paasonen, 2010). Differentiating from mainstream pornography, digital amateur pornography involves 'pictures of real people with real desires, having real sex in real places' (Messina, 2006). This fantasy of realness, directness and authenticity, supported by low-fi aesthetic and raw performance, lies at the heart of the popularity of UGC (Barcan, 2002).

To a degree, amateur productions have come to represent a better kind of porn that is ethical in its principles of production, but also somehow more real, raw and innovative than mainstream pornography (Van Doorn, 2010; Barcan, 2002). However, on the other hand, as suggested by Laurence O'Toole (1998, p. 180), the porn industry answered the trend of amateur pornography by basically swallowing it up: "Amateur" became a bunch of long-serving members of the industry cooking up a show "at home", yet marketing like it was part of the original pioneering amateur spirit.' (Paasonen, 2010). Amateur porn was soon established as a subgenre of commercial pornography, partly intermingling with other emerging categories such as gonzo (videos with little narrative using hand-held cameras and point-of-view shots, as introduced by Jamie Gillis, John Stagliano and Rocco Siffredi since the late 1980s) (Paasonen, 2010, p. 1305).

Paasonen (2010) in her article "Labors of love: netporn, Web 2.0 and the meanings of amateurism" criticizes the previously established dualistic approach of dividing user generated content from the professional and alternative from the mainstream and the independent from commercial. Furthermore she addresses porn up-loaders as immaterial affective labor serving as tool for the professional pornography industry. Jacobs (2004b) therefore proposes that the most significant difference in terms of UGC and mainstream pornography is the monetary compensation, thus being amateur is just a question of doing what one has a passion to do without monetary gratification with the same results (Jacobs, 2004b; Paasonen, 2010).

This brings us to another societal dilemma Paasonen (2010) suggests. As identified by Paasonen, once the protagonists receives money for producing sexual content they are seen as sex workers, which comes with social stigma. Sex work is generally excluded from the notion of good sex, that is, socially acceptable sexual practices that should take place in a relationship void of monetary exchange. (Kulick, 2005; Warner, 2000, p. 26; Paasonen, 2010). Therefore the action of uploading pornographic content is subject to societal norms.

Sergio Messina (2006), an active agent in the netporn community, who has coined the neologism 'realcore' describes the realness of the sexual acts and desires presented in realcore and argues against realcore being swallowed by mainstream porn. Marking a departure from the familiar categories of hardcore and softcore, realcore has been quickly picked up as shorthand for self-made pornography that refuses to confine itself to the generic conventions of mainstream porn, its distribution or economy (Hardy, 2009). Messina (2006) sums up that other than the formerly carelessly described motivation of amateurs versus monetary motivation in mainstream pornography there is a factor of realness of the act and sensation recorded (Paasonen, 2010; Messina, 2006). Messina sets mainstream professional porn performers as masters of sexual techniques, simulating pleasure and improving visual experience by professional production such as lights, backdrops, make up, edition and other special effects against 'pictures of real people with real desires, having real sex in real places' (Messina, 2006). Furthermore Barcan (2002) suggests that the fantasy of realness, directness and authenticity supported by low-tech and visual performance of amateur pornography lays the foundation for the popularity of amateur pornography.

Paasonen maps the contemporary conceptual framework of amateur pornography, by describing critics of conceptual division between alternative amateur and mainstream pornography, furthermore she investigates motivations for amateur pornography. Furthermore Paasonen subscribes to carelessly defined statement that the motivation for amateur pornography springs from “deviation” of individuals filming themselves because; they get horny from someone getting horny over them’ (Dery, 2007, p. 24). Concluding that amateurs are not merely expressing themselves, as a neoliberal discourse might have it, but commodifying themselves in relation to pornography as a genre and an industry (Paasonen, 2010).

Paasonen clarifies that the linking of sexual practices with desire and authenticity may derive from perceiving sexuality as the truth concerning the self, as discussed by Michel Foucault (1990, pp. 58,59). Whatever the reason may be, there is a risk of approaching amateur pornography as expressions of desire or pleasure without accounting for how such moments of intimate production may be conditioned (Paasonen, 2010).

Paasonen continues arguing against the dualistic approach between amateur pornography and mainstream pornography, by implying that the conceptual divisions invoked in UGC criticism is both limited and limiting. Rather than explaining the operations of the contemporary media landscape, they create a false sense of clarity (Paasonen, 2010). Concluding with a statement that mainstream pornography responded to the amateur trend by basically swallowing it up, Laurence O’Toole (1998, p. 180) suggests: “Amateur soon became established as a subgenre of commercial pornography”. Paasonen therefore names amateur porn a hatched hand of mainstream pornography and protagonists of amateur porn, the laborers of love for megalomaniac pornographic conglomerates.

In her latest work, *Carnal Resonance*, Paasonen situates herself within a media historical framework, focusing on the “modalities, affective intensities, and visceral and disturbing qualities” of online porn (Paasonen, 2013, p. 2). By framing porn in terms of affect, she draws our attention to the intersection of bodily and sensory experiences and the digital materiality of porn (Kannabiran, 2013).

2.4 Consumption of UGC

In previous paragraphs we have discussed the literature contributing to the knowledge of user generated content and amateurs overall. In the following section we address the work done with a focus on the consumption of UGC.

Until now the only significant contribution to the general research of consumption of UGC is a netnographic study of 100 user generated amateur videos distributed on YouPorn (<http://www.youporn.com> an adult video-sharing website) Niels Van Doorn (2010). Van Doorn (2010) addresses an argument that while pornography has traditionally had an antithetical relationship to feminism, which predestined pornographic production to be heterosexist and a glorification of male dominance e.g. (Dworkin, 1981), some feminist scholars have suggested that new media technologies are opening up spaces for the sexual emancipation of previously marginalized groups (Attwood, 2007; Jacobs, 2007; Lehman, 2007; Albury, 2003). They argue that DIY web cultures facilitate different, more authentic, representations of gender and sexuality than what is conventionally available in mainstream pornography (Van Doorn, 2010).

However, Van Doorn (2010) suggests the centrality of a “normative mainstream pornoscript” that is, generic conventions that “highlight sexual difference as the primary source of heterosexual visual pleasure, which is predominantly from a male perspective” in user generated content. Furthermore Van Doorn argues that amateur video evokes a sense of authenticity through poor technical execution and the display of ordinary imperfect bodies while at the same time reusing the conventions familiar from mainstream pornography (Paasonen, 2010). Van Doorn therefore warns against the optimism of Jacobs, Attwood and Lehman, when they propose that the Internet can provide representational space for sexual cultures and previously marginalized individuals. (Van Doorn, 2010)

Paasonen suggests, regarding Van Doorn’s study, that in a paradoxical dynamic, amateur porn approximates the generic conventions of porn (in terms of poses, gestures and acts) in order to be recognized as such while also differing from and providing alternatives to them (as something more authentic, raw and real) also suggesting that previously marginalized groups are no differently misrepresented in amateur porn (Paasonen, 2010).

Now to a summary of previous studies on consumption of pornography. While Smith and McKee were the pioneers of representing the consumers’ voice, McKee’s research settings are national bound and the study neglects UGC as well as representation of prosumers. Clarisse Smith focused strictly on female consumption of male pornography, while Knudsen, Lofgren-Martenson and Mansson researched consumption of pornography by young adults. Finally, while it did represent the consumption of UGC, the study of van Doorn did not include the voice of consumers nor prosumers; it did however provide a netnographic outlook on UGC.

In listening to the voices of consumers and prosumers of UGC we get a quite different perspective from that of the experimental academic research that attempts to find the effects of the genre by showing unrepresentative examples to non-consumers and non-prosumers of pornography in stressful public settings

(McKee, 2005b). The studying of consumers and prosumers can improve our understanding of UGC and the genre of pornography itself and provide valuable information for the ongoing academic and public debates that seek to understand the place of UGC within pornography and its effects as well as the motivations of those who choose to consume and produce it (McKee, 2005b).

Studies of consumer culture are important as they point us towards the possibility that we can bring the perspective of UGC consumers and prosumers into public and academic debates and further broaden the discussion about pornography and sex (McKee, 2005b). However, to our knowledge, little such work has been conducted around the world.

In ways similar to how the research by McKee and Smith of consumers of mainstream pornography have contributed to the understanding of the consumption of porn and has depolarized the academic view upon it, we interviewed prosumers as well as consumers in our quest to gain a deeper understanding of the consumer culture of UGC.

Paasonen suggest moving beyond dualistic conceptualizations such as the commercial and the non-commercial, the mainstream and the alternative, the professional and the amateur, the online and the offline, as frameworks for making sense of pornography, contemporary media culture and their fundamental entanglements and we feel it right to follow this suggestion (Paasonen, 2010).

Furthermore, Paasonen (2013) argues that the previously employed epistemological commitment to pursuing 'how does it work?' instead of 'what does it mean?' drawing from Deleuze and Guattari (2009), keeps the inquiry focused on the assemblage instead of freezing the dynamics into semiotic units (Kannabiran, 2013). Paasonen (2013) argues that existing methods such as content analysis as used by Van Doorn are limiting in staying true to the above-mentioned epistemological commitment.

Additionally, Paasonen argues that methods such as content analysis is a "distanced form of interpretation" (2013, p. 135) that relies not only on the clear distinction and distance between the researcher and the subject but also on the ability of the researcher to decode and analyze the collected data and is therefore inevitably reductive of the sensory and the material (Kannabiran, 2013). In search for alternative and additional analytical tools Paasonen argues for methods that account for affective powers as well as material forces of online porn, methods that accommodate and rely on the proximity and interaction between the researcher and the researched, while remaining open to "ambiguity and the plurality of the material studied" (2013, p. 136).

To our knowledge there is no study available that includes consumers and producers of user generated content, no study that represents their voice regarding this consumption and production. Currently, the

Journal of Consumer Research includes only 10 articles that contain the word pornography in their text and 0 having pornography in the abstract as a keyword (JCR, 2014).

Nevertheless, considering the controversial and challenging nature of porn research we feel the need and responsibility to state clearly that we have no wish to represent the voices of consumers and prosumers of UGC pornography in order to increase sales of pornographic content or in any way support the monetization of an improved understanding of the prosumer culture of UGC. We are aware of the potential accusation. Our intention is to produce a different perspective on the consumption and production of pornography and UGC. We believe that such studies are important in order to point academia towards the possibility that, as researchers, we can bring the perspective of pornography consumers into public debates about the genre and its effects.

CHAPTER 3. Consumer Culture Theoretical Framework

Consumer Culture Theory emanated from postmodernist perceptions and refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868).

The rising postmodern “societal movement” challenges marketing conventions, societal norms and ideas, as postmodernism recognizes that the constraining goals for modernity of relieving people from ignorance and irrationality will never be reached (Brown, 2006; Cova, 1996, p. 494). Postmodern thinking is characterized by fragmentation, ambiguity and a distrust of universal explanations (Cova, 1996, p. 494). This had a tremendous impact on marketing management as “postmodernism attacks scientific assumptions of the last thirty years - its epistemology, methodology, its claims to knowledge, and in particular assuming there is many or no truth attacking the modern assumption of single reality.” (Cova, 1996, p. 494).

The acknowledgement of postmodernism gave rise to a new research field: Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), which often leads to a more rich and broad understanding in contrast to traditional consumer research approaches (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868).

While representing a plurality of distinct theoretical approaches and research goals, CCT nonetheless shares a common theoretical orientation toward the study of cultural complexity that programmatically links their respective research efforts (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868). Rather than viewing culture as a fairly homogenous system of collectively shared meanings, ways of life, and unifying values shared by a member of society, CCT explores the heterogeneous distribution of meanings and the multiplicity of overlapping cultural groupings that exist within the broader socio-historic frame of globalization and market capitalism (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 869).

Central to CCT is the consumption of fabricated commodities and desirable marketing symbols. Here, consumption is viewed as a subject of the individual’s free choice (Holt, 2002) based on personal and negotiated meanings that consumers embody in social roles and relationships (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 869). Moreover, marketing symbols are seen as a tool used by groups to construct practices, identities and meanings to guide their members’ experiences and lives (Kozinets, 2001). Thus, CCT traditions involve investigations of the dynamic relations between consumer actions, the meaningful ways of life decided by culture and the symbolic objects on which they depend as they are mediated through markets (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 869).

As the phenomenon “consumption of pornography respectively user generated content” is previously not much researched within CCT, although its presence in the consumer society is increasing rapidly, our aim is to add to theory in this field of research. To increase our chances of capturing the most relevant consumer meanings, we chose to adapt a broad viewpoint in CCT where we focus on both the individual consumer as well as the group of consumers that are consuming or producing user generated content pornography.

Accordingly, our work somewhat departs from the CCT research domain Consumer Identity Projects, which addresses the socio-cultural dynamics that drive consumption and production of UGC. Namely, we investigate what is the motivation of consumers and prosumers to engage in consumer culture of UGC, and how this helps them in the search for and the creation of their identities. This “concerns the co-constitutive, co-productive ways in which consumers, working with marketer-generated materials, forge a coherent if diversified and often fragmented sense of self” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 871; Belk, et al., 1988; McCracken, 1986).

We highlight the conflicts, internal contradictions and ambivalence that consumers are said to experience. CCT advocates argue that individuals enact and personalize cultural roles that align their selves with the larger consumer-driven global economy, while they pursue personal goals through their consumer positions (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 871).

We also investigate the consumer culture of UGC from the perspective of the CCT domain Marketplace Cultures, which investigates the ways consumers form feelings of social solidarity and create cultural worlds through the pursuit of common consumption and production interests establishing a community (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 873).

By employing a CCT framework, we address the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption. We also investigate the Socio-historic Patterning of Consumption, a domain of CCT research that addresses the institutional and social structures that systematically influence consumption, such as class, community, ethnicity, and gender. The domain suggests that consumers are conceived of as enactors of social roles and positions (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874; Otnes, et al., 1993).

Lastly, we address the mass-mediated market place ideologies and consumers interpretive strategies of consumers making sense of mediated messages and formulate critical responses (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874; Hetrick & Lozada, 1994; Hirschman & Thompson, 1997; Murray, et al., 1997).

In the following paragraphs we present the importance and benefits of using a consumer culture theory framework for this research project. Because CCT is fundamentally concerned with the cultural meaning, socio-historic influence, and social dynamics that shape consumer experiences and identities in the myriad messy contexts of everyday life it helps to unravel the consumption of pornography for other than “purely” sexual reasons. (Smith, 2002; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Frounier, 1998; Holt, 1995). It also serves as a constant reminder that consumption is a historically shaped mode of sociocultural practice that emerges within the structures and ideological imperatives of dynamic marketplaces reminding us of the evolution of pornography to the point of UGC (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

In coherence with this understanding, CCT serves to research how consumer (Holt, 1995) across a range of social areas such as at home in privacy, in public areas or online together with members of the UGC community etc. (Arnould & Price, 1993; Belk, et al., 2003; Grayson & Martinec, 2004)

Another important benefit of choosing CCT as a theoretical framework is the acknowledgement that CCT highlights that the consumer world is for any consumer neither unified, nor monolithic or transparently rational providing the breadth and richness of data collected to contribute to current research an understanding of UGC (Belk, et al., 2003; Curasi, et al., 2004).

Precisely, CCT represents that many consumers’ lives are constructed around multiple realities and that consumers use consumption of products to experience these realities that differ dramatically from the routine (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Belk & Costa, 1998; Deighton & Grayson, 1995; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Kozinets, 2001).

As Arnould and Thompson (2005) suggest, the use of CCT coincides with concerns of modernist construction of science and the idea that a scientific field progresses by developing a unified system of knowledge around a common domain of interest, in our case allowing us to challenge the previously proposed polarity of the understanding of UGC and porn consumption (Hunt, 1991).

Last but not least, the CCT framework highlights the socio-historical significance of consumption in general but more importantly has an impact on broader academic and social conversations concerned with marketing’s effects on society (Schor, 1998). Also, by virtue of adding CCT theory the variety of theoretical conversations that differentially address core topics increases and allows for cross-fertilization (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 873). Arnould and Thompson (1998) characterized the cross-fertilization as a kind of conversational interaction, whereby theoretical insights and constructs from one paradigmatic conversation are re-conceptualized and reworked in relation to a different paradigmatic vernacular.

Such a disciplinary situation may not always be comfortable but can energize the discussion by provoking and inspiring. Such an act may provide fertile intellectual ground for theoretical innovations and advancements (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 873). In our case, the consumption and production of user generated content.

CHAPTER 4. Methodology

The aim of this research is to gain an understanding of the consumer culture of Porn 2.0, both from the perspective of content up-loaders as well as from that of users. Through the research, we have attempted to determine the motivation for consumption and production of Porn 2.0, UGC. Our goal was to get closer to consumers / prosumers, hear their voice and try to understand what needs, desires, potential issues, meanings and opinions direct them towards the consumption/production of porn 2.0, in short, why they engage in pornography.

In order to explore a critical attempt to understand the consumer culture of Porn 2.0 (UGC) and answer the research question: “Why do people engage in consumption and production of UGC?” it was needed do accede choices as advocated for in the following subchapters.

Additionally, it is necessary to mention, that even though the research was designed to collect data on the matter of consumption and production of porn2.0 (UGC), due to the nature of the study, some of the research findings reflect pornography consumption overall.

4.1 Research strategy

Methods were carefully chosen with consideration of research epistemology and ontology and in correspondence to potential and/or encountered limitations.

The ‘taboo’ character of the subject of the undertaken study – the consumption and production of pornography (porn 2.0), which naturally interfere into matters of sex life in contemporary society, in itself caused several issues during the process of research e.g. access to the respondents, openness of the respondents, completeness of data gathered, research method choice limitations, the political nature of the subject and the researchers’ status as students. Additionally, the time frame period of in total 10 weeks was of vital importance for the choice of method.

In order to get access to various perspectives and to determine if and how they influence the perception of the same phenomenon – the consumption/production of porn and what motives stand behind the behaviors of the respondents, the study includes 3 different sources of data: content up-loaders, solely users, and members of the community of Make Love Not Porn (MLNP).

According to Cunliffe (2001; Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008, p. 21) reality is no more than a creation by people through language and discourse. For this reason, qualitative, interpretative (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 16) methods have been chosen. Our ambition was to get an understanding of human behavior, therefore “words were the preferred form of data collected” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 402). We believe that this provides a greater deal of descriptive detail on what goes on in the bigger setting that is to be investigated (context) within which people’s behaviors – consumption, take place. Qualitative research is most useful and powerful when it is used to discover how the respondents see the world.

Additionally, qualitative methods allowed us to, during the research itself, direct attention into areas that may previously not have been considered to be of importance from the researchers’ point of view (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 406).

The application of a qualitative research method based on interviews had in mind to allow the participating respondents to relatively freely verbalize their thoughts, feelings, opinions, experiences and emotions. A qualitative methodology allowed for a more descriptive and interpretative study due to the extensive usage of words through which, following the thought of (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008, p. 128) it was anticipated, the participants will express themselves.

The qualitative research interview seeks to describe the meanings of essential themes in the lives of the respondents (Kvale, 1996). The main task in interviewing is then to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say; to cover a level of factual and a potential level of symbolic meaning of their responses.

In order to structure, analyze and understand the material collected, the transcripts of the interviews underwent a process of manual coding. The purpose was to extract from the text the list of ‘events’ or themes, which would appear repeatedly among respondents.

The analysis and interpretation of the findings were achieved through an iterative process (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 14) as we were going back and forth between the themes that were emerging from the material being analyzed and the theoretical framework of CCT.

4.2 Research unit

To be able to provide an answer to the research question we needed in-depth, descriptive, opening up new dimensions and insights and qualitative empirical data from both consumers as well as producers of UGC. Based on preliminary research it has been established, that the online UGC community, due to its richness and great variety, will be a more representative source of empirical material compared to limiting the research to a particular geographical area. Therefore, in order to provide as thick and broad a description of

the consumer / prosumer culture of UGC as possible, the unit of analysis is not limited in terms of nation, gender, age, sexuality, religion, race etc.

Due to the fact that around 70% of porn users are male (<https://wsr.byu.edu/pornographystats>), the sample was greatly represented by male respondents.

As stated by Marshall (1996, p. 523) samples for qualitative investigations tend to be small. The aim of qualitative research is not to attain generalizability but to attempt to gain a thick understanding.

The respondents were chosen through simple random sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 172) and some through the process of snowballing (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008, p. 229).

The research unit constituted of:

- 9 users
- 4 up-loaders
- 20 members of MLNP, authors of posts

Some are identified by a nick name, others by their real name. Table 1 represents, in short, the profiles of respondents. The names of respondents had been change, due to the potential risk of compromising their real identities.

Table 1. Profiles of respondents

UPLOADERS PROFILE									
NAME	Master	Max	Tony	Vee	sweet	lwa	Ben	David	Carl
AGE	58	37	26	23	49	28	24	36	27
GENDER	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
NATIONALITY		Spain	Germany	Czech	Denmark		Netherlands	Sweden	Turkey
Notes					also uploads	reupload old videos			
UPLOADERS PROFILE									
NAME	Anonymous	Lina	Norman	Red					
AGE	35	47	43	29					
GENDER	M	F	M	M					
NATIONALITY	USA	USA	Norway	USA					
Do you perform in the videos?	NO	YES	YES	YES					

4.3 Accessibility

In terms of accessibility it is necessary to acknowledge two distinctive categories of respondents, representing different specifications: the content producers and the solely content consumers. One of the most important aspects, which shaped our methodological choices, was the issues of accessibility to prosumers of user generated content. As the research within the field of pornography was a new experience to us as researchers, we had no prior connection to it, nor did we have a starting point within our group of

peers who would be uploading UGC pornography, which could have improved our access to desired respondents. These facts also contributed to the employment of the simple random sampling.

From the perspective of the data collection from solely users of Porn2.0, the accessibility was noticeably easier and much less limiting in regard to research method choices. The case was rather different when it came to the content creators, which led to the application of particular research methods e.g. e-mail interviews and chat semi-structured surveys, for which the argument is presented in the following paragraphs.

4.3.1 Accessibility of users

The solely content consumers were more prone to participate in the research as their identity could not be compromised by their online presence. In order to access consumers of UGC porn, the researchers used the snowballing effect when one consumer recommended another and so forth.

Unlike the case of the accessibility to up-loaders of UGC pornography, we had peers in our social circles that we could approach in person for data collection. This gave us a starting point and the ability to use a snowballing effect for our sampling with a prior trust bond being transferable to the next respondents.

4.3.2 Accessibility of up-loaders

One might assume that once up-loaders share their sexual “adventures” online, they are already very open to share with others their experience, and therefore would be willing to e.g. contribute to research. However, up-loaders often deliberately submit content protecting their identity through e.g. not capturing their faces. Interestingly, we have come across individuals who maintain a second life identity online in addition to that presented in real life and who wished for those two not to become connected and not to have any “interference between them”.

Unfortunately, we did not have any network support, which could constitute for and support the research in reaching up-loaders. We did not know or could not identify anybody from close social circles who has been involved in uploading pornographic content and who could have served in the process of snowballing. In order to find up-loaders, based on preliminary research of websites providing UGC, we decided to pursue one of the most visited porn websites in the world, which also offers mainly UGC, www.xhamster.com. To clarify the importance of UGC, respectively that of www.xhamster.com within pornography, this is the 52nd most visited website in the world. The significance is even greater in specific countries such as e.g. Germany where the www.xhamster.com site is ranked as the top 19th most visited website (8% of all porn visitors), 32nd in France (4.6% of visitors), 30th in Egypt (2,4% of visitors) (Alexa.com, u.d.). Also unlike other

websites, which serve as a host for UGC and allow users to upload, www.xhamster.com offers the feature to create a viewable profile and the ability to contact and connect with other up-loaders. Importantly, the usage of the website is free of charge.

Consequently, accessing potential up-loaders on www.xhamster.com meant creating a profile. Through profile creation, our identity has been revealed and additionally supported by portrait images in order to create an open, honest impression, as well as full transparency when it comes to the intentions of our research. We found this to be of high importance due to the potential sensitivity and/or controversy of the study. As stated by Laverty (2003) the trust between the researcher and the interviewee is crucial for attaining richness and validity of data gathered.

Our sampling method was random. Through internal chat interface, using a list of the most recently active users in order to get instant interaction, we contacted users who also uploaded UGC. In total we approached over 200 persons on www.xhamster.com, from which we managed to collect a sample of 4 consumers who upload UGC and 5 solely users who agreed to participate in the research.

In order to increase the breadth and richness of the data collected from up-loaders, we took a step to analyze open testimonies of UGC from other websites. We decided to use the start-up business initiative www.makelovenotporn.com (.tv) where we analyzed all available testimonies of UGC up-loaders, which accounted for 20 articles of approximately 15000 words. The decision to use MLNP was due to the easy access and breadth of the data available. In regards to the initiative MLNP, it is important to mention that up-loaders receive financial gratification for their content, however they are not employed by MLNP nor do they have MLNP as the major source of their income as they typically have full time jobs elsewhere. Therefore, for the purposes of this research, we perceive them as amateurs.

4.4 Methods. Data collection

The research was designed to collect data on the matter of consumption and production of porn2.0 (UGC); however, it is required to note that due to the nature of the study, the research findings reflect the consumption of pornography over all.

The time limitation of the research was set to 10 weeks and the data collection process was performed within the first five weeks.

Our choice of methods was also greatly influenced by the previously discussed accessibility issue. While it was possible to meet in person with some users of UGC and to reach others within the online community through e.g. Skype, which could still allow, in a sense, very personal interviews, the latter was rather difficult for the fear among the respondents of their real identity being exposed. The time limitation significantly

impacted our chances of 'getting to know' the potential respondents first, which could have allowed a stronger establishment of trust, which was considered to be vital due to the sensitive and controversial nature of the research and its environment. Therefore, the initial ambitions had to be adapted and replaced by impersonal methods such as e.g. online chat and/or email surveys.

4.4.1 Xhamster.com up-loaders

In order to collect data from up-loaders from within the xhamster.com community, the methods of email survey and chat interview were pursued.

The response rate was unfortunately relatively small, accounting for around 2% of everyone approached. Primarily, the preferred plausible method of data collection was interview, unfortunately due to fears of identity compromise and the honest intentions of the research, all encountered respondents refused it. Therefore, a more suitable method in terms of identity protection had to be applied.

On www.xhamster.com we utilized the built-in chat system and conducted 4 open answer surveys in a time frame of 15-50 minutes each. Since the control over the process of the survey was insufficient, the respondents chose which questions they wanted or did not want to answer, and how broadly. Often the time between the question and the answer was extended due to sudden absence or passivity of the respondent. One up-loader specifically required an email interview.

Chat - open answer questionnaire

The dominating method for data gathering from up-loaders was an open answer questionnaire using the www.xhamster.com integrated chat. Using such a method allowed us to combat accessibility issues while providing the greatest convenience to respondents as well as confidence as to a certain degree of anonymity. Due to the lack of neutrality of the researched topic, anonymity was a vital aspect of gathering rich data. Staying within natural settings that the respondents were already comfortable with (xhamster.com platform, without face to face interaction) allowed us to control the issue of trust tension, while an open answer setting contributed to avoiding interviewer's bias of leading towards a particular answer. By being in, from the respondents perspective, natural settings in which they felt comfortable, it was possible to get them to engage with us.

In one particular case we used the method of email communication, as it was more convenient for the up-loader. A beneficial aspect of using the chat functionality of www.xhamster.com was the ability to post follow-up questions after initial analysis and examination of the data collected.

Although one might argue that interviewing is often the best method of gathering qualitative information for constructionist research, it is a very time consuming one. Also, we believe it is often sub-optimal for our area of research as respondents feared compromising their identities and to successfully establish a bond of trust only over the Internet is time demanding. Another important factor to consider is the social interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. As Jones points out, interviewees will figure out what researchers are like, and make judgments from their first impressions whether they can be trusted and told everything or not. Furthermore Jones clarifies that interviewees seek to get the interview finished and over with as quickly as possible. Due to the student status of the researchers it is plausible that such issues might occur, therefore using an open answer survey helps overcome some of the potential trust issues between respondents and the “stranger” researchers.

4.4.2 makelovenotporn.com up-loaders

For the purpose of analyzing content from www.makelovenotporn.com text analysis has been applied.

Text analysis

With the intention of increasing the variety of the data collected and the sources used, the researches employed text analysis of testimonies from up-loaders to www.makelovenotporn.com as a complementary method to open answer questionnaires.

Although the data was not primarily created for the purpose of researching consumer / prosumer culture of user generated content it was extensive, descriptive and consisting of about 15 000 words. In regards to the source www.makelovenotporn.com we feel obliged to investigate the intentions of the project. MLNP is a start-up business, established by Cindy Gallop, which sets as a goal to offer an alternative to mainstream pornography, highlighting the negative influence of mainstream pornography, the standardization of sex and the overall inauthenticity and inability of connecting pornography with real-life sex. Although some respondents state they do not take a negative approach to mainstream pornography, we suspect the intentions of MLNP might be to influence, at least to a degree, the overall testimony of content producers.

4.4.3 Users

For data collection from users of UGC we pursued snowballing sampling. The starting point for the snowballing was already known subjects, such as close friends who had an established bond of trust with the researchers already prior to the data collection. Having an established relationship with the first person in snowballing was greatly beneficial as the already established trust transferred to the next respondents. In

order to increase variety we also pursued users at www.xhamster.com with the same method as described above.

The preferred method for gathering data from users was the semi-structured interview, with peers whom we could not meet in person we used Skype interview. Regarding users from www.xhamster.com we used the same methods as with up-loaders, respectively utilizing chat provided by the platform itself.

In total we gathered data from 9 users, among which (7), (8), (9) we were able to meet in person and conduct face-to-face interviews.

In the following paragraph we are going to provide our reasoning for our method choices.

Interviews

The primary method used for data gathering from users of UGC was semi-structured interviews. Being able to use snowballing sampling and having established a bond of trust, open interviews gave us a higher degree of confidentiality as the replies were more personal in nature and, as interviewers, we had the opportunity to identify non-verbal clues (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008). Interviews were semi-structured as the researchers had a fairly specific area to cover and thus wanted to avoid a freely conducted interview without interruption with a risk of causing an unclear picture (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008).

For that reason, a general interview guide approach was applied. The guide approach intended to ensure that the same general areas of information were collected from each interviewee. This had in mind to provide more focus and structure, which we hoped would later improve the analysis of the material.

Over all, throughout the research we conducted 4 face-to-face interviews (David, 36; Rene, 24; Vee, 23; and San, 27) lasting anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes.

Chat or survey

As a complementary method to face-to-face interviews we again utilized the built-in chat at www.xhamster.com as well as email. Chat was used as a complementary method to face-to-face interviews when the researchers intentionally increased the variety of data collected by including users from www.xhamster.com.

Due to the student status of the researchers, it is plausible that respondents felt a degree of lack of confidence in the researchers; therefore the use of an open answer survey helped overcome trust issues between respondents and the “stranger” researchers (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008, p. 149). Taking into consideration the student status, the time limitations, the issue of the researchers and trust, we find open answer anonymous surveys to be a more suitable option to use with individuals who were not involved in snowballing sampling.

By using these previously described methods the researchers suggest the study gained valid data and the best access to the broad experiences and intentions of prosumers (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008, p. 109).

Furthermore as social constructionism research aims to understand people's meaning, how change processes over time and to contribute to evolution of new theories, the researchers believe these methods gather the most suitable data (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008, p. 72).

4.5 Framing/coding

Data collected from all 3 sources was subsequently subjected to the process of coding. 'In qualitative research, coding is the process whereby data are broken down into component parts, which are given names' (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 584).

The process of framing and coding of data was proceeded by familiarization, reflection, conceptualization, as suggested by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2008, p. 167). First we read through the interviews, as well as the text from MLNP, and tried to reflect on the material and the process through which the data had been gathered. Subsequently, we started to pick out the themes, which emerged from the text - anything that appeared more than once, or anything that would seem to be important to the respondent. Next the themes were grouped around a set of tentative categories. Initially we defined 11 such categories, which all later in the process were labeled underneath one of the 3 main themes: authenticity and realness, safety and risks, self-medication.

The next step was to connect the findings within the 3 themes within the CCT framework, which was established through an iterative process (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 14).

4.6 Political dimensions and ethics

The sensitive and provocative nature of the research phenomenon set certain demands along the way. Porn is an interesting, yet controversial phenomenon and it is one often subject to political tensions, this holds true also within the academia. Due to the potential buzz the study might create due to its subject matter alone, and most importantly the negative connotations around the phenomenon itself, we were required to get prior authorization and approval from Lund University to be allowed to undertake the study. It was vital that the study would not compromise in any way the image and reputation of the institution. For

that reason, among others, the research method of netnography, which was initially intended to be used by the researchers, was disapproved by the legal voices of the university.

The researchers themselves experienced stigmatization, corresponding with the subject of the research. Even in the eyes of their peer fellows, their reputation has been negatively affected, as if studying pornography is something considered to be suspicious, something not normal. It was important to us to not let the reactions of our environment affect the way the study was run and managed in reference to the way in which the material has been interpreted.

In regard to interviewees, it was necessary to secure the full information consent and to be transparent on the level of supplying all information regarding the goal and nature of the research.

As mentioned repeatedly, the trust between the respondents and researchers themselves was crucial. The stigmatized, taboo subject of porn and particularly the very personal consumption practice of it were, as expected, not something that respondents wanted to discuss openly – mostly due to the fear of disclosing their identity, and /or even second identity. As researchers, we were obligated not to use the data collected against the interviewees, which potentially in certain contexts could be very harmful. The authenticity, honesty and in a sense loyalty towards the respondents were important for the quality and validity of the data. In order to not cause any, or at least not cause additional, misinterpretations it was very fundamental to separate personal backgrounds and convictions of the researchers from the field/subjects of the study and constrain judgments and personal filters for the research.

Therefore, it was also significant to manage well the power that derives from asking questions. The questions themselves, but also the manner in which they were asked, could have been fashioned in ways that could create significant risk of improperly swaying the answers.

4.7 Limitations

4.7.1 Limitations to our methods

We wish to problematize the lack of trust in the researchers caused by identity protection. The inability to conduct face-to-face interviews with up loaders of UGC implies the inability to examine facial expressions as well as voice and other aspects of body language. It meant that our data collection was very time consuming as returning to the research was not always accepted by the respondent, which resulted in some incomplete

data collection. Subsequently, the respondents and, especially, the researchers needed additional time to set themselves into more perceptive and focused state of mind.

By choosing a constructionist research design, we believe the researchers gained a good understanding of the consumer culture of UGC, but the concepts and constructs derived from the research might be irrelevant to other settings (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008, p. 109). Due to the unique features of this research the findings may not be generalizable to other backgrounds; however, this is a burden for all social constructionist research, as generalization is only a theoretical abstraction (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008, p. 59)

4.7.2 Time limitations

Due to the time, incentive and method (netnography neglected as a potential research method by Lund University) limitation, the analysis of MLNP community was based on content already previously posted by their members - testimonies on e.g. why did they join the community, what it gives them, how different it is from mainstream porn offering etc.

CHAPTER 5. Analysis - Authenticity and Realness

To answer our research question, let us start by introducing the theme of: Authenticity and Realness, which we consider to be very significant part theme throughout our analysis of UGC culture. In this chapter, we will discuss the various aspects of authenticity and realness projected in consumer culture of UGC divided in following sections: Gender empowerment, Emotions, Tenderness, Story-telling and Caring; Joy (of Having Wanted Sex) & Guilt, Body, Age and Stigma; Neighbor, Peek into Privacy, and Acting. We do not neglect that also previous research has found authenticity to be a motivating factor of UGC, nevertheless the employment of CCT allows for even greater investigation of this concept.

5.1 Gender empowerment

The first aspect through which we have interpreted the findings is that of gender empowerment and representation. One of the motivating factors identified in terms of why an individual consumes UGC is the importance to be able to relate to gender behavior and identity, and to reflect upon the content consumed. This finding reappeared throughout our data collection, from the female as well as the male perspective.

One respondent stated:

- 'I like watching sex that is erotic . . . BUT . . . I want it to be real and respectful, something that I can relate to on my own, personal, level'. **Carl, 27**

The theme of respectfulness was coming back in respect of the criticism of mainstream pornography (even) among male respondents,

- 'I don't like that sort of porn where women are just a material (...) I like porn where women enjoy themselves'. **Vee, 23**
- 'Yes definitely, in mainstream porn women are used just as a tool for satisfying men.' **Carl, 27**
- 'More real, more respectful to woman' **Ben, 24.**

The perception of realness and authenticity described in previous research is thus reflected in gender respectful behavior.

From the perspective of some prosumers, we identify the presumption of UGC as a political marketplace in which to fight the gender injustice perceived to be prevalent within mainstream pornography (Michletti & Isenhour, 2010). Once pornography consumption becomes an arena for expressing political views we

suggest that it can be viewed as a form of political consumption. In the case of some prosumers, we interpret UGC as a product created with political context that expresses disagreement with mainstream pornography. From the responses of some users and prosumers we have construed other forms of political consumption, such as the boycotting of mainstream pornography, while others do not consider UGC to be political at all, nor do they distance themselves from mainstream pornography (Michletti & Isenhour, 2010). From the perspective of users we have also deduced strong expressions of disagreement, springing from various lines of reasoning, with mainstream pornography, leading them to boycott it:

- 'I feel cheated when I watch a "hidden vid" that is obviously staged'. **Anonymous, 35**

or

(So does this mean that you do not watch regular/staged/mainstream pornography?)

- 'Yes, that is true. If I would realize that I am watching mainstream porn, I would directly close it'. **Carl, 27**

We do not suggest that consumers would follow a labeling scheme of amateur named pornography through consumption; however, some seem to have habitual choices regarding the consumed content (Michletti & Isenhour, 2010, p. 143).

Prosumers have also expressed their disagreement with mainstream pornography and their inability to associate with produced content.

- 'These are things I would never do in real life. They aren't practical and they don't make the sex better for me or my partner.' **MLNP**
- 'From a women's point of view, I find that so empowering because it is so obviously completely consensual, arousing and erotic . . . unlike most other online porn.' **MLNP**

The women empowerment factor seems to be deeply embodied within UGC, as it allows prosumers to redefine perceptions created through mainstream porn. The intention could be witnessed in:

- 'And I found that empowering for me as a woman . . . and empowering for Hubby and I as a couple . . . because MLNP gives the "video-stars" (everyday people like us) the opportunity, and control over the content and nature of every film we wish to share.' **MLNP**

Furthermore prosumers encourage rethinking of the female position in mainstream pornography, a position described grossly as a tool.

- 'A major reason I don't like porn is that the women are so often forgotten – they are there strictly to give pleasure, not be a part of it.' **MLNP**
- 'It was an untrue (for the most part) portrayal of a woman's orgasm, and was all about me giving vs. not much (if any) reciprocation from the male talent.' **MLNP**

Female prosumers question the representation of the female gender in mainstream pornography.

- 'Ten seconds later I was wondering how girls agree to do this shit. I mean, there she is, eagle spread, trying to breathe through her nose with a guy's dick inside her mouth and another inside her ass. ...this is not sex, this is men vacuuming we're talking about. I don't understand how that became sexy, or worse, how people started to expect that from fucking.' **MLNP**

These gender empowering factors of UGC meet positively also with male consumers, who acknowledge that the environment of mainstream pornography is poorly aligned with real life sex and suggested their preference of UGC.

- 'I don't like that sort of porn where women are just a material... I like porn where women enjoy themselves so it does not change.' **Vee 23:**
- 'Yes definitely, in mainstream porn women are used just as a tool for satisfying men.' **Carl, 27**
- 'More real, more respectful to women.' **Ben, 24**

Prosumers and consumers draw a direct connection between real and respectful in UGC and question the motivations behind why women are being treated in such objectified, and subordinated way as mainstream pornography visualizes.

The contemporary representation of women in mainstream porn, evokes negative emotions – users repeatedly referred to a feeling of guilt connected to the manner in which women are presented and used in mainstream porn.

- 'If you watch like mainstream porn, I think the whole like male view of women can be... sort of you get damaged by it. Most porn is made by man for man, the whole thing like objectifying women, making them do what you want, all this kind of being in control... it's creepy in a way, that it's so much into males perspective that can be harmful I think...' **David, 36**

Particular examples of what women might be combating, according to CCT theory, are body postures of subordination, such as what Goffman and Corrigan describe as 'bashful knee bend' (Goffman, 1979, p. 45), that

indicate a less powerful position (Corrigan, 1997, p. 72). This 'can be read as forgoing of full effort to be prepared and on the ready in the current social situation, for the position adds a moment to any effort to fight or flee' (Corrigan, 1997; Goffman, 1979). Women are frequently posed in this position in mainstream pornography. For Goffman, 'The resulting configurations can be read as an acceptance of subordination, an expression of ingratiation, submissiveness, and appeasement' (Goffman, 1979; Corrigan, 1997)

Furthermore regarding the political undertone of the consumption of UGC, we interpreted UGC as what Micheletti and Isenhour (2010, p. 135) suggest to be a discursive action against the treatment of women in the pornography industry and springing a consumption lifestyle of "real" authentic UGC. As a common characteristic of lifestyle political consumer groups of UGC we assess the goal of promoting gender respective content (Micheletti & Isenhour, 2010, p. 137).

Lastly we would like to suggest a reason for why gender neutrality gets such relatively large attention in UGC. We propose that what UGC is reflecting is in fact the overall changes within society regarding the gender issue, which is increasingly gaining attention. Females are increasingly becoming a leading gender establishing new norms of consumption through UGC. Therefore we would like to draw attention to gender empowerment seen through the practice of pornography production as a reflection of greater societal changes and the establishment of new norms of consumption.

5.2 Emotions, tenderness, story-telling and caring

In this section we address the aspects of authenticity and realness of UGC that are perceived through emotions, tenderness, story-telling and caring. The involvement of emotions is a greatly appreciated and much represented aspect of UGC.

- 'The authenticity of the videos (or at least the impression of such) is probably the hottest part. Building context that isn't contrived is a very rare thing indeed. MLNP really highlights the emotional connection between couples and that is the sexiest part of all.' **MLNP**

In contrast to what is perceived within UGC, prosumers pinpoint the lack of emotional connection between the actors in mainstream pornography and they show their appreciation of the emotions involved in UGC. This is another aspect of how sophisticated the prosumer culture is and it develops the notion of authenticity reflecting emotional connection, tenderness and caring in UGC. One could possibly describe these attributes in the UGC culture as loving sex, compared to mainstream pornography being aggressive, rough, penetration focused and most importantly from the male perspective only.

In this interpretation we reflect on a larger societal trend in search of a new value system that is more closely connected to genuine, natural human life, here reflected in emotional expressions.

- 'To me those sites invariably show sex-scenes from a completely male-biased viewpoint, always intent on instant penetration, instant gratification of the male participants, with little or no storyline AND, seemingly, very little tenderness or caring between the people involved.' **MLNP**

These prosumers react strongly against the way mainstream pornography sets the standard to be the male perspective with a focus on instant gratification, pushing out aspects of real life sex involving emotions. Many consumers who prefer UGC find that the involvement of emotions makes the content more erotic and therefore more arousing.

- 'From a woman's point of view, I find that so empowering because it is so obviously completely consensual, arousing and erotic . . . unlike most other online porn.' **MLNP**

Through assessing and interpreting the experience consumers seek, we came to the understanding that consumption of mainstream pornography and UGC are both, what MacCannell (1976) would call, the non-ironic and the ironic tourist "post-tourist" or possibly "postmodern tourist" (Corrigan, 1997; MacCannell, 1976). In the following analysis, we use the metaphor of a tourist being an experienced searcher and respectively consider sexual pleasure as an experience.

The non-ironic looks for authenticity, which we interpret as a motivation for users to consume UGC, the ironic tourist on the other hand looks rather for deliberately staged inauthenticity. Some consumers are aware of pornography being staged entertainment imitating real life sex but anyhow seek to consume it.

- 'I don't have a major problem with traditional porn. I recently got into hidden cams and there really isn't any of that in traditional porn while there is in user created content so that's a difference. UGC vs. mainstream porn – It's like the difference between watching a gory horror movie and a suspenseful thriller. I'm not saying one is always better than the other. They are just different. I still like scripted porn. But I like this too.' **Anonymous, 35**

5.3 Joy & Guilt

Joy is connected to the projections of authenticity of sex being expected as a voluntary, happy, satisfying act. Subsequently, it focuses on the consumer's choices once such an outlook is not fulfilled.

What mainstream pornography seems to be missing according to consumers and prosumers of UGC is the genuine joy from having sex. MLNP is 'all about Real World People enjoying their own Real World Sex', as suggests one prosumer. In comparison to mainstream pornography, prosumers share outlook on pornography suggesting one of the motivating factors for them to consume UGC porn, is the realness of joy from having real life sex

- 'I would always tell Hubby "the only ones I really, really find exciting are Nina's" . . . because for me, Nina Hartley* was the only one that seemed "natural" and "real" and the only one who really seemed to be enjoying herself'. **MLNP**

In UGC, the joy of having sex is represented as something what may/can not be scripted, played or imitated; therefore we identify the joy of sex as another realization of authenticity in UGC. We also detect the genuine intentions of sharing UGC, which is not a monetary motivation, to be appreciated by prosumers. This, we suggest creates the presentable distinction of UGC in society, when compared to mainstream pornography.

- 'That is exactly why I enjoy MakeLoveNotPorn so much because it is clearly obvious that everyone is sharing their most passionate moments because they WANT to'. **MLNP**

In contradiction, the motivation in mainstream pornography springs mostly from monetary gratification. Specifically, we identify the imitation of joy coming from apparent falseness in mainstream pornography, such as for example unrealistic moans and groans.

- 'Watching initially arousing . . . but often I would find my excitement wane quite quickly as I began instead to focus on the clearly apparent falseness of the situations, or the unrealistic moans and groans of the participants. And then, worse still, I would wonder if the women were really enjoying themselves or if their motives for being involved were dictated by circumstances that had nothing whatsoever to do with their own excitement or enjoyment' **MLNP**

Users of UGC have specified their intention of watching someone who truly enjoys real life sex (*Tony: quality of vid and content, the protagonist enjoy sex*), and how turned off they can be by seeing someone who is not pleased but might even be perceived as forced to have sex. Users are aware of the possible motivations of UGC up-loaders and argue for themselves:

- 'Surely, because if she would not enjoy it she would have not recorded it ... she does not get payed, understand? I watch something like amateur, like a girl does it because she is good and she likes it, so she does it for herself not for the money and it makes her happy.' **Vee, 23**

Users go as far as to polar distinction between mainstream pornography and UGC as describing the mainstream porn industry as a pure business compared to the enthusiasm of amateurs who simply love the show.

- ‘ (...) you cannot compare one thing with another (UGC vs. mainstream) - One is Porn Business and the other is amateur people who like to show.’ **Max, 37**

Furthermore, users have reported that once they suspect that certain content is not genuinely real, they discard it.

- ‘Yes, that is true. If I would realize that I am watching mainstream porn, I would directly close it.’ **Carl, 27**

In this part of the analysis, we draw attention to a bad feeling that can come after watching pornographic content, by some described as guilt. Our conclusion is that this feeling, at least at times, is connected with the perception of mainstream pornography lacking motivation from pure joy but rather being fuelled by financial gratification. Users expressed that the feeling of guilt is not as strong or dominant after watching UGC.

- ‘And then, worse still, I would wonder if the women were really enjoying themselves or if their motives for being involved were dictated by circumstances that had nothing whatsoever to do with their own excitement or enjoyment’. **MLNP**

We suggest that UGC allows those users who perceive the motivation for uploading to be intrinsic to the matter of joy from sex, to avoid the feeling of guilt that they might otherwise feel when using content produced forcefully for monetary gratification.

(Do you respond differently to UGC and mainstream pornography?)

- ‘For sure my mind responds differently. For example when I watch mainstream I feel somehow bad afterwards but I don’t have it with other female friendly.’ **Ben,24**

Furthermore, we suggest that consumers who watch pornography as a pleasure seeking act, do not wish to deal with the potential risk of feelings of guilt. Guilt is contradictory to the pleasure seeking tied to the sensation of traditional hedonism (Campbell, 1987; Corrigan, 1997, p. 16).

We have also interpreted that the feeling of guilt may stem not only from inauthentic joy but also originate from the mistreatment of women, the objectification and commodification through mainstream pornography.

5.4 Body, age overall acceptance of variety – de-tabooing of sex

5.4.1 Neighbor

A significant theme in the perception of authenticity in the consumer culture of UGC is the perception of body and societal norms imposed on it.

According to our analysis, UGC consumers view authenticity through the body, it is the image of ‘real people having real sex – people of all ages and all body types — the kinds of couples you see shopping at Macy’s or having dinner at P.F. Chang’s. They’re videos that you can see and feel the excitement, enjoyment and sensuality of people having sex’. **MLNP**

What seems to be arousing and appreciated is the notion of seeing bodies in UGC similar to those with which the users encounter on daily bases. Those bodies, which users see during ordinary activities at ordinary places such as Macy’s (department store in the USA), produce the genuine image of authenticity.

The connection appears to be “unshakably” between familiarity of ordinary bodies of individuals who users encounter in daily life and its authenticity associable with the users’ life. Such interpretation was established by the users themselves, who proposed the idea of imagining protagonists of UGC as possible individuals from an environment they can identify with, e.g. neighbor.

- ‘It’s nice to see everyday people (less than perfect bodies) having sexual adventures. Your neighbour may be a secret star!’ **Lina, 47**

We interpret this perception as users being able to consider themselves to be potential stars, which not only brings the excitement but also creates the perceived authentic connection and carry the content consumed as close as possible to reality.

Another point we raise regarding bodies in UGC is the connection to imperfect bodies. In the previous paragraph we described the excitement of the ordinary body, which we propose is associated with real life settings of users. We analyse this point further and look into the perception of what an ordinary body is. Having established the excitement connected to the ordinary body, our analysis also suggests a connection to the fight against “the perfect bodies” fed to us by mainstream pornography.

- 'It's nice to see everyday people (less perfect bodies) having sexual adventures'. **Lina, 47**

Further, we interpret the vision of the perfect body displayed in mainstream pornography as:

- '(...) these Barbie-dolls and fake boobs ... when she is too good looking it is like she's plastic. It feels more personal and genuine if she's more like the girl next door'. **David, 36**

In UGC, opposing mainstream pornography and society norms as established by pictures of the ideal body and ideal beauty, we analyze the notion of the imperfect body, as represented by stretch marks, cellulite, jiggly bellies, body hair, etc.

- 'There were middle-aged people with wrinkles and cellulite and jiggly bellies'. **MLNP**
- 'Some of the women have stretch marks, and their breasts have never been under the surgeon's knife.' **MLNP**
- 'With that came the realization that everyone else is having real sex, with real boobs, real bodies, real body hair, real conversations, real stretch marks, real interruptions'. **MLNP**

We see the display of "real" bodies in UGC as a rebellion against / liberating from the "ideal beauty" of societally constructed norms, allowing the users of UGC to associate with the content and perceive themselves as approved by the newly interpreted beauty standards from UGC. Also, the possibility of relating to what "the beauty" standard norm might call body flaws, transfers into authenticity and realness and contribute to the construction of new norms.

- ' ... it is completely outrageous, because in some way it is the misconception that guys want the perfect body... It's like we value other, sweetness stuff thing: nice way of talking, sweet smile, messy hair, whatever – things that make her human and someone you can touch, love – real person, rather than just some kind of... it seems more real, more authentic. I prefer to watch a girl who is not like super good looking...'. **David, 36**

Importantly, we draw attention to the subjective beauty perception and the misconceptions, which users of UGC stretch. As David points out, beauty and attractiveness of a female is assessed through more attributes other than the body. Those attributes are more present in UGC than they are in mainstream pornography, which gives a perception of authenticity.

However, the issue of beauty and perfect body norms does not only touch upon body flaws but importantly also on extreme sexual body symbols such as penis or boob size. Individuals acknowledge the anxiety creating images of mainstream pornography such as large penises or the shape and size of women's breasts.

- 'Penises are another thing. Along with women's breasts, men are expected to have large penises, and both can lower self-esteem when the norm' for porn is larger than average. People come in all shapes and sizes, and it's sad to think that people live with this warped mind-set of a false reality.'

MLNP

or

- 'The men are not endowed like buffalos and they don't fuck like machines'. **MLNP**

Because bodies in UGC reflect real life bodies and do not represent extreme cases as in mainstream pornography, they create much less social anxiety and less over-expectation. We associate especially the factor of extremely large penises as a motivation for prosumers to upload content (*'The men are not endowed like buffalos and they don't fuck like machines' MLNP*) but we have not established this connection with solely users.

Furthermore, mainstream pornography often establishes a connection between penis shape and size and being a good lover. As Corrigan (1997) points out the shape and size of body parts can serve as an index of the sort of person who carries it. E.g. from Corrigan a large nose combined with a low, sloping or concave forehead 'denotes the erratic disposition of a faddist or fanatic, due to inadequate reasoning ability' (Corrigan, 1997, p. 159; Rees, 1950).

The misconception that we perceive regarding the shape and size of the penis and being a good lover is fuelled or at least reinforced through the media power of mainstream pornography, which serves as a reference point "a representation of what people ought to look like" especially for young individuals of the attractive and ideal (Corrigan, 1997) Through data collection individuals have admitted watching pornography for self-education reasons, we suggest that the educative intention of becoming a better lover connects with the perception of size and shape of penises portrayed in mainstream pornography. Therefore this misconception of penis size and shape from mainstream pornography connects with the anxiety of becoming a good lover.

Another problematisation we raise in this chapter is the standardization of body through mainstream pornography with a focus on age. Users of UGC report mainstream pornography usually portray skinny young women with large breasts and strong young males with large penises, the majority of them being white. The lack of variety of bodies and people that are represented in mainstream pornography, especially in terms of age, contributes to the normalization of individuals who, according to societal norms, should be having sex.

- 'I saw couples of all descriptions, ages and appearance making love. There were straight people, gay people, solo people. There were middle-aged people with wrinkles and cellulite and jiggy bellies'. **MLNP**
- 'The emphasis mostly seems to be on body-beautiful younger women who seem to be portrayed just as objects without any emotion or feeling at all.' **MLNP**

We conclude that the realness of pornographic UGC is perceived through the variety of bodies shown. We emphasize that our interpretation is that it is not only about showing imperfect bodies with flaws but also bodies both young and old and of all descriptions and appearances, in contrast to the standardized body of mainstream pornography.

5.4.2 Peek into privacy

Another aspect of authenticity that we highlight is that, when examining our material, our interpretation lead us to believe that sexual life is perceived as a having a deep private connection. We did not go on to analyze whether such a connection should be shared but we rather focused on the perception of privacy by users.

Users and up loaders of UGC identified sex life to be the most passionate, intimate personal moments. The identification of privacy and its scarcity serves both as a motivation to watch and testament of authenticity. We identify appreciation from users of UGC as a facilitator of peeking into someone's private moments, making the content authentic and therefore attractive.

- '(...) it is the excitement that is created seeing common people in their intimacy'. **Iwa, 28**
- 'Sexual life means privacy. Thus I don't like to share it for the interest of public. I don't even think to do that. Being private makes it attractive.' **Carl, 27**

5.4.3 Acting

The last realization of authenticity and realness in UGC that we present, sums up some of our previous findings. In the next paragraphs we reveal some factors of importance, for why one should not perceive mainstream pornography as reality but rather as entertainment, which is commercial, staged and most importantly acted to imitate real life sex.

User generated content may be characterized by its absence of plot and presence of natural behavior thus the opposite of acting. The non-existence of plot makes UGC more appealing to many when compared to mainstream pornography, as the latter tends to become predictable.

- 'I think the mainstream porn is much more well scripted or staged. They try to take as many known fetishes as they can put them in male view and put them into action in that plot. I already know what is coming'. **David, 36**
- ' (...)you can see and feel the excitement, enjoyment and sensuality of people having sex — things that can't be scripted, acted or faked (if they are at all) in most porn videos.' **MLNP**

Excitement therefore becomes the unknown, the unpredictable, and the unscripted. Anonymous, goes as far as feeling deceived once he discovers ingenuity of content.

- 'I feel cheated when I watch a "hidden vid" that is obviously staged.' **Anonymous, 35**

The quote from Anonymous above reflects what MacCannel would suggest is evidence for staged authenticity, respectively its 3rd stage, what MacCannel describes as 'a front region that is totally organized to look like a back region', but this often runs the risk of being seen through (MacCannel, 1976). In this particular example, it is when acting was detected, which in turn caused disappointment in the consumer.

Our overall interpretation is that users wish to reach 5th stage and up. They want to leave the clean room that has been prepared for sexual activity to a stage which is real but safe and prepared for consumers to see. The 6th stage of UGC 6th might be interpreted through content such as hidden cameras or spontaneous filming without any preparation.

What we suggest is that UGC content in pornography represents the 5th and 6th stage of authenticity tourism described by MacCannel (1976); we are proposing a metaphor between traveling for experience and entertainment of sexual experience coming from pornographic content.

Summary

In this chapter we have discussed the aspects of Authenticity and Realness projected in the culture of UGC touching upon: Gender empowerment; Emotions, tenderness, story-telling and caring; Joy (of having wanted sex); Guilt; Body, age and stigma; Neighbor; Peek into privacy; Acting. Employing a CCT theoretical framework in this analysis clearly demonstrates the sophistication of prosumers and consumers of UGC regarding how they perceive and judge authenticity. It is our view that this concept requires and deserves

much more attention and richer description than what it has thus received in existing research. Referring to CCT framework, we made use of authenticity theories from Goffmann (1972) and MacCannel (1976) contributing to a broader understanding of authenticity. When highlighting the political aspect of consumption through CCT theory we uncover the importance of gender equality, both from the prosumer as well as the consumer point of view. However, mainly we must underline that the UGC culture is still more refined than merely authenticity and its various forms of receptions, as it also includes other aspects some of which are undoubtedly presented also in mainstream pornography. Therefore, in following two chapters we address aspects of pornography consumption, respectively UGC under the sections: Risk and Safety, and, Self-medication.

CHAPTER 6. Analysis - Safety and Risk

We devoted the previous chapter to the portrayal of authenticity and its various forms of reception through consumption of UGC, however, the reasons for consuming UGC do not only spring from the search of authenticity, which leads us towards the second out of three analysis sections: Safety and Risks. This chapter is devoted to exploring risk and safety benefits of engaging in consumption or production of UGC split into the following categories: Community, Gratification, Recognition and Representation, Status and Identity, Free of Judgment, De-stigmatization, Education, Solo.

6.1 Community

First of all, we bring attention to the perception of uploading sexual content of oneself as being unconventional in contemporary society and by many even repudiated. We do not disregard previous research that state that part of the motivation to upload UGC is a sexual deviation of being turned on by the knowledge that someone else is getting turned on by you.

- 'We always felt attracted to the idea of someone watching us while having sex, but this was the real thing, and it wouldn't be just someone we picked, but a lot of strangers from wherever' **MLNP**

However, we move further and interpret the notion of uploading and creating a connection with other up loaders as a search for community of like-minded people, audience and a market for the prosumer's products. The general rejection and negative connotation of pornography gives up loaders the sensation of acting against societal norms.

- 'I feel like all porn (perhaps especially mainstream) represents a weakening of the fabric of society and is morally wrong. That doesn't stop me from really liking it, enjoying it, buying it, etc. I feel conflicted when I do think about that but I don't think about it that often.' **Anonymous, 35**

We interpret that acting against what is by society stated as the good and right, acting against the approval of society, creates a new community based on the deviance from and the deviance of standard norms.

On the other hand, what we interpret from prosumers of UGC is the pursuit of approval from this newly found community of likeminded individuals, sharing the same previously defined deviation, fighting the matching societal disapproval.

- ‘Discovered MakeLoveNotPorn.tv it just seemed naturally thrilling to be able to share some of our more recent videos with like-minded people in the MLNP community’. **MLNP**

The sense of community is leaping from a society-constructed shared sexual deviation and the courage required to put oneself in a completely vulnerable position.

- ‘ I’ve been impressed with the MLNP.tv community for several reasons that range from pure enjoyment to feeling pretty charged at the idea of becoming completely vulnerable. That alone is freaking powerful! Seeing other couples and individuals share their most intimate moments on screen, in a blog post or interview is a constant reminder of what makes this community so refreshing: Zero judgment!’ **MLNP**

Furthermore, the members of such a community establish a distinction between themselves and what is labeled by society and repudiated, respectively mainstream pornography.

- ‘Suddenly, here was an online erotic-video site which IS “real”, and where the participants are clearly involved because they WANT to be’. **MLNP**

What members draw attention to are the obvious differences between the UGC community and mainstream pornography such as the aspect of “real” and the underlying motivation. What we interpret is that the sense of being part of the community and being approved by it, produces and exercises wonder and excitement. The initial desire to get horny over someone else by using the content is suppressed at the detriment of the excitement of finding like-minded people.

- ‘And it is that word “share” . . . that for me makes the MLNP experience so captivating, exhilarating . . . and yes, arousing!!! Sharing the wonder and excitement, and personal fulfilment, of our lifestyle with a community of like-minded people.’ **MLNP**
- ‘But it is the “sharing” that I have found to be the most enjoyable thing about being part of the MLNP community.’ **MLNP**
- ‘ (...) by sharing and being part of the community, I don’t just mean posting our own videos. We have also rented and enjoyed a number of different videos from other MLNP-stars.’ **MLNP**

As usually in other communities we deduced originating social competition and conspicuousness as couples uploading content were motivated because they are proud of their “love”,

- ‘ (...) we uploaded it because, as poetic as this may sound, we are very proud of our love and have always wanted to find a community of people who can enjoy real love and real sex and feel inspired

to enjoy human bodies and feelings openly and naturally and realistically. Also, we wanted to feel inspired through real people like us from all over the world.' **MLNP**

Possibly, even because they believe they are so much better looking than others, and having the urge to conspicuously demonstrate their qualities and challenge the status of other members within the community. We interpret such motivation to be narcissistic and not necessarily connected to above described ones.

- 'There's a start-up site called 'Make Love Not Porn.' It's videos from real people—not porn actors. I thought it was hot—but not as hot as we are.' **MLNP**

Some prosumers of UGC, who were not revealing their identity in produced content, nor shared the similar intentions of joining the community looking for approval for showing what by society standards is rejected, used the conspicuousness of their content as the motivation to upload. We suggest that such behavior is due to uncompromised identity and a search for recognition and social gratification rather than approval and participation in the community.

- 'I really liked the vids I had. They are better than a lot of the ones in the same niche I'd seen on xhamster and other places and thought others would like them too. That was the original motivation.' **Anonymous, 35**

Furthermore, we suggest that the consumer culture of UGC allows for alternative online identity creation, where individuals can be admired and recognized regardless of their offline identities. Such attributes may take shape in real life and be of benefit to the individual's self-esteem.

The community of UGC seems to employ similar mechanism as could be found in other areas of social life. The community was viewed by others, as to employed standards, which we suggest caused new up-loaders to live through paradoxical doubts of unacceptance while searching for acceptance.

- 'I remember watching an intro from a couple of MLNPstars in the site and thinking: "I hope people don't laugh at us.' **MLNP**

We leave unrevealed the details of the joy of prosumers getting thrilled over someone else watching them in UGC during an intimate act, but we point out that the approval searched through community might be catalyzed by various reasons e.g. unshared deviations but we feel that this area requires and deserves further research. How does e.g. a poor childhood with a lack of a father figure play in to it all?

- 'So that men can see me and fantasize about me. Probably a poor childhood with no father figure. Seeking approval. I get a thrill.' **Lina, 47**

In connection to both online and offline UGC communities we have also identified trading mechanisms, which we interpret as the hard core of a UGC subculture of consuming content which is not difficult to access unless recognized within the community itself. Trading content seems to be a regular practice within the members of UGC community.

- 'I really like the videos I have and wanted to share. As a side effect I've been talking to a few people since I uploaded and a couple are willing to trade me for content that I haven't seen before on the net.' **Anonymous, 35**

6.2 Recognition and Representation, Status and Identity

The idea of sexual deviation, voyeurism, exhibitionism or narcissism creating a community has been described in the paragraphs above. In this section we focus on the gratification and joy that prosumers gain by uploading UGC and by being part of the community.

- 'Of course the voyeur/exhibitionist in me (in ALL of us???) means I have found all the emails I have received from people who have rented the videos, to be flattering and exciting.' **MLNP**

Prosumers of UGC content gain not only sexual pleasure but also societal (and some even minor monetary, e.g. makeovenotporn.com) recognition for their acts. Prosumers are flattered by the manifestation of appreciation from users and recognition for their content. They are reporting emails showing recognition and demonstrating enhanced status within the community.

Recognition or appreciation of the content uploaded is also projected in the number of views, content rating and comments that UGC platforms such as www.xhamster.com or www.youporn.com provide.

- 'In the near week since I uploaded my vids have gotten around 10k views and a couple dozen very positive comments. I didn't really expect it but it turns out reading the comments while I watch my own vids added another level of enjoyment to the vids.' **Anonymous, 35**

The status enhancement is projected by approval and appreciation and it helps the identity building of prosumers. We suggest that viewing consumer approved content gives prosumers increased level of excitement and joy.

Adding to the identity creation and self-representation motivation, UGC can observably serve as representing material. Some participants such as male user Norman, establishes the use of uploaded content as a social bridge for connecting with other peers and potentially meeting them in person. A similar connection attracts the female user Lina, therefore we interpret the motivation of uploading UGC as a facilitator of establishing real-life connection. This interpretation raises a paradoxical situation of pornographic content being uploaded for the sake of finding a real life partner and status creation, elements not present in mainstream pornography.

- 'So people can see who I am and that they can get in touch if they like what they see. So we can meet for a sex date.' **Norman, 43**
- 'At this time, I'm seeking for a man to spend the night with. One night only, with my husband's approval.' **Lina, 47**

Adding to status and identity creation, prosumers of UGC seem to also concentrate on the idea of what may be interpreted as being a good lover.

- 'It makes me feel very manly and females seem to be interested in what I have to offer from time to time.' **Red, 29**

In this statement Red refers not only to having, according to his perception of societal norms, a fitting body but also being a good lover and his ability to satisfy a woman. Attributes and abilities clearly highly valued within the community of UGC that is looking for potential sex partners are the body and the ability to be a good lover.

6.3 Free of judgment de-stigmatization

This section is dedicated to the perception of norms of pornography and society, influencing factors such as religion in the prosumer culture of UGC.

Firstly, we introduce religion-liberating effects of uploading UGC. Prosumers describe the influence of religion on the tabooing discussion about sex and pornography. In our data gathering we find repeated elements related to the constraints of Christianity, the imposed idea of performing a wrongful act according to religion but having positive inner feelings about doing so. The prosumers described such stages flowingly.

- 'I may have been a Christian doing all the "right things" outwardly but what I really felt like was a dirty whore whose secrets would find her out.' **MLNP**

The ability to publicly display sexual content revolting Christian preaching was described as a liberating practice from religious norms embodied in society.

- 'It's quite liberating turning terror into passion and removing fear by embracing love.' **MLNP**

Another prosumer revolting against similar religious constraints of sex tabooing found in the community of UGC a necessary support to find courage to express his disagreement.

- 'MLNP.tv is really about one thing for me. It goes right back to that time when I was young boy looking at my teacher's boobs scared to death that I was headed for the dinner date with the Devil who would dine on my cock first before he threw me into his fireplace. The difference is, with MLNP.tv, I experience the therapeutic value that comes from facing all of those old thoughts by symbolically standing up and pulling my pants down and sticking both of my middle fingers in the air (technically, that would be three) and screaming "Fuck Off." **MLNP**

We comprehend this conception as the community facilitating an arena for religions and other discourses in society constraining sex and pornography over all. This interpretation ties in with the next risk of pornography that we studied, that of it serving as a tool for education. We perceive UGC to be challenging perceptions created by pornography and its educational aspects.

6.4 Education

We continue with the acknowledgement of social norms influencing the openness of discussion about pornography and sex, which in the UGC culture expands in educational complications.

In UGC culture prosumers do not adopt, but rather criticize society's ability to openly talk about sex and pornography-related issues. They rather point out the rising issues and contribute to de-tabooing educative issues of pornography.

- 'Internet nowadays can compel all manners of strangers to speak their sex by pressing play on a video we find on a porn website. Cindy Gallop has spoken of how online porn has become the de facto sex education for young people in a country that absolutely refuses to grow a pair and speak sex to its youth.' **MLNP**

Some prosumers go as far as dramatizing the present situation as a monolithic image of sex created by consumption of mainstream pornography.

- 'The problem is that we, collectively, have so readily given over any desire to construct alternative dialogues, alternative erotic displays, that we have let porn imagine itself to be monolithic, to be the only type of sex that people could want.' **MLNP**

We find that some prosumers are aware of the negative educative effects of mainstream pornography and have the ability to distinguish real-life and pornography, taking pornography as a liberating service, but in no means an educative one.

- 'Porn can be a great way to delve into a fantasyland, but it's a terrible means of sex education.' **MLNP**
- 'If you can't abstract between reality and show-business, apart from the body, I think the kind of how they perform sex in regular porn is a big influence to (young) people.' **Tony, 26**

Other prosumer uncertainties strike beyond the ability of consciously rejecting the fiction of pornography and its inability to link with real sex life.

- 'More thinking about how women are treated. I don't want to unconsciously create an image in my head that sex should be like mainstream porn. I would rather like to (unconsciously) create an image in my head that sex should be like female friendly porn. I might achieve this by watching female friendly porn.' **Ben, 24**

However, the key problematization of the educational aspects of pornographic content leans over to the innocent who have little or no ability to grasp the context of pornography or lacking the knowledge to perceive pornography as entertainment, the young inexperienced adults.

- 'Of course, there is an age at which any human being has little ability to gather much context. Certainly, the younger a child is exposed to hard core Internet porn, the less likely he/she is to know what the fuck is going on.' **MLNP**
- 'Okay, this is not an entirely fair analogy in regards to porn. A kid watches — for the first time — a video of two naked people fucking. The parents don't want to talk about it. The school doesn't want to talk about it. His/her peers have little knowledge on the subject. The process of exploration is immediately hostile and restrictive.' **MLNP**
- 'Are we arming the youth? Perhaps not explicitly. We're not explicitly marketing porn to them either. But kids are interested in sex and they're smart. They're going to find porn because it's there. My hope is that they'll find the context too. And this is where I feel responsibility shifts to the individual.' **MLNP**

Prosumers importantly problematize porn education due to the inexperience of young adults, the inability to discuss content with adults and the perception of mainstream pornography. The motivation of participants in UGC is therefore magnified by the intention of de-tabooing pornography by the extension of sex and protecting young adults from gaining unreal expectations.

During our data collection we also had the reappearing theme of mainstream pornography being man made, from man perspective, for man. We are suggesting that UGC is couple made, from both male and female perspective, without a gender-specific audience.

6.5 Solo

An aspect of safety that we finish this chapter with narrate from prosumer data in the ability of consuming UGC, which reflects ordinary bodies seen in public in the safety of private space.

- 'The sex, the mutual sex, intercourse, it's more like a two person thing, and in the porn you don't have to care about the other persons pleasure, you just watch it and for yourself, it's more like, you don't have to... I don't know, maybe it's why I did more like...relaxing, and you don't have to feel like, you don't have to be sexy, or attractive yourself, you just can sit in your underwear and do it. What wears if you have sex you have to projecting image of attractive man, and to be a good lover, think about your partner.' **David, 36**

What David implied was the fear of being caught and perceived as pervert in public areas while feeding his curiosity and watching women. UGC allows him to see the bodies he wishes to examine in public areas but without the fear of being questioned and a reprobate. Furthermore, the aspect of solo privacy projects in being free from the responsibility of pleasuring a partner and therefore avoiding having to deal with sex

expectations of others. David particularly addresses the pressure to deliver sexual pleasure and the fear of failing and combating a status of being poor lover. We suspect David protects his perception of self, rather than assessing it and facing possible rejection and therefore experience failure. Also, we suggest that he is avoiding responsibility in partnership as well as loyalty. Overall, the secure feeling of performing such an act in privacy allows David to be far away from all societal norms, free of any judgment.

Summary

In the first chapter of analysis we looked into the establishment of authenticity and its various projections in UGC, thereby improving the understanding of UGC. In this chapter, under the heading of Safety and Risk, we touched upon Community, Gratification, Recognition and Representation, Status and Identity, De-stigmatization, Education, Solo. Previous researchers have already stated the creation of communities of UGC; however, employing a CCT theoretical framework enabled us to analyse the underlying significance of community and its benefits as well as its risks, respectively reaching previously neglected areas of research such as identity creation, social gratification, recognition and status creation. In addition, our analysis opened up a discussion of stigmatization of pornography and sex within contemporary society and points to further potential of UGC as an alternative combating movement. Furthermore, we have analysed the overall risks and benefits of consuming pornography with the focus on UGC. In the next chapter we develop the understanding of consumption and production from the perspective of the individual in the theme of Self-medication.

CHAPTER 7. Analysis - Self-Medication

In this analysis chapter, we bring attention to the influence of UGC porn consumption as a form of self-medication of consumers and prosumers. Through the chapter we address the complexity of symbolic meaning of consumption of pornographic content, the self-reflection of consumers and prosumers, and comforting attributes of consumption in dealing with societal norms and expectations. Through consumption of porn consumers manage their emotions, which can be caused by social demands and standards since they are part of this construct.

In contrast to the previous 2 chapters in the analysis, this chapter is not divided into particular categories as we have found that its concepts e.g.: life style, emotion management, hedonic consumption, low self-esteem, tension release, emotional and sexual needs, fall on each other and create in a sense one continuum.

Employing a CCT framework allows us to comprehensively identify societal norms that individuals balance by consumption and production of pornography and the more individual embedded aspects of porn consumption.

Self-medication

Consumption of pornography, the obvious aside (an outlet for physical lust through the act of masturbation), seems to have more complex meaning. The final act of masturbation can be, every so often, considered as the last step in that journey.

Overall consumption of pornography seems to be a sort of short term solution to issues like stress, tension, unrealized lust, loneliness, fear, social anxiety, unfulfilled needs both: emotional and sexual,

For Vee, 24, the motivation to watch porn is:

- ‘... I would rather say to fulfil (...) needs’. **Vee, 24**

Those needs, which as we are to discuss later, are various in the nature and cause.

Carl, 26, stated:

- ‘I can call it as an assistant to make things easier and more entertaining’.

Naming porn an assistant can suggest the importance and in a sense usefulness of the relation with porn. It implies that it is a valuable relationship since it is helpful, improving the quality of Carls's daily life and simplifying it.

We interpret through our analysis that there is always a good time for some porn as it never disturbs, or interrupts the daily life, and it is relevant in any emotional state. Consumers alter their attitude towards porn in accordance to their personal preference and needs.

- '...sometimes when I'm really happy and energized I want to do it, but also when I'm really low, when I feel like not living, than it's also some kind of comfort doing it, so it depends, it can be in every mood.' **David, 36**

Consumption/production of porn has a number of dimensions, e.g. its perceived symbolic meaning by prosumers, pornography as a product (Levy, 1959; Levy, 1963; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967) and its utilitarian value, which can also derive from the symbolic context.

As based on the example of David, one of the reasons for which he engages in consumption of porn is simply by means of managing emotions e.g. maintaining a state of happiness, or to try to balance the sadness. We interpret it as emotion regulation consumption (ERC) which involves the consumption or purchase of a product or service 'for the purposes of alleviating, repairing, or managing an emotion e.g. sadness, amusement, contentment, and fear/anxiety in the short term' (Kemp & Kopp, 2011, p. 2). The regulation of emotions can be manifested in daily practices of consumers e.g. waking up with a cup of coffee in the morning, having a nice meal as a reward, buying goods of either intrinsic or extrinsic value all in order to make themselves feel better (Mick & DeMoss, 1990) or watching porn to manage a specific, short-term subjective state e.g. need for tension release, lust, feeling low.

Because hedonic products/services often generate positive affective responses from the consumer (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Voss, et al., 2003), individuals experiencing negative emotion may consume or purchase hedonic products in an effort to invoke positive emotion. 'Positive emotions have the ability to undo the effects of negative emotions.' Individuals in negative emotional states engage in affect repair by consuming something from which they derive some positive affective benefit e.g. porn. Subsequently, these individuals might also be more likely to engage in consumption of a hedonic nature to maintain positive affective states (Kemp & Kopp, 2011).

Watching pornographic content is also motivated by the need for tension, and/or stress vent. It is also considered by consumers as an easy way to get rid of the sexual urge. This helps consumers to rebalance, attain a feeling of comfort, which in itself can be equalled with pleasure.

- 'It's like tension release. ... it's nice, it's a rush, it's a need that u can fulfil easily. You cum and it's out of your system. It's an easy way to get the relief' **David, 36**

Thus, through consumption and/or production of porn they try to reach a level of physical and emotional pleasure.

- 'I just like putting myself into the porn stage. I like to be horny'. **David, 36**
- "For pleasure. Instinct in me that wants to. It is interesting to watch naked girls. More like arousing.' **Ben, 24**
- 'It's fun it makes me happy, horny' **David, 36**

According to Campbell (1987), consumerism is tied to consistent self-gratification activity (...), springs from satisfying needs and pursuing pleasure. Search for pleasure in quite specific practices such as: eating, drinking or sex is one of the characteristics of traditional hedonism (Corrigan, 1997, p. 15)

Insofar as hedonic consumption is characterized as "multisensory images, fantasies and emotional arousal in using products" (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), here understood as watching porn.

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) traced the evolution of the concept from product symbolism (Levy, 1963; Levy, 1959; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967).

The merit of hedonism is debated, some praise it as natural and healthy, but others equate hedonism with overindulgence and moral decay. It is associated with 'good taste and the art of living well and on the opposite with addiction, superficiality, irresponsible behavior and short-sighted egoism (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

The above correspond with the fact that the practice of watching porn is considered by consumers as separated from others, focused on self and in a sense liberating from potential external expectations, which brings a feeling of comfort.

- 'It's more egoistic, I think about my own pleasure ... the sex, the mutual sex, intercourse, it's more like a two person thing, and in the porn you don't have to care about the others persons pleasure, you just watch it and for yourself, ... you don't have to be sexy, or attractive yourself, you just can sit in your underwear and do it. What's worse is if you have sex you have to project image of an attractive man, and to be a good lover, think about your partner.' **David, 36**
- , ... because it's like the solo thing, and then you just taking the part you like.' **David, 36**

Therefore, we interpret that entering the world of porn, exempts users from the need of being 'perfect'- according to the societal norms e.g. being caring and giving as a partner, being a great lover as a 'real' man should be, or even being a man in a sense of social gender roles construct.

We interpret consumption of pornography as a way, to sate potentially deeply embodied emotional lacks, and wounds.

In Lina's responses we can trace a psychoanalytical theme - the importance of early childhood for the individual's further development (Fisher & Greenberg, 1977).

- 'I do things because I want to....so men can see me and fantasize about me. (...) Probably a poor childhood with no father figure. Seeking approval. **Lina, 47**

However, we are not going to conduct the analysis on her - the lack of professional skills and training and a very modest amount of material, indisputably separate us from it. What we can assume however, is that, perhaps her narrative, is the description of the motivation behind producing and consuming the UGC, irrespectively of her emotions. The need for approval that Lina, (47) possibly tries to medicate through the search for acceptance, and flattering comments of other, male, porn users.

Interestingly, prosumers / consumers themselves think that mostly particular people, individuals with some kind of issues, get involved in porn. We interpret as a cliché folk saying: I judge you on the bases I judge myself. (How we judge ourselves is how we judge others) which suggests that prosumers of UGC porn perceive themselves as socially troubled, problematic individuals.

- '... perhaps many of them have issues from their life which that made them. Maybe they do it to search for recognition, acceptance, confirmation, because they have issues from the past. I think it is over represented by girls who were sexually abused or have a missing father. I think it is special kind of people who go to this business.' **David, 36**

For Lina (47) the porn sphere appears to play more complex role. As she stated later:

- 'At this time, I'm seeking for a man to spend the night with. One night only, with husband's approval.' **Lina, 47**

The search for the one night partner, could suggest that she seeks confirmation of her attractiveness in another sex partner, as a sign of approval.

Lina stated that she watches, consumes and produces porn, because she does what she want, which can be seen as contradictive to the fact that her short sexual adventures with new partners need to be previously accepted by her husband. The husband figure is in a way also fulfilling the need of approval that she might not have experienced from her father. Additionally we see a display of 'traditional' social gender powers, the man / husband is seen as the head of household, as having the last word, while the woman is seen as an obedient wife who, based on her actions, including those in reference to the consumption / practice of porn, is dependent on the prior approval of her husband.

Sexual adventures also bring excitement into her life:

- 'I get a thrill' **Lina, 47**.

That excitement can come from the unknown, the novelty of sexual intercourse with random sexual partners.

Our research indicated the aspect of novelty multiple times. The novelty that comes from watching pornography seems to be one of the main motivations to watch porn in the first place. Porn has been proven to be solution to needs of consumers relating to desire for the new, e.g. the new body.

- 'Because, for me a lot about the porn has to do with - I want the new, new, new sensation, flavour, it can be like a scene very similar to scene I've seen before, but it may be with new characters in it, a new actress and that's it, I think that the novelty of it all ... I don't like famous porn actress because when I've seen them once or twice, I get bored of a certain look, it is all about the new, the novelty, the unseen.' **David, 36**

Through watching pornography, respondents seem to manage the need of novelty, so it does not affect their real-life relationships negatively.

- 'Of course I would never risk ... the whole thing with my partner because of that, but I sure feel I would really like to just fuck with the random stranger to get the new tits, the rush.' **David, 36**.

For some like Vee, 23, the fact that he can supply his need for novelty through porn, is also a way to stay loyal within his relationship, because he values it more.

- 'But surely I believe that it is better to watch porn than go for a one night stand somewhere... I watch porn so I don't have intentions to cheat somewhere.' **Vee, 23**

The CCT perspective focuses in particular on consumers as social beings. In this sense, culture is perceived as the fundamental determinant of wants and behavior of individuals. In a culture, values and norms serve as guidelines for human behavior, thus can be considered as the criteria that one refer to while making choices and justify their own actions as well as to value objects and the behavior of others (Fraj & Martinez, 2006).

The values of individuals and the values held in their milieu, can be understood as the reflection of an individual's lifestyle (Hansen, 2008). Vee's choice of consuming porn instead of cheating can be interpreted as an expression of his monogamous lifestyle and his values e.g. loyalty, trust, honesty, stability etc.

In the respect of novelty, porn can be perceived as a remedy for the potential boredom that can appear in long-term committed relationships.

- '... it excites them? Interests them to see something what they don't have at home? ... And I think that when I was in a relationship I watched porn far more than when I am single.' **Vee, 23**
- '... if I've been in relationship for some time and walk on the street and see the girl I think is less attractive than the girl I'm with, still I can be more attracted to that random stranger, because it is new and unknown.' **David, 36**

We mark, that consumers agree that consumption of porn is not as satisfying as sex with a real human in the real world but because it brings them comfort and because it frees them from e.g. the fear of rejection or disappointment from unmet expectations in relation to personal interactions in real world, it has a high regard among them.

- 'No it's not, but it's like a comfort price. It's like the next best thing.' **David, 36**

The world of porn, in which they separate themselves from reality, allows them to be who they really are without the need to play a role e.g. the great lover. It minimizes the risk of rejection and does not create the stress connected with low self-esteem issues.

- 'I think it is a fear, being afraid of being rejected. And the whole easiness of it all, I think it takes a lot of effort to like asking somebody out. Trying. If I just want sex, then it is easier to just go to a girl online, rather than going to a club, or something. I don't know how to succeed in there in that sense'**David,36**

The need for real emotions and real touch does still exist.

' Don't you miss the touch of the real body, etc.?

- True, yeh yeh I do a lot.' **David, 36**

The fear of not succeeding and failing is redirected and channeled through looking for satisfaction in porn.

- ' But It's so much like fear linked to that, that sometimes I think I should not go there...Instead of like going out socializing with people I'll just go home and jerk off 3 times instead of going out to disco, or whatever. So it can have that kind of function as well to sort of be away from people, because it's like the solo thing, and than you just taking the part you like.' **David, 36**

By particular choice of form of porn, users attempt to bring themselves closer to the real world and simultaneously, as in case of David, keep themselves at a safe distance from it.

- 'Another kind of sex thing I've done, was talking to some random person in webcam, and than maybe she shows me her boob, and I get horny by that, and than she ask if she can see may cock. I say yes sure. So it is some kind of mutual, so it is in between porn and real sex' **David, 36**

Max, 37 shares the concept of personalized life interaction online also.

- ' ... I like cam to cam, see me with another person on cam' **Max, 37**
- 'It's like tension release, and it could be sort of escape from reality.' **David, 36**

Interestingly it seems that through porn, which consumers are aware of being a form of creation, 'Life imitating art' (Anonymous), they are searching for authenticity, realness, personal, intimate experiences which they could live in the real world but due to e.g. fear, the amount of effort required, no guarantee of success, high expectations etc., they choose to separate themselves from the real world and rather prefer to go to the fantasy land - porn - in order to experience the "real".

We interpret this as porn being, in a sense, the location for displaced ideals of a fulfilling relationship, it's secure, accepting, a place where issues of low self-esteem and rejection do not exist. Online pornography acts as a bridge between reality, which consumers may want to escape, and an ideal that is desired but due to e.g. fear cannot be quite attained. The real needs and desires e.g. being confident, popular and wanted by women, through the concept of displaced meanings (Corrigan, 1997, p. 45; McCracken, 1988) are transferred into the world of UGC porn, and there they are potentially, at least to some degree, fulfilled. Porn, in a sense, brings relief from the struggles of reality.

However, even though the physical need may be satisfied through porn it can still lead to emotional emptiness. Through our study, we have observed that men are paying attention to also the emotional aspect of sex and porn. They talk about emotions and are aware of the emotional lacks that porn may increase or even create.

- '... it is so different from real sex, ... If I would have sex with someone, then afterwards we would cuddle or something, lie down and laugh... it's a bit miserable actually 😊 Of course, it's empty feeling' **David, 36**
- 'Yespeople may "forget" about true love and true feelings and only think about getting sex.' **sweet, 49**
- (UGC) 'It is more gentle. Mainstream is sometimes very aggressive and as well sometimes it is about love and in female porn it is more realistic and more loving' **Ben, 24**

We interpret the fact that men talk about emotions and openly admit that they matter, could be a sign or a reflection of bigger social changes, targeting gender equality. Through the choice of UGC porn over the mainstream porn, in which the man typically very much plays the role of the dominant macho who focuses on his egoistic, purely physical needs and disregards the partner and the concept of emotions, consumers express their stand point, and we see an image of a 'new', perhaps more authentic man start to appear. This brings us back to the concept of symbolic consumption.

Porn is also used to acquire new knowledge, in order to become a better lover, to deliver more pleasure and sexual satisfaction for the partner, which consequently could lead to be perceived as a better lover in the partner's eyes.

- 'Lately watching porn for females is more educative, because you see what the girl wishes, instead of just banging.' **Ben, 24.**

Practice can be explained by motivation coming from the male ego; Ben believes that if he will be a better lover his relations with females will be more stable:

- 'I believe relationships with girls might get more solid' **Ben, 24**

For Ben, the perception and approval he gets from females is an important element in building his male ego and his self-perception, which strongly depends on external approval.

Summary

With this summary of self-medication we close the set of the three analysis chapters. Although this particular chapter focused on the self-medication aspects of UGC, we cannot neglect the more general findings of consumption and production of mainstream pornography. Throughout the chapter we address the complexity of consuming pornographic material, self-reflection of consumers and prosumers and comforting characteristics of consumption dealing with societal norms. With the usage of CCT concepts we were able to identify societal constructions leading individuals towards the consumption of pornographic material, thereby enriching the understanding of porn consumption.

The symbolic meaning of consumption of porn seems to be complex but the overall goal of the consumption is to make the consumer feel better with and about him - or herself. This goal is attained through emotion regulation consumption, often leading to hedonic consumption, escaping reality by displacing the ideals, substituting the need for real adventure by the adventure in the virtual world of porn – yet it is a world which in a sense is a representation of reality (UGC) but one, unlike mainstream porn, that does not create as significant inner moral conflicts.

CHAPTER 8. Discussion

Abstract: We add to the theory within CCT research in the domains of Consumer Identity Projects, Socio-historic Patterning of Consumption, Marketplace Cultures and Mass-mediated market place ideologies and consumer interpretive strategies by mapping the previously uncharted consumer culture of UGC and its consumption and production. More precisely we provide insights into the aspect of consumer culture of UGC porn, which we group in three categories: Authenticity and Realness, Safety and Risks and Self-medication. We draw upon the current understanding of UGC consumption and production and the consumption of pornography in order to analyse differences and similarities. We build upon insights from body perceptions, community and acceptance, analysing aspects of the UGC culture. Furthermore, we address the needs of prosumers and consumers of UGC to be heard and we investigate the motivations behind engaging in consumption and production of UGC porn.

Until lately the knowledge about consumption of pornography remained scarce without voices of consumers and prosumers joining the critical discussion about consumption and production of UGC porn. (Smith & Attwood, 2014, p. 14) What we argue for, is that the representation of consumers and producers of porn is crucial in order to reach a greater, deeper, more accurate understanding and for the enrichment of the overall discussion. Therefore, with our study we aimed to bring new nuances and outlooks upon porn, while representing the previously unheard or misrepresented, possibly even victims of epistemic violence; the users and producers of UGC.

In our analysis we split our findings under what we find to be the three most significant themes: Authenticity and Realness, Safety and Risks, and Self-medication. Employing a CCT framework seamlessly suited our proposal of enriching the currently rather dualistic, monolithic understanding of porn consumption and providing a broader comprehension (Paasonen, 2010, p. 1297). The significance of our findings resides in representing the miss- and under-represented by opening up a discussion and providing alternative outlooks on porn consumption while challenging the current understanding, for instance the simplistic understanding of authenticity or the discussion on sexuality and the stigmatization of sex and pornography.

8.1 Authenticity and realness

Our first section we devote to the understanding of meaning of authenticity and realness of consumption of porn. Although researchers have previously acknowledged that authenticity is the dominating cause of increased popularity of amateur pornography, further investigation was desisted Barcan (2002).

Furthermore some researchers, such as Paasonen or O'Toole, concluded that mainstream pornography has absorbed amateur porn.

Through our analysis we find greater sophistication of consumer perception towards authenticity than formerly suggested. We do subscribe to the proposition that amateur pornography involves 'pictures of real people with real desires, having real sex in real places' (Messina, 2006), however we question that it is simply a fantasy of realness, directness and authenticity, supported by low-fi aesthetic and lay performers what lies at the heart of the popularity of amateur porn Barcan (2002).

First of all we recall an argument of researchers such as Attwood, Jacobs, Lehman and Albury (Attwood, 2007; Jacobs, 2007; Lehman, 2007; Albury, 2003), that UGC can provide representational space for sexual cultures and previously marginalized individuals. Contrary to Van Doorm (2010) by using a CCT framework, we interpret UGC as an arena for representation of female empowerment through pornography providing control on what UGC is produced, furthermore suggesting political consumption and production of UGC.

Another aspect of authenticity previously neglected is the involvement of emotions, tenderness, care and storytelling, which also project the authenticity of content as it reflects the real-life sex of consumers of UGC more closely. We pursue this aspect of authenticity as another factor of empowerment of previously marginalized groups in mainstream pornography and identify the notion of ironic and non-ironic consumers of pornography, where the non-ironic consumer searches for authenticity; if he or she fails the content is refused. Such statements by consumers lead us to the interpretation of boycotting of mainstream pornography and imitations of UGC.

What has also, through our analysis, proven to be an important part of authenticity is the genuine joy of having sex. Consumers perceive authenticity of the content through perception of protagonists enjoying themselves, which suggests natural settings of sex. More importantly, once protagonists were not perceived as enjoying themselves it caused negative feelings of guilt among consumers. The feeling of guilt projects as one of the motivations for consuming UGC over mainstream pornography.

It has been grounded earlier that UGC is a place for a wide range of alternative body type tolerance (Paasonen, 2010, p. 1298; Messina, 2006; Jacobs, 2007; Dery, 2007; Shah, 2007). We agree with Messina's statement that amateur pornography involves 'pictures of real people with real desires, having real sex in real places' (Messina, 2006). Through our analysis we can confirm previous research and conclude that the acceptance of body is also an acceptance of deviation from the "ideal body" and the inclusion of any age group in UGC. Overall, the idea of the imperfect body within UGC is perceived as an authentic aspect of real life sexuality. Users and prosumers therefore find the imperfect body to be arousing as they can associate it

with the everyday fanaticized real people they encounter in ordinary life e.g. the neighbor. Also, the display of imperfect bodies enables consumers and prosumers to liberate themselves from the anxiety imposed by “ideal body” image.

Likewise, we observe an important projection of authenticity, viewed by prosumers and consumers of UGC, represented by a peek into the privacy of the sexual lives of others. We suggest that this representation originates from non-ironic tourist seeking authentic experience of what is interpreted by Goffman (1972) and MacCannel (1976) as the back stage. Consumers have proven to be more sophisticated than what Paasonen (2010) or O’Toole (1998) suggested, proving that if the authenticity is staged or compromised such as what threatens the 3rd stage of authenticity; consumers feel betrayed by content and discard it. Consumers draw attention to the possibility of compromised authenticity through staging, acting or suspicions and what they are truly searching for in UGC is what McCannel (1976) would assign as 5th or 6th stage of authenticity, respectively the backstage. This interpretation suggests that previous assumptions of mainstream pornography fully swallowing amateur content are false. The authentic experience of UGC survives independently.

Consumption of UGC also carries a political dimension. We reflect on consumers who boycott consumption of mainstream pornography and purposely looking for the UGC, likewise prosumers who refuse mainstream porn due to various aspects such as the “ideal body” and wish to provide an alternative. Therefore we analyze the production and consumption of UGC porn becoming an arena for political representation.

Our findings therefore rather suggest that UGC content is independent to mainstream pornography with a complex culture offering more than just what Barcan (2002) suggests; the fantasy of realness, directness and authenticity supported by low-tech and visual performance. Thus amateur has not been ‘swallowed’ up by professional industry. In our analysis we conclude that the perception of authenticity is complexly viewed through various factors such as joy, non-standardized body or emotions. With those interpretations we identify consumers to be more sophisticated in their choice of pornography consumption, in contrast to previous research.

Our crucial theme of UGC, previously discussed and identified in our research, significantly contributes to the understanding of consumers’ sophistication; nevertheless the findings also brought us to a discussion on the relationship between the market and the life of prosumers and consumers. Paasonen (2010) proposes that prosumers making their own porn are not merely expressing themselves, as a neoliberal discourse might have it, but commodifying themselves in relation to pornography as a genre and an industry. We do not neglect that there is a room for potential commodification but also we bring attention to the production and consumption of UGC being a significantly politicized message conveying act. Prosumers do not view

themselves as pornography producers, therefore they might commoditize themselves in relation to gender but we wish to discuss whether they commoditize themselves in relation to industry as they are, in accordance with our findings, rather disruptors of it and they destabilize it more than they contribute to it as immaterial free labor.

For that reason our findings are important in order to extend the discussion of commodification, motivations to disrupt as well as representation of previously oppressed groups through UGC (which was addressed skeptically by Van Doorn) (2010). Although authenticity was a predominant theme within our analysis it leads us to a second chapter of findings namely Safety and Risks addressing pornography in much more general manners.

8.2 Safety and risk

In this section we address the carelessly concluded argument that the motivation for consumption/production of amateur pornography springs simply from sexual “deviation” of individuals filming themselves because they get horny from someone getting horny over them (Dery, 2007; Messina, 2006). In our study we contribute to the discussion against this simplistic view of prosumers, hopefully offering a broader, richer perspective.

We have interpreted the act of uploading UGC by prosumers as being strongly connected to the idea of community of sharing sexual deviation that does not correspond to reigning societal norms. The notion of the community of user generated content sharing a subcultural knowledge has previously been grounded by Attwood (2007) who argued that both consumers and prosumers become members of ‘a taste culture which functions to bind them together in relations of economic and cultural production and consumption which are also relations of community’ (Paasonen, 2010). Furthermore Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000, p. 293; 2004, p. 108) have identified a form of immaterial labor as an affective labor that produces or manipulates affects, social networks and forms of community (Paasonen, 2010, p. 1301). We wish to contribute to this discussion by adding that some prosumers such as those of MLNP are monetarily gratified and more importantly all prosumers are socially gratified.

We extend the knowledge and describe some missing aspects of the community origins and motivations. Motivation for some prosumers to upload has been identified as the search for acceptance and a community of like-minded individuals challenging the social stigma imposed on pornography production and consumption; however, we have also interpreted the notion of identity and status creation within the

community of UGC prosumers. Status creation leads us to our second interpretation of safety, which is the gratification or social recognition within the UGC community. Social psychologists have defined narcissism in online social networking—those subjects who “gain esteem from public glory” and “enjoy looking at themselves on videotape and in the mirror”—is clearly evident in UGC (Garland, 2011, p. 71; Buffardi & Campbell, 2008, p. 1304) we do subscribe to such previous findings and extend the knowledge of it while we add to the theory of current community perception, proposing that although UGC often leaves the sphere of influence of original producers, the form of gratification shall be perceived as not only monetary but also from the societal perspective as recognition, identity and status creation. Therefore we propose not to look at UGC as a purely immaterial labor without monetary remuneration act motivated by societal gratification.

Prosumers have also been identified to upload strictly for the purpose of social gratification through the form of recognition. Furthermore, the reasons behind social recognition implied, for some up-loaders, the ability to present sexual abilities online and possibly attract partners.

Importantly, we have identified the notion of uploading pornography as an act that is liberating from the taboo of sex and the disapproval of society as well as religious discourses. We go on to draw attention to the risks of pornography, as perceived by consumers and prosumers of UGC. Prosumers and consumers are aware of the negative effects of pornography if used as an educative tool both consciously as well as unconsciously.

We interpret the risk of taking mainstream pornography as a reference point as a motivation for prosumers and consumers to consume UGC over mainstream pornography. Also prosumers and consumers acknowledge that there is a necessity for greater sex education, which is currently constrained by social stigma, as they propose that some young adults are not capable of making the distinction between real life sex and pornography without education or reference point, compared to older, more enlightened users who acknowledge the “night and day” differences of real life sex and mainstream pornography. Our findings change the simplistic understanding of community as a given formation emphasizing the connections between consumers/prosumers such as recognition, status and identity broadening the reasoning for producing and consuming UGC.

Our findings are significant particularly regarding the stigmatization of sex, sex education and pornography itself, providing an alternative outlook and perspective on consumers/prosumers as well as a potential movement challenging societal constructions and norms. Such movement is a possible contributor to a discussion of de-stigmatization of pornography and sex education, which, according to consumers/prosumers, seem to be one of the fuelling factors of pornography consumption. We also suggest considering UGC as a prospective challenge to a rising neo-moralistic view upon sexuality and porn. We wish to enrich the discussion about sexuality and porn based on the suggestion from our respondents concluding

that a stumbling-stone in our society is the stigma, which, by extension leads to a lack of proper education and awareness of mainstream pornography. Rather, mainstream porn should be viewed as entertainment to enable a distinction in comparison to real life sex. We shine a light on the discussion of UGC, e.g. represented by MLNP taking a position of an educating body away from mainstream pornography thereby contributing to the de-stigmatization and increased awareness. One key point we propose based on our findings is that while mainstream pornography is mainly made by man from the perspective of man for man, UGC is more often produced from a couples perspective representing both genders for anybody to use without focus on a specific group of consumers. We wish to further discuss the possibility of MLNP or any other UGC movement becoming a reference point to young individuals, and furthermore address the idea of UGC turning into mainstream pornography representing the megatrends of society such as “Returning to authenticity” or “Back to the roots”. We also bring attention to and discuss the ability to imitate authenticity which seems to be one of the most significant themes projected in UGC by mainstream pornography. Is the love and chemistry between real couples possible to imitate or are we facing a transformation from mainstream pornography towards UGC?

In the next section we address the societal pressure and norms, respectively how personally individual consumers and prosumers balance through them and use pornography consumption and production for their comforting characteristics of consumption. We discuss the ability to consume pornography free of any judgment and provision of space for expressing sexual desires, which cannot be criticized or questioned by society.

We contribute to the relationship between consumers/producers and the society in regards to themes such as monogamist lifestyle or novelty search. These consumers use pornography in response to the previously discussed societal stigmatization.

8.3 Self-medication

We add to the discussion of consumption reasoning in terms of self-medication. Consuming pornography is, except the obvious physical lust, an act complex in meaning. Masturbation is only the final step, or a tool through which other, more hidden needs are to be satisfied.

Therefore, the consumption of porn has a compound symbolic meaning (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Levy, 1963; Levy, 1959). Overall we analyze consumption of pornography to be a short-term solution to issues such as e.g. stress, tension, unrealized lust, loneliness, fear, social anxiety and unfulfilled needs both emotional and sexual. Fundamentally, the purpose of porn consumption is to manipulate emotions, to make

the consumer feel better, happier, excited, secure, free, all of it without violating societal norms, at least not openly so.

Therefore, self-medication, through consumption/production of porn may have a character of emotion regulation (Mick & DeMoss, 1990), people turning towards consumption of porn because it brings pleasure, it neutralizes a bad emotion.

The hedonic motivation for consumption (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) of porn may derive from a desire to fulfil the need of novelty. Novelty brings excitement from the unknown and change. By some consumers the UGC is interpreted as a great supplier of novelty, which allows them, e.g. to sustain their relationship, be in line with personal values, monogamist lifestyle and act within societal norms.

One more thing worth mentioning is that, throughout our research, it was noticeable that for most respondents porn has a positive utilitarian value. It solves problems rather than create them, at least in the short time perspective. In contradiction to anti porn voices, consumers find, through porn, a way out from their daily fears and problems. For some, UGC porn can be perceived as an alternative, better space into which consumers displace their ideals – imagined realities in which they are successful, free of worries and self-limitations. They are safe and accepted. Consumption of UGC porn in that sense protects them.

Importantly, consumers agree that consumption of porn is not as satisfying as sex with real humans in the real world, but because it brings them comfort, and because it frees them from e.g. the fear of rejection or disappointment from unmet expectations in relation to personal interactions in real world, it has a high regard among them – it is the next best thing after the ‘real thing’.

Conclusion

To our knowledge, in our study we are the first to represent the voice of consumers and prosumers of UGC. We investigate with a CCT framework in great detail the consumer culture of UGC, which has previously been looked upon mainly through the lenses of media studies. We allow consumers and prosumers of UGC to produce input and be represented in the discussion on UGC within academia, revealing the sophistication and complexity of UGC grouped in the categories of Authenticity and Realness, Safety and Risks and Self-medication.

Overall, we propose to distance the discussion from the polarized, dualistic approaches to UGC and instead pursue it as a complex movement, one that may not be dualistically conceptualized such as the commercial and the non-commercial, the mainstream and the alternative, the professional and the amateur, the online and the offline, but nor as an immaterial labor serving mainstream pornography.

We go as far as raising the idea of UGC disrupting mainstream pornography, though the question is how long mainstream pornography will take to fully imitate all aspects of UGC or whether the greatest unwillingness

towards mainstream pornography comes from monetary motivation. Our analysis of MLNP is that such a movement might represent the future development of mainstream pornography and eventually become the new mainstream of the industry.

Our hope as researchers is that the attention to prosumers and consumers of UGC will act as a catalyst for further dialogue and conversation about sexuality and sexual desire with our partners, friends and community. Those conversations and dialogues are what make the difference for the questions around identity and sexuality that remain unanswered or even suppressed or are brought to the public, destigmatized and explored with knowledge, research, and curiosity as we discover our relationships on newer and deeper levels (Young, 2014, p. 188)

Limitations and future research

Overall we believe we were able to provide rich interpretations of consumer culture of user generated content and greatly contributed to the understanding of it. However, there are several limitations we would like to acknowledge.

Firstly we would like to acknowledge our epistemological and ontology limitations followed by constraints in method choices.

Secondly we address the time limitations of our research as establishing connection with up-loaders of user generated content is quite timely, which lead us to the usage of text analysis of testimonies, respectively to have a male domination in the sample of consumers from whom we collected data. For future research we would suggest a greater variety of respondents, including but not limited to the perspective of gender as well as age.

Also, our research was applied broadly to the understanding of consumer culture of UGC as a phenomenon on its own, which suggests that there can be certain aspects within the research that could and should have been addressed with greater attention. Examples may include the assessment of UGC as an anti-porn movement, trading of UGC, UGC as an education body etc.

We consider the CCT framework as one of the main advantages of our research as the contribution to the understanding of UGC by collecting consumer and prosumer perspectives, thereby depolarizing the views on UGC and consumption of porn overall, is of importance.

Paasonen argues that content analysis is a “distanced form of interpretation” (2013, p. 135) that relies not only on the clear distinction and distancing of the researcher and the researched but also on the ability of the researcher to codify and categorize the researched phenomena and is therefore inevitably reductive of the sensory and the material (Paasonen, 2013; Kannabiran, 2013, p. 1399). Therefore, for future research, we would recommend to do a complex study involving a netnographic method to assess UGC of interviewed individuals in order to provide reflective information, which can be assessed against one and the other and provide a more complex outlook. We would also suggest enriching data collection by conducting in-person interviews with up-loaders as according to our data collection personal interviews with consumers provided much deeper data compare to electronic questionnaires.

Furthermore, we would suggest exploring the liberation effects of user generated content from the social stigma with regard to sex education, pornography and uploading of content, exploring the possibility of UGC serving for greater societal changes perhaps serving as sex educating media.

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Appendix:

Guidelines for data collection

Guideline questions for up-loaders:

1. How old are you? What is your gender?
2. Do you create, upload any porn content? If so how often?
3. Do you star in it? Who performs in it? (Wife, partner, prostitute, talents, etc.)
4. Why do you do it? What motivates you to upload your own content?
5. Where do the motives come from? Is there anything you wish to achieve by doing it?
6. Do you receive any kind of gratification for your production? (Financial, non-financial - if so what kind)?
7. Do you share it with your friends? What do you think about revealing your identity? Would you show your full identity on the video? Why?
8. What do you think about the current porn industry situation?
9. Is there anything that frustrates you about contemporary pornography?
10. Does user generated content differ from 'traditional porn / mainstream porn'?
11. Does watching user generated porn make you feel different than when watching mainstream?
12. Do you think it addresses different needs and target different consumers?
13. How does user generated content differ from the mainstream porn?
14. Do you think porn is important in human life? Why?
15. Do you think porn affects the life of people who are watching it? Is there any difference in the way the mainstream porn and the user generated content impact viewers?
16. Does it affect you (as a producer, creator, actor-which theoretically could mean you are more aware of the whole mechanism) and your sex life/relationships etc.?
17. Why, do you think man/woman watch porn? Why do they choose user generated content over staged porn?
18. Do you think porn reflects 'real' sex?
19. Have you ever come across porn criticising information?
20. Has it affected the way you look at porn?
21. Do you know if you have a frequent viewers/loyal viewers of your content?
22. Do you think pornography could be liberating?

Guideline question for viewers:

1. How old are you and what is your gender?
2. How old were when you watched porn for the first time?
3. Why do you watch porn?
4. How often do you watch porn?
5. What type of porn do you watch? What are your preferences?
6. Do you switch between categories? Why?

7. Why do you choose to watch user created porn content over regular porn?
8. How often do you watch user created porn?
9. What motivates you to watch user created porn? What lead you to it? Was there a specific movement or literature you came across regarding porn?
10. What attributes of user created content do you appreciate?
11. Have you thought of uploading some content on your own?
12. Do you think there is any difference in the way you / your body respond to the user generated content vs. mainstream porn?
13. Do you think watching porn impacts your life / sex life / relationships?
14. Do you think there are any differences in the way user created porn and mainstream porn affect you?
15. What does porn mean to you?
16. What do you think porn is?

Informed Consent

Attempt to understand consumer culture of Porn 2.0 “a taboo industry”.



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are being invited to take part in a research study for a **Master Thesis at Lund University, Sweden**. Before you decide whether to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

The purpose of this study is

To understand the consumer culture of Porn 2.0, a “taboo industry”.

Potential Risks

The risks of this study are minimal. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose to do so.

Confidentiality

The level of confidentiality is individual. For the purposes of this research project your personal data will not be published, though given answers/comments will not be anonymous, unless requested. It is also your privilege that all or part of your responses be kept anonymous at any time.

Compensation

There is no monetary compensation to you for your participation in this study; the researchers are also not getting paid for this work.