

**Y**oung women's engagement with  
pornography. An investigation of culturally  
embedded and embodied sexual practice.  
Sylwia Kieran, Oxford Brookes University

# Context



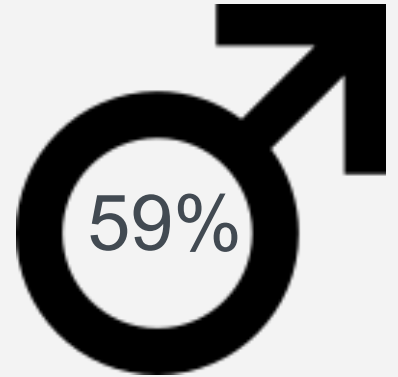
# Gender Differences



- Content
- Feelings



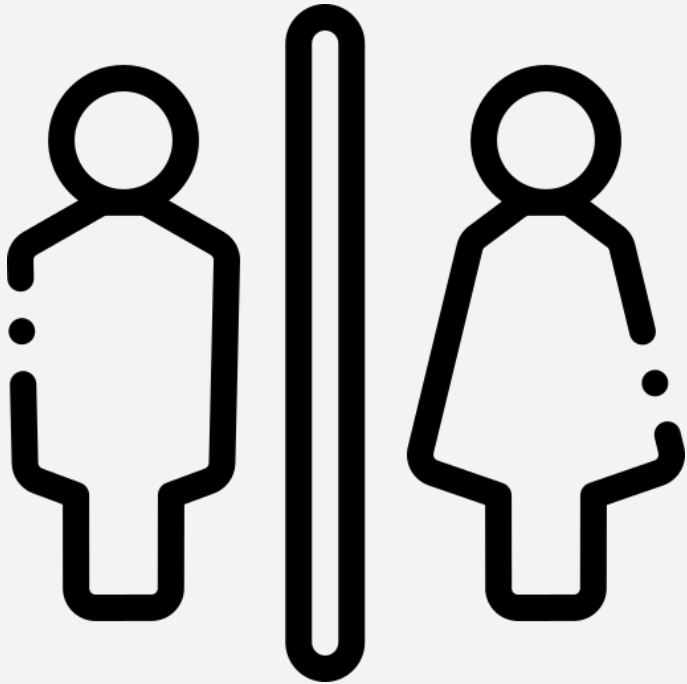
- Frequency
- Repetition



# Social Norms



# Gender Norms

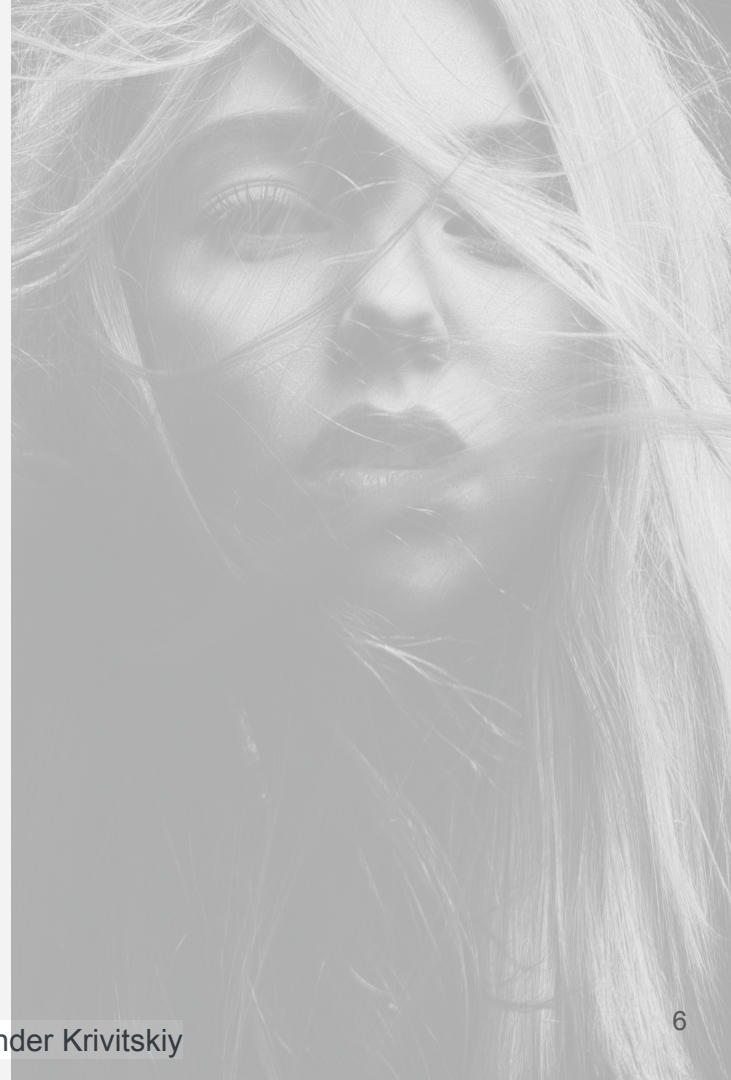


“At first I wasn't sure it was **normal** to watch it, my mates have talked about watching it so I don't feel bad watching it now” (Male, 15-16);  
Martellozzo et al., 2016

Do you think it's okay that I watch porn, and is it **normal** behaviour for a girl?  
(Maria, 13); Spisak and Paasonen., 2017

# Feelings

- objectification
- degradation
- submissiveness
- aggression





*A. Krivitskiy*

# Pleasure

Larger positive than negative effects of pornography consumption (Hald & Malamuth, 2008)

- Connect with their bodies
- Explore preferences and identities (Attwood, 2019)
- Explore pleasure, sexuality and self-knowledge (Spisak and Paasonen's, 2017)

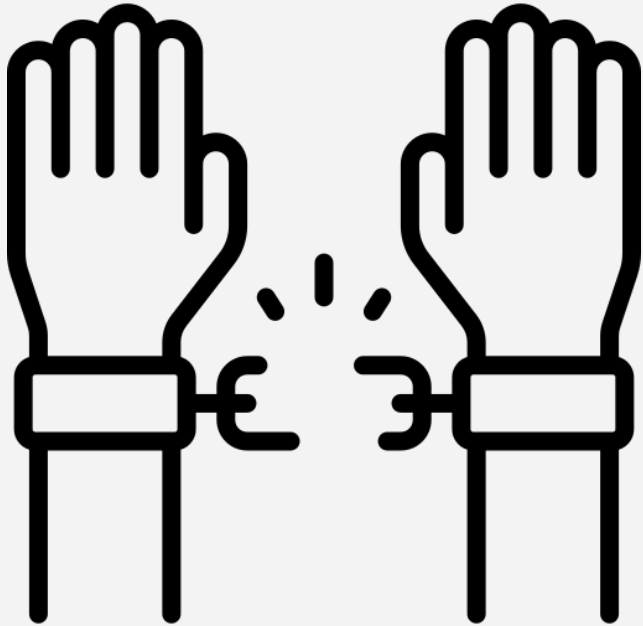
“Hi! I’m an 11-year-old girl. Is it normal to masturbate and watch porn to get that wonderful feeling?”

(Emma, 11) (Martellozzo et al., 2016)

“Porn is pure recreation.”  
(Kat, 18-26)  
(Attwood, 2019)



# Sexual Empowerment

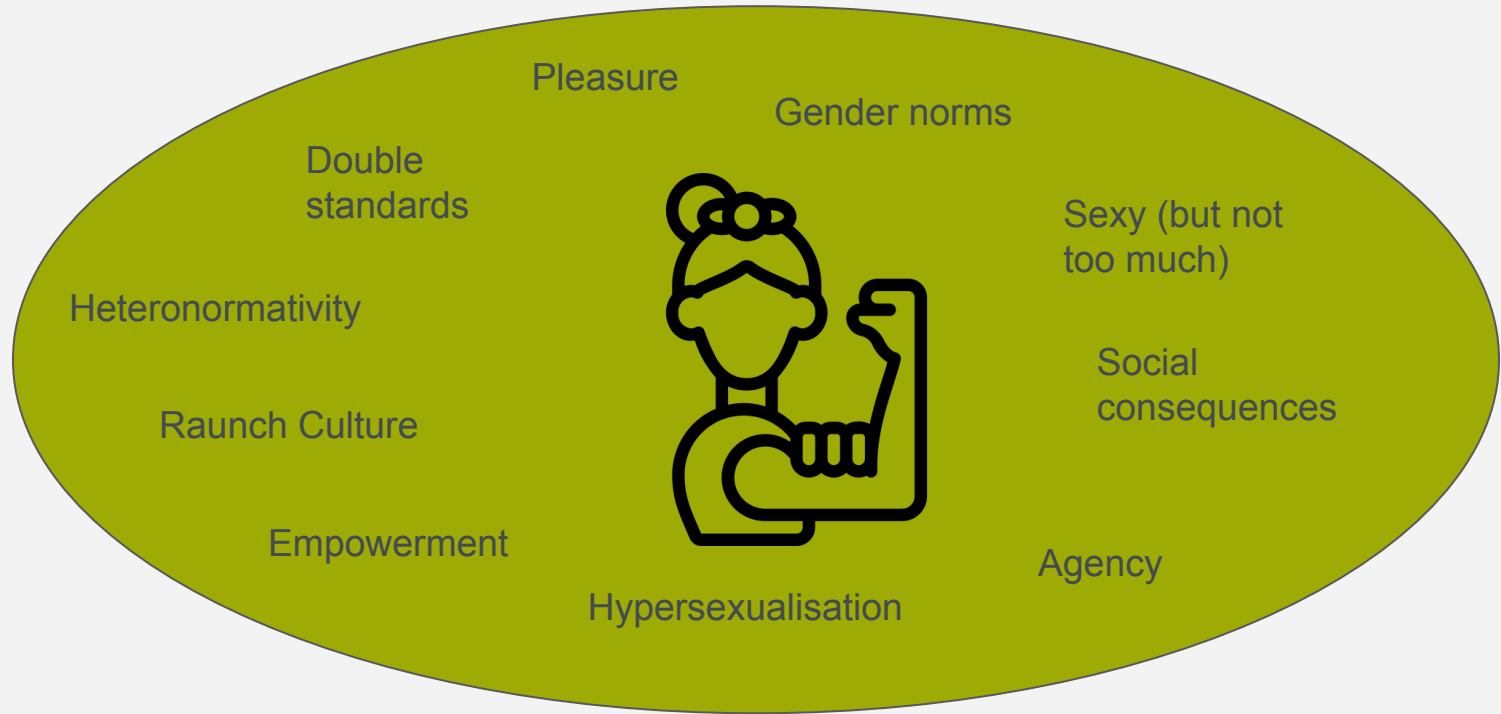


**Sexy = Empowered**

**Sexy vs Sexual**

**Freedom or  
Oppression?**

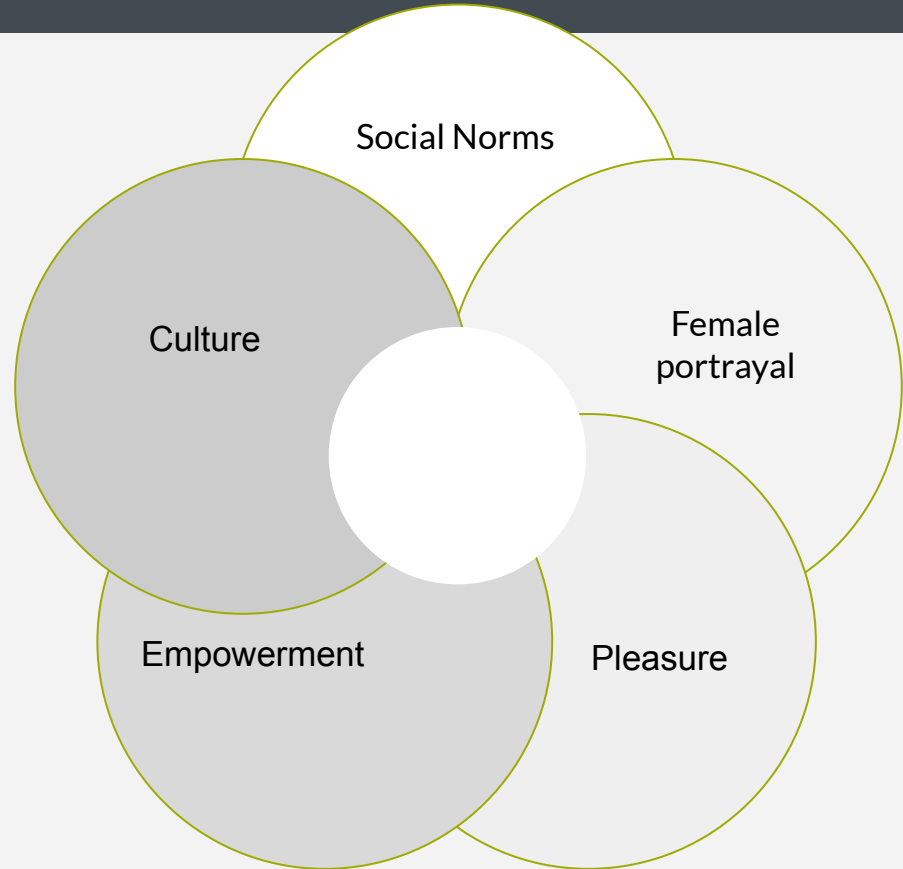
# Agency



# Summary

Engagement with pornography is:

- Complex
- Ambiguous
- Individual
- Context dependent



# Research Questions

1. Are there social norms affecting young women's engagement with porn?
2. Is pornography embedded and embodied in their sexual lives?
3. What are young women's affective responses to sex media?
4. How do they utilise agency in engagement with porn in relation to the context they are in?



# Theory

## Social Norms theory

Photo; Ryoji Iwata, Unsplash



## Phenomenology

Photo; Anika Huizinga, Unsplash

# Method

Semi-structured interviews



We are all  
made of stories

# Sample



- 2 groups of friends
- Heterosexual
- Cis-female
- Aged 16-19

Photo; Omar Lopez, Unsplash

**Thank you**