CONFLICTS, CONTRADICTIONS AND COMMITMENTS:

MEN SPEAK ABOUT SEXUALISATION OF CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

In the past two decades sexualisation has ascended as a focus for academic, social policy and public debate: central to these debates is concern for children and young people and the significance of sexualised cultural landscapes to feminist politics and women's social positions. A striking feature of these discussions however, is a lack of empirical, as well as theoretical, considerations of men and masculinities. Men's accounts, perspectives and experiences of sexualisation have largely been omitted or obscured from contemporary discussions. This thesis widens the parameters of debate to include and to position men as critical agents and stakeholders in the issue. The thesis presents analysis of 154 men's experiences of, and perspectives on sexualisation, yielded from an online survey and in depth interview process. Of these 154 men, three took part in interviews, eight in both the survey and interviews and 143 the online survey only.

The study was guided by two interconnected aims: to explore how men make sense of, and experience sexualisation; and how sexualisation may intersect with ways of being a man. These aims presented two central challenges - researching men, and masculinities and researching sexualisation - both are theoretically, conceptually and practically opaque subjects of study. A woman researching men also presented interesting tangles for research design, specifically for feminist methodologies. As the study advanced the gendered dynamics of the research context emerged as a salient site for exploring forms and flows of (some) men's oppressive practices, and how men articulate privilege and sustain relations of inequality.

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

> In contemporary society there is much anxiety about 'the sexualisation' of our culture but sexual imagery has always been around. I think what many commentators are really complaining about is the violence, exploitation, sexism and commercialism that are often a part of sexual imagery (Grayson Perry, *Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman*, 2011).

During the course of this study sexualisation ascended as a focus for social policy agendas and academic and public debate. A burgeoning and emerging field of study, sexualisation has entered discursive arenas at such a rate and with such gusto that it could be understood as a contemporary phenomenon. To understand sexualisation as new to cultural landscapes is to obscure the historical linkages of what the term attempts to describe. An outline of sexualisation may be traced across different cultural settings and epochs and across different sites and landscapes: from the history of art, to the birth of advertising. Beyond the scope of this thesis however, is to offer a genealogy of sexualisation: this study enters the field in a discursive moment, where the terms and frames of reference are still being worked out and where existing debates have been refreshed and new ones opened.

Central to contemporary discussions are questions of how to describe, define and locate sexualisation, as is working out what is at stake in the issue. Some frame contemporary cultural climates as testimony to a loosening of sexual restraints, while others bemoan the profoundly sexist, ageist, racist and ablest visual economies of mainstream popular culture. The issue has (re)sparked vibrant debates about the

cultural significance of visual cultures and the sex industry to gender politics. These themes are explored in more detail in the next chapter, which reviews relevant literature. Here an introductory sketch of what we are talking about when we talk about sexualisation is offered in order to outline the aims and contexts of this thesis. This also highlights a man shaped chasm in conversations about, and the knowledge base on, sexualisation.

What is Sexualisation and What is at Stake?

The proliferation of sexualised visual imagery across mainstream cultural outputs such as: print media; music videos; marketing and advertising; video/computer games and new and emerging medias, as well as themes of sex across leisure, fashion and beauty, and entertainment has, according to Government reports, mainstream media and academics created a cultural landscape saturated in sex. Alongside this, and narrated as forming part of sexualisation is what has been described as a mainstreaming and normalisation of the sex industry. This description is, however, too flat to get at the way contemporary cultural scenes are seeded in and reproductive of systems of gender, sexism and inequality. The sex depicted across contemporary cultural outputs, it has been argued, can be linked to and is reflective of enduring relations of gender and other inequalities. As Gill (2011) posits:

> … sexualisation does not operate outside processes of gendering, racialisation, and classing, and works within a visual economy that remains profoundly ageist, (dis)ablist and heteronormative (p. 65).

The issue is a salient site for explorations of contemporary formations of gender and sexuality, and has refreshed often-divisive feminist debates around the sex industry, visual cultures and sexual politics. An enduring focus remains on the meanings of contemporary cultural landscapes for feminist politics, women and girls' ability/inability to negotiate or re-signify cultural constructions of gender and sexuality, and shifting attitudes and boundaries around sex, sexuality and commerce. These debates however, hold a preoccupation with women and girls, which in part helps to reinforce an already regulatory gaze on women's sexualities, while men and masculinities, as well as broader formations and operations of men's power have become obscured. This thesis frames sexualisation as an issue for and about gender inequality and violence against women, and recasts the focus from women and girls to bring men into view.

Why Focus on Men?

Most debate to date centres on meanings and impacts of sexualisation for women and girls such that the 'gender' in 'gender politics' becomes theoretical short hand for women. Meanwhile men and men's practices are cast as silent extras, and if present at all are implicit reference points for argumentation. If sexualisation is an issue for women then it is also an issue about, and for, men (Garner, 2012).

Heteronormative visual economies of mainstream media (in part) appeal to an assumed heterosexual male gaze. The gendered asymmetry of the sex industry also means that men disproportionally use and seek out pornography, pay for sex, and visit strip and lap dancing clubs. As such heterosexual men are both actual and imagined consumers of sexualised styles and commercial practices across

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contemporary cultural spheres, and actors within practices of inequality. A risk in this reading may be that it shores up heteronormativity (Berggren, 2012) by restricting potential pluralities of meanings to be read from visual economies. However, this framing is presented as one which allows structural analysis, and to emphasise material inequality over cultural disruption (Connell, 2009). As Walby (2011) argues, while breaking down categories of sex and gender and emphasising fluidity of meaning avoids essentialism, it can make analysis difficult and obscure persisting material inequalities. As Connell (2009) emphasises meanings are linked to social processes, interests and histories.

> Society is unavoidably a world of meaning. At the same time meanings bear the traces of the social processes by which they were made. Cultural systems bear particular social interests and grow out of historically specific ways of life (p. 83).

Sexualised popular cultures 'bear the traces' of inequality and grow out of the interests and legacies of gendered power asymmetries. The sex industry meanwhile, represents an arena for practices of inequality (Coy, 2012). In the way it is argued that visual and media culture represents women as sexually available objects/subjects the often-invisible corollary is that men's sexualities are imagined and made as predatory and 'urgent'. Similarly, whether or not men choose to use the sex industry, it exists as a potential in their lives: in this men become inheritors of social landscapes that legitimise and encourage specific ways of being men through practices linked to, and productive of, relations of inequality.

Sexualisation is implicitly and explicitly linked to men and ways of being men. An underexplored, yet crucial, aspect to sexualisation debates is exploring how men make sense of and experience their positions within sexualisation. Empirically and theoretically men's motivations for using the sex industry have been located by some feminist writers within frameworks of male privilege which shape a sense of entitlement to women's bodies (Frank, 2002; Coy et al, 2007; Jeffreys, 2008, 2009, 2010). This study was interested in what might come before, sit in opposition to and in tension with this sense of entitlement and privilege: to explore the possible contradictory, ambiguous and troubled subject positions of men in relation to sexualisation.

In the way it has been argued that sexualisation restricts women's 'space for action' (citing Jeffner, 2000, in Coy, 2009; Coy and Garner, 2012) how might sexualisation restrict (as well as enable) men's space for action? This means unpicking the 'ontological depth' (Walby, 2011) of gender orders (Connell, 2009). In recasting the gaze onto men as Pease (2010) argues we can 'examine how inequalities are reproduced by and through the daily practices of privileged groups' (p. 123). More than this, we can also explore the everyday meanings, formations and lived experiences of privilege and social power and the sense, or not, of entitlement and advantage they may invoke. This study raises questions about how sexualised popular culture and the sex industry may shape men's lives and their sense of selves in more complex ways than mere privilege.

Central to inequality politics and feminist analyses of men's use of the sex industry is the notion of privilege, and specifically for gender politics male privilege. But how

are we to understand privilege? Peggy McIintosh (1988) was perhaps one of the first to explicitly offer an analysis of this 'elusive and fugitive subject' (p. 6). Writing from her position as a 'white' woman she describes her own social privilege as:

> ... an invisible package of unearned assets, which
> I can count on cashing in each day, but about
> which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious (p. 1).

Privilege for McIntosh is unearned social advantage passed on to individuals through hierarchical social systems which 'overempowers' certain groups and in turn disempowers others. McIntosh states that men work from a 'base of unacknowledged privilege' and that it is through these un-acknowledgements (1988, p. 2), or worse, denials of social advantage that privilege is normalised and dominance maintained. This process of normalising and 'naturalising' unearned advantage leads to a sense of entitlement to conferred social power (Adams et al, 1995 cited in Pease, 2010). Even where critical reflections do occur as McIntosh (1988) highlights, they are often only partial acknowledgments of inherited social advantage.

> As a White person I realised I had been taught
> about racism as something which puts others at a
> disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one
> of its corollary aspects white privilege which puts
> me at an advantage (p. 1)

McIntosh describes a similar scenario in relation to some men's resistances to acknowledging that their own social advantage is linked to women's disadvantage.

These denials she argues, amount to 'taboos' which render male privilege unspeakable, and in this have the effect of protecting it. It could be argued that these 'taboos' may also function beyond protecting privilege to also restrict discussions of the lived experiences and subjective frameworks of it. In this 'privilege' may become a flat representation as always beneficial and always unacknowledged. The risk here is to overshadow the potential ambiguities and contradictions of conferred power and 'unsought' dominance, which may fortify the very hegemonic discourses of power that the critique attempts to disrupt. Meanwhile, efforts to transform relations of inequality may become restricted to a circular politics of top trumps where dimensions of identity and social location become stratified along a 'hierarchy of oppressions' (Lorde, 2009).

Intersectional analyses go some way to avoid this and take account of the multiple social positions individuals occupy to explore how they collide and overlap (Crenshaw, 1993) to locate individuals within a matrix of relations of oppression and dominance. As Pease argues: 'most people live their lives with access to privilege in some areas while being subordinate in others' (2010, p. 23). This framework however is not a full fit in attempts to make sense of the interplay between men's structural power and personal lives. The focus on the relations between social locations may miss the relations within them. Missing the internal hegemony (Demetriou, 2001) - the relations between men - is to miss a core context of men's lives, and their negotiations of, and within, power relations. Further, while social locations may infuse and shape personal ontologies and experience they do not determine or equate to them.

More emphasis on the personal affects, experiences and individual negotiations of unearned social advantage is needed to break the 'taboos' which surround notions of privilege. This does not mean abandoning the structural for the personal, but rather exploring how they interact and asking whether men experience their inherited social positions as positive, always beneficial and advantageous, but also crucially in ways that do not reinforce men's privilege by denying it (Pease, 2010). In focussing on the potential tensions between men's social and public power and personal experiences, this study is concerned with exploring the questions so succinctly articulated by Messerschmidt:

> ... how do we permit an understanding of the interplay between 'structural fact' and personal experience, and how can we understand and explore how men can be enabled and constrained by their structural position? (2000: p. 17).

In the context of this study then, do men take on and experience their positions within sexualisation through frameworks of privilege and entitlement or is this scenario more ambiguous? This exploration raises the question of whether male privilege as a concept may take too much for granted when advantage is not contextualised to local schemas of individual lives and experiences and when internal hegemony operating between men is not considered. Similarly, while unearned advantage goes some way to link conferred power to historical processes, the link is often implicit. Privilege needs to be considered within more expansive frames, which take account of its historicity: the ways in which the structural

intersects with the personal, the individual and the everyday, the relations between men and how those relations may form landscapes of action and inaction.

Aims

The research was steered by two central interconnected aims: to explore men's experiences of, and perspectives on, sexualisation, and how sexualised cultural landscapes may intersect with and shape ways of being a man. These aims were led by an imperative to get at potential tensions and contradictions between and across men's structural power and personal lives. This meant creating methods which could traverse dominant ideas about what it means to be a man and to reflect and speak about their personal lives.

Chapter Three explores the methodological challenges and successes of this study, relevant here is how these aims developed across the timespan of this project and as a result of my experiences with men in and outside of the research field. Researching men's lives and structural power is messy: the two are not discreet phenomena, neatly packaged across public and private domains. How the two blend and shape one another manifested across the research process both inside and outside of the field. Here men articulated taken for granted unacknowledged social advantage and power in subtle and explicit ways, which required careful emotional and intellectual fielding on my part. One approach to such fielding was to incorporate these articulations into analysis, as such subsidiary aims of this study evolved: to explore the forms and flows of (some) men's oppressive practices, and how men articulate male privilege and social advantage and sustain relations of inequality.

Theoretical Framings and Parameters of this Study

Feminist and pro feminist work from across the fields of violence against women and girls (VAWG), inequality politics and critical studies of men and masculinities form the theoretical spine of this study. Chapters Two and Three offers in depth discussions of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used to understand sexualisation and to interpret the findings from this research. By way of introduction however, this section outlines some of the central theoretical concepts and vocabularies used - setting the parameters of focus for this study.

Reflecting on restrictive approaches to the study of pornography, Hearn (1991) argues that pornography is not a 'thing' but a social relation and process. This study frames sexualisation in similar terms: as a gendered social relation and 'masculinising process' (Connell, 2005). Sexualisation is understood here as an issue for inequality politics and specifically for gender inequality and VAWG. Within postmodern, postfeminist and neo liberal climates, this is a contentious and unfashionable framing. While some feminist scholars working in the fields of cultural studies have made links between sexualisation and on-going sexisms, few have extended these links to the issue of VAWG: a striking omission from such a sophisticated body of work, and one which could speculatively be linked to an intellectual squeamishness to avoid messiness of causal arguments characteristic of pornography debates (see Chapter Two).

Exceptions however, can be found in the work of feminist scholars who take a critical position on pornography, (Boyle, 2010; Dines, 2011) and those on the intersection of academic scholarship, activism, social policy and practice (Coy,

2009; Dines et al, 2010; Coy and Garner, 2012; Long, 2012;). In the latter, arguments are made to frame sexualisation as contributing to, and incubating, 'a conducive context' for violence against women. This framing attempts to avoid potential dead ends of cause and effect arguments, by considering the ways culture may intersect with, but not determine, individual and social identities and practices.

R.W Connell's work on hegemonic masculinities (2005) provides useful tools in unpicking how dominant ideas about what it means to be a man are reproduced in different ways across different settings and times. Central to Connell's work is the idea that masculinity is not a stable descriptor or set of character traits, but is better understood as 'configurations of practice' which are formed in relation to, and in tension with, different ways of being a man. Central however, is the way power operates as these relations and configurations of practice are formed, creating hierarchies between men. Here hegemonic masculinities are the most dominant ideas and articulations of what it means to be a man within a specific time and setting.

However, some have argued that this framework and how it has been taken up can produce abstract analyses and theoretically dense language to describe what men do. The theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinities is central to understanding men's lives and as such to this thesis. However, while it retains the central tenents of it, the thesis attempts to use a more accessible vocabulary to describe relations of hegemony between men and ways of being a man. Following Hearn et al (2012), where possible the term men's practices is used to describe what men do, and also

where possible ways of being a man is used in place of masculinity and masculinities.

As a matter of method this study works with the term sexualisation in order to explore potential benefits and limits of it as a concept. This research was undertaken in the UK with reference to cultural landscapes therein. Echoing the nature of global media and cultures popular cultural texts sourced for, and discussed during data collection however, originate from further afield including the US. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, a characteristic feature of current debates around sexualisation is porous boundaries of what constitutes part of it. In this, mainstream music videos and advertising campaigns are considered alongside and in relation to aspects of the sex industry such as prostitution and pornography. In line with this, instead of focussing on one aspect or field of culture, this study approached sexualisation as holistic phenomena and endeavoured to explore what may have once been considered separate categories and sites of analysis together: mainstream and illicit. This was a purposive design decision to allow explorations of the potential connections and disconnections between the two.

This approach holds further challenges linked to the politics and difficulties of definitions, specifically in relation to pornography. Some argue that the study of pornography should be undertaken in a way that states clearly what definition of pornography was used and why (Horvath et al, 2013). Jensen (1997) however, notes how pornography debates are characterised by what he terms 'dodges and distortions': part of this he argues is the way discussions can be stifled by on-going distractions around how to define pornography. Whilst definitions are important, the

weight of definitional importance is also connected to contexts and methods of study (Ibid). If this study had sought to explore the 'effects' of pornography on men's behaviours a definitional base from which to begin such explorations may well be important. Similarly, if this study was concerned with how to legally code pornography, definitions would form a central part of the work. This study however, takes as its focus men, men's practices and men's experiences (or not) of pornography. Here the exploratory approach, as well the subjects of study, means a level of flexibility may be afforded. As lead consumers, it could be argued that men are the experts in working out what is meant by the term pornography. Moreover, the contemporary climate where technological advances means pornography is accessible as never before, means that the industry and its products have gained at the very least an implicit familiarity – a common sense understanding of what is meant by pornography.

My interest lies more in theorising rather than defining pornography, and so pornography was not defined for participants during data collection. The approach was to take for granted the lead consumers - men's - own expertise and then work with that in an analytic way. As briefly discussed earlier sexualisation involves a crossing over of pornographic conventions into the mainstream. These 'pornographic quotations' (Boyle, 2010) this thesis argues do not deem the text or cultural output within which they appear pornography, but rather representations of pornography. In this study pornography is framed and explored as a distinct industrial product and practice, as well as a genre of representation (Boyle, 2010). In this sense my approach is similar to Boyle's (2010) formulation of 'everyday pornography'. Theoretically pornography is understood as part of a cultural arsenal of products and

practices linked (predominantly) to men, which contribute to gender inequality and VAWG.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis comprises nine chapters. This the first, outlines the aims of this study and situates it by introducing the topics under examination, why it was undertaken and what is at stake in the issues. It also highlights a 'gap' in knowledge and lack of focus on men and masculinities across sexualisation debates and empirical studies. *Chapter Two: Literature Review* describes the discursive terrains within which this study was undertaken, revealing how sexualisation has become a cause and matter of debate not only within the academy, for the public and media, but also for national and international social policy agendas. Children and young people form the focus of concern for UK policy discussions, which orbit around a contradictory framing of age appropriate sexualisation. Differences and similarities in contemporary and past feminist discussions are also explored, situating sexualisation as both an old and new social phenomena. The field of critical studies of men and masculinities is also introduced as a vital theoretical toolkit for researching men and men's lives and Connell's (1987; 2005) theory of hegemonic masculinities is outlined as central to this thesis and for understanding how internal hegemony between men may shape landscapes of men's lives, and potentially how they experience, and engage in sexualisation. The final part of Chapter Two explores the knowledge base around men's use of three aspects of the sex industry: paying for sex, strip and lap dancing clubs and pornography. Focussing on the contradictions and ambiguities across the literature this section argues that tensions between men's structural positions and

personal experiences is a useful analytical space for complicating men's practices and lives.

Chapter Three: Researching Sexualisation, Researching Men, presents the overall methodological approach of the study and describes the methods used to explore men's lives and sexualisation. The chapter outlines how through the challenges of the research and an extensive pilot phase, the final methodological approach developed as a dialogical, collaborative and reflective process designed around an online survey and in depth interview process. This chapter also comprises a section wherein discussion is given to the gendered dynamics of the field and how masculinities played out and were articulated within the research context and beyond.

Chapters Four to Eight comprise the original empirical and analytic contribution of this thesis, with Chapter Nine a concluding reflection on the findings and their implications.

The first empirical chapter, ***Chapter Four: Men Speak about Being Men*** presents findings from in depth interviews with eleven men, focussing on discussions around masculinity and what it means to be a man. This chapter illuminates how relations between men constitute formative personal landscapes in men's lives and helps to frame sexualisation as a conducive context for 'doing masculinity'. 'MenSpeak' is developed here as a conceptual tool to frame the different ways relations of hegemony between men are organised, articulated and maintained through styles of

speak. Three modes of 'MenSpeak' are introduced in this chapter, which are further developed across subsequent ones.

Chapter Five: Men, Masculinities and Commercial Sex presents findings from an online survey which explored men's experiences of, and perspectives on, three aspects of the sex industry: paying for sex, visiting strip and lap dancing clubs and pornography. The survey yielded 151 responses from men and was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter Five thus offers a broader frame on which to hang findings from in depth work undertaken during the interview process.

Chapter Six: Sexualisation: Definitions, Geographies and Meanings discusses how men spoke about sexualisation: how they named and framed 'it', where they located it across the social world and their lives, and also how they made sense of it. This chapter contributes to the endeavour of working out how far academic and policy discourses resonate with men's lives, and also what is missing from current conceptualisations.

Part of the interview process included a section where discussions were made about a sample of images sourced from mainstream popular culture, images which could be considered part of sexualisation. *Chapter Seven: 'There's Just Loads of Naked Women Here in Sexual Poses'* outlines the ways men responded to, read, and reflected on the imagery. The final findings chapter, *Chapter Eight: All the Roads Lead to Pornography* presents findings also drawn from discussions during the interview process about men's uses, or not, of three aspects of the sex industry.

During these discussions, pornography emerged as occupying a unique space in men's lives, being the most common experience of sexualised consumption, but also evoking the most politically and personally inflected reflections from participants. Chapter Eight includes pornography biographies, which locate men's use of pornography within the broader landscapes of their lives and extends on Hardy's (1998) work in relation to men's 'commitments' to pornography. The concluding chapter reflects on the learnings from the study overall, and considers their relevance to future directions in study, and the projects of gender equality and ending violence against women and girls.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews relevant literature around three themes central to this thesis: sexualisation of culture; critical studies of men and masculinities; and men's use of the sex industry. Analysing work from the fields of cultural studies, sociology, public policy and feminist theory, the chapter attempts to contextualise the findings of this study as addressing a lacuna in the knowledge base and debates around sexualisation by exploring men's experiences and perspectives. It begins by describing the discursive terrains in which debates are taking place and within which this study was undertaken. Attention here is given to theoretical and policy debates around sexualisation to outline a set of challenges linked to naming and framing the issue. The chapter then explores the theoretical field of critical studies of men and masculinities and outlines its relevance to this study. Finally, empirical and theoretical work around men's use of the sex industry is discussed. Through this, the chapter reveals a deficiency in contemporary conversations around sexualisation in that men and masculinities are omitted from the frame.

Naming and Framing the Issue

As outlined in the previous chapter, during the course of this study 'sexualisation of culture' has formed the focus for much debate across diverse arenas and has secured a place in academic, policy, mainstream media and general public's register. Issues of how to define, make sense of, and historically locate sexualisation form much of these discussions. Language matters and can set the direction and parameters of debates, and in this, agendas for what is at stake in the issue. Attwood (2006) argues that 'sexualised culture' is a clumsy term, and Gill (2011) that 'sexualisation' is too vague. Sexualisation has also been critiqued as too opaque to describe stylistic

specificities of visual cultures and their historical roots. Sexualised cultures have for example been narrated as a 're'-sexualisation, and 're'-commodification of women's bodies following second wave feminist advances which had worked to neutralise overt objectification (Gill, 2009c). While for some, pornification (Paul, 2006; Paasonen, 2007; Dines, 2011), porno chic, and pornographication (McNair, 2002, 2009), are more apt as terms to capture how industry practices, processes, and aesthetic conventions of pornography have infiltrated mainstream popular culture. While useful for tracing pornography's cultural potency this approach however, may also work to dissolve the 'specificities of pornography' as a distinct industrial practice and process (Boyle, 2008). Critical feminist reflections have also centred on the ways sexualisation as a term obscures how relations of inequality are often reflected in contemporary styles of visual culture. Gill (2011) questions whether sexism is a more apt and useful term, and Coy (2014a) advances a case for the concept of 'sexualised sexism'.

Beyond terminology, descriptions and definitions bring us closer to deciphering what we are talking about when we use the term sexualisation. Here broad strokes are made which evoke sexualisation as ubiquitous and omniscient. Attwood (2006) for example links sexualisation to 'the mainstreaming of sex' and defines it as:

> … a contemporary preoccupation with sexual values, practices and identities: the public shift to more permissive sexual attitudes; the proliferation of sexual texts; the emergence of new forms of sexual experience; the apparent breakdown of rules, categories and regulations

designed to keep the obscene at bay; our
fondness for scandals, controversies and panics
around sex (2006, p.78).

A problem with this celebratory approach is that it is void of social contexts. Boyle (2010) also identifies a central problem in Attwood's framing of 'the mainstreaming of sex' more broadly as a conflation of 'sex', with the 'commercialisation of sex' and 'commercial sex' (Boyle, 2010). A similar conflation she detects in debates around pornography. An important and useful distinction laid out by Boyle between commercialised and commercial sex is that the latter is: 'purchasing access to the bodies of others for our own gratification and independent of theirs', and commercialised sex is 'the invitation to buy products and enhance our sex lives' (p.3). Attwood's formulation of sexualisation as being about the mainstreaming of 'sex' lacks analytical depth, and considered alongside Boyle's analysis, a more specific reading would link sexualisation to both commercial and commercialised sex.

Gill (2007) is also broad but more specific, locating sexualisation within cultural texts and discourses about sex and sexuality across media forms:

… the extraordinary proliferation of discourses
about sex and sexuality across all media forms…
as well the increasingly frequent erotic
presentation of girls', women's and (to a lesser
extent) men's bodies in public spaces (p. 151).

Across UK and international policy responses sexualisation is also evoked as ubiquitous and is described as 'the wallpaper of young people's lives' (Bailey, 2011,

p. 23); and a 'continuum' of commercial practices, which converge to form the 'background noise' of society at large (Standing Committee on Environment Communication and the Arts, 2008, p. 6).

Similar to Paasonen, Nikunen and Saarenmaa's (2007) assertion about pornography, the parameters and sites of sexualisation are 'porous and difficult to map' (p. 1). While mainstream popular culture forms the focus for much analysis, discussions traverse boundaries between mainstream culture and commercial sex. Strip and lap dancing clubs, pornography, and paying for sex have been described as forming part of a 'new respectability' towards the sex industry and as being assimilated into mainstream cultural texts through conventional and formal references (Paasonen, Nikunen and Saarenmaa 2007; Boyle, 2010; 2011; Coy, Wakeling, and Garner, 2011; Dines, 2011).

What can be deduced from these discussions then is that sexualiastion may be understood as: a stylistic convention across media and popular cultural texts and practices and a shift in the sex industry's social location into the mainstream. Although difficult to define, material products and outputs of sexualisation are easier to detect across cultural landscapes including, but not limited to: a growth in strip and lap dancing clubs across British high streets; girls' clothing and toys mimicking 'adult' sexy styles; computer video games with rape narratives; increased availability of pornography and 'pornographic permutations' (McRobbie, 2008) across music videos and advertising. This is not an exhaustive list or an analytical explanation; it is a description in order to set a scene. A characteristic feature of discussions around sexualisation, is that as debate and analysis deepens across time so too do the

parameters of what is considered to form part of this cultural scene and what socio-political and cultural significance it holds.

An analytical deficit in this description, as it stands, is that it depicts a scenario, which is gender, race, class and generation neutral occurring in a social vacuum shorn of any commercial imperatives. A more in depth analytical description would include the way themes, scenes, and references to sex are embroiled in: heteronormativity; gender difference and inequality; racialised stereotypes; fetishisation of youthful and abled bodies; and crucially how women and girls are massively disproportionately signifiers of the *commercialised and commercial* 'sex' in sexualisation (Boyle, 2010; Gill, 2011; Coy and Garner, 2012).

The issue represents a point of concern for differing reasons and for differing agendas, the central arenas of debate being feminist politics and social policy. In the former, the cultural significance of sexualisation to gender politics is debated through refreshed lenses, while in the latter, sexualisation is framed as a social problem for children and young people. The following section explores the arguments being made across these fields to reveal an overemphasis on women and girls, a preoccupation with children and young people and an intellectual caution with respect to violence against women and girls.

Feminist Framings

Current discussions are linked to, and in some respects are extensions of preceding feminist debates around visual culture and the sex industry. Feminist film scholar Laura Mulvey (1975) for example, using psychoanalytical analysis deconstructed

gendered power dynamics operating within mainstream cinema to identify women as passive sexual objects of a penetrating male gaze. A rich literature and tradition of feminist scholarship has grown up and out of this era, to unpick gender politics embedded within representational practices across visual and media cultures. Around the same era feminisms began to debate the sex industry to offer two main competing frameworks for understanding prostitution and pornography. The first framed them as harmful articulations of male power; and actual and symbolic violence against women (see for, example: Brownmiller, 1976; Dworkin, 1981; Griffins, 1981). The second framework sought to enfranchise women's sexuality and agency into what was seen as an 'anti-sex' fundamentalist argument (see, for example: Rubin, 1984; Willis, 1992). The so-called pro-sex position emphasised notions of women's agency and choice in the sex industry. In addition to seeking legitimisation of the sex industry as 'sex work', this perspective also explored pornography as a route to carving out space for women's sexuality.

The legacy of these debates now known as the 'sex wars' (Duggan, 1995) can be detected in current perspectives on sexualisation. However, contemporaneously with shifts across cultural, political and theoretical landscapes, divisive binaries of the past *appear* to have faded. The combination of technological advances, which has impacted the style, volume and mode of cultural production and consumption, and the ascent of postmodern theory and 'postfeminism' has created a nuanced and complex field of perspectives (see, for example, Gill, 2007, 2008, 2011; McRobbie, 2008, 2009). That said, binaries of the past are still detectable and contemporary feminist tensions are once again forming around sexualisation and issues of violence against women, gender inequality and sexual politics (see Coy and Garner, 2012). In

particular across cultural theory, gendered visual economies of mainstream media have sparked refreshed debates around women's agency, pleasure and social positions.

For Attwood (2006) sexualisation means an unprecedented visibility and accessibly of what she terms 'sexual repertoires' and could be a potential opportunity to work towards forging a new 'ethics of sex' (2006, p. 15). Similarly, McNair (2002) consigns critical commentary around sexualisation to what he terms 'feminist anxiety' to mark the appropriation of a 'pornified' style by advertising, fashion, media and high art during the 1980s, as the cultural articulation of sexual diversity and increased sexual liberalism. Updating this, he asks whether post 9/11 and in context to recent policy and academic debates the 'democratization of sex' (as he sees it) is being revoked, and replaced by a resurgence of opposition to this so called sexual liberalism (McNair, 2009).

McNair and Attwood focus on what could be understood as dilemmas of, and between sexual freedoms and sexual censorship. While important aspects of debate, both fail to fully consider on-going systems and structures of inequality in their analyses, particularly those linked to gender. Attwood does however critique McNair for 'simple celebrations' of sexual liberalism, to heed a warning that this visibility and accessibility of 'sexual repertoires' 'may' be linked to relations of power surrounding class and gender. However, her analysis and indeed her concern is superseded by a dense fascination with how this increased visibility of sex may be subject to regulation, and to stemming a perceived 'rush to simplify what is happening as a continuation of a worn out system of sexual inequality' (2006, p. 8).

Casting a critical lens across the issue is fraught with theoretical trap doors and risks of alignment with prudishness, protectionism and right wing moralising, or indeed as present in Attwood's analysis, charges of feminist pessimism. However, McNair and Attwood's notions of sexual diversity and liberalism become tenuous if considered in tandem with structural gendered inequalities, and in terms of everyday material lives.

Feminist cultural theorists Gill (2007; 2011) and McRobbie (2009) are far less celebratory about the significance of sexualisation to feminist politics, sexual freedoms, and identities, and narrate how more pernicious forms of exploitation and sexism are at play across contemporary cultural settings. Both complicate notions of women as passive objects to outline a shift in styles of contemporary visual economies, where women feature as active participants in sexualised self-styling across myriad arenas including leisure, performance and aspirations. Here, women and girls as passive props to structures of sexualised production and consumption, and active/passive binaries laid out by earlier feminist critiques of visual culture are complicated. For these authors, objectification no longer holds the analytical purchase (Gill, 2009c) it once did, as a generation of so called post feminist 'auto-objectifiers' (Munford, 2009, p. 70) take up the task themselves in the name of perceived sexual empowerment, apparently transforming a passive position into one of active subjectification (Gill, 2009c). Here a previous feminist politics appears outmoded within a new regime of sexually achieved (perceived) empowerment and control.

This refashioned politics of sexual agency and confidence (Munford, 2009), has come to define a third wave of 'girlie feminism' which rejects second wave critiques of pornography, marking them as anti sex and anti pleasure. Sexual politics dominates the girlie feminists' agenda, how women are to articulate sexuality being a core concern and sexualisation a key strategy. For this set of voices their oppressors are preceding generations of feminists who identified masculine sexual domination, but in their view, restricted female sexual identity and making sexual pleasure out of bounds (ibid).

Critiques warn that this should not be read as a marker of feminist success, and is best understood as part of a process, which works to undermine feminism through neo liberal sensibilities. McRobbie (2009) for example, asks whether women *really* endorse sexual objectification/self-sexualisation or just do not critique it for the sake of female individualism not feminism. This, she argues undermines a core component of feminist politics and works to stifle critical debate. Gill (2009) also unpicks self-sexualisation as empowerment argument and frames it as a feminist veneer and an advanced form of exploitation. Earlier work also warns that in so-called postfeminism sexism is more complexly expressed and exploitation is difficult to recognise and negotiate (Whelehan, 2000) and responses must demonstrate a similar degree of complexity. The difficulties Whelehan describes are particularly relevant here, where the framework of postmodern cultural theory and contexts of post feminism merge creating an almost stifling (at worse), and unfashionable (at best), context in which to critique sexualisation.

McRobbie offers an opening, and advances Whelehan by rejecting post feminism altogether. Postfeminism for McRobbie (2009), represents 'an undoing of feminist politics' (p.11), and describes a process where mainstream entertainment genres co-opt feminist issues, invoking them only to reject them. This cultural style for McRobbie means:

> Women are educated in irony, and not made angry by objectification… objectification is pre-empted with irony, spectre of feminism, is invoked so that it may be undone. (Ibid, p. 18).

Meanwhile a resurgence of anti-sexualisation/objectification feminism can also be detected where a new generation of activists organise around the issue creating energetic interventions. In the UK for example, organisations such as Object, and initiatives such as Rewind and Reframe work in partnership with violence against women organisations to lobby British governments for changes in licensing laws for strip and lap dancing clubs, to ban page three from the tabloid newspaper *The Sun* and to give young women (online) space to critically intervene in sexist and racist music videos. Here, however, it could be argued that the appeal of such political organising is limited given the frameworks used to address its audience. As outlined, objectification as an analysis may obscure the complexities and contradictions of sexualisation's appeal for both women and men. A challenge then emerges in terms of a gap in critical vocabulary to critique sexualisation in ways which take account of these new modes of sexism and 'undoings' of feminism, and women's participation in sexualisation.

Categorising and periodising feminist politics is useful in shaping new lines of inquiry and scoping fields of debate. In identifying similarities and differences between past and present concerns, contexts and cultural styles, the sexualisation of culture emerges as both an old and new issue for gender equality projects. Old in the sense that women's bodies remain a primary intermediary for mainstream popular culture, and new in terms of contexts and possible meanings that postmodern, postfeminist, capitalism allows (see or example, Gill, 2007; 2009; McRobbie, 2009).

A striking feature of these debates is a lack of focus on men and boys. Feminist analysis rests on the ontological meanings or impacts for individual women and feminism as a movement for all women. Men appear in the frame implicitly, in terms of masculine power structures or as taken for granted unexamined consumers. Explicit discussion of men and boys is near or completely absent from political discussions, a deficiency also detectable across policy debates where discussions pivot around generation and boundaries of acceptable/unacceptable.

Policy Matters

Early responses in the UK had their genesis in concerns for child safety and wellbeing in context of the commercial and digital worlds (Byron, 2008; Buckingham, 2009). Later, this remit was extended, where as part of their violence against women strategy the Home Office published 'the Sexualisation of Young People Review (Papadopoulos, 2010). The review was underpinned by an evidence base guided by the American Psychological Association's (APA) report on the impact of sexualised media on the wellbeing of girls (2007). The Home Office was tasked to examine 'the hyper sexualisation and objectification of girls on the one

hand and the hyper masculinisation of boys on the other' (Papadopoulos, 2010, p. 3). The bulk of the Home Office report draws on the APA findings and consequently its evidence disproportionately relates to girls. The 'masculinising effects' of sexualised media on boys appears as a sporadic, underdeveloped thread.

The review draws a generational divide between what is acceptable on the one hand for adults, and on the other for children and young people. The definition of sexualisation it presents marks out the boundaries of its debate;

> The imposition of adult sexuality on to children and
> young people before they are ready to deal with it
> (Papadopoulos, 2010, p.23).

While by admission, children and young people are defined as the main focus of the review, by making this arbitrary distinction the report creates a contradiction at the core of its thesis. The review first identifies the sexualised cultural world as contributing to the normalisation of violence against women and reproducing gender inequality, but at the same time legitimises that world by equating it to 'adult sexuality', which young people will one day be ready to 'deal with' (2010, p. 6). Paradoxically the concern here appears to be at what stage in the life course an individual 'should' enter the sexualised cultural landscape rather than the sexualised cultural landscape itself. This framing as well as the tone of language used evokes a sense of inevitability.

The review identifies multiple sites of sexualised culture and offers a comprehensive review of research evidence, but by not offering a cross-generational and developed gendered analysis, which interrogates notions of masculinity it emerges as a contradictory underdeveloped offering.

Following this effort, the Conservative/Liberal Democratic coalition Government shed the violence against women framework altogether, reframing the issues in terms of family values and the preservation of children's innocence. *Letting Children be Children*, The Bailey Review (2011) retains a central narrative of age-appropriate sexualisation, reverberating Papadopoulos' contradictory critique of sexualisation and thus reinforcing its inevitability. Notably the Bailey review not only drops violence against women and girls but also any feminist analyses. Therefore children appear as homogenous group, with little analysis of how sexualisation may translate for those in different social locations as well the potential different impacts and experiences for girls and boys (Coy and Garner, 2012). These policy responses from the UK can be summarised through a trajectory of 'from child protection to violence against women and girls, and back again (Coy and Garner, 2012, p. 289).

This return to child protection means only a short-lived engagement from UK government with sexualisation as an issue for violence against women and gender equality agendas. Following the Bailey Review, concern for young people has moved to impacts of, and how to police, online pornography (see for example, Horvath, et al, 2013). This new attention has shifted the lens from sexualisation as an encompassing and ubiquitous phenomenon to a more tangible site of analysis. Here,

pornography represents a nucleus to discussions wherein broader sexualised cultural backdrops are also mentioned.

This new focus has occurred contemporaneously in the UK to high public profile police investigations into historical cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, and subsequent independent inquiries of both in 2013.[1] Between 2011-13 for example, the Office for the Children's Commissioner for England (OCC) as part of their inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups (CSEGG) commissioned six reports, including a rapid evidence assessment (REA) of the effects of access and exposure to pornography on young people (Horvath et al, 2013). The terms of reference for the overall inquiry were to:

> Identify the cultural, sociological, demographic, technological and economic factors that contribute to and help to perpetuate child sexual exploitation, victimization and abuse linked to gangs and groups (OCC, 2011, CSEG, p. 2).

That the OCC included a REA of pornography in their inquiry reflects an acknowledgement that it may feature as a potential contributing factor in the perpetuation of violence and abuse of children and young people. Less commitment however, is shown by UK policy makers to undertake similar work in terms of adults, even where similar to the OCC's terms of reference, their own call to end violence against women (Home Office, 2014), as well as broader international protocols and

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[1] Operation Yewtree is a Metropolitan Police Service inquiry into alleged child sexual exploitation by the late Jimmy Savile and others, see: http://content.met.police.uk/News/Operation-Yewtree- Update/1400012396517/1257246745756; and an Independent Inquiry commissioned by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in October 2013.

human rights instruments require such a commitment. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)[2] for example, links the commercial exploitation of women as sexual objects to VAWG and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) (1995) frames pornography and sexist media imagery as contributing to prevalence of violence against women (Coy, 2013).

'Generation has trumped gender' in UK policy debates around sexualisation (Coy, 2013, p. 149; Coy and Garner, 2012; Garner, 2012), producing contradictory analyses which obscure and euphemise what is happening across contemporary visual economies and cultural scenes. Shedding a violence against women framework also means that an opportunity is lost for wholesale explorations of cultural and sociological contributing factors to all forms of violence against women and girls, at a time when it could be argued this is most needed and salient.

As new issues emerge across social policy landscapes, such as 'rape pornography', 'revenge pornography', online sexualised bullying and harassment, as well as the cited high profile child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, gendered analyses, which expand beyond children and young people and which consider VAWG along a continuum (Kelly, 1987) are essential. In the meantime this continued attention to young people and children is given without any should include a commitment from government to ensure sex and relationships education is taught in schools, which includes, critical interventions on sexist media cultures, the sex industry and broader causes and consequences of gender inequality and VAWG (EVAW, 2015).

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[2] Signed by the UK in 1981, and ratified in 1986. See www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw.

Sexualisation and Violence Against Women

While exceptions can be found in the work of feminist scholars who take a critical stance on pornography (Boyle, 2010; Dines, 2011), a notable omission from the fields of cultural theory are discussions of sexualisation and violence against women and girls. Gill (2011) argues that in so- called postfeminist climates critique is made difficult and a 'new modality of sexism operates through an annihilation of language to speak about structural inequalities' (p. 63). Within contemporary feminist discussions around sexualisation, this thesis argues violence against women has become what Gill terms an 'unspeakable inequality' (ibid, p. 63).

The introduction of this thesis speculatively linked this omission to an intellectual caution to avoid theoretical tangles characteristic of pornography debates, where tensions built around paradigms of cause and effect (see later in this chapter). Sexualisation it could be argued occupies similar discursive space to pornography in that linking sexualisation to violence against women and girls has been: dismissed as simplistic, conflated with right wing moralising (Attwood, 2011), or is simply left unspoken.

Framing sexualisation as an issue for VAWG agendas indeed requires careful work to avoid drawing simplistic causal links, and flattening cultural landscapes and consumers. Here, theoretical tensions exist between evoking a hypodermic needle effect of visual and media cultures on consumers, and cultural theory which presents a more complex scenario involved in media reception and representation. The risk is homogenising potential diversity of meanings and readings available across visual culture. Bordo (1993a) however has argued that postmodern cultural landscapes

offer either 'battlegrounds' or 'playgrounds' for identity work: here individuals relate to the cultural world in pleasurable or angst filled ways, indeed maybe both. Social policy concerns orbit around Bordo's potential angst, and raise questions of young people's negotiations to re-signify dominant messages about gender and sexuality, which in turn may incubate sexist attitudes.

Scholars and practitioners working across the fields of violence against women raise different but similar concerns about how sexualised popular culture may contribute to producing a 'conducive context' (Kelly, 2007) for VAWG by promoting a socio-sexual landscape suffused with sexism and racism (Coy, 2014a; Coy, 2014b). This framing asks questions about what stories are told about sex and gender across mainstream popular culture, and how they might intersect with and potentially shape everyday experiences, practices, identities and ontologies (Coy and Garner, 2012, Garner, 2012). A conducive context for violence against women does not attempt to draw causal links, but to raise questions about contexts, and socio-cultural landscapes within which VAWG exists and in which gender relations are formed. Where policy responses call for a child-friendly society, here calls are made for a more wholesale and gendered approach and call for a woman-friendly society (Coy and Garner, 2012).

Moving beyond cause and effect new lines of inquiry open and sexualisation and violence against women can share important analytical focus. Similarly, loosening restricted understandings of violence against women and girls as legally defined acts and incidents can also help in drawing links. While discourse as violence may distract from the material pain of violence (Hearn, 1998b), everyday sexisms

perpetuated across cultural landscapes and visual cultures accumulate to produce hostile public spaces. Rosewarne (2007) links sexualised advertising for example, to women's social exclusions and frames it as a form of sexual harassment. Elsewhere, the concept of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990) has also been used as a way to frame how representations of prostitution across popular culture obscure the gendered inequality of prostitution as well as the physical and psychological harms women in prostitution experience (Coy, Wakeling and Garner, 2011). Symbolic violence in the Bourdiean sense are invisible forms of domination embedded in everyday life, leading narratives which downplay, pastiche and mimic elements of the sex industry can work to obscure, but also crucially normalise material violence which can form part of the sex industry.

Another potentially valuable theoretical tool to link sexualisation to violence against women is Liz Kelly's (1987) continuum of violence against women. In her study of women's experiences of sexual violence, Kelly argued that some experiences of abuse were missing from legal codes and previous research in the field. Kelly used the concept of a *continuum* to make visible these experiences, framing them as part of a common and continuous spectrum, where men's abusive behaviours 'shade into one another' (p. 75). This concept allows the range and extent of male behaviours defined by Kelly's participants as abusive to be conceptualised, as well as offering a framework for understanding male violence against women more broadly. In Kelly's context the continuum is applied to specific male *behaviours* and also to prevalence of violence in terms of cumulative *experiences* within women's lives. The concept may also have traction if extended to include how legacies of patriarchy manifest and operate culturally, specifically here within contexts of cultural production,

reproduction and consumption. By extending the concept of a continuum from behaviours and experiences to socio-cultural contexts, it may be possible to frame sexualisation as part of a cultural continuum of violence against women and girls.

What About the Boys?

Across policy discourse men and boys feature as footnotes in recommendations for further research. Similarly, within academic arenas men appear as implicit reference points against which arguments are made about gendered inequalities and are often obscured by, or conflated to masculine power. Questions of how sexualised culture may manifest in men's constructions of the self and sexuality and what conflicts may arise are not being asked. In the way it is argued that sexualisation can narrow ways of being for women and girls (Coy, 2009), does it also entail a similar narrowing of men's worlds and ways of being, and what (if any) are the negative implications for men, and gender relations more broadly? These questions involve considerations of the possible tensions and contradictions between men's structural positions and social inheritances, and their everyday lived experiences, identities and practices, and how they may intersect to produce patterns (of inequality) in gender relations.

Sexualisation represents a salient site for such explorations as discussed in the previous chapter, men are assumed beneficiaries, and imagined as well as actual 'consumers' of (hetero)sexualised spectacles and the sex industry. Central and vital to any inquiry of men's lives and social power are theories and conceptualisations of masculinity. The next section introduces the significance of critical studies of men and masculinities to this thesis.

Theorising Gender, Theorising Masculinity

> Revealing the dynamics of gender makes masculinity visible and problematises the position of men (Kimmel et al, 2005, p. 1).

In recent decades scrutiny of a formerly 'unexamined norm' (Kimmel et al, 2005) men and masculinity, have formed a focus for academic inquiry across social sciences, humanities, cultural studies and psychology (Kimmel, et al, 2008). This new focus on men is embedded in and has perhaps been prompted by gender studies more broadly and seeks to:

> … treat masculinity not as the normative referent against which standards are assessed but as a problematic gender construct (Kimmel, 1987, p. 10).

Following feminist scholars, Flood et al (2007) advance that all traditional academic study has by default been a form of men's study, but 'positioned as constituting generic human experience' (p. viii). Tracing the development of the field the authors summarise three chronological stages: sex role theory; men's studies; and critical studies of men and masculinities. Sex role theory outlined a biological model of gender based on natural differences between men and women which programme social behaviour. The main limitation to this perspective is noted as being a failure to interrogate systems and relations of power between women and men, and men and men (Connell, 2005), prompting a conceptual shift from understanding gender

differentiated social world as being structured by biological imperatives to a broader social constructionist perspective.

Definitive of much of the work which constitutes men's studies and critical studies of men and masculinities, social constructionist perspectives identify masculinity not as an innate, static quality or character trait possessed by an individual, but as social and cultural processes where in different contexts variations of masculinity are produced and reproduced (Connell, 2005). Unlike sex role approaches social constructionists take account of the diversity of masculinities across time, space and context: 'Men situationally achieve masculinity in response to their socially constructed circumstances' (Messerschmidt, 2004, p. 3).

Described as the academic destabilisation of dominant constructions of men and manhood (Flood, 2002), this theoretical shift inevitably signalled a destabilisation of dominant understandings of gender relations as a whole. With this turn from biology to sociology, the project - so far advanced by feminist theory - of unpacking social relations which work to produce gender and reproduce inequality and oppression, was also picked up by masculinities scholars. Flood et al (2007) note how men's studies has been criticised for failing to produce critical scholarship which takes account of feminist thought. Critical studies of men and masculinity are distinguished from men's studies for endeavouring to develop 'collaborative rather than colonizing work' (Flood et al, 2007, p. viiii).

R.W Connell's (2002, 2005, 2009) work on gender has been perhaps the most influential in developing the analytical tools for conceptualising and investigating

masculinities. Connell outlines gender as a social structure which is reconstituted through social action: 'an enduring pattern among social relations' (2009, p. 10). Masculinity or masculinities are 'configurations of practice' (ibid, p. 101) generated in particular situations. Adapting Antonio Gramsci's (1971) analysis of class relations to gender, Connell describes how power operates between different masculinities generated in specific settings. Hegemonic masculinities are the most dominant or desired in a particular context.

Empirical studies have applied this framework to explore cultural resources and social strategies men and boys draw on in order to construct masculine identities and to what effects. Frosh et al (2001) in their study of how boys in London schools articulate their gender identity report how dominant ideas of masculinity can shape boys' behaviours and understandings of 'acceptable' manhood. In this study hegemonic masculinity was associated with heterosexuality, toughness, power, competitiveness, and subordination of gayness. The authors describe how, for the boys in their study, masculine identity work involved complex manoeuvring in order to achieve positions of perceived power. By drawing into question other boys' authentic masculinity boys can position themselves further up a hierarchy of toughness.

Similarly, Pascoe (2007) describes how adolescent boys use the derogatory term for a gay man -fag- in order to demarcate their own gender identity. Using the metaphor of a hot potato, Pascoe describes how the accusative label of 'fag' is passed from one boy to another in order to construct masculine identities hinged on proving heterosexuality.

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These studies reflect how masculine identity work is not just about asserting what you are: it can also entail a constant negotiation of a 'relentless test' (Kimmel, 2004) and is also defined 'by what you are not'. Both studies reflect a process where boys work to both negate and construct specific gender identities initially as an individual project, which becomes a collective one with heterosexuality as a compass. Frosh et al (2001) concludes this process of identity work as being:

> ... a contradictory one fraught with tension and vulnerability, based on the constant need for assertion and reassertion… masculinity is a powerful but fragile construct. (p. 58).

Understanding relations between men is thus key in understanding broader patterns in gender relations. These interplays of hegemony, subordination and complicity reveal a dynamic process where individual men jostle for subject positions within a complex of hierarchical power relations (Connell, 1987, 2005).

The influential thesis of hegemonic masculinity (ibid) has offered routes for scholars to explicate and explore multiple ways of being men which 'at any one time, in any one place will be contesting and interacting with one another' (Pringle, 1987, p. 5). In this, hegemonic masculinity becomes the most 'culturally exalted' (Connell, 2005, p. 77) or idealised way of being a man, formed in relation to, and in tension with for example, marginalised masculinities. As discussed, hegemonic masculinity can hold regulatory and aspirational value in ways of being men, forming the bedrock to what Connell (ibid) terms 'hegemonic projects' (p. 79), which in turn infuses relations between women and men. Men's investments and engagements in hegemonic

projects can produce patterns in practice which legitimise men's dominance in relation to women and other men. Central to this thesis is how configurations of hegemonic masculinity change across time and context, therefore hegemonic masculinity is best understood as plural to account for such change.

Critiques of this conceptualisation however have formed around warnings that too great a focus on pluralities of masculinity may work to obscure men, and men's practices (Pringle, 2002, Hearn, 2004); and that Connell's framework has been applied in ways contrary to its original formulation, as a typology rather than configurations of practice (Hearn, 2004; Connell and Messersmidt, 2005; Beasley, 2008). To meet this Hearn (2004) argues for a move away from seeking and exploring a particular form of hegemonic masculinity, to instead understanding 'the widespread repeated forms of men's practices'. This he argues would involve exploring 'the hegemony of men' and:

> … the examination of that which sets the agenda
> for different ways of being men in relation to
> women, children, and other men (Hearn, 2004, p.
> 60).

While analysing the 'widespread repeated forms' of men's practices is important, without a vocabulary to describe and frame those practices analysis may become difficult, which is perhaps why 'theoretical ambiguities and conceptual confusions' around hegemonic masculinity have occurred (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Messerschmidt, 2008;). Christine Beasley (2008) describes this as 'slippage', which she summarises as:

> Slippage between its meaning as a
> political mechanism – to its meaning
> as a descriptive word referring to
> dominant versions of manhood and
> finally to its meaning as an empirical
> reference specifically to groups of
> men (p. 88).

Central to Beasley's 'slippage' is a tension between the analysis of hegemony as a process or 'political mechanism', and as a descriptor for typologies of manhood: typologies which she suggests often conflate hegemonic with dominant. Connell and Messerschmidt concede this suggested slippage across twenty years of scholarship, both in their earlier re-evaluation of the concept (2005) and later in Messerchmidt's (2008) response to Beasley. However in the latter, Messerschmidt also rejects Beasley's suggested conflation in Connell's original formulation and rearticulates that dominant masculinities should not be made synonymous with hegemonic masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2008).

A related but separate problem the authors note in their re-evaluation is how hegemonic masculinity has become theoretical short hand for describing or locating harmful and negative ways of being men. This they argue simplifies the processes of hegemonic masculinity:

> … it is difficult to see how the
> concept of hegemony would be
> relevant if the only characteristics of
> the dominant group were violence
> aggression and self-centeredness.
> Such characteristics may mean
> domination but hardly would

> constitute hegemony – an idea that embeds certain notions of consent and participation by the subaltern group (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, pp. 840-841).

The framework then is best understood and analytically applied as a process which seeks and gains consent for the sustenance of inequalities between women and men and between different groups of men (Whitehead, 2002). In this process there are ways of being men which come to hold influence, or are most culturally exalted, yet may not always be dominant in mode or style but are effective in gaining and legitimising consent for domination. Diverse practices are therefore generated from a common cultural template. In this 'hegemony has numerous configurations' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 840). It is, in part, in men's strivings for the exemplary way of being a man that hegemonic masculinity holds its authority and forms patterns in relations between women and men and men and men.

> Hegemonic masculinity need not be the commonest pattern in the everyday lives of boys and men. Rather hegemony works in part through the production of exemplars of masculinity, symbols that have authority despite the fact that most men and boys do not fully live up to them (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 846).

For some however this is too abstract. Wetherell and Edley (1999), for example,

argue that Connell's formulation lacks the analytical purchase to explore the 'nitty

grity' of how men negotiate masculine identities:

> …men might conform to hegemonic
> masculinity, but we are left to think
> what this conformity might look like
> in practice… How are the norms
> conveyed? Through what means and
> by what means are they enacted in
> men's everyday lives? (p. 336).

The pursuit of hegemony for the authors is a matter of self-positioning in relation to

exemplars of masculinity. Masculinity here is understood as a discursive practice

where hegemonic norms come to define subject positions which are taken up

strategically by men. 'Masculinity' represents not a certain type of man but rather a

way that men position themselves through discursive practices (Wetherell and Edley,

1999, p. 841).

> Sometimes the most effective ways of
> being hegemonic, or being a 'man'
> may be to demonstrate one's distance
> from the hegemonic masculinity,
> perhaps what is most hegemonic is to
> be non-hegemonic! (ibid, p. 351).

Demetrious (2001) argues something similar by suggesting that the application of

hegemonic masculinities to analyses of gender relations has been elitist in that not

enough attention has been given to the ways subordinate or marginalized

masculinities can impact hegemonic projects. In this, he describes how hegemony

appropriates from other masculinities 'whatever appears to be useful' (p. 345) for continued domination. This he terms 'the dialectical pragmatism' (p. 345) of hegemony, which creates a pattern of hybridisation more than hierarchy. Demetrious also makes distinct 'external hegemony' (p. 341) to describe the flows of hegemony between women and men, and 'internal hegemony' (p. 341) as those between men. Internal hegemony refers to a social ascent of one group of men over others, and as both Connell and Demetriou note such ascendry is best exemplified in the ways gay men are subordinated to heterosexual men.

As outlined, these critiques in part led Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) to revisit hegemonic masculinity and reformulate the concept in four areas. The first area 'the nature of gender hierarchy' (p. 847) relates directly to Demetrious' theory of dialectical pragmatism to argue that analysis should include the reciprocal influence of masculinities on one another, as well as the interplay of femininities and masculinities. Recognised here is 'the agency of subordinated groups, as much as the power of dominant groups, and the mutual conditioning of gender and other social dynamics' (p. 847). The second area of reformulation 'geographies of masculine configurations' (p. 847) offers three levels at which masculinities can be analysed: 'local' face to face interactions; 'regional' level of culture or nation states and 'global' - world politics, business and media.

The third area 'social embodiment' (p. 851) highlights the need for more complex explorations of the ways men's bodies are represented and used across societies. The final area of reformulation, 'the dynamics of masculinities' can be read as a call to

explore the complexities of masculinities which may reveal 'internal contradictions, divisions, and emotional conflict' (p. 852).

Connell's framework of hegemonic masculinities is central to this thesis and to understanding how internal hegemony between men infuses hegemony between women and men. These interplays of hegemony, subordination and complicity may be considered a formative landscape to men's lives, and in this potentially shape how they negotiate sexualisation. The collective sites and products of sexualisation offer a tool kit for gender identity work, where men and boys can in groups and individually, demarcate their heterosexuality and subsequently masculinity. In this, sexualisation becomes a salient site to explore the dynamics of masculinity, including any potential internal contradictions divisions and emotional conflict.

Across the field of cultural studies, masculinities theory has been a vital tool to explore how cultural and media texts can contribute to reproducing dominant ideas about men. Similarly, the theoretical framework has been applied to men's use of the sex industry. The following section will discuss relevant work from these fields of study.

What We Know

While a knowledge base about men's use of specific elements of the sex industry exists (Hardy, 1998; Mansson, 2001; Frank, 2002; Coy et al, 2007,2012; McLeod, Farley & Anderson, 2008; Farley et al, 2011), to date empirical explorations of men's experiences of, and perspectives on sexualisation as a holistic phenomenon have not been undertaken.

A deficiency also exists in empirical work which explores with men specific sites of sexualised popular culture and media, such as music videos, advertising and print media. Here however, a methodological tradition has formed around critical content and textual analyses, where valuable work has been undertaken to unpick the ways popular cultural texts contribute to shaping dominant ideas about what it means to be a man, and vice versa. Ticknell et al (2003), for example, explored how masculinity is discursively (re)produced through the genre of men's magazines, 'lads mags', and argue that the generic editorial styles and visual economies construct and appeal to men's sexuality as hedonistic and detached from emotion, articulated within reduced terms of domination and subordination.

While valuable for revealing how sexism is discursively reproduced, such studies can inadvertently reduce or invisibilise men to abstract cultural constructions of 'masculinity', and here a disjuncture between lived experience and cultural critiques of masculinity can form. Where men have been included in empirical work around 'Lads Mags', methodological approaches seek to 'test' how far the magazines influence men's attitudes, and report findings that men cannot distinguish between quotes taken from convicted rapists and those taken from editorial content of Lads Mags (Horvath et al, 2011). This study appears more as an indictment of Lads Mags, than it does men, yet its approach inadvertently obscures men's own accounts, and potential ways Lads Mags may feature in their lives in more personal, and thus complicated ways than contributing to hostile sexism. That is not to completely discount this work and its method altogether, however, similar to laboratory genre of porn studies (see for example, Linz, Donnerstein and Penrod 1987) such methods can discount men's lived experiences and the contexts of their practices.

Legacies of sexist systems of knowledge may have reduced men's subjectivity and experiences to public power and notions of rationality and objectivity. Methods which disconnect men from their lives, it could be argued, contribute to this as well as potentially reducing men to harmful articulations and manifestations of gendered power. A side effect of not exploring men's practices within broader frames of their lives is that dominant discourses about men become reified, inadvertently shoring up gendered power structures that such work may seek to dismantle. This, however, does not mean dismissing or excusing men's oppressive practices and how they are reproduced, but rather considering them within more expansive frames, including personal, social and political, so that any potential contradictions and ambiguities may be analysed, and in this potentially opening space for discourses and practices of change.

Sexualised media texts appeal to and construct men's sexualities as urgent, predatory and as being based on conquest (Coy, 2013). This stylistic convention can be linked to dominant ideas about men and masculinities more broadly, which are reproduced through 'a male sex drive discourse' (Hollway, 1984) which naturalises men's biological 'need' for sex. Here sex is a one-dimensional and unilateral project, where a sexual object (women) must be attained, dominated, and exists only to satisfy men's natural and uncontrollable physical need for sex.

The male sex drive discourse leaves little room for intimacy, vulnerability, sensitivity, or pleasurable exchange. Edwards (2006) describes this as the alienation of men's sexuality and Kimmel (2004) notes how for men a cultural and discursive boundary between sex and intimacy can exist which ultimately impoverishes men's

personal and sexual relations. This separation of sex and intimacy has been narrated as central to masculinity whereby it is argued that men avoid the unpredictability of intimacy, and instead embark on stereotypical masculine behaviours to maintain perceived control of situations and relationships: 'masculinity becomes a means of rendering social relations manageable' (Kerfoot, 2001, p. 238).

If accepted, this theorising means men's investments in hegemonic projects and strivings to be acceptably male may involve sacrifice, repression and performance, where in order to establish and maintain control of a public façade, emotional needs are suspended. In this frame, men's (hetro)sexuality is linked less to pleasure, or even sex, and more to a gendered social practice bound to power relations, as:

> … an ongoing practice you do seeking two things: to avoid stigmas, embarrassment and ostracism if suspected of being gay, and in order to link selves to power status and privilege (Messner, 2004, p. 425).

The sex industry features here as an arena where men can do masculine heterosexuality: articulate this proposed sexual need, and engage in hegemonic projects which contribute to gender inequality. Indeed empirical studies have explored men's motivations and experiences in these terms. Jeffreys (2008) argues that the so called strip club boom in the Western world helps to compensate men for lost privileges. For Jeffreys, by attending strip clubs men enhance their self-esteem, sense of masculinity and strengthen bonds with one another (p. 670). Men's motivations for paying for sex, have also been theorised around a sense of

entitlement to sex and women's bodies (Coy et al, 2007; McLeod et al, 2008). The next section outlines why men's use of the sex industry is relevant to this study, and also attempts to extend on framings of such use as articulations of male privilege and entitlement by exploring contradictions and ambiguities across the literature in this field, and potentially within men's experiences and practices.

Mainstreaming the Sex industry

As debate around sexualised popular culture has ascended so too have analyses which blur boundaries between mainstream culture and the sex industry. This mainstreaming of commercial sex (Boyle, 2010) has been located within themes, narratives and formal conventions of popular cultural texts and practices, such as: music videos, advertising, fashion and leisure, television formats, and visual economies of popular culture more broadly (see for example, McNair, 2002; Boyle, 2008a; Dines, 2010; Coy 2014). Music videos, advertising campaigns and women recording artists, as part of their imagery deploy and exploit a cultural awareness of the dynamics and aesthetics of prostitution and pornography as found in the so called 'pimp and ho chic' for example (Coy, Wakeling and Garner, 2011).

Beyond a convention of pastiche and mimicry this proposed mainstreaming can also be located within a proliferation of the sex industry across the western world and its integration into global capitalism as a respectable market sector (Jeffreys, 2009, 2010). Strip and lap dancing clubs have for example, attained a proposed new respectability across contemporary cultural landscapes and occupy a permanent position as part of the night-time economy in the UK (Jeffreys, 2009; Coy, 2010; Sanders, 2010). In the Internet age pornography is available at an unprecedented rate

and in myriad modes, while the globalised world has diversified prostitution through so called sex tourism and online live pornography.

Marjut Jyrkinen's (2012) analysis is less fragmented; drawing substantive economic and organizational linkages across prostitution, pornography and strip clubs she frames all three as forming part of a global sex trade, or in her terms 'McSexualization'. Jyrkinen reveals how the sex industry bleeds into and across cultural and social landscapes in obvious and subtle ways, 'substantively linked, by the bodies, sex and sexualities it sells' (Ibid, p. 14). Given these 'porous boundaries' (Paasonen, 2007) this study includes as part of its analysis of sexualisation three aspects of the sex industry, and the section which follows explores what is known about men's use of strip and lap dancing clubs, pornography and paying for sex.

Paying for Sex and Strip Clubs

As discussed earlier in this chapter feminist debates now canonised as 'the sex wars' are often retold as binary arguments, where women are framed as either victims or agents within gendered power relations surrounding the sex industry. Research on men who pay for sex is similar in that often studies explore men's practices, motivations and experiences as projects of political-legal condemnation or legitimisation of prostitution. Men who pay for sex are framed as beneficiaries and exploiters of harmful gender relations, or as legitimate consumers of 'sex work'. Coy (2012) argues that polarising debates around prostitution obscures a middle ground for those who neither endorse nor contest either position. Chen (2003) also warns that totalising accounts of prostitution may work to successfully frame it as:

… a gendered social structure, while paradoxically dissolves specificity of the oppression (2003, p. 2).

Chen is referring here to what she terms a discrepancy between 'theorising men from macro- structures and micro personal narratives' (p. 2). This discrepancy translates into the knowledge base where a consistent, yet often implicit, feature across perspectives are contradictions linked to men's motivations for, and experiences of, paying for sex. This section takes as its focus these contradictions within the literature as this framework outlines the intersections of men's personal experiences and structural position - a focus of this study - as a valuable site for research on men, masculinities and the sex industry. By exploring men's potentially contradictory experiences new routes to reconfiguring how men 'express themselves as men' (Cowburn and Pringle, 2000, p. 63) may begin to emerge.

Research on men who pay for sex has explored characteristics of sex buyers and contexts and prevalence of buying sex (see, Mansson, 2001; Monto and Mcree, 2005; Ward, Mercer and Wellings, 2005; Coy, et al, 2007). This emerging body of work has shifted focus from women in prostitution to the men who pay for sex in fulfilment of various research agendas related to: public health; legislative and policy review and sociological inquiry. Assessing prevalence appears as a research priority across these fields, but due to illegality (depending on research setting) and social stigma linked to prostitution attempts to gauge rates of paying for sex is particularly difficult (Mansson, 2001; Coy et al 2007; Sanders, 2008). Though an important point of analysis for particular research aims and contexts, prevalence is not of central relevance to this thesis, men's motivational and experiential narratives are more

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salient to the aims of this study. That said, research findings which relate to patterns and trends is undoubtedly useful in drawing links between sexualised cultures, the sex industry and formations and articulations of masculinity.

In the UK context, Coy et al (2007) cite two probability sample studies on sexual attitudes and lifestyles which reflect an increase in the rates of paying for sex over a ten-year period from 1990-2000. For the authors, this rise is in part due to sexualisation of culture, the Internet and globalisation. Particularly pertinent here is how in their study men framed paying for sex as a leisure and a consumer right. These narratives may represent a normalisation of paying for sex linked to the mainstreaming of the sex industry more broadly. A later study also found links between increased rates of men paying for sex and broader contexts of consumerism, leisure and travel. A third iteration of sexual attitudes and lifestyles in the UK survey conducted in 2013 found that of 6,108 men surveyed more than one in ten (3.6%) had paid for sex, and two thirds of them whilst abroad and as part of broader 'hedonistic' behaviours such as drug taking (NatSal, 2013).

Men who pay for sex have also been explored and organised through social demographics; the kinds of sex they pay for; their motivations and decision making processes; and narratives of experience. Although patterns are identifiable within the framework of specific studies, a broad reading from across the literature suggests that men who pay for sex are not demographically homogenous, nor are they necessarily seeking 'deviant' or abnormal sex. Kinnell (2006) describes the general profile of her participants as 'rather ordinary....Mr Average', and Coy et al (2007) reported their participants as paying for 'mundane sex'. Findings related to men's

motivations for paying for sex are diverse, and in places contradictory. Some studies report overlapping motivations linked to a desire for sex divorced from emotional responsibility and intimacy, but also a desire for (perceived) reciprocal and emotional exchanges with women (Chen, 2003; Kinnell, 2006; Sanders, 2008).

These findings raise the question of why is 'Mr Average' paying for 'mundane' sex, within a framework of perceived intimacy? Sanders (2008) offers a two pronged rationale of push and pull factors which make up the motivational spine of why men pay for sex. The pull factors she argues relate to the allure of the commercial sex setting, and push factors to men's dissatisfaction with everyday life. Here paying for sex is a reward, a form of hedonistic escapism. For Sanders paying for sex is not about 'doing masculinity', but about taking time out of the 'taxing constructions and scripts of heterosexual masculinity' (p. 45). This analysis sits in conflict with other sources across the field, which suggest that commercial sex is a place for men to engage in flows of hegemonic masculinity and to articulate and reaffirm a sense of male entitlement to women's bodies, satisfying a self-perceived biological need for sex (Coy et al, 2007; Jeffreys, 2008, 2009).

Adopting an either or position to these analyses would miss analytical similarities in that they both link paying to sex to formations and articulations of masculinity, and to how men make sense of being men. Interpretive differences however remain in terms of how each reading frames the ways men manage and enact gendered power.

In the first framing prostitution represents a site of release, to escape gendered pressure, while in the second; prostitution represents a site to do gendered power, to

exploit unequal gender relations and the access to women's bodies they afford. Following feminist scholars working across fields of violence against women, perhaps a more fruitful route would be to abandon either/or understandings of men's motivational and experiential frameworks for paying for sex, for what Coy (2012) describes as a 'both/and' approach. This means exploring the space between these arguments and any potential contradictions and ambiguities.

Beyond empirical studies of men's lived experiences of paying for sex, Bender and Furman's (2004) content analysis of sex tourism websites show how advertising on these websites simultaneously appeal to established notions of masculinity and work to reproduce them. Here, men are addressed as potential consumers through three main assumptions about men: as seeking sexual conquest; as seeking companionship; and as hardworking and unappreciated. These sites the authors argue, depict men who pay for sex as: insecure; characteristically and physically flawed; dissatisfied with life; lonely; not respected by other men; unappreciated by women; and as having intense, adventurous sexual needs. Commercial sex is crafted as a place for men to indulge both their physical need for sex, and paradoxically also gain emotional pastoral care.

By the author's own admission the study does not engage in men's perspectives so direct correlations may not be made. However, parallels may be drawn between Sanders' (2008) analysis of sex buyers as seeking ways to reconcile gendered social pressures and disappointments, and studies which found men associate paying for sex with a gendered sense of sexual need and a consumer right to women's bodies (Kinnell, 2006; Coy et al, 2007). Similarly, the websites examined by Bender and

Furman work to craft a tense dichotomy between men's sexual and emotional needs, reflecting a broader pattern in the cultural and social constructions of men's sexualities.

Sex and intimacy are gendered. For men, the enduring sexual drive discourse (Hollway, 1984) discussed earlier in this chapter constructs intimacy and emotional needs as separate to, and superseded by a biological need for sex. This is a system so embedded in social structures and cultural discourses that it may reverberate within men's constructions of the self and sexuality. Where emotional needs do appear in men's motivational narratives of paying for sex, or across cultural construction of their sexuality, they are embedded in codes of hegemonic masculinity and themes of *lack*. Here, men pay for sex in order to reconcile a *lack* of respect, appreciation and understanding or in order to satisfy a naturalised sexual need and to assert control and dominance.

This socio-cultural separation of sex and intimacy (for men) recasts the sex industry from a site of sexual liberalism, as is often argued, to one of social, emotional and sexual control which exploits false dichotomies of gender and the types of intimacy and sex men and women should and can have. Brod (1990) argues that patriarchy alienates men from their own sexualities, which for him, as with Marx's theory of capitalism, entails internal contradictions: 'a system of domination also damages the dominant group, preventing them from realising their full humanity' (1990, p. 126).

Moving from men's motivations to experiences of the process of paying for sex, some studies reflect findings which can be linked to Brod's internal contradictions:

here some men report guilt and shame (Coy, et al 2007; Farley, et al, 2011). Though these experiences may be minimally reported and potentially based on fear of social stigma, personal health and safety or legal consequences, they may also reflect something more complicated about some men's personal negotiations of gendered power and sexualised consumption. Crucial to analysis here is finding ways which do not make men victims of their own decisions choices and practices, but also take account of the landscapes, personal and social, within which these choices are made and practices done.

Coy et al (2007) link these narratives of guilt and shame to what they term an 'intersection between cultures of masculinity and men's conflicting personal experience' (p. 23). In the same study however, the authors found accounts of entitlement and boasting. These contradictory overlaps in men's narratives, experiences and lives may offer useful routes for exploration, but often they are overlooked in research analysis and theory. Similarly, men who choose not to pay for sex are also overlooked, and in this the hegemony of men may be reproduced by hegemonic discourses about them.

Similar contradictory frameworks of experience have been found in explorations of men's experiences of visiting strip and lap dancing clubs. Frank (2003) describes how some regular patrons to strip clubs in the US experience their visits within a 'framework of frustration and confusion' (p. 66). In the same study Frank also found in men's accounts affirmations of masculinity and a sense of control and power linked to sexualised consumption. Frank's study is unique in its focus on men, and

represents a departure from a tendency to study and theorise strip clubs through women.

The proliferation of strip and lap dancing clubs across the Western world has prompted debates around the gendered politics of them and a broader mainstreaming of the sex industry. In the UK a legislative debate over whether strip clubs constitute part of the leisure or sex industry is perhaps testimony to this process of mainstreaming. Here however, policy approaches to re-draw these boundaries have been made. Coy (2010) highlights changes to licensing legislation in England and Wales which now define the clubs as sex establishments, and Jeffreys' (2009) criteria for framing the clubs as part of the global sex industry is 'sexual use of women even when no touching takes place' (p. 3). Sex establishment, however, is a neutral description, which obscures how strip clubs are profoundly hetero-normative and masculinised spaces (Frank, 2003; Coy, 2010). Despite this, discussions are undertaken in similar terms to sexualisation more broadly: in particular women feature as the focus within a continuation of structure/agency debates. Some frame women who strip as empowered sexual entrepreneurs (Scweitzer, 2000), and the clubs as socially transgressive, and disruptive of gender norms (Liepe-Levinson, 2002).

Those taking a more critical perspective frame the clubs as forming part of an exploitative industry and broader patterns in unequal gender relations (Jeffreys, 2008, 2010; Coy, 2010). In the latter, continuing contexts of gender inequality and violence against women within which the proliferation of strip clubs has occurred are

emphasised to draw into question contexts of, and highlight constraints on, women's choices and agency.

While necessary discussions, they often take place at the detriment of attention to men's practices, and under an ever present gaze on what women do with their bodies. Similarly, across theoretical and political analyses, men's practices, and men's lives are overcast or conflated with masculine power structures, or as economic beneficiaries of the industry's revenues (Jeffreys, 2008, Sanders, 2010). Franks' study cited above, in contrast, focuses solely on the experience of regular patrons to strip clubs in the US. Frank argues that very few men understand their visits to strip clubs in terms of an exercise of personal power or a desire for dominance, while also arguing that transactions in strip clubs should not be understood as unrelated to social structures of inequality (2003, p. 61).

The point of contestation between structural and personal frameworks for making sense of men's use of the sex industry emerges as how men express, articulate and experience privilege, and social dominance. Exploring men's own accounts and testimonies may not involve explicit articulations of entitlement, for example, and may even reveal tales of tenuous personal power. Some men in Frank's study framed their visits in terms of 'just trying to relax' (p. 61), to escape social pressures and norms associated with being men. This echoes Sanders' notion of men paying for sex as a way to avoid the 'taxing constructions' and scripts of heterosexual masculinity.

Chen (2003) also highlights another contradiction related to men's use of the sex industry, and argues that men who pay for sex abroad tend to see their encounters as reciprocal rather than exploitative. These findings highlight a disjuncture in the ways men can experience and express their inherited social advantages: some may explicitly express them as a sense of entitlement, some may not acknowledge them rendering them 'taboos' (McIntosh, 1988) and unspeakable, while for others they may represent a point of tension and personal turmoil. While we have garnered a knowledge base and theoretical tool kit to excavate how men express their privilege through a sense of entitlement, much work is left to do in unpicking contradictions and ambiguities linked to how men express and experience social advantage.

Similarly, while a knowledge base continues to grow around men's use of the sex industry more focus is required on men who choose not to take part in these particular practices of inequality. Not only will this produce interesting findings, but it may also contribute to shifting dominant discourses about men, towards potentially complex analyses which may offer routes in to change.

Pornography

In contrast to paying for sex and strip and lap dancing clubs men have been a central focus in studies and discussions of pornography, but it could be argued this has taken place within restricted methodologically terms. The impact of viewing pornographic material on men's attitudes towards women and their capacity for sexual aggression has dominated research around pornography and sexually explicit media. This laboratory genre (Hearn, 1991) of research has yielded a 'complex and contradictory', body of 'hotly contested' findings (Boyle, 2000, p.187 &188), which

attempts to prove or disprove a causal relationship between men's use of pornography and their attitudes and behaviour. This body of literature attempts to draw links between men's use of pornography and sexist attitudes; acceptance of rape myths and likelihood of committing violence against women.

While men are central to this effects discourse in that they appear as subjects within whom effects (potentially) take shape, they disappear as agents of practice. In this, questions of what men do with pornography, why and how, as well as considerations of broader social and personal contexts of pornography use are not addressed. Hearn (1991) warns that pornography is not a thing that causes effects: 'it is itself a social relation and social process' (p. 4). Analysis of pornography for Hearn should focus on the social relations entailed in the production and consumption of it. Similarly, Boyle appeals for a shift in analytical focus from cause and effect, to the way in which pornography is produced and consumed in harmful ways (2000, p. 192).

Attwood (2011) argues that sexualisation as a cultural climate has broadened the field of focus for 'porn studies', and rejuvenated the predominant behaviourist approach with diverse and innovative modes of studying pornography. This 'paradigm shift' she argues has moved the field on from a cause and effects framework to analyses focussed on production, history and sexual libertarian potential of pornography. Attwood also describes a double bind in that this shift in focus has brought new disciplinary and theoretical frameworks for studying and discussing pornography but at the same time, according to her, a conservative emphasis on 'danger and effects' continues to overshadow and invisibilise innovative work from this new paradigm.

Attwood's analysis reignites political and theoretical tensions and conflicts characteristic of historical debates around pornography, where potential harms- both actual and ideological - were dismissed for celebrations of pornography as sexually liberating. Attwood conflates critics of sexualisation and pornography with anti-sex conservatives and dismisses the body of effects research on pornography as unsophisticated, unethical and as forming part of a right wing conspiracy.

Dismissing questions of violence against women and harm, Attwood's analysis could be considered intellectually unethical, as Boyle (2011) argues in context to the weight of testimonies of abuse reported from women inside the industry: 'those of us who study porn whether critical or celebratory, have an ethical obligation to consider violence against women in our analysis' (p. 591). Cowburn and Pringle (2000) note how research undertaken on the effects of pornography is not fundamentally flawed, but that there is not enough of it, and it fails to consider pornography within a context of 'power relations surrounding gender; 'race', class, disability and sexuality' (p.58). In this sense Attwood also fails, in her ' postmodern flattening of the terrain of power relations' (Bordo, 1993, p. 277) in order to promote pornography and sexualisation more broadly as offering routes to forging new sexual ethics and citizenship. A more considered analysis might explore pornography, sexual freedom and sexual violence in tandem, and in the context of gendered power relations.

Contemporary climates are unprecedented, in terms of accessibility to, and styles of pornography (Hearn, 1991; Paasonen, 2007; Boyle, 2010; Dines, 2010). As outlined above, policy responses to sexualisation have graduated to a focus on impacts of

pornography on children and young people. Meanwhile a resurgence of anti-pornography feminism is detectable. These analyses, rather than a conservative emphasise on danger and effects, is concerned with gender justice and represents critical reflections on these shifts in how pornography is consumed and produced and how they may present barriers to gender equality and promote violence against women.

An organising aspect to pornography debates then, both past and current, is the issue of violence against women and harm. While effects discourse has shaped the direction of these discussions elsewhere valuable work has also been undertaken through different approaches. Here questions of whether pornography causes, or is, violence against women are extended to explore how pornography is implicated in violence against women and how pornography is produced in and used in harmful ways. Both Tyler (2010) and Boyle (2011) highlight how within industry practices and production values violence against women functions as a marketing tool, appealing to men through what Boyle terms 'pornographic value of abuse' (2011,p. 594). Here, violence against women is part of the 'acknowledged story' of pornography (ibid), an acknowledgement which is exploited by pornographers and which consumers, predominantly men, must negotiate every time they use pornography to masturbate.

Contentious points for opponents of critical approaches to pornography, as with the effects literature, are questions of what constitutes and how to evidence harm. Here arguments about freedom of speech, sexual fantasy and freedom are made which frame pornography as a polysemic cultural text, wherein consumer responses and

readings are complex (Attwood, 2011). Following a campaign led by Rape Crisis South London and supported by the End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW) in 2014 in the UK, pornographic depictions of rape were included in legal provisions which regulate extreme pornography. This amendment to legislation was met by opponents who defended pornographic depictions of rape as sexual fantasy, and argued the changes were flawed due to a lack of evidence of harm (Attwood et al 2014; Barnett and Let 2014).

In response, cultural harms of pornography were cited in similar terms to a conducive context, and Rape Crisis Centres presented practice- based evidence where survivors of sexual abuse and rape described how pornography featured in their abuse (Garner and Elvines, 2014). Drawing on practice-based evidence however is often dismissed as non-scientific, even though such accumulated knowledge gathered by these epistemic communities involves ethnographic immersion (Coy and Garner, 2012).

Arguments have also been made which reframe pornography from a cultural text to a process and practice of inequality, wherein real bodies do real things within exploitative and abusive contexts, with real consequences.

> To these women pornography is not a polysemic text, a fantasy to be savoured, a form of sexual liberation or discourse. It is an event that forever changed their lives, and has to be dealt with every day (Dines, 1998, p. 164).

Arguments which link pornography to sexual fantasy and liberalism do so at the detriment of structural, material and gendered analyses and are often made, it could be argued, in order to silence critical reflections and engagements on pornography. It could also be argued however, that perspectives which only frame pornography as a negative manifestation, practice of power and abuse, also risk dismissing testimonies concerning the uses and gratifications of pornography. These partial views then may (re)create polemic arguments and cyclical debates. Exploring men's 'uses and gratifications' of pornography, and even perhaps women's, in context of persisting gendered inequality and violence against women may offer interesting directions in the study of pornography's harms.

Often debates orbit around what men do and the implications therein for society and women. How pornography intersects with men's lives beyond this framework is seldom addressed. Exceptions however, can be found in narrative approaches which involve 'listening to stories' (Jensen, 1998, p. 101) and taking account of personal histories, trajectories of experience and broader social and cultural landscapes within which they form and collide. Hardy (1998) interviewed young men about their interpretations and experiences of pornographic magazines, and plotted his participants' use of pornography across a three-stage life trajectory, where he describes three different types of 'commitments' to pornography. In the final stage, adulthood, Hardy reported how continued use of pornography can sit in tension with men's relationships with women, and in this requires a moral reckoning. Jensen (1998) also described guilt and shame linked to his own pornography use. In a different approach Whisnant's (2010) content analysis of porn user forums describes

how men and boys are groomed to suspend and erode their own moral objections to women's abuse in pornography.

Negative impacts for men and their lives as well as considerations of men who choose not to use pornography are less visible. A recent surge in men confessing negative impacts on their lives however is detectable outside of the academy where for example, and as part of an anti- sexualisation arsenal described earlier in this chapter, so called pro feminist men's groups, online and anonymously, share testimonials of negative experience linked to using pornography (see, for example, Facebook pages, 'Being Against Porn Doesn't Make You a Wanker' and 'Guys Against Porn'). Across the literature however, men's accounts of their pornography use are sparse, as are explorations of men who do not choose to use pornography.

Conclusions

This chapter has situated this study by outlining the contemporary discursive landscapes around sexualisation and identifying 'the gap' in knowledge and lack of focus on men and masculinities. Sexualisation is both an old and new phenomenon: linked to historical processes and patterns in gender relations, and contemporary in terms of socio-political and cultural settings. Refreshed tensions across feminist politics about women's agency and pleasure and oppressive social structures are played out in ways reminiscent of the so-called 'sex wars' debates. Much current feminist discourse however, is careful to unpick operations of neo liberalism, and post feminism as divisive and diverting discourses, which obscure continuing sexisms and stifle feminist critique. Two central deficiencies were noted across this

arena: a lack of focus on me and an intellectual caution from some sections of the academy to explore violence against women.

This chapter also argued that UK policy responses to sexualisation have been too child and young people centred, and over the life course of this study this has produced contradictory framings of age-appropriate sexualisation. Policy responses have also focussed too heavily on women and girls, which in effect reinforces an already regulatory gaze on their sexuality, and invisibilises men and boys.

Exploring sexualisation in relation to men is a missing yet crucial focus for gender equality and violence against women agendas. How and whether men reinvest their inherited lot forms a central part of understanding how inequality is reproduced and how unearned social advantage is taken on and reinvested, eschewed, and potentially rejected. The scholarly field of critical studies of men and masculinities was presented as an essential tool kit for such explorations. In particular Connell's (2005) model of hegemonic masculinities was reviewed in light of its relevance to this study: revealing how hierarchies between men can potentially create landscapes of action and inaction which may infuse how men make sense of sexualisation, as well as their practices within it. This chapter also outlined how critiques of hegemonic masculinities uncover and narrate 'slippage' in the way it has been used analytically: reducing the concept to a typology of masculinity rather than a process and practice which seeks and gains consent for domination. In this slippage hegemonic masculinity has been read and applied as dominant, or as theoretical short hand to describe harmful and negative ways of being men. It was also noted that while key to understanding relations between men this framework may be too abstract to get at

the 'nitty gritty' of how relations of hegemony play out in men's everyday lives. In this study 'men's practices' are considered a more accessible way to talk about what men do, with masculinities a framework utilised to explore the flows and forms of men's practices and how relations between men help maintain relations of inequality between women and men.

This chapter also identified a gap in empirical studies which explore sexualisation as an holistic phenomena. While a knowledge base around men's use of specific elements of the sex industry continues to grow, and critical content analyses and theorisations are made about sexualised cultural texts, few studies – if any - explore sexualisation as an encompassing phenomena in relation to, or with men. Here it was argued that existing approaches inadvertently obscure men from themselves and their lives, potentially reifying dominant ideas about men and men's sexualities.

Studies and theorisations of the sex industry often focus on women in terms of their potion within it. In the past decade however, a knowledge base around men who pay for sex and visit strip and lap dancing clubs has begun to emerge. Relevant literature was discussed to highlight men's contradictory experiential frameworks. Such contradictory findings reveal a tension at the intersections of men's structural position within and subjective experiences of sexualised consumption and how these might represent a point of rupture and entry to extend on theorisations of men's social positions and practices as articulations of entitlement and privilege.

It was also noted that in contrast, studies of pornography have focussed on men but within restrictive methodological frames which hide personal and social contexts of

use and surrounding relations of power. An organising feature of pornography debates is the question of harm and violence against women, with a point of contention in how to define and evidence harm. Approaches here have posited pornography as: a stimulus which causes harm; as discourse which represents and reproduces harm; or as an intrinsically harmful practice. A useful bridge was identified in approaches which seek to explore how men may use pornography in ways which are harmful to women and how pornography is implicated in violence against women. Following this, it was argued that critical narrative approaches, which explore pornography in context to men's lives and relations of power surrounding gender are useful in identifying ways pornography can intersect with, and feature in men's lives beyond cause and effect but potentially also in harmful ways.

This study then, is located at the edge of the voids identified in this chapter; it attempts to explore sexualisation as an encompassing phenomenon spanning mainstream culture as well as the sex industry. Its focus on men is also unique amongst contemporary discussions of sexualisation, as is its methodological approach: exploring men's practices and social positions in context of their lives and the potential ambiguities and contradictions therein. The following chapter presents how this was undertaken.

CHAPTER THREE: Researching Sexualisation, Researching Men

> I detest the masculine point of view. I am bored
> by his heroism, virtue and honour. I think the best
> these men can do is not to talk about themselves
> any more (Virginia Woolf, 1977: quoted in
> Dworkin, 1981, p. 48).

Researching men is beset by a paradox that historically men have spoken but at the same time not spoken. Feminist scholars argue that social worlds have been interpreted through an androcentric lens which has subjugated women to men, and consigned the messiness of life and experience to canons of rationality and objectivity (Harding, 1986; Smith, 1987; Oakley, 1974). Within and across these androcentric legacies of knowledge production men have been, and are, taken for granted as public un-gendered beings, and in this it could be argued have remained mostly silent about themselves when it comes to emotional, personal and subjective matters. This study endeavoured to traverse ideas of men as public beings, to excavate and to explore personal landscapes of their lives and to encourage men to talk and think about themselves as gendered: an endeavour, that raised a number of methodological challenges.

This chapter presents the story of this research process and outlines how some of these challenges were met. It offers an account of how the methodological decisions were arrived at, including the false starts and discoveries. The research topic - sexuality and power, and context - a woman exploring men's lives - involved a series of personal, political, ethical and theoretical negotiations. This is the story of those

negotiations and how, in and through them, the epistemological and methodological foundations of the study evolved.

The project was a live gendered process and experience and the research context became a 'fertile field'[3] for exploring the dynamics of gender and sexuality, two of the core foci of this thesis. How the interactional and relational aspects of gender and sexuality played out across the research process offered insights into how gender is imagined, done and reproduced. As the study progressed personal experiences with, and imaginings of 'masculinity' and men's practices became too loud to ignore. The personal impacts of the field therefore became a source for methodological decision making and emerging conceptual frameworks to take shape.

Part one outlines some of the challenges linked to researching sexualisation, masculinities and men's lives, and describes how they were addressed including an extensive pilot phase. The recruitment strategy and final research design is then presented along with discussions of research ethics and data analysis. The second part of this chapter focuses on the gendered dynamics of this research study and field and presents reflections across my experiences of, and with, men who took part.

Challenges

This study was steered by two core interconnected aims: to explore men's experiences of, and perspectives on 'sexualisation', and how sexualised cultural landscapes may intersect with and shape ways of being a man. These aims presented

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[3] This phrase is taken from 'Fertile Fields: Trafficking in Persons in Central Asia, by Liz Kelly, (2005) and though contexts of use differ considerably the sentiment and meaning resonate well.

two central challenges for research design: conceptualising 'sexualisation' and how best to research men's lives and masculinities. As outlined in the previous chapter, during the life course of this study sexualisation ascended as a focus for social policy agendas and academic and public debate (Attwood, 2010; Coy and Garner, 2012; Garner, 2012; Gill, 2012). While sexualisation can be linked to historical feminist debates and broader cultural histories (see Chapter Two) contemporary discussions bring new socio-political settings and with them broader theoretical framings, and new imperatives for research and research design.

An early challenge was how to keep up with and translate theoretical and policy debates into research methods: in particular how to define and locate sexualisation in order to study 'it'. Relevant to methodological decisions was how some sections of debate draw links between popular culture and the sex industry (Attwood, 2010; Boyle, 2010; Coy and Garner, 2010; Dines; 2010; Coy, Wakeling and Garner, 2011). In the research context concern rested on attempting to do too much and the topic being too broad to operationalise. Working out the parameters of the research or more precisely of sexualisation was a prime consideration, with a friction between practice and theory - how to meet a practical imperative while not losing the explorative space theoretical flexibility affords. One solution was to take these difficulties into the research. Rather than working from a definitive conceptualisation, from the outset a decision was made early on to explore the possible meanings, spaces and definitions of 'sexualisation' with participants, whilst exploring pornography, paying for sex and strip and lap dance clubs as part of sexualisation. This held the benefit of situating the project within the context of policy and academic discourse, entering debates in the discursive moment and

permitting explorations of how, or whether, contemporary commentary on sexualisation resonated with participants and their lives.

This exploratory approach meant the scope of topics ranged from the general to potentially sensitive issues. Research design required methods that could comfortably traverse the scope of topics: from for example, mainstream popular culture to personal and 'private' terrains such as men's experiences and practices within the sex industry.

An associated but separate challenge emerged as how to research masculinities and men's lives. While the field of critical studies of men and masculinities offered crucial theoretical frameworks for interpretation, in practice a key challenge was how best to translate theoretical density into research methods. For example, if 'masculinity' is understood as plural, as configurations of practice seeded in and reproductive of relations of power (Connell, 2005), what 'tools' best enable explorations of masculinities? In other words what was I looking for? How and where did 'it' or 'they' manifest? Masculinities featured early on as intangible and elusive subject(s) of study: 'everywhere and yet nowhere, known and yet unknowable' (Edwards, 2006; p. 1). This presented a risk that too deep a focus on theories of masculinities could potentially make invisible men and men's practices (Cowburn and Pringle, 2000).

Synthesising theoretical foundations with methodological and ethical foundations of research also required careful considerations. From the outset this study was situated within a critical feminist epistemology committed to exploring sexualisation in the

context of power relations surrounding gender and as a potentially 'masculinising process' (Connell, 2005). Questions arose as to how to research men's lives in ways which did not 'other' men or conflate structural power with individual lives and experiences, whilst not missing potential interconnections. That I was a woman researching men also raised interesting tensions for feminist methodological approaches.

As argued in the opening of this chapter, sociological inquiry has traditionally positioned men as normatively human (Harding, 1986; Smith, 1987; Brod, 2002; Pease, 2010), with the parallel contention that women's experiences have been distorted and ignored and men's standpoint represented as universal (Smith, 1987): a great deal of 'corrective' scholarship and empirical work has been undertaken to 'make women visible' (Oakley, 1974). Diverse feminist methodologies and epistemologies have grown out of a commitment to produce non-sexist work which, among many things, problematises notions of 'objectivity' and centres from the margins the everyday experiences of women (Stanley and Wise, 1983). Methodologically this has included approaches that explicate the affective components of research, highlight the importance of reflexivity and attempt to redress, or at least acknowledge, power differentials between and across the researched and researcher (Fonow and Cook, 1991).

While this study was guided by these approaches, in focussing on the 'superordinate' as opposed to subordinate groups it forms part of what Brod (2002) describes as a paradigm shift, and occupies dubious territory and raises interesting questions for

feminist research practice. How do these pillars of feminist research hold when a woman researches men's lives?

While scholars working within critical studies of men have written about tensions related to men researching men from a 'pro feminist' position, less has been written about women researching men from a feminist perspective and more specifically from within the fields of violence against women. In the former, focus is given to approaches that avoid retrenching sexism (Pringle, 1987; Hearn, 1998 a & b; Pease and Pringle, 2001; Brod, 2002; Cowburn, 2014) and in the latter to how best women can navigate potential gendered power differentials and dynamics within the research context (Arendell, 1997; Lee, 1997). While crucial, these concerns in part focus on men's potential oppressive practices within a research context. Albeit unintentional, a possible side effect is that men as research participants are often cast implicitly and explicitly as a social problem, as inherently unreliable informants.

Arndell's (1997) study of divorced fathers evoked for her a series of questions which chime succinctly with my own concerns before entering the field, and as such the passage is reproduced in full here.

> What are the power dynamics when a woman studies men given that the society remains stratified by gender? Does the power imbalance shift because of the researcher's expertise with respect to the topic being studied, and her initiation and handling of the study? That is, does the overt definition of the situation override or reverse temporarily the usual gender order? Or is

the conventional gender hierarchy maintained or reestablished across the interaction? How does and should a woman researcher finesse gender politics in the interview context? Should a researcher with feminist politics or any other, for that matter discuss these with her or his research participants? (p. 343).

Another challenge specific to researching men is breaking down normative fictions about what it means to be a man which can restrict subjective reflections. As Brod (2002) argues, successful masculine subjectivity hinges on a supposed inherent self-confidence:

… for a man to admit he has questions about masculinity is already to admit that he has failed as a man, men are 'supposed' to know (p. 163).

Asking men to think and speak about themselves as gendered, and to explore personal realms of experience means asking them to depart from traditions of discourse and practice which have minimised everyday experience as relevant to knowledge, and consigned gendered self-reflection to failures in masculinity. Paradoxically, legacies of sexist systems of knowledge may have reduced men's subjectivity and experiences to public power, rationality and objectivity. At the same time men also have 'a vested interest' in remaining silent and un-self-reflective about their own social positions. As Pease (2010) argues, men have been 'unmarked' by gender: an 'unmarkedness' which is precisely the mark of dominance. To study men as gendered subjects is, by definition, political in that this endeavour seeks reflections and revelations from men about their own social advantages, a practice

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which has been restricted across cultural and epistemological history. In these frames men represented a potentially difficult research group to both access and to work with, and the research field a potentially difficult, and worst-case scenario, hostile one to navigate.

Beginnings and Piloting

An integral and absolutely necessary part of working out some of these tensions was to undertake an extensive pilot phase. The design was a multi-methods approach comprising three strands of data collection administered chronologically, where the findings from each would feed into the next. The first was an online anonymous survey which would enable wide participation by not asking for any identifying information and ensuring that only researcher and respondents see what has been recorded on the survey (Coy et al, 2013). This was also potentially useful to gain initial insights into how men would respond to the research topics.

The second strand was face-to-face, unstructured interviews in order to achieve both breadth and depth (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) across topics. While the research topic is 'intrinsically visual' (Spencer, 2011) a striking deficit across debates and empirical studies in the field is work which explores visual economies of popular culture in tandem with its assumed consumers. To address this, the final strand was to be what I termed and developed as a multimedia Online Reflective Space (ORS) where participants would be asked to individually and anonymously engage with a selection of media and cultural texts over a period of five weeks. The lessons learnt from each of these pilot strands and how they contributed to the final research design is now discussed in more detail.

Online Survey

The pilot survey worked well as an initial scoping exercise to explore men's reactions to the research topics and how far an online confidential space would enable and/or inhibit reporting of practices. The survey was composed of three parts, with a feedback section at the end. The first asked questions about modes, frequencies and contexts of men's use of three aspects of the sex industry: paying for sex; strip and lap dancing clubs; and pornography. The second section was designed to elicit respondents' perspectives on sexualisation more broadly in terms of both styles of cultural outputs such as advertising and music videos, and social policy debates. The final section sought demographic and personal details including: ethnicity; sexuality; age; and relationship status. A feedback section at the end of the survey asked about the content, style, and length of the instrument.

A convenience sample of thirteen men was recruited from within my own social network and that of friends via email and social media. Given that this recruitment process reached well over sixty men, this represented a fairly poor response rate, which alerted me to potential problems in recruiting men to the research. However, when the data were analysed the first section elicited useful insights about patterns, modes and quality of men's use of, and experiences within, the sex industry which helped identify themes for further explorations during interviews. Responses across the second section of the survey which attempted to engage and explore men's perspectives' on sexualisation highlighted what, on reflection, was a mismatch between aim and method. It became apparent that attempting to explore perspectives on styles of popular culture and policy debates within the one dimensional confines of an online survey with tick boxes and Likert scales was too restrictive.

The feedback section evoked positive and constructively critical responses about the format, content and style of the survey. Respondents said the survey was interesting and expressed appreciation for having the space to think about and offer their perspectives, and some made valuable suggestions for improvements. Some said the survey was too long, repetitive and made suggestions to improve navigation and structure. However, a few respondents couched their feedback in defensive criticism, and one man in particular was particularly critical and negative. For example, the survey asked whether respondents had ever 'used' or 'looked at' pornography; if they answered yes, they were then filtered to another question, which asked them to say something about why they used pornography. This respondent first rejected this question as sexist, and biased.

> I feel this question is very superficial and infers a
> very defined male response (PSR4[4]).

Moving on to answer the question his response became confessional, bordering justificatory.

> I've never been that secure about my sexual
> abilities I've used porn since being very young, It
> gets me through loneliness It also makes me
> lonely and sometime ashamed (PSR4).

Similarly, two other respondents framed the survey style and content as biased.

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[4] Coding scheme: Pilot Survey Response 4 = (PSR4)

Too male orientated, no reference to feminine
culture or social history being at all responsible
for the sexualisation of women (PSR6).

Very frustrated with the 'steer' of the questions
(PSR7).

These responses led to a valuable process of reflection and revision. That this was
the first formal engagement with men about the research issues highlighted a number
of important considerations about the research terrain and potential flaws in design.
The negative responses, while in the minority, brought to the fore the gender politics
of the research terrain to highlight it as potentially emotive territory for various
reasons. A central question in this study is the unquestionable an 'unexamined norm'
(Kimmel et al, 2005) of men and men's practices, which for some men, may be
experienced as affronting. These responses offered pause for thought to consider
potential researcher bias, but also how they could constitute findings in that they
may represent discursive styles which reflect the forms, flows and manifestations of
masculinity. Or in other words, how such responses are embedded in, and
productive of different ways of being men.

My interpretation of these responses was that some men do not like being
questioned, which alerted me to the potential for implicit and explicit articulations,
denials and defences of men's unearned social advantages across the research
process. It also alerted me to how asking men about their lives and practices can be
read as controversial, biased, or as sexist, and can result in the building of what Sara
Ahmed (2014) calls 'walls'.

> You come against a system when you point out a
> system. When there is a system those who benefit
> from the system do not want to recognise that
> system… White men = a support system. No
> wonder: walls come up when we talk about walls.
> A wall can be a defense mechanism (p. 3).

Pilot Interviews and the Online Reflective Space (ORS)

Following the online survey a convenience sample of men was sought by asking colleagues to identify willing participants to take part in pilot interviews, with the condition that they were strangers to me. Five men agreed and were interviewed face to face. Interviews ranged in time from fifty minutes, to two hours and twenty minutes, two were held within the University, and three in public space - one in a park and two in quiet pubs. A few days after the interview a link to an anonymous online feedback form was sent to participants in order to capture reflections, which may have been more difficult to offer face to face.

Interviews were unstructured but explorations were shaped by three main themes: 'sexualisation'; men's experiences or not of paying for sex, strip and lap dancing clubs and using pornography; and 'masculinity'. That the survey had evoked articulations of defensive entitlement highlighted the importance of ensuring interviewees were fully informed about the study, and as far as possible positioned as active agents within, and contributors to the research. My approach here was to stress to participants that their interview formed part of a work in progress and that their input was integral in helping to steer the final research design. I also explicitly

sought their advice on potential approaches and methods. This proved very successful in garnering fruitful discussions about the research themes and methods.

Positioning men as both participant and advisor also helped in navigating the anticipated challenges linked to asking men to self-reflect. For example, pilot interviews closed by discussing 'masculinity' and what it means to be a man: discussions which were in most cases initially strained and awkward. Participants found it difficult to speak fluidly here, which in itself offered routes to discuss the possible source of discomfort and difficulty. Similarly, investing participants as critical agents of, and contributors to, research design also helped to neutralise any discomfort or intensity during discussions about their experiences within the sex industry: here any embarrassment or discomfort was named and discussed as part of the process, which in turn lead to in depth discussions.

As with the pilot survey, these interviews were invaluable learning curves and preparation for the main fieldwork. In the feedback forms four of the five men explained that during the interviews they had discussed and reflected on things which they had never spoken to anyone else about before, adding that once interviews were over they continued to think about our discussions and some elaborated on particular points or topics. This suggested that perhaps the interview attempted to cover too much ground in a single session. Without material reference points to specific cultural products or outputs, discussions about 'sexualisation' sometimes felt abstract and stilted: in these moments outlining social policy and academic debates were useful levers to spark discussions and to locate the study. Several participants also described embarrassment and discomfort during discussions

about pornography and paying for sex, and suggested more structure during these discussions as a way to mediate this. Overall, the pilot interviews highlighted: a necessity to offer more space for reflection; the possibility of incorporating cultural texts within discussions; potential benefits of more structure across particular topics; and the potential for defensive and confrontational responses from men.

Following the pilot survey and interviews I began to have doubts about the Online Reflective Space (ORS) as a research tool. Caution here was based on whether the ORS as a stand-alone tool would evoke a sense of one dimensionality, with potentially frustrating effect for participants. I designed one module of the ORS and piloted it with friends, the feedback from which cemented my doubts that while it was useful and interesting to contextualise the research topic, this method may be too restrictive and isolating. I therefore decided to incorporate the ethos behind the ORS across the research design as a whole, redesigning the survey and interviews as interconnected reflective processes and a set of cultural texts were incorporated into the interview process.

These findings, experiences and learnings helped shape the methodological approach and research design around a reciprocal, dialogical and reflective process. The defensive survey responses also firmed up an ethics of transparency and inclusivity: working with men rather than on men and engaging men in debates rather than positioning them in relation to debates. This was both a strategic and ethical approach in order to diffuse, as far as possible, (some) men's defensive posturing by attempting to position them as agents and not subjects of research and hopefully neutralising the disorientated gendered power dynamics. Although as discussed later

on, this was theoretical conjecture. How this approach worked in practice is discussed later. Discussion now turns to how men were recruited to the study, and following this discussion of how research tools were revised and applied.

Recruitment

A research website was created to host the online survey and information about the study. The website served as a portal for prospective participants and featured a 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) page for each strand outlining: how data protection responsibilities would be adhered to and how participant anonymity and confidentiality would be achieved (see Appendix 2). The FAQ also included researcher contact details for any further questions or information. Hard copy recruitment material including A4 posters with rip off information slips and small leaflets referring potential participants to the research website were also designed (Appendix 1).

Once the survey was embedded on the research website the web link was then publicised across online space and social media (see table 3.1). The hard copy materials were also distributed across London, Reading and Manchester in public spaces including: men's toilets in gyms; bars and pubs; live music venues; train toilets and strip/lap dancing clubs. In addition I carried recruitment materials with me and as and when I found myself in 'men's spaces' or opportune moments, I distributed them on an ad hoc basis. I also attempted face-to-face recruitment by approaching men directly and sparking conversations about the research. Working close to a football stadium meant I was often in proximity to large groups of men, which offered opportunities to speak to strangers either as individuals or in groups

and discuss the themes of the research. These moments offered useful face to face insights into men's initial responses and reactions to the research and also prepared me for the research context by setting me at ease in talking about the topics and also in mining different ways to translate the research to 'everyman'. Public space recruitment differed from online recruitment, in that across the former, I remained gender anonymous across all materials until prospective interviewees made contact: the reasoning for this decision is discussed in more detail later on in this chapter. Table 3.1 summarises the online recruitment strategies.

Table 3.1: Online Recruitment

Website/Forum	Details	Action
Go Mammoth	An online forum and network for five a side amateur football leagues in London	A link to the research website posted on discussion thread and Facebook page
Five a side football league in London	As Above	A link to the research website posted on discussion thread and Facebook page
Men's Anti-Pornography Project	An online forum for men writing from an 'anti-pornography' perspective.	A link to the research website posted on forum
Nuts	Online Men's 'lifestyle' magazine	A link to the research website posted on discussion thread and Facebook page
Zoo	As Above	As Above
Men's Health	As Above	As Above
Gum Tree	National community Website	Advert posted on 'community chest' section

Given the diffuse nature of online recruitment it is difficult to be precise about the origins of survey responses, but tenuous correlations can be made between timeframes of recruitment postings and response rates. The research web link was posted on men's lifestyle magazine ('lads mags') forums and football communities first, which elicited very few responses. A few days later the link was posted on the

Men's Anti-Pornography Project online forum and response rates increased considerably. While no longer live the website existed as an online space for (mostly) men to discuss pornography, often from a critical perspective. This however does not mean that all of the men visiting and contributing to the website, and indeed who responded to the survey, held critical perspectives about pornography. Chapter Five presents the survey responses and shows they reflect diverse positions and perspectives on pornography and the sex industry more broadly, including critical positions. Negative experiences with, and emotional turmoil around pornography use emerged as a theme across survey findings and interviews, and in this represented a motivating factor for taking part.

While personal and political investments in the research topic may have motivated men to participate, the silences from across other recruitment sites may also say something significant. It was particularly difficult to recruit men via the more mainstream routes such as generic online sports and 'lads mags' forums and, as far as can be detected; public space recruitment had minimal effect. This raises a question of why a broader sample of men did not choose to take part. Speculative answers could include: too time consuming; too emotionally demanding; or a lack of interest from men. However, most if not all the men I encountered socially and formally across the life course of the research expressed intrigue, interest and in some cases eagerness to contribute on the issues, which as discussed in the second part of this chapter was sometimes a cause of personal discomfort for me. This disjuncture between men's apparent interest and enthusiasm for the research topic and reluctance to formally take part is notable, and rather than the speculative answers presented above may be linked to a broader culture of silence amongst men.

That an anonymous forum for men to talk about pornography yielded the most responses may reveal something about the spaces men feel comfortable, or are willing, to talk in about the issues the research raised.

Survey Respondents

The survey yielded 151 responses from across England, Scotland and Wales, and the age of respondents ranged from 18-66. The majority were aged between 18 and 35, with the largest group aged 18-26 (38.4%, n=58), as figure 3.1 shows.

Figure 3.1: Age Range of Survey Respondents
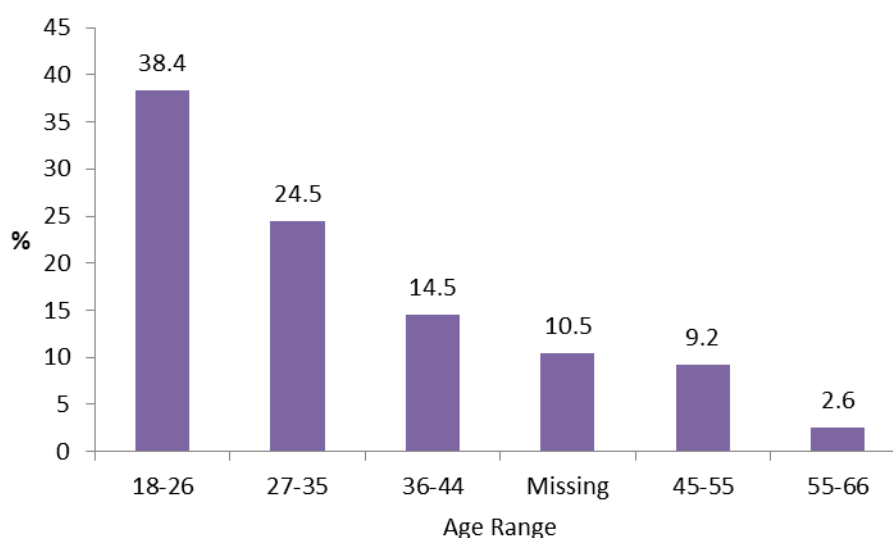
Over a fifth (20.5% n=31) of respondents chose not to disclose from which region in the UK they were from: of those who did nearly half (49.2%, n=59) were from London and the South East, with a minority evenly distributed across the North, East and Midlands regions, and one in six (15.8%, n=19) from Scotland. The survey comprised an open text box for respondents to self-define their sexuality and ethnicity. Of those who chose to write something here the majority (58.2%, n=78)

described their sexuality as 'heterosexual' or 'straight'; a few (5.2 %, n=7) as bisexual; one as 'gay' and one as 'queer'. The rest of the sample were less prescriptive and used the open text box to describe the quality of their sex lives, and libido.

> Proactive: you are sexual from the womb to the tomb (Q27, R33).[5]

> Used to be very charged but have lost a lot of vigour lately (Q27, R99).

> Nice (Q27, R74).

A few expressed confusion, indecision or ambiguities around defining their sexuality.

> Unsure (Q27, R100).

> Undefined (Q27, R93).

> Straight/possibly bi-sexual (Q27, R65).

Two men chose to leave confessional reflections about the way pornography had impacted their sex lives in negative ways.

> I've only had sex with one person and the relationship was destroyed by pornography (Q27, R74).

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[5] Coding scheme: Question 27 Response 33 = (Q27, R33)

> Part of my sexuality was stolen by pornography
> (Q27, R97).

While an eighth (12.5% n=19) of respondents chose not to leave any information about ethnicity, of those who did the majority (83.3% n=110) self-defined as 'White'; one man as 'Black' and three men as 'Asian'. The survey sample can therefore be described as predominantly heterosexual young white men, from London and the South East.

Interviewees

Eleven men were interviewed, ten twice, eight of whom had also completed the online survey. There were many more who contacted me to take part but either practical issues or my discomfort with email correspondence (see section two of this chapter) meant that they did not ultimately participate. While different in perspectives and experiences, similar to the survey sample, all interviewees held in common either personal or political motivations for coming forward.

Demographic details for each interview participant were gathered spontaneously during interviews and email correspondence (see Appendix 9). This information however, was not analysed in a systematic way. In part this is due to the sample being too small to make any meaningful links between men's narratives and demographic profiles. However, across data analysis and writing up tenuous links were suggested between for example generation and men's perspectives and experiences.

Another perhaps more pertinent reason for not analysing findings in terms of demographics relates to how men discursively positioned themselves in relation to 'other' men during interviews. Here talking about 'other' men emerged as a central way to 'do' masculinity and to negotiate subject positions. These strategies of self-positioning were resonant across the full sample, the analytical interest therefore rested on the continuities across men's material and discursive practices even where demographically different. A central focus of the research thus became more about how men self- position in relation to other men, rather than patterns between men's narratives and experiences and men's structural social dis/advantage.

The Research Process

The final research design was shaped around a reciprocal, dialogical and reflective process underpinned by an ethics of transparency. The key shift was that rather than three separate strands of research administered separately (online survey, ORS and interviews), the online survey and interviews were brought together as 'reflective spaces', forming an overall iterative approach. The ORS was omitted from the final research design. The decision to undertake two meetings with interviewees was made in order to allow more time to cover all the themes of the research and a time gap to allow for deeper considerations and reflections. Work with a set of images sourced from popular culture was integrated into the interview process and replaced the textual reference that the ORS would have offered (see Appendix 3 for interview guides and Appendix 8 for images used).

Consideration was given as to whether to omit the survey altogether and to focus on face to face research methods. Whilst it was retained the length, structure, style and

content was revised considerably. The final survey was much shorter, and devised to elicit findings about frequencies, patterns and contexts of men's use (or not) of the sex industry. While these questions offered multiple-choice responses where appropriate, a central shift in style meant the survey invited men to reflect in more depth on issues and questions by offering open text boxes following each question. A final section also invited respondents to elaborate and follow up on any of the topics or themes raised across the survey as a whole. In this the survey became a predominantly qualitative reflective tool (see Appendix 6).

The decision to retain the survey was also based on its potential role in recruitment and the hope that survey respondents may also be motivated to take part in interviews. This proved a success: eight of eleven interviewees were recruited via the survey, and many more survey respondents indicated a willingness to take part in interviews. Retaining the survey also meant the research remained open to participation from men who may not want to take part in face-to-face interviews. The survey was also important for analysis in that the quantitative data generated provided a frame on which to hang the findings from the more in depth work undertaken during the interview process. For example, descriptive statistical data about men's practices within the sex industry could be synthesised with narratives of experience from interviews, and vice versa. While the survey and interview strands ran concurrently, in practice, interviews commenced only once the survey had been live for a week and generated interest from prospective participants.

Interviews were organised around the same themes explored during the pilot interviews: 'sexualisation', men's experiences and perspectives on three aspects of

the sex industry, and masculinity. There were, however, key changes to the format and approach: discussions were spread across two separate meetings; more structure introduced during discussions about the sex industry; and the inclusion of an 'image work' section. In the latter 24 images from magazines, celebrity culture, and advertising were sourced and downloaded from the Internet, colour printed in A4 and laminated (see Appendix 8).

The sample of images was selected from across three main sites of cultural output: advertising and marketing, magazines, and celebrity culture. Reflecting the gendered patterns across these cultural sites the imagery featured predominantly women but also included men. In order to capture the ways sexualised visual economies traverse mainstream outputs and sites, imagery was also sourced from across gay and lesbian lifestyle magazines and what is termed across the print media industry as 'black' and 'urban' lifestyle magazines. This created diversity across gender, ethnicity and sexuality within the sample of images, and was valuable in ensuring expansive discussions around any differences and similarities in formal and conventional styles. This led to interesting discussions around race, class, gender and sexuality.

In presenting the images outside of their intended context I hoped to create 'a reflective space' where shorn of their contextual furnishings the codes, conventions and compositions of the imagery could be considered in a focussed way. A concern however existed in whether findings here would be relevant to how participants receive such imagery in their day-to-day navigations of public and online space. This method however, proved successful in providing a base for men's critical reflections to take shape and to be articulated. Often men expressed shock and

dismay at some of the sexist styles of imagery precisely because they were outside of their usual contexts, and in this, the method held interventionist value (see Chapter Seven for further discussion).

Interview one opened by asking participants what interested them about the research. This was effective in not only scoping participants awareness of the research topic but also in many cases offered levers to segue into the next section in which 'sexualisation' was discussed. This section was discursive in style: rather than working from definitive conceptualisations and within prescribed parameters, participants were asked what they understood by the term and whether and where they noticed sexualisation across their everyday lives. Contextualising the research within theoretical and policy frameworks of debates worked well in encouraging discussions and positioning participants as active and discerning agents in the process, and also contributed to negotiating and maintaining informed consent. These discussions were also good preparation for the subsequent image work section.

This section was purposively unstructured: before presenting the images I sought consent to do so by explaining that the images were all sourced from mainstream media and outlined that participants could offer whatever came to mind. Once the images were laid out across a table or desk, in order to gauge immediate reactions I stepped back sometimes having to linger in tense silence as participants calibrated their responses. A surprising aspect to this part of the interviews was how the imagery evoked emotional responses from participants: some men expressed shock and anger, and seemed stifled by the styles of imagery.

Overall, participants responded in different ways in the first moments of this exercise both in how they understood what was 'expected of them' and in their immediate reactions to the images. Some participants explicitly asked 'what do you want me to do here?', some seemed reluctant or cautious to talk due perhaps to embarrassment, shyness or fear of judgement, while others launched straight into rating images along how erotic or arousing they found them. In the main this moment was characterised by silence followed by affect, conjuring a sense of revelation and intervention. Simon[6] expressed angered shock through an exasperated rejection of some of the images.

> That's an advert!? That's terrible! Dreadful! It
> look likes, I don't know what it looks like (IM1,
> Simon, Intv1[7]).

Louis filled this moment with nervous laughter, and Jack offered sighs, and tense staring. George seemed apathetic and bored by the imagery: "They're all very boring" (George, Intv1). Jim offered me congratulations on having 'done a good job'. These initial reactions often moved into deeper reflections about sexualisation, the imagery helping to contextualise and extend on previous discussions.

The final part of interview one focused on participant's experiences (or not) of paying for sex, using pornography and attending strip/lap-dancing clubs. In order to address the embarrassment, tension, and discomfort evident across a few of the pilot

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[6] All interview participants have been anonymised using pseudonyms.

[7] Notation: IM1=Image1, Simon, Intv1 = Interview 1 (IM1, Simon, Intv1).

interviews this section was formatted around three separate pro-formas (Appendix 3) for each aspect of the sex industry. The pro-formas were a useful reference point to move into these discussions and evoked a sense of structure, which distracted from potential discomfort or embarrassment for both researcher and participant. In the main however, the pro-formas were replaced early on with unstructured discussions, but they remained symbolically supportive in moments of unease or in order to break eye contact. By this stage in the interview rapport had been established and in nearly all cases it was comfortable to advance into personal discussions and reflections.

The audio recording from interview one was then transcribed and emailed to the respective participant who was asked to read through it and in preparation for the second meeting, to identify anything they may wish to follow up on or elaborate. The first part of interview two was then spent reflecting on interview one. This afforded space and opportunity for me to follow up on particular points, to ask for clarification and to check early analysis with participants (see Kelly, 1987). I offered a summary of the main points and themes I had identified from meeting one, and participants offered elaborations and reflections. In all cases participants commented how interesting, and for some useful, it had been to take part and to be able to read our discussions. Some gave very positive feedback about participation, and how the research had infused their lives and personal relationships, most expressed how good it had been to talk about the issues and how the discussions had resonated across their day to day lives. Some however, I suspected also felt exposed by the transcript and as such discussions here became scoping exercises about the direction of analysis.

> Well I'm not sure where you're going with this (Chris, Intv2).

> Just one or two things where I'm worried about interpretation (Jim, Intv2).

Barry expressed concern that the transcript from interview one misrepresented his views, even though I had transcribed the recording verbatim.

> I think the only problem/issue is reading it again is that maybe it was misrepresentative. I probably come across quite anti-pornography on this. As an overview if someone read this it does sound a bit like a crusade (Barry, Intv2).

The time lapse for some, also brought reconsiderations: James for example opened interview two by explaining how reading the transcript had sparked for him a process of reflection and reconsideration:

> I guess I was thinking about it and reading through and I was saying previously that I said it didn't change my perception of what sex could be like or what I was interested in, but looking back from a young age I think it definitely affected what I was interested in. So that typical portrayal of a woman from the media and things, so I was remembering being with a girl at 16 at a party or something and I noticed she didn't have shaved legs and broke it off from there, so yeah even though that now I'd like to think I was

> enlightened I do think it maybe had an impact on
> my expectations (James, Intv2).

Moving on the second interviews focussed on explorations of 'masculinity' and what it means to be a man, these were linked to discussions made across the interview process as a whole. Initially, this part evoked friction and stifled interview momentum, which in part may have been due to participants lacking language for, and experience in, gendered self-reflection. It may have also been attributed to the purposively instrumental and abstract approach to these explorations. Rather than just applying 'masculinity' as an analytical lens, masculinity became an explicit subject of consideration which required extra work on my part as the researcher. Here, similar to the way bringing in academic and social policy debates and imagery helped contextualise sexualisation, offering personal reflections about 'femininity' eased the strained atmosphere and led to more fluid discussions.

Following interview two, participants were thanked and reminded that closer to completion of the research they could email me to receive an executive summary of findings. The pilot phase highlighted how not having a feedback loop following discussions such as another meeting, for some, was frustrating. As there would not be a third meeting, the decision was made not to send participants a copy of transcripts from the second interviews - unless specifically requested. Only one man requested their transcript from interview two be sent to him, and none of the interviewees requested a copy of the findings.

Analysis

Analysis was an on-going iterative process as well as a practical task undertaken in stages. Transcribing audio recordings provided a context for complete immersion in data. Alongside this, field notes were also an invaluable way to record early reflections and ruminations. Systematic thematic analysis was undertaken to organise and code interview data, which entailed working through three main stages of analysis or what Ritchie and Lewis (2003:212) term the 'analytical hierarchy'.

At stage one, data management, interview transcripts were anonymised and their formatting standardised; the main stages of interview and discussion topics were also organised into a grid using Microsoft Excel in preparation to extract relevant sections of individual interviews for close analysis of particular topics. Stages two and three were interpretative stages; here transcripts were read and re-read and coded producing 'descriptive' accounts and 'explanatory' accounts of data. This approach provided structure but also allowed constant reflection and creativity between stages. Alongside this everyday interactions, specifically those with men, became spaces to ruminate and make sense of data and my own experiences of the research. Talking socially about initial analytical themes and ideas with colleagues, formal and informal networks were also invaluable parts of analysis and interpretation.

Quantitative data generated from the online survey was analysed using a combination of the survey hosting software Survey Monkey, and once exported Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Through this, descriptive statistics were produced about frequencies and contexts of men's experiences of and practices within the sex industry. This statistical information provided a frame on which to

hang and contextualise the qualitative data: the written reflections from the survey. A striking feature of the survey results was the level and depth of reflective responses left across the survey. These responses were also organised, coded and analysed using a similar technique as described for interview transcripts. Alongside this, both sets of findings - from the survey and interviews - were considered relationally: patterns and narratives which were identified in the survey data for example, were echoed and often extended across interview data.

Findings were also interpreted through the theoretical frameworks which underpinned this study. Connell's (1987; 2005; 2009) theory of hegemonic masculinities (see previous chapter), for example, was crucial to understand the ways participants spoke about being men, relations between men and personal landscapes of their lives. However, as outlined earlier in this chapter, concerns about theoretical depth obscuring men from analysis created challenges in writing up findings.

In light of this, a decision was made to avoid, where possible, dense theoretical language to describe what men say and do. Therefore similar to Hearn et al, (2012) where appropriate this study uses 'men's practices' or ways of being men, rather than 'masculinity' to describe what men do and say.

> Generally we prefer to talk more precisely of men's individual and collective practices – or men's identities or discourses on or of men rather than the gloss of masculinities. However the latter term… remains the shortest way to refer to how men act, think, believe and appear or are made apparent (2012, p. 96).

In a similar vein, hegemonic masculinity as an analytical framework presented tensions beyond issues of language. While invaluable in making sense of the flows, forms and manifestations of power between men and men and women, as Wetherell and Edley (1999) argue, the formulation lacks the analytical purchase to explore the 'nitty gritty' of how men negotiate masculine identities. The authors argue that hegemonic masculinities are best understood in terms of how men self-position within hierarchies of masculinities. 'Masculinity' represents not a certain type of man but rather a way that men position themselves through discursive practices (Ibid, p. 841). Reflecting this, discussions across the findings chapters are made in terms of men's investments in hegemonic projects.

As analysis of interviews and surveys advanced, and indeed collided with my own experiences of men across the research field, thematic analysis alone began to feel too flat to make sense of participants' words and posturing. Thematic analysis of findings thus extended into a critical discourse analysis of what men said, how they said it and its discursive function.

Discourse in a rudimentary sense is written or spoken communication, however in more analytical terms discourse refers to how such communication is entwined in relations of power and broader social worlds (Gill, 2000). Discourse analysis encompasses a broad group of research methods, spanning diverse fields. Gill (ibid) outlines a shared characteristic across approaches to discourse analysis as being, a rejection of language as neutral. Relevant to this thesis and analytical process, is the 'action orientation', or 'function orientation', of discourse: that is an understanding that discourse is social practice: 'people use discourse to do things' (Gill, 2000, p.

175). In this, I was interested in the form and flow of what men said, and the ways men used discourse and to what ends.

Ethics: Approach and Practice

Ethics are not separate features or functions of research processes , but are entwined with epistemological and methodological approaches and research practice (Cowburn, 2014). So far this chapter has implicitly outlined some of the ethical underpinnings of this study: working *with* men not *on* men, and to make central men's experiences in ways which did not conflate individual men with structural power and histories. The final research design was underscored by what was termed earlier as an 'ethics of transparency and inclusivity'. This meant investing participants in the research topics by making clear the theoretical frameworks of debate and where the study was located within them. Linked to this, research design was also steered by a principle to diffuse, as far as possible, hierarchical power relations across the interview process, and was premised around a dialogical, collaborative and reflective process.

That said, methodological piety must be diluted with research realism, which acknowledges that ultimate authority in interpretations rests with the researcher. The gendered dynamics of this research project also complicated the composition and flow of relations of power across the research process: a woman researching men's lives evoked a number of tensions between ethical approach and practice. Ethical approval was gained from the University, and the following discussion explores some of these tensions, and outlines some of the more tangible elements and sites across the research process where ethics were of paramount consideration.

As argued above, ethics form part of an overall research approach, intrinsically stitched across epistemological and methodological approaches. Ethics, however, are also 'done', in and across a research field and process. The following were paramount considerations in ensuring ethical research practice across this study: ensuring researcher safety; gaining and maintaining informed consent; data management and protection, and researching sensitive issues.

Researcher Safety

Women researching men, specifically men's use of the sex industry is a potentially dangerous and emotionally labour intensive (Hochschild, 1983) endeavour. Grenz (2005) for example, in her study of men who pay for sex recounted an interviewee masturbating during a face to face interview, and Arendell (1997) an interviewee's violent behaviour while relaying his experience of divorce. Safety planning was an integral part of this research project, from recruitment and liaising with prospective participants, to conducting interviews and post interview communications. As a solo researcher recruiting from the general public, I was without the actual and perceived safety frameworks attached to larger research teams who may recruit from within a specific controlled setting.

Safety planning was a practical task, but more it was a live emotional labour and flexing series of responses and negotiations of my own imaginings before, and experiences of men during the research. These are explored in more detail in section two of this chapter. Practical decisions to ensure my own safety in the field were made, including: that interviews were to be held within the university; personal

contact details were not given to participants; and that a colleague was always informed before and after an interview. These considerations extended into online spaces, which can also be potential sites of gendered harassment and bullying (Reid, 1999; Herring et al, 2002; Vera-Gray, 2015). I anticipated that the topic may evoke harassment if recruitment materials included details that a woman was undertaking the research. As such, I made the decision to remain gender anonymous across the recruitment material and online survey, only revealing my gender once initial contact had been made following an inquiry for more information about the interview process or research more generally.

Informed Consent

Gaining participant consent extends beyond agreement to take part, it was also important that participants understood why and how the research was being undertaken. Similarly, once gained consent should also be renegotiated across the life course of a research project. The online survey was embedded within a research website which hosted comprehensive information about the research, including mine (a generic research email address) and the lead supervisor's contact details for further information. In order to ensure that the survey was accessed within the broader context of information made available on the website it was disseminated across social media via this web link only.

A consent form also featured on the front page of the survey and before interviewees agreed to take part they were sent the FAQs, and consent form, and it was made clear that participants could ask questions or withdraw from participation at any stage.

Interview one opened by discussing the FAQ and consent form, reiterating the main features and offering space for any questions. At different stages across the interview process, I also checked in that participants were fine to carry on and as we segued into the next section, or into a new topic I made clear what was coming. At the second interviews I renegotiated consent by checking with participants that they were fine to continue and whether they had any issues or questions about the process. Interview two began with a summary of the main points I had drawn from interview one and by discussion of some early analytical reflections which were opened up to discussion and interpretation. The collaborative and dialogical approach outlined in the previous section contributed to gaining and maintaining informed consent.

Data Management and Data Protection

Interviews were transcribed and any identifying details such as name, occupation, names of partners, friends or family members referred to across interviews were excluded or coded out of transcripts and analysis. Number codes were allocated to individual participants, and later whilst writing up, pseudonyms. Audio files were saved to a password-protected USB stick and deleted from the recorder. During analysis hard copy transcripts were shared only with academic supervisors.

Researching Sensitive Issues

As discussed earlier in this chapter 'sexualisation' is a conceptually broad and expansive topic to research. Discussions and explorations across data collection were therefore also broad and expansive, and at points contrasting. For example,

interviews ranged from generic discussions about mainstream media outputs and celebrity culture, to very intimate reflections across individual sexual biographies and experiences of the sex industry. The reflective methodology created unpredictable scope for discussions and depending on the participant, the direction and depth of discussions was difficult to plan for. The pilot phase highlighted a number of issues which helped steer considerations and planning to ensure researcher and participant comfort, and to minimise potential distress or conflict during interviews.

The topics sparked a range of responses from men, including: biographical reflections; defensive posturing; cathartic confessions; and articulations of male privilege and gendered bullying. Discussing pornography with men also held a possibility that some may disclose experiences of child sexual abuse (Langevin and Curnoe, 2004); while other topics may have evoked disclosures of perpetrations of violence. The research topics could be considered sensitive issues, and 'emotionally labour' intensive for both researched and researcher (Hochschild, 1983; Melrose, 2002). These concerns were best worked out within the research field, as, when, and if moments of discomfort, conflict or distress presented. However, practical steps for contingency planning were made, along with a broader methodological approach which helped circumvent and minimise such moments. Many of these have been discussed in this section, including: gaining and maintaining informed consent; working around an ethics of transparency; bringing structure to discussions about the sex industry, while remaining flexible and exploratory. In addition a list of support services for men featured on the research website, at the end of the online survey and also on the back of participants' copy of the interview consent form. In terms of my

own wellbeing, further to the safety measures discussed above, informal arrangements were made with my supervisory team and fellow PhD students to debrief about the research as and when I needed to.

Part Two: Gendered Research

This section considers the gendered dynamics of the research through discussions about my interactions with men both within and outside of the research field. These 'empirical scenes' (Egeberg-Homgren, 2011) are presented as part of an epistemological commitment to reflexivity: to replace the notion of 'value free objectivity' with 'conscious subjectivity' (Arendell, 1997). In this the researcher as a neutral miner discovering knowledge shorn of social, cultural and historical influence is rejected for acknowledgements of researcher positionality, and what Arendell (ibid) terms 'baggage'.

In this section I extend on some of the discussions already undertaken so far in this chapter, but filter them through a personal lens to get at the 'unspoken inner or self-dialogues' of this research project. These self-dialogues narrated political, emotional, ethical and theoretical tensions and dilemmas: all of which were influenced by my position as a woman researching men. Whereas the previous section dealt with some of the theoretical, ethical and political challenges, this section focuses on the emotional labour **(**Hochschild, 1983**)** involved in women researching men.

'Safety Work' and 'Space Invaders'

> Male entitlement may well follow men into a
> research project in how they react to the
> researcher and the stories they tell (Kleinman,
> 1997, p. 15).

The research process was characterised by a simmering caution and apprehension about how gendered power dynamics may unfold across virtual and actual research spaces and interactions. At the same time it was essential to keep an open heart and mind. This meant balancing my everyday knowledge as a woman (Stanley & Wise, 1983) of (some) men's oppressive practices and my academic expertise in the fields of violence against women, with not assuming the worst of men or reinforcing notions of dangerous masculinity. Organically, the research process became characterised by a series of necessary risk assessment exercises some of which were practical tasks and material practices, while others resided within me as embodied responses and negotiations (Vera-Gray, 2015) or what Kelly (2012) terms 'safety work'.

The pilot phase formed an integral part of this safety work by scoping and illuminating issues of concern, discomfort and potential unsafety. In particular the pilot survey subtly shifted my overall approach to recruitment, which was initially based on an ambition to recruit as diversely and widely as possible via an extensive and broad appeal across online and public space. While an ambition to recruit broadly and diversely remained, recruitment became a more careful and slower negotiation. Some of the responses from the pilot survey highlighted the potential for some men to feel affronted by the research topic evoking caution about online

anonymous forums as both a research method and recruitment method. As interviewee Louis warned, questioning men about being men may be construed as confrontational, which may evoke hostile resistance from them:

> People will think that you are just trying to weaken or disempower what it is to be a man by asking that very question in the first place, if you try and take that apart you might suffer a little bit (Louis, Intv2).

This caution influenced decisions about how I advertised the research, how much information about myself I divulged across marketing material and within the research field itself. Marketing materials including the website, fliers, and posters and also the online survey contained gender-anonymous information and a generic email account was set up in order to liaise with prospective participants. This was a strategic decision made in order to circumvent those men who may have been drawn to the research in order to flex gendered power. Following initial email contact from men interested in interviews, I signed off correspondence revealing my gender, and once some level of trust had been established, communications became more relaxed.

In the main exchanges with prospective participants were unremarkable, however, a few responses reflect how for some men, that I was a woman represented an opportunity to do oppressive practices (Cowburn and Pringle, 2000) in subtle and overt ways. One man who contacted me with initial interest in the research for example, replied to my follow up email in which it was revealed that I was a woman,

with the following advice: *Slag - give it up men will never change.* Another prospective participant during email correspondence persisted in requesting that we meet at his 'basement flat for a chat', even though I had stipulated very clearly that interviews were to be held at the university.

Similarly, I cancelled an interview with one man due to my discomfort during email correspondence. After confirming a time to meet, at the last minute he contacted me to say that he could not make it to the university, and asked if I would travel to his house to interview him there. I declined and said that we could arrange another time to meet at the university, but he persisted beyond comfort and gender etiquette to request that I travel to his house. The 'GumTree' posting also yielded two emails from men who had interpreted the call for research participants as some kind of code for 'sexual services'. Here, both men responded to the advert in ambiguous, but sexually suggestive ways. While only one of these exchanges was overtly abusive, and the other may be more open to interpretation, this ambiguity demanded emotional and practical negotiations in order to make decisions.

That said, research interviews and more broadly social interactions with men during the life course of this study revealed the more subtle ways some men do oppressive practices and more specifically 'invade space'. Social scenarios for example, became careful negotiations of 'disclosure' about the research, where if asked by men what I was studying, whether strangers, colleagues or friends, the space became a site of tension and subtle and overt practices of trespass and gendered bullying. Two men used the space to tell me, in detail, about their preference for particular styles of pornography. On one occasion a member of my extended social network used the

space to tell me through whispers about 'his friend's' use of 'you know, rough porn', and to describe in graphic detail depictions of women being bound and gagged and 'gang banged'. On another occasion, a different male colleague saw the conversation as an opportunity to show me what I experienced as very violent pornography on his phone.

Some interpreted my focus on men as a personal assault and became defensive, often resulting in discussions led by them which made arguments to frame the sex industry as a human rights issue, linked to women's choice and men's biological need for sex. These moments were characterised by what I colloquially referred to as entailing a 'yeah but' factor, where before I had said anything more than a short outline of the research, men made a set of assumptions about the study, spoke condescendingly to me, rebuked the idea that men would be honest and belittled and minimised the 'rigour' of the work. Less hostile responses and exchanges positioned me as a confessional and emotional drop box: here men spoke about their discomfort and displacement within cultures of masculinity and dislike of the sex industry and one man confessed infidelity which he linked to his 'obsession' with pornography.

While significant in highlighting the emotional and safety work entailed for women researching men's lives, and practices, these experiences were in the minority, and on many occasions I found myself in constructive and enjoyable exchanges with men about the research. These informal interactions were excellent preparation for interviews which brought with them a similar, but distinct, set of challenges and interactions linked predominantly to shifting flows and configurations of gendered

power. Discussion now turns to these gendered power dynamics within the research field.

The reflective approach asked men to consider their unmarked status and indirectly to acknowledge social advantage. This was contested by some men, and welcomed and gently negotiated by others, but more often both happened simultaneously. My experience with the eleven men who took part in the interview process was predominantly positive in that overall interactions were respectful exchanges, peppered by a few moments of gendered power play and tension. However, one man in particular used the space to subtly and overtly 'do' oppressive practices and masculinity.

This participant often spoke in what I interpreted and experienced as statements of purpose, which served as discursive darts of simmering ridicule. This citation for example is taken from a larger dialogue during discussions about 'masculinity': 'Get that in there' is used to punctuate his incongruous sexualised language to belittle the research and me.

> I think it's to do with the stresses of trying to get a girl into bed, especially if you read *Nuts* magazine and you think all you have to do is ask her how she likes to be fingered and tell her how big your car is. ***So get that in ther*e** [Emphasis added].

This second citation is taken from our discussions about his experiences of strip clubs; here he answers my question of whether he had ever been to a strip club through pointed sarcasm:

> Twice on my own, once with a load of academics
> from the University of X in a male bonding
> session that destroyed women's careers (laughs).

Interviewing this man was intense and at points frankly unpleasant: following the first interview I felt drained, bullied and depressed. During interview one he would speak for long periods without interruption, and repeatedly drifted into incongruous and explicit detail often using sexualised language. Even if I interjected in order to change the dynamic he ignored me and continued to speak. I also sensed that he may have had an underlying motivation for taking part linked to anti-feminist leanings.

Given that the research topic was expansive, spanning mainstream popular cultures to sexuality, boundaries of discussions were often unclear, something which at points he exploited. Similarly, following interview one he sent me web links to pornography to apparently support a point made during the interview. This man also presented at different stages as a charming and charismatic and he contributed valuable insights across many of the research topics. This participant evoked a number of 'inner self dialogues' both within the two interviews undertaken with him, and outside of them. Here, reflexivity moved into territories of self-doubt and self-interrogation: his practices were ambiguous, subtle and phantom like, which created a lack of confidence in my own judgements. It was only during transcription, and a

decent time lapse that I could make sense of his actions, and confidently rest on my judgements that he had indeed used the research context to subtly bully me, and in effect 'do' harmful masculinity. I considered removing his input from analysis, however, following conversations with my academic supervisory team decided to include his contribution to the research whilst also writing this reflection.

This man was an exception; interviews with the other ten men were far less difficult and characterised by less hostile interactions. Whilst there were still points of tension, where gendered posturing seemed accentuated, there were also moments where these gendered tensions seemed to evaporate. Three main styles of research interactions unravelled with these ten men, best described as: collaborative; confrontational and confessional. Sometimes, they were separate, and distinct to particular men and research relationships, while with others they overlapped.

Confrontational interactions occurred where men struggled to relinquish their usual positions of power, and where across particular topics they spoke condescendingly to me. These confrontations usually occurred during the image work or introductory discussions around 'sexualisation'. While interviews were premised around a discursive approach which encouraged critical engagements, exchanges here were sometimes characterised by competitive contestations, underscored by a 'yeah but' factor. One participant was particularly defensive and confrontational during the image work discussions, so much so, that I internally questioned his motivations for taking part. As the interview progressed the friction continued, such that the experience became unpleasant and to my mind unconducive to productive research work. During a comfort break I asked whether he could sense the friction and

expressed that my feeling was that perhaps it was best that we did not continue. Once we had cleared the air we continued.

Collaborative interactions were moments where men were not 'jockeying for positions' (Edley and Wetherell, 1997) of superiority, power or as 'knowing best'. Here men's interest, intrigue, and investments in the research topics seemed to bypass and deflate masculine posturing. Rather than articulating a taken for granted authority on issues, men would invite me into discussions by asking what I thought about their musings and the topic. Often here, men's reflections would chime with theoretical and policy literature from the field, in which instances I would share this with them which would lead to more in depth discussions and respectful exchanges.

Confessional interactions potentially positioned me as a therapist or confessional for men to express guilt, shame, conflict and confusion about their own and other men's practices. This was most acute during discussions about the sex industry, which by design invited 'confessions'. However, for some men the research topic and interview process as a whole represented a cathartic space of unravelling, which demanded emotional work on my part to create and navigate boundaries.

Conclusions

This chapter has described the methods used to explore men's experiences of, and perspectives on, sexualisation. It has also presented the ethical and methodological underpinnings of this study. As outlined this research was beset by two central challenges: researching men and researching sexualisation, challenges which were met in part through piloting - an absolutely pivotal part of the research project.

Piloting helped bring to the fore some of the ethical issues at stake across this research terrain, which in turn shaped the study's methodological approach. Specifically here, some of the ways pilot participants responded to the research topics and context highlighted what I saw as an imperative for an ethics of transparency and inclusivity, with a collaborative dialogical approach to interviews. Underscored by tenets of feminist methodologies and epistemologies which seek to collapse hierarchical power relations across the research setting and make central reflexivity, the project occupied interesting grounds for such an approach.

That said, and as discussed, a woman researching men's lives from a critical feminist position raised a number of conundrums for feminist research practice, a central one being how to problematise men's collective history in ways which did not collapse and conflate individual men and their lives, but also in ways which do not ignore, discount or deny individual men's social advantages, and possible negative manifestations and articulations of it such as male entitlement. My approach was committed to placing men's experiences at the core, to making reflexivity central and also to taking account and being mindful of the power differentials across the research. That this is relatively unchartered territory within empirical academic work, meant a dearth of methodological tools to do what I wanted to do, which was to work with men rather than on men. Perhaps more than a lack of tools was a lack of insight into how to do this well.

In my experience, researching men from a critical feminist position resulted in potentially heavier emotional labour than research which is not cross gendered. Emotional and safety work becomes necessary across every phase to negotiate the

flows forms and manifestations of men's oppressive practices. I cannot be impartial about my lived experience. I can however, interrogate my own potential oppressions and biases. As Lorde (2009) says, the key to revolutionary change is to seek the oppressor within. I did and found her. I imagined men as dangerous and abusive; I also experienced men as dangerous and abusive. Inside and outside of the field, I experienced sexualised bullying, subtle tones of belittling. I also however, discovered spaces where gender for a split second evaporated: spaces in which men could relax and I could relax and we collaboratively tried to make sense of sexualisation and gender.

Chapter Four: Men Speak About Being Men

This chapter is built on analysis of data from the second interviews during which discussions of 'masculinity' took place. While this does not follow the chronology of the research process, data analysis highlighted how ideas about what it means to be a man and relations between men form central landscapes in men's lives and in this can help shape men's practices within, and perspectives on sexualisation. Findings presented here support previous theoretical and empirical work in that expressions of (hetero)sexuality presented as a central way to do 'masculinity' (Frosh, Phoenix, and Pattman, 2001; Kimmel, 2004; Pascoe, 2007;): locating 'sexualisation' as a salient site for exploring contemporary formations of 'masculinities' and vice versa. This chapter therefore provides a foundational and conceptual backdrop to subsequent chapters in which men's practices within, experiences of, and perspectives on 'sexualisation' are analysed.

The chapter is organised around two ways participants spoke about being men in this part of the interview process. The first, 'Measures of a Man' outlines how participants described what they saw as a set of expectations in relation to being men. Legacies of sex role theory were expressed here through descriptive and prescriptive sets of character and behavioural traits. This section fits with Connell's (2005) model of hegemonic masculinity, in that all participants described idealised exemplars of what it means to be a man, set within frameworks of expected attainments. Participants also described particular contexts in which a perceived need to 'measure up' seemed most potent, and where invitations to hegemonic projects are most abundant: here participants described a set of discursive strategies (Wetherell and

Edley, 1999) and resources on which they draw in order to position themselves within, or outside of, these invitations.

These strategies of self-positioning and negotiations are explored in the second section, 'Being THE Man'. Here all male group settings were identified as the most salient for 'measuring up', where specific topics and styles of talk were mobilised as a means for both demarcating boundaries of, and striving to 'measure up' to successful 'masculinity'. The concept of 'MenSpeak' is introduced in this section to capture these various discursive strategies characteristic of the relations between the men in this study.

Before presenting this analysis however, the challenges linked to speaking with men about being men are briefly considered. As outlined in the previous chapter, a methodological challenge of this study was devising ways to encourage men to reflect and speak about themselves as gendered beings. This meant asking participants to part with legacies of a discursive heritage, which has overemphasised men as public rational beings, and to share and reflect on personal and 'private' matters. Initially this part of the interview process was characterised by awkward silences, and for some participants talking about 'being men' evoked dismay, confusion and discomfort. This required work by me to remove a metaphorical dam between internal and external expression, and an apparent lack of vocabulary for, and experience in gendered self-reflection. Michael, for example, describes how subjective reflections do not or at least *should* not form part what it means to be a man:

> I think the kind of person who thinks about what it is to be a man is probably not considered much of a man. You're supposed to know about it, bloody know what it is in your gut or balls or whatever (Michael, Intv2).

This assumed knowledge and embodied sense of self forms a constituent part of an imagined successful masculinity (Brod, 2002). That this 'knowing' should form in 'the balls' or 'gut' signals the endurance of biological understandings of gender as corporally constituted: specifically for men, their sense of self equated with power and located in their 'sex'. That men who may seek to ask questions about what it means to be a man have already failed highlights what Kimmel (2004) describe as a 'relentless test', linked to forming and achieving masculine identity. All participants, in varying ways and to differing degrees, could be considered to have failed the first hurdle of embodied gendered knowing simply by taking part in the research.

> Presumably all the other participants you have spoken with have all been, in some shape or form, at the very least problematic about their own masculinity. Otherwise your discussions would never have taken place (George, Intv2).

All participants held contradictory and for many fraught, subject positions in relation to dominant ideas of what it means to be a man. For some this had been a source of personal turmoil across their life course: Michael, for example, explains how this fermented in adolescence as a sense of gendered guilt and shame.

> I used to really, like, condemn my own gender to
> the point where I think I used to want to be
> asexual. The whole sexual politics and relations
> used to drive me around the bend, because my
> own position in relation to it was conflicted
> (Michael, Intv2).

George outlines how his own struggles with 'masculinity' underscored his motivations to take part in the research.

> I am interested in what I would term
> masculinities and its discontents and the fact that
> that chimes with feelings I have, and have had
> about my own masculinity (George, Intv2).

While Michael's 'discontents' with masculinity reside in the social in terms of finding it difficult to negotiate expectations of masculinity, i.e. not fitting in, for George his trouble was located in the body, the proposed site of masculine 'knowing'. George describes a rejection and abjection of his penis, which rather than a 'knowing in the balls' evokes an unknowing, a disembodied gendered self.

> What I am trying to get across is perceiving
> femininity as something to which I aspired,
> connected to a dislike of my genitals and
> masculinity (George, Intv2).

Similarly, yet less overtly Louis, Barry and Jim all held troubled subject positions, which for Barry and Louis culminated as feeling different to their peers and for Jim a

tension between a 'structural fact' of men's public power and a sense of personal powerlessness. The unifying theme across these troubled subject positions appeared to be restricted and constricted space to talk and reflect about what it means to be a man.

> I think we just don't talk about what it is to be a man. I've never had that conversation (James, Intv2).

> You don't usually get to talk about this stuff (Andrew, Intv2).

Dominant ideas about what it means to be a man can constrain space for self-reflection; as Michael outlined earlier 'men should just know'. Theoretically this restricted space can also be linked to what has been termed men's 'unmarked status' across the social world: here it is argued that (some) men occupy taken for granted subject positions, which do not require any 'special comment' (Rosenblum and Travis, 1996, cited in Pease 2010). This 'unmarked status' affords what is described as 'a privilege of silence' (Wildman and Davis, 2000, cited in Pease 2010, p. 10) where men's conferred social advantage remains 'unacknowledged' and thus becomes naturalised to form a sense of entitlement (McIntosh, 1988).

While 'privilege of silence' may be an apt description of how legacies of androcentric knowledge provide men as a social group refuge from scrutiny as 'men as a social problem' (Pringle et al, 2004), the concept can overshadow individual lived experiences. The accounts offered in the second interviews and analysed here, present a more complex scenario than 'privilege of silence' or expressions of

entitlement, revealing how legacies of silence can constrain spaces for men to reflect and speak about being men, with personally troubling effects. The following section discusses further how dominant ideas about what it means to be a man infuse men's lives and relationships with one another.

Measures of a Man

Theoretical scholarship on gender as practice has contributed to shifting understandings of 'masculinity' away from fixed character traits, to outlining multiple ways of being men and doing 'masculinity' (see Chapter Two). However, as Pringle (1987) argues, while plurality matters it is also important not to lose sight of the 'deeply entrenched theme of masculinity' (Morgan, 1992 cited in Pringle, 1987, p. 6). Additionally, while masculinities can be understood as 'configurations of practice' (Connell, 2005, 2009) these practices are infused by 'ideas' of what it means to be a man: ideas, which form across cultural, social, personal and political sites. All participants offered an 'idea' of masculinity which while narrated through personally and socially located detail, was underpinned by core 'themes' of dominance, control and leadership.

> I think it's being a hunter-gatherer for me, provider for like a tribe if you want to be really basic. So being in a leader head role, an example to everyone else, the person everyone relies on. For me I guess that's why you can't show your weakness because you're supposed to be an example to everyone else (Andrew, Intv2).

Andrew's words here reflect enduring sex role theories, which while within some academic disciplines may hold less purchase still permeate across social spheres, common sense discourse and the personal lives of some men. Andrew's formulation of dominance and leadership are seeded in, in his own words, 'really basic' pre-history. Louis, on the other hand, offers something of an advanced capitalist version of a hunter-gatherer model of masculinity, which he links to 'Westernised ideologies of manhood'.

> There are differences between being THE man
> and A man. Money. Power. Respect. That's the
> premise of being THE man (Louis, Intv2).

Louis makes a hierarchical distinction between THE man and *a* man, where being 'THE Man', for Louis, means *exuding* power and control.

> It is important to have an aura of alpha male
> about you - an air of don't fuck around (Louis,
> Intv2).

For Paul the symbolic is also *enacted* through exertions of aggression, here masculinity is physically embodied and expressed.

> Aggressive, belligerent and often physical; lots of
> punching, grabbing, holding of people by the
> neck and under your arm. So there's physicality
> to it, but it's an attitude, like a really brittle ego
> that can't accommodate any other points of views
> (Paul, Intv2).

Messner (2001) notes that men are taught to be 'success objects': the notion of 'success' was central to how participants spoke about what it means to be a man.

> Men get measured by so many different measures, financially secure, great sportsman - we have to be brilliant academics, good looking, last for seven hours in bed. We have so many pressures put on us to make it as a really successful man or men (Chris, Intv2).

Participants offered 'measures of a man' as a template where successful manhood was bound to a particular set of traits, practices or ways of being. In this template, successful masculinity was narrated in relation to omniscient expectations, pressures and implied obligations, which represented an evaluative and regulatory base for striving towards successful manhood.

> People say 'that's what boys are like' and if you're not then there's always a need to defend why you're not like that. Why aren't you a proper boy? (Michael, Intv2).

Linked and perhaps central to success were themes of dominance and control, and constructed as their antitheses are weakness and vulnerability, which for the men in this study were synonymous with emotionality. Here, we see how legacies of discourse which connect men to notions of 'rationality' has endured and infused how (some) men may make sense of, and live, their lives. Participants described what

they saw as an externally imposed process of personal emotional concealment, where dominant ideas about what it means to be man can regulate the self.

> I guess you're not ever supposed to be emotional (Barry, Intv2).

> He (father) never said 'be a man, stop crying' but there was an implication that you hold tough, you just get on with it (Chris, Intv2).

> I guess men are supposed to bottle things up, 'oh he's a man he bottles things up' (Andrew, Intv2).

> I think you're forced to hide away your emotions more as a man (James, Intv2).

These tones of duress reflect a perceived external pressure to act and be a certain way, 'to hold tough', to maintain emotional control. Jim depicts a fragile process of self-presentation similar to walking a tight rope in relation to maintaining an external impression of control.

> You have to either not be weak or so weak it's a statement. You don't tend to, you're not supposed to, ask for help if you're in trouble (Jim, Intv2).

Paul also suggests something similar in relation to showing emotion, which he describes as being caught between a discursive binary, which seeks emotional expressions but also regulates and berates men when they do express emotion.

> That was a funny thing in the summing up of the
> Olympics the men got a bit of a hard time when
> they were blubbing, apparently more than the
> women. You know you can't ask for emotional
> integrity and then criticise people when they
> show it, so you're caught between the binary
> (Paul, Intv2).

Paul highlights how some arenas may be considered more acceptable for emotional expression than others: in this example a major sporting event represents a tenuously 'safe' domain.

To make it as a successful man then means demarcating what you are not, as much as what you are (Connell, 2005; 2009; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Pascoe, 2007). In these accounts achieving an aura of dominance and control relies on denying or suppressing an emotional self, which in a limited vocabulary of masculine success is seen as weakness. Jim reflects on the process of emotional expression for men as he sees it, to outline how showing emotions is not strictly out of bounds for men, but that such expressions must be 'transposed' into acceptable formations such as anger. Similarly Jim states how for men relationships can be transposed to sex.

> So men can transpose anything into anger and be
> accepted, in the same way they can transpose
> anything about relationships into sex (Jim, Intv2).

(Hetero)sex was also a core aspect in how these men perceived the measures of successful manhood: here a hetero-sexualised dichotomy of men as 'seekers' and women as 'keepers' of sex was played out. 'Sexual success' was premised on and measured by men's ability (or not) to attract women and to 'get' sex.

> We should be able to chat up women and get laid
>
> whenever we like (Michael, Intv2).

Louis reveals that the actual 'getting' of sex is less important than creating the impression that you could: 'being good with the ladies' is here a signifier of masculinity, or 'being THE man' and demarcating the hegemonic through heteronormative performance.

> To be THE man you are expected to, how do I
> phrase that? Be good with ladies and that can be
> superficial, just comfortable talking to them so
> that if anyone asks a question, you can say I'm
> still THE man (Louis, Intv2).

What Wendy Hollway (1984) terms the 'male sexual drive discourse' also infused understandings of masculinity. Participants described how men are expected to be ready for, and want sex all of the time. Jim, for example, articulates and reproduces what Sedgwick (1985, p. 2) describes as 'the gender differences in the structure and constitution of sexuality'.

The thing is as a man you're expected to have a
high sex drive and to be ready, and women are
supposed to suppress it (Jim, Intv2).

Jim explicates a notion implicit across all of the 'measures' of a man described thus far: that masculinity is imagined, done, and constructed in opposition and relation to ideas about what it means to be a woman, or 'femininity' (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985; Connell, 1987). Similarly, heterosexual masculinity is analysed by some as (in part) constructed through collective disparagements of same sex attraction, which marks gay men as not 'real' men (Messner, 2001; Pascoe, 2007). Participants described the body and dress as sites for 'measuring' successes and failures of heterosexual masculinity in opposition to ideas about gay men. Andrew explains how careful self-presentation forms a constituent part of heterosexual masculinity.

You're not supposed to care about the way you
dress (Andrew, Intv2).

That Michael diverted from this particular code of heterosexual masculinity and paid attention to fashion during his early twenties, for some, served as a signifier of (homo)sexuality.

So a lot of people used to think I was gay
particularly when I was 21 and they'd be like, 'so
you're gay?' I used to pay a lot of attention to
what I wore you know. I really did have quite a
look (Michael, Intv2).

Bodies that exude strength and sexual virility were also framed as markers of successful manhood.

> People expect you to be tough. You can't be skin
> and bones, you have to be muscly. Like being
> thin or anorexic is the worst thing you can be as a
> man (Andrew, Intv2).

> I think that I, as a man, am concerned with my
> appearance and the way that I am able to please
> women (Louis, Intv2).

Measures of a man for these participants then, are imagined as a set of behavioral and character traits to be exacted, enacted and restricted in the body, emotional and sexual realms. The successes and failures of being a man form around an ability, or not, to exude and exact control, dominance, leadership and 'urgent' heterosexuality. All participants spoke about these measures in relation to an evaluative and regulatory gaze. The language used, whilst responsive to the style of questioning perhaps, suggests that masculinity is conceived of, and 'done', in relation to an imagined social 'other', which the next section reveals is predominantly other men.

Locating measures of a man within phrases such as 'supposed to be', 'have to', suggest more than an expectation to meet these standards rather a perceived pressure and obligatory participation and performance. However, as the next section illustrates, while participants were critical of these measures of manhood, they also reify them through practice and discourse, and resist challenging them.

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These are both familiar and surprising findings. Familiar, in the way they succinctly chime with gendered stereotypes and sex role theories; so much so that they have a kind of parody value. Similarly, their conformity to Connell's (2000) formulation of 'winning styles' of masculinity is striking. The findings are surprising to the extent that such stereotypes continue to hold traction in men's imaginaries, and as the following section explores, their practices and lives, given the ways gender relations have, and continue to, reconfigure over recent decades. Connell argues that women have an interest in changing, and men in maintaining, unequal gender relations (2005; 2009). This makes unpicking and explicating the overt and subtle ways men strive to maintain the gender status quo crucial. The legacies of androcentric discursive histories and how they suffuse contemporary formations of masculinities, is, this thesis argues one such route and is explored in more depth across this and subsequent chapters.

Being 'THE' Man

This section presents how the measures of masculinity outlined in the previous section infuse men's lives by punctuating, and for some regulating both their relationships, and sense and presentation of self. That said, while men are subjects of discourse they are also actors within and producers of discourse (Wetherell and Edley, 1999). This section focuses on what men do and say to both shore up and challenge dominant ideas about being men and relations of hegemony.

Participants identified all male group contexts as when 'measuring up' seemed most potent and where invitations to hegemonic projects were most abundant: they also described talk as the main currency through which such invitations are made and

negotiated. This section consists of two subsections: the first introduces 'MenSpeak' as a conceptual tool to understand how ideas about being men are reproduced through speech; following this, 'Strategies of Self-Positioning' presents what participants described as a set of manoeuvres they use to negotiate, engage in, or attempt to reject conventions and modes of 'MenSpeak'.

MenSpeak

> Think of two geezers on a bus, they're coming
> home from the pub, the bus goes passed a
> hoarding, where a scantily clad women is. One
> says to the other: 'cor look at that one there', and
> that's an important moment there, in bonding for
> them (George, Intv2).

The 'important moment' George describes can be theoretically understood in two connected ways. Firstly, this represents what Connell (2005) describes as a 'moment of engagement' in hegemonic masculinity, and secondly what Flood (2007) would term a moment of 'homosociality'. In the latter, women's bodies provide a resource for men to express and enact heterosexual desire and thus 'masculinity' for the benefit of one another. As George's imagined scenario outlines, 'girl watching' is a means for productions of masculine identity through performative talk (Quinn, 2002). As outlined earlier, all male group contexts were cast as the most salient for invitations to, and engagements in this kind of hegemonic project. Participants also outlined how in such contexts, 'measuring up' seemed in most demand by other men, and where 'ideas' about what it means to be a man become actualised and brought into being through speech. So resounding was the theme of talk that this

section introduces the concept of 'MenSpeak' to capture its significance in the operations of hegemony between men, and between women and men.

Analysis of the interview data revealed three distinct, but sometimes overlapping 'modes' of MenSpeak which operate in different contexts, and are characterised by different conventions and discursive functions. The first two modes discussed in the following sections are 'predatory' and 'regulatory' MenSpeak. Both function to secure individual men a place in the hegemonic order and also to police and regulate other men within it. Co-produced between men and 'regulated' through a spectrum of acceptable and unacceptable modes and topics of talk, predatory and regulatory MenSpeak feature in this chapter as a potential resource for doing masculinity, and for measuring up as a man. The section which follows, outlines the contexts conventions and functions of these two modes of 'MenSpeak'. Later in this chapter and in subsequent findings chapters, the third mode - 'defensive' MenSpeak - is explored.

In this part of the interview process (hetero)sex and women, featured as the most common topics of MenSpeak, and were presented as a route to being 'THE' man.

> 90% of the time we spend talking about women
> and sex, and I think that's a reflection of being
> THE man as opposed to being a man (Louis,
> Intv2).

Barry outlines how such scenarios play out.

> Just stupid comments like when someone's
> walking passed the table you'd say 'she would
> get it' (Barry, Intv2).

The performative aspects of MenSpeak are highlighted here: a performance ultimately made for other men. The reflective space of an interview offered Barry opportunity to critically consider his own engagements in MenSpeak.

> If I was sitting on my own at a table and I saw a
> lady walking past, that idea wouldn't even enter
> my head let alone saying it. So the idea of a
> person walking past, I know nothing about that
> person, and yet I could make a judgment about
> what I might do to her is ridiculous and puerile
> (Barry, Intv2).

MenSpeak hinges on more than simply speaking about sex and women: it requires a 'particular' style and audience.

> I think talking about women, that's a place where
> you have to communicate in a particular way
> within that environment. So there are accepted
> formats. If I'm with a group of men and there's
> 'oh look over there, look at that girl', you got a
> choice you either abstain or you join in, but you
> have to join in in a particular way (Chris, Intv2).

While Chris identifies groups of men as the relevant audience, he does not elaborate on what he means by this 'particular' style'. Michael however, does and describes

predatory and often violent or aggressive expressions of heterosexual desire as a characteristic convention of this style of MenSpeak.

> The words you choose to talk about sex - that had an impact on me. You can say fuck, shag, say something like 'I really want to wreck that chick', that's just sooo horrible, that's the dominant, the violence, you know? If there could be a tiny bit of like, aggressive banter, there's a lot of that typical male behaviour, it's what you do, you talk, maybe you make aggressive sexual jokes and obviously it's taken as a joke, but it's still, the vibe of the banter can be really horrible and that's something quite masculine (Michael, Intv2).

For Michael this style of MenSpeak has been a source of conflict across his life course. For many of the participants adolescence or young adulthood was marked as a particular point when a 'need' to perform predatory heterosexuality to other men and boys was first encountered. James reflects on how as a young man, the pressure to 'join in' with MenSpeak seemed stronger and entailed personal conflict, rooted in a process of adapting the self for external validation.

> I do remember definitely when I was younger feeling like I had to join in, even though I would have that feeling that 'oooh this is grubby'. It comes from insecurity, that feeling that you have to prove yourself (James, Intv2).

While MenSpeak can position men within a hegemonic project, it can function as a way to regulate other men as a source of reprimand for those who reject or attempt to move outside of 'acceptable' masculinity. During our discussions in the first interview, Louis explained how his friends responded to him not wanting to pay for sex while on a 'lads' holiday, a theme we returned to during interview two.

> I: you said about how your friends responded
> when you left the brothel in Amsterdam because,
> like you say 'they gave me friendly banter, you
> know don't be a pussy'
>
> Louis: Yeah
>
> I: What is that?
>
> Louis: what not being a pussy?
>
> I: Yeah
>
> Louis: Ok, good question. Answer it simply;
> again I think it's the difference between being
> THE man and a man. Yeah, if you're the man
> you're not a pussy, you do whatever it is that
> makes you look like the shit, you would never
> imagine doing anything that doesn't make you
> look like the shit, yeah (Louis, Intv2).

Louis' dichotomous delineation of being 'a' man and 'THE' man as presented earlier, is central to regulatory MenSpeak, which both constructs hierarchies between men, and polices and reproduces them through, in Louis' account, 'friendly banter'.

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'THE man' is the epitome of hegemonic articulations of acceptable masculinity, and the sex industry in this instance represented an arena for such an articulation. While Louis minimises this process as 'friendly banter', Barry is more critical.

> Barry: There will be a target and that's one of the most negative, the notion of it as harmless. People suggest that and actually I don't think it is harmless, and with boys it's usually banter about sleeping with an ugly girl, and actually it's far more malicious than just banter.
>
> I: Are there particular topics that feature in 'banter'?
>
> Barry: I think generally it's women, but often in a derogatory way… not positive elements of women, that are banded around, taking the piss out of women who are ugly, or easy, the same targeting mentality. I'm not comfortable with this idea it's ok. Even though I will still engage in it (Barry, Intv2).

'Banter' has been theorised as co-operative as well as competitive styles of talk amongst men: a way to both build bonds, but also to score points against one another through 'put down' and 'one-upmanship' talk (Hein and Donhue, 2013). The concept of MenSpeak as described in this chapter so far, chimes succinctly with this framing of competitive put down banter, and was explicitly named as such by participants. As we saw, Louis minimises banter, but Barry and Michael are less dismissive about its content and effects.

Barry for example, sees it as a pernicious form of bullying, which is minimised by consigning it to jokes or as being 'ok'. Barry's critique fits well with broader analyses of the ways 'banter' as a concept can function to dismiss, downplay and mitigate sexism within tabloid newspapers (Attenborough, 2014). In this, 'banter' functions as a caveat and get out clause which redirects blame and minimizes intent, reducing sexism within the British press to harmless 'jokes' (ibid, p. 151). This analysis is useful to extend the lens beyond the ways banter operates between men on an interpersonal level, to explore how banter can also work to rebuke and silence feminist critiques of sexist cultures. This was demonstrated in a recent statement issued by British television channel – ITV - in which it defended one of its male comedy stars 'Dapper's use of 'rape jokes' in his television series, 'Dapper Laughs'.

> We realise that all humour is subjective and accept that Dapper's humour is more risqué but feel that his unique brand of banter and brash charm is neither sexist nor degrading to women (ITV, cited in The Independent, November, 2014).

'Banter' and 'brash charm' function here as euphemisms, and get out clauses for sexism: 'banter' functions then to restore the gender status quo. All three modes of MenSpeak developed across this thesis operate in a similar way, as this and subsequent chapters will demonstrate.

That Barry expresses discomfort and disapproval yet still choses to 'engage' in this style of MenSpeak creates a contradiction at the core of his narrative which reflects a

reluctance to relinquish his own subject position in this hegemonic project. This could be read as group approval trumping Barry's personal moorings, yet the scenarios may be more complicated if considered in terms of what Barry and men more broadly gain by reinvesting in hegemony.

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Participants also outlined how speaking about particular topics with other men was perceived as out of bounds, and a source of discomfort and failure. James reflected on how he would not feel comfortable speaking with male friends if he had a problem or wanted to discuss something 'deep'.

> James: There is slightly more bawdiness with men if you're in a group and an inability to, in a classic sense, talk about deeper issues generally. If I ever have an issue or something I want to talk about I always got to my female friends
>
> I: How come not your guys?
>
> James: I don't know, an unwillingness to show vulnerability I guess, yeah. I don't feel able to show that I have weakness maybe. It's still that macho thing of wanting to be, to have status in a group, I don't know. Because I'm sure if I did most of my friends would probably be fine with it. It's not like I won't talk about anything. Say I broke up with someone recently I would definitely say 'oh I'm torn up about it', but it would be reasonably superficial (James, Intv1).

James expresses a desire to maintain an aura of control which pivots around the emotional realm. He also notes that while he is sure that his friends would respond and allow him to open up, it is his own investments in the 'measures of a man' template that fortify and reproduce these normative and restrictive ways of being a man.

> I: In what way? What do you mean superficial?
>
> James: I wouldn't go into the same level of detail, or analysis or existential doubts you know, just be yeah I'm really, probably like that's just bad.
>
> I: How come, is it that you think they wouldn't get it?
>
> James: Not that I don't think they couldn't understand, I have no idea, I just wouldn't feel comfortable doing it. I think it is to do with unwillingness to show vulnerability (James, Intv2).

Both his account and Barry's outlined earlier, are contradictory: they reflect both condemnations but also apathetic complicity in MenSpeak. This contradiction highlights how men make choices to fortify and reify dominant ways of being men, even when by their own view and admission these investments can entail personal costs. It also reflects a perceived constraint on men's space for action in relation to one another.

Jim and Andrew offer further examples of where codes of MenSpeak extend to what you should *not* speak about as much as what and how you should: the former is linked to attaining masculine prowess and respect, and the latter to rebuffing the risk of being marked as a feminine 'other'.

> And you don't share discussions about relationships you tend to talk about 'things', if you do talk about relationships; people suspect you're homosexual (Jim, Intv2).

What emerges are restricted codes of MenSpeak, where emotionality is chauffeured back into the realms of predatory (hetero)sex.

> If I started talking about my new girlfriend and how she makes me feel, I would get laughed out of the room, but if I walked in and showed them a picture of her tits on my phone, they would be all over it (Barry, Intv2).

These tales of MenSpeak expressed through confessional tones laced with apathy, compelled further questions.

> I: Would you like to be able to talk about the emotional aspects with your friends? To say 'I think I'm falling in love and I'm a bit scared'. Would you like that space?
>
> Barry: I guess I would like to but I can never see it, when numbers go up the laddish behavior

> starts, evolutionary maybe that's when
> competition starts, its about being the strongest
> most masculine, fertile, virile (Barry, Intv2).

Barry here reduces social action to biological determinism to mediate what he constructs as restrictive dynamics between men, thus framing them as an inevitable part of being a man. Barry along with James is resistant to change these dynamics even where they may involve personal and emotional loss: here a sense of 'survival', self-preservation and ultimately investments in hegemonic projects win out. This paradoxical and contradictory discourse then becomes another convention of MenSpeak where on one hand participants expressed discomfort and implicit (sometimes explicit) condemnations of particular practices and ways of being men, while simultaneously participating in and defending them.

While all male group settings are the most salient for MenSpeak, participants also spoke about specific modes of MenSpeak when women enter a social space.

> We went skiing with the school and there was the
> guy's dorm and the girl's dorm and sometimes
> the girls would come in and there was one guy,
> he said to one of the girls after like, people acting
> up a bit, being a bit blokish, he said, 'do you have
> any idea of how different we are when you're not
> here?' I thought like yeah that's very, very true
> (Michael, Intv2).

The live presence (or not) of women then in Michael's account can work to mediate, MenSpeak, where 'acting up' or being a 'bit blokish' is concealed. Jim, on the other

hand outlines multiple scenarios where women's presence can also accentuate styles of MenSpeak which berate women.

> [if a girl comes in the room] it does affect their communication style a bit especially if they are in an all-male environment and that can be in different styles, positive and negative. We all stop swearing and try and talk better or it can be more crude, or it can be like to treat the woman badly (Jim, Intv2).

Whether as sexualised symbols, berated 'others', or as actual living flesh, women are central to the operations of MenSpeak and in particular within modes of it which are framed as 'banter', 'a get out clause' to cloak pernicious sexisms. While participants framed MenSpeak as a source of personal conflict and turmoil, some also expressed commitments, or at least reluctance to changing or challenging it. The following section explores how the men in this study self-position in moments of MenSpeak.

Strategies of Self-Positioning

> Really simply men are terrible things to be around full stop. A man can be fine, but *men* can be horrible things (Chris, Intv2).

All participants described invitations to MenSpeak as a source of discomfort and personal conflict and some through notions of survival. Chris and Louis, for

example, reduce their positions in such moments to a stark two option model; to 'fight or flight', to 'go with or against the current' of MenSpeak.

> We have to negotiate, it's like fight or flight, you're not always doing what's right or wrong you're just doing the best thing for that moment (Chris, Intv2).

> It's a challenging situation and how you deal with it, you can go with the current or against the current (Louis, Intv2).

Participants also described a set of strategies they use to manage invitations to MenSpeak, which all stabilised a particular hegemonic project. Silence and avoidance were for some ways of 'coping' with discomfort.

> You just sit and roll your eyes, and wait for the moment to pass, and think I'll just try and avoid being in this group again (Chris, Intv2).

Michael and Paul also referred to silence as part of a broader strategy of withdrawal.

> I just get quite withdrawn and my best friend would do that, talk in that way when he's with others and when I'm there. But I don't rise to it, he did it to wind me up I think, but I don't respond to it. It makes me feel a bit sick you know? Makes me feel like there's something wrong (Michael, Intv2).

I'll usually be quite quiet not go along with it but
not at a very assertive level, where I'll be
disappearing into the background (Paul, Intv2).

Jack offers a more self-critical analysis, framing his silence as complicit participation
or in his words 'tacit agreement' in MenSpeak, premised on a perceived inability to
challenge other men.

Jack: There are times, when you find yourself in
groups where women are talked about in certain
ways and you may find it difficult to challenge
that in a group situation, and you find yourself
tacitly agreeing with something

I: So *you* would agree?

Jack: No not like I would agree but you might not
directly challenge it, or you might not respond, I
don't know.

Deflection was another strategy participants spoke about when negotiating
discomfort with modes of MenSpeak. George reflected on his use of humour, or
again silence, in an attempt to avoid participation and to neutralise discomfort.

I did tend to hang back, not because I was a
moral superior, but because it was a locker room
masculinity, but parodies, it was a locker room
Yfront masculinity that I guess I opted out of, I
didn't feel comfortable with. I would often fall
silent, change the conversation or make some sort

of humorous remark that would deflect it
(George, Intv2).

There were remarkably few reflections or accounts of directly challenging other men, or situations which invite 'moments of engagement' in hegemonic masculinity more broadly. Chris did, however, express an ambition to do so.

I think there is a moment where this masculinity is so ready to be challenged on such a basic level, 'insert a clever quip here', but something challenging emasculating, that could immediately sort of put a dampener on it (Chris, Intv2).

Later on Chris also recalls his own interjection on, and attempt to challenge a particular mode of MenSpeak, the response to which reveals its regulatory aspects.

Men will discuss openly how they cheat on their wife, the methods that they do to keep it concealed or the philosophy behind it, and you sit there going 'why are you telling me this? I had an interesting experience of someone I worked with telling me all this and I said 'are you not concerned that your wife might be doing this?' And I got an intense flash of anger from him, like why are you saying this, and I could sense the danger, the air was slightly electric (Chris, Intv2).

The most common way to self-position in moments of MenSpeak was through complicit silence, or deflective speech and maneuvers. As Hearn (2004, p. 61)

suggests, where this might be the case, men's complicit practices are revealed as the most widespread and repeated. Participants described how such complicity can evoke a sense of fractured and compromised self; for some this extended into more personally troubling terrains. Michael for example, expresses guilt about being a man leading to self-condemnation.

> I feel guilty about being male a lot of the time because I hear this chat all of the time and I'm party to women getting heckled in the street by other men and it makes me embarrassed, but I don't want to have to lose anything of myself, as I did do. It's hell to be so self-condemning, so it's proper heavy stuff (Michael, Intv2).

For George the practices of MenSpeak can evoke and exacerbate a sense of displacement and rejection from a heterosexual masculine order.

> That very blokish, geezerish, laddish carrying on beyond a certain point does make me feel awkward, particularly when I was going through a difficult period about my sexuality and rejection from a partner. And if you're feeling like that then engaging in 'banter' with your mates about the desirability of a figure on a street hoarding, it may alleviate that or maybe it would have the effect of making you feel even jocularly, this is a world I've been kicked out of and it's too painful for me and I don't want to go there (George, Intv2).

Barry excuses his own investments in MenSpeak as disassociation and as a kind of external performance separate to himself.

> lt's like your characterizing yourself, parodying,
> it's not a conscious thing it's like a hole in your
> psyche (Barry, Intv2).

And for some complicit investments in MenSpeak lead to a sense of self fragmentation and even personal sacrifice.

> You kind of catch hearing yourself say something
> and think maybe that's a bit outrageous and not
> my view of the world, so there's a bit, you
> become aware of yourself and usually I say
> nothing (Paul, Intv2).

> If you conform you may be developing parts of
> yourself that you might not want to, or that you
> don't feel comfortable with (Louis, Intv2).

> I have always felt very different to my friends,
> always, always very different, and I conformed, I
> conformed a lot until my twenties. I have
> described it to my girlfriend at the time as a
> façade to make things slide, to make things ok,
> easy (Barry, Intv2).

Working with these narratives of conflicted complicity led to questions about how the conventions and modes of MenSpeak, and 'sexualisation' more broadly, may sit with those participants who expressed commitments to gender equality and feminist

politics. Andrew for example, self-identified as a feminist early in the interview opening up avenues for discussion.

> I: If someone's flicking through say a magazine or something and says 'check this out have you seen Kelly Brook in this?' How do you manage having that opinion base in that situation? Is it difficult?

> Andrew: No, I switch one way or another. Still though I feel a bit guilty and bad because I catch myself doing it, like brutally sexist from my all boys school upbringing and having an objectified opinion of women and everyone and that's the topic of conversation in the group. I catch myself and think I don't really think like this anymore, but at work I put on a macho façade, because it's funny or because that's what people expect (Andrew, Intv2).

Andrew here shows how participating in sexualised banter and 'brutal sexism' can entail suspending or ignoring his internal moorings for external performance, which whilst evoking a sense of guilt is seemingly easily resolved by his commitment to 'measuring up'. For Michael however, a sense of guilt and conflict was less fleeting.

> Sometimes there's a double function as a man, sometime you can feel guilty as a man, sometimes complicit, you know? … There's a kind of disgust at your own gender (Michael, Intv2).

Unlike Andrew, Michael struggles to reconcile his own participation and complicity in MenSpeak, which extends into a 'disgust' at his own gender. The 'double function' Michael describes is a useful way to think about both tensions between men's social positions and personal lives; and also how men manage and negotiate these tensions. This 'double function' could link to what Hearn (2004) terms a 'double complexity' that 'men' are:

> …both a social category formed by the gender system and dominant collective and individual agents of social practices (p. 59)… both formed in men's hegemony and form that hegemony (p. 61).

In this double complexity men both inherit social positions of advantage and dominance and reproduce and reinvest them through action. The findings in this study reveal that this is not always a straightforward process: such reinvestments can be a source of personal tension and conflict which are managed through, as participants in this study described, subjective 'doubling' and fragmenting the self. Here participants made distinctions between how they present themselves to 'other' men and who they feel and believe themselves to be. This subjective 'doubling' and fragmented self both constrains individual men, but simultaneously shores up operations of hegemony. Through fragmenting the self men *imagine* themselves as not contributing to operations of hegemony, whilst *actually* doing precisely this. The overall impact of this process is an implicit discursive mode, and modality of living, which serves to distance men from their actions. In this a discourse of 'I'm not 'that'

guy' rises to the fore as a way for men to negotiate and neutralise personal conflict and discomfort. Elsewhere across the interview process, 'I'm not 'that' guy' was articulated in more explicit ways, which is introduced briefly below and developed across subsequent chapters.

Wetherell et al (1999) argue that recognised social ideals can act both as a source for identity work, and as an 'other' to position oneself against. 'I'm not 'that' guy' captures the contradictory ways some men in the research context constructed, distanced, and yet performed and did a version of masculinity they sought to distance themselves from. Articulated through autobiographical storytelling, participants cut links between their own practices and what they constructed as the harmful ones of 'other' men.

> I've been on buses where I hear guys say 'if we
> don't meet a girl we'll have a fight'. Some people
> blame alcohol. I think it's to do with the stresses
> of trying to get a girl into bed, especially if you
> read *Nuts* magazine and you think all you have to
> do is ask her how she likes to be fingered and tell
> her how big your car is, *so get that in there.*[8]

Depicting the men on the bus as archetypal masculine 'others', this participant's tone berates and others them but also defends them through the very mode of MenSpeak he attempts to distance himself from. Participants also sought to assign particular

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[8] This man has not been identified here, as it would reveal him to be the man I experienced as a bully as discussed in Chapter Three.

behaviors to 'types' of men; here class and race offered routes for some to distance themselves from 'other' men while fortifying classism and racism.

> I see groups of men nonstop, like a cliché living in a cliché world, on top of the scaffolding, in a group where men do nothing but comment on and observe the women around them passing by, maybe whistle, maybe say something (Chris, Intv2).

> Well it's a cliché but like hip hop culture there is this thing amongst young men having this exaggerated bravado and, sort of disregard for what people think and feel. It's violent and quite aggressive and it's quite misogynistic, basically a lot about the denigration of women and using them as objects (Jack, Intv2).

In this self-distancing the 'intimate intersections and interconnections' (Cowburn and Pringle, 2000) of men's practices are obscured. 'I'm not 'that' guy' discourse is a core convention of the third mode of MenSpeak analysed across this thesis: defensive MenSpeak, which is developed in more detail across subsequent chapters, and functions to downplay and mitigate men's oppressive practices and to break continuities across men's practices.

Conclusions

This chapter has presented the ways dominant ideas about what it means to be a man can infuse men's lives by punctuating and for some regulating their relationships,

sense and presentation of self. 'Measures of a Man' outlined a set of character and behavioral traits, which were framed as exemplars of 'successful' masculinity. Here legacies of sex role theories of gender were articulated through tones of expectation and pressure where successful masculinity was linked to sexual and physical virility, urgent heterosexuality, emotional strength, dominance and control. Given the shifts in gender relations across recent decades, and in light of feminisms, the endurance of these discursive legacies are surprising and suggest a reluctance by men to relinquish them. This raises questions of what do men gain by reproducing and reinvesting in normative fictions of masculinity, which by their own accounts can be a source of personal turmoil and conflict? The second section 'Being THE man' outlined how men reproduce and reinvest these ideas about masculinity through complicity.

'Being THE Man' presented all male contexts as when these measures seem most in need of attainment and invitations to hegemonic projects most common. This section also described what men do and say to both shore up and challenge dominant ideas about being men and relations of hegemony between men. 'Talk' presented here as the main currency through which invitations and investments in hegemonic masculinity are made and negotiated, this finding in particular underscores the analytical tool of 'MenSpeak' introduced in this chapter, and developed across subsequent findings chapters.

Three modes of 'MenSpeak' were introduced, each characterised by different conventions, and functions, but with overlaps. 'Predatory MenSpeak' was developed through analysis of what men described as aggressive articulations of 'urgent' heterosexuality which function to position men within hegemonic projects,

representing a route to 'being THE man'. Linked to this 'regulatory MenSpeak' was developed through what men described as constricted and restricted modes and topics of talk between men, which function to police and regulate. The third 'defensive MenSpeak' was developed to capture the way some men constructed particular ways of being a man as aberrant and 'other', in order to self-position as different - a convention termed here as 'I'm not 'that' guy'. This mode of MenSpeak, is further developed across subsequent chapters, and functions to downplay and mitigate personal and collective accountability and to disrupt the ways men's practices are interlinked. An overlap across all three modes of MenSpeak is that they all function to reproduce relations of hegemony between men and between women and men.

All participants expressed discomfort, and for some conflict with MenSpeak, and all described different strategies of self-positioning in moments of invitation to it which in effect stabilise relations of hegemony between men, including: silent withdrawal; deference; and 'tacit agreement'. For some men this can involve personal turmoil, described as a process of subjective fragmentation and 'doubling' and creating a facade 'to make things slide'. However, that only one man offered an account of directly challenging predatory MenSpeak reflects a reluctance, perhaps a fear to disrupt it, and in this to relinquish their subject positions within hegemonic projects.

The findings presented in this chapter highlight how relations between men and operations of hegemony therein, can form and shape landscapes of men's lives, evoking conflict and discomfort, which complicates notions of social privilege. That said however, findings presented in this chapter also described the ways men

(re)invest in and (re)produce these landscapes through complicity, reflecting a commitment to 'being THE man' and legacies of sex role theories of gender.

A central contradiction then emerges between men's explicit accounts of conflict evoked by relations of hegemony between men, and their implicitly expressed commitments to maintaining these relations. In this, and as argued in chapter one, notions of men's social privilege and unearned advantage become flat ways to understand tensions between men's social positions and personal experiences. While unearned advantage hints at the way men inherit social landscapes, it obscures the potential contradictory frameworks of men's experiences, and indeed their own discourses. 'Masculine heritage' is introduced in this study and developed across subsequent chapters as a less restrictive way of framing inherited landscapes of men's lives, and one which takes account of how operations of internal hegemony between men can form personal landscapes of action and inaction.

Given the centrality of 'urgent' heterosexuality to dominant ideas of what it means to be a man and codes and conventions of predatory MenSpeak, sexualisation is a salient setting for expressions and articulations of masculinity, and for incubating hegemony between men. Subsequent chapters explore how ideas about 'masculinity' presented in this chapter, including strategies of self-positioning, play out, intersect and infuse men's practices within, and experiences of the sex industry and sexualised popular culture more broadly. Through this, MenSpeak is also developed as a way for men to reinvest and reproduce their masculine heritage, a concept that is further developed across this thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE: Men, Masculinities and Commercial Sex

This chapter presents findings from the online survey. As outlined in Chapter Three the survey was designed as a 'reflective space' to capture qualitative as well as quantitative data about men's use of the sex industry. Previous studies have sampled men as users of particular elements of the sex industry, especially paying for sex and visiting strip/lap dancing clubs (Frank, 2002; Chen, 2003; Hester and Westmarland, 2004; Coy et al, 2007; Earle and Sharp, 2007; Sanders, 2008). The survey in this study was unique in that it was open to men both with, and without, experience across three sites of the industry. The findings therefore, contribute to an existing knowledge base and also offer insight into the less explored question of why some men choose not to pay for sex, attend strip and lap dancing clubs, or use pornography.

The findings are presented in three sections, exploring the three sites respectively and threading the findings from the previous chapter throughout. Sections one and two, Strip and Lap Dancing Clubs' and 'Paying for Sex', include analysis of how dominant ideas about what it means to be a man can for (some) men inflect how they experience and make sense of the sex industry. Section three, 'The Trouble with Pornography', extends on conventions and modes of 'MenSpeak', and locates pornography as occupying a unique space in (most) men's lives.

This chapter combines quantitative analysis of frequencies and contexts of men's use of the sex industry, with thematic analysis of written reflections from the open text boxes and open-ended questions. A striking feature of the survey results was the volume and depth of written reflections offered by respondents. In the main, men

wrote between five and eight lines, with many extending way beyond this to offer twelve plus lines of written reflections for particular questions. This response rate was similar across men with different perspectives and experiences.

The survey yielded 151 responses from across England, Scotland and Wales. The age of respondents ranged from 18-66, with the majority aged between 18 and 35 (71%, n=107). Within an open text box the majority of respondents self-defined as White British, and as heterosexual or straight (for more details on the sample see Chapter Three).

Visiting Strip and Lap Dancing Clubs

The proliferation of strip and lap dancing clubs across the Western world has been linked to a mainstreaming of sex industries into popular culture, leisure and mass consumption (Jeffreys, 2008; 2010). Primarily marketed to, and attended by heterosexual men (Frank, 2002), some commentators have argued that strip and lap dancing clubs have gained an increased or 'new' respectability within the socio-cultural milieu of leisure and entertainment (Attwood, 2009; Sanders, 2010). The findings presented here both reflect and complicate this proposed new respectability.

Two fifths of the sample had visited a strip club (41.7%, n=63). Table 5.1 shows that of those, nearly half had visited as part of a night out (47.8%, n=30), the most common context was in an all-male group (38.7% n=24). None had visited a club with their partner, although more than one in five (22.5% n=14) had been with women.

Table 5.1: Contexts of Visits to Strip Clubs

Who respondents attended the clubs with	N	%
In an all-male group	**24**	**38.7**
Alone	14	22.6
In a mixed gender group	11	17.7
With one male friend	4	6.5
With one female friend	3	4.8
With partner	0	0
Other	6	9.7
Missing	1	
Total	**63**	**100**
Setting	**N**	**%**
Night out	**30**	**47.8**
Something else	19	30.2
Stag party	9	14.3
Work event/Business	5	7.9
Total	**63**	**100**

Over 30% chose 'something else' to describe the contexts of their visit(s): here respondents either offered more detail about their mood at the time to state why they decided to visit a strip club, (n=6): 'Curiosity' or 'wanted to try it out'. Some used descriptive text instead of selecting one of the tick box options (n=11): 'night out with friends from work', 'birthday party'. One response was confessional: 'Getting burned out on porn and masturbating, I was searching for a new sexual high'. One respondent used the free text box to express misogyny: 'trollop hunt'.

Figure 5.1 shows that just over a third (37.1%, n=23) had been to a strip club only once, with the second most common frequency between two and five times (32.3%, n=20). Regular visitors, - those attending more than ten times, made up only 9.5% (n=6) of this group and 3.9% of the whole sample.

Figure 5.1: Frequency of Visits to Strip Clubs
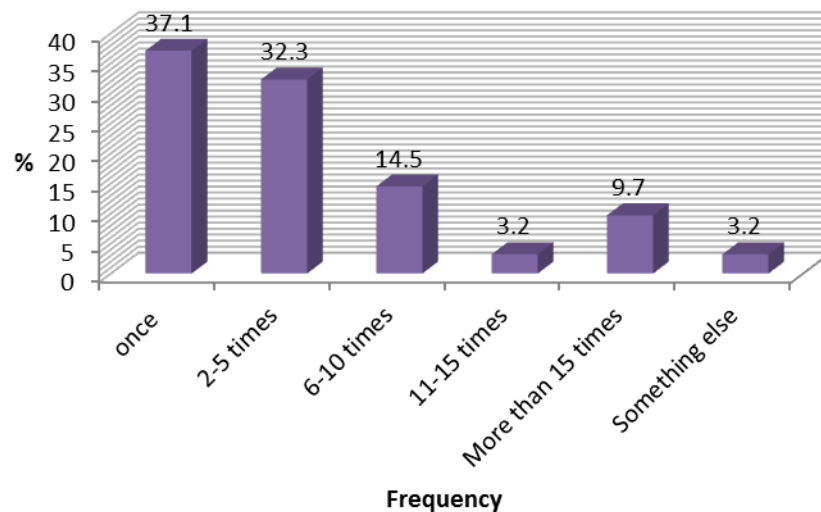
While visiting strip clubs therefore represented a fairly infrequent homosocial 'leisure' practice, almost one in ten of those who had been to a strip club (n=9) had been over 15 times, and over a fifth (22.6% n=14) whilst alone.

There may be differences in motivations and experiences between those men who visit strip clubs on multiple and few occasions, and between men who visit them alone and as part of a group. Frank (2002) found that the predominant motivation for 'regulars' was 'to relax' through a 'touristic' departure from their everyday lives. In her study strip clubs offered spaces where 'men can be men', and engage in otherwise socially restricted 'traditionally masculine practices' (p. 91). Jeffreys (2010) reads this as a reaffirmation of male privilege, a 'counterattack' to the advances of second wave feminism: for her the proliferation of strip clubs across Western worlds offers an: 'antidote to the erosion of male dominance by re-institutionalising the traditional hierarchy of gender relations' (p. 167).

Whilst not denying that this reading may hold traction, especially on a structural level, on an individual level, it may flatten the possible diversity of experiences and motivational underpinnings of some men's visits to strip clubs and sits in tension with some of the accounts offered in the survey. The findings discussed next outline how most men in this survey either reject strip clubs altogether, or frame the possibility of future visits in more mundane and taken for granted terms, which cast nuanced shades over notions of entitlement. Similarly those who do choose to visit strip clubs can experience their visits through a complex of agency and constraint in relation to other men.

For the Boys

Of those who had never been to a strip club (58.2%, n=88) a quarter (26.1%, n=23) said that it was something they may consider doing in the future. When asked to say more, responses were suffused with ambivalence, indifference, and curiosity. Individual apathy however could be resolved when ritualised and collective invitations to invest in hegemonic projects arise. Here personal moorings were sometimes suspended 'for the boys'.

> Stag do only. Personally I would never pay for a dance or someone to strip (Q8, R69).

> I'm not sure how much sexual pleasure I would take from going to a strip club, but if I was with friends on

> a night out I wouldn't have a problem
> going to a strip club (Q8, R14).

All-male group settings, therefore, provided a conducive context for this form of sexualised consumption and could override personal ambivalence to create complicit investments in this hegemonic project. Some men presented this as a 'compulsory' part of being 'THE man', based on a perceived lack of space for men to challenge one other.

> It seemed to become a compulsory
> part of the group I was working with
> - we would even send the women in
> the team home early in order to go
> early. I would find myself making
> excuses to leave early to avoid having
> to make the decision not to go - so I
> was absent rather than turning down
> the trip (Q7, R2).

This response echoes the strategies of self-positioning discussed in the previous chapter, where interview participants described a series of strategies to manage their discomfort in moments of, and invitations to, predatory 'MenSpeak'. Silence, deference or complicit performances featured as the main 'coping' strategies for interviewees; and this survey respondent describes a tactic of premeditated avoidance. Rather than declining potential invitations to a strip club he chooses to leave early and thus avoids 'failing' as a man. That women colleagues are 'sent home early' reflects that for (some) men, strip clubs represent a male domain from which

women as equal peers are excluded yet re-enter as fetishized and sexualised others. Here Jeffreys' framing of strip clubs as holding recuperative social and personal value to men vis-a-vis shifts in gender relations may hold traction. Another potential reading of this man's account is to consider his alternatives in this constructed scene of duress. One would be to challenge other men by rejecting strip clubs, which may risk losing his position within this hegemonic project, and another would be to attend 'for the boys': here MenSpeak as a discursive practice may be extended to include complicit practices.

For the following respondent, the anonymous site of an online survey appeared to allow space for him to express and acknowledge his complicit investments in 'being THE man' in ways that are restricted in peer settings.

> Don't want to appear soft in front of
> my friends (Q8, R13).

In contrast, for the following man the survey represented a site to 'do masculinity' and to be 'THE man', premised on assertions of heterosexuality and concomitant denouncements of homosexuality.

> I'm simply not homosexual and I like
> hot girls (Q8, R57).

Contradictory expressions of indifference and appeal were also present in these responses in which strip clubs represented a mundane possibility premised on a

socially inherited taken for granted access to strip clubs, or more specifically women's bodies.

> Never really my style and it's not something I feel is on my 'to do' list - I mean maybe one day I'll stroll in drunk or something but that's about it (Q8, R39).

> Just never come up - me and my friends usually find something else to do, but never say never (Q8, R23).

Reflections here also formed around curious and adventurous narratives, also based on a taken for granted possibility.

> I don't rule anything out (Q8, R4).
>
> Why not? (Q8, R5).
>
> Just once, to see what it's like (Q8, R29).

Empirically and theoretically men's motivations for using the sex industry have been understood through frameworks of male privilege which shape a sense of entitlement to women's bodies (Frank, 2002; Coy et al, 2007; Jeffreys, 2008). Data presented here reflect how privilege and entitlement can be experienced and articulated in subtle and mundane ways. The adventurer narrative of 'why not', 'I'll try anything

once', for example reflects more a 'taken for granted' socially inherited access to strip clubs than an active self-perceived entitlement to women's bodies. This 'taken for grantedness' means unearned advantage remains unacknowledged and normalised, (McIntosh, 1988; Pease, 2010) forming in this scenario an implicit and simmering sense of entitlement.

Discomfort and Critique

Three quarters (71.5%, n=63) of those who had never been to a strip club said that it was not something they would consider doing in the future. Responses here expressed discomfort with the sex industry, with critiques drawn around two main axes: morality rooted within religious affiliations; and gendered analyses, which framed strip clubs as exploitative of women and men.

> It seems tragic for many reasons, all based on the exploitation of the women involved and the customers. Can't sum it up easily in writing (Q8, R41).

While the above respondent struggles to articulate how strip clubs can be exploitative of both women and men, another suggests that strip clubs work to exploit social constructions and 'ideas' about men as sexually 'urgent' and out of control. This man also expresses cynicism that 'stripping' is a legitimate form of work.

> I find the social expectation for men to be "turned-on" at all times exhausting, putting myself in a situation where this expectation is combined with women who are "working"
> [original emphasis] doesn't really sound all that appealing (Q8, R67).

Discomforts also centred on the commercial setting, not wanting to participate in a transaction or exchange premised on gendered performance and 'faux' attraction.

> It's not much fun if you know the women do their act for every man that pays (Q8, R12).

> It's all based on a fake consumer society that makes men believe that women actually act like that, and are naturally like that, when its quite the opposite (Q8, R34).

Anxieties that the club environment might provoke shame and embarrassment also deterred men. These anxieties were formed around conceptualisations of respectability and stigma, linked to a fear of being seen at a strip club.

> People might find out which would hurt my reputation (Q8, 58).

> I would feel sleazy/dirty to be at risk of identification at a strip club (Q8, R51).

> Maybe because going to a strip club
> is a public act and I think if you're
> going to objectify women, you should
> at least be ashamed of it (Q8, R10).

One man extended on this sense of shame, to make demarcations across public and private use of the sex industry. Here private use of pornography is subtly condemned but also minimised and framed as holding a benefit of avoiding 'public' endorsements of 'demeaning' practices.

> I consider it [strip clubs] demeaning
> to women, but saying that I have
> looked at porn that is demeaning.
> However, when I've done that it was
> in the privacy of my own room, so I
> think it would be the shame of being
> seen by others to take part in such an
> activity that would stop me from
> doing it (Q8, R16).

This respondent both acknowledges and dismisses a contradiction in his account. While initially he identifies a tension between framing strip clubs as demeaning and 'looking at demeaning pornography', the tension is resolved: the 'privacy' of pornography use becomes a way to minimise and evade public shame and personal conflict.

The fairly low levels of engagement with strip clubs, combined with the narratives of discomfort and critique, complicate notions of them as gaining a new respectability across contemporary cultural scenes. As outlined, most men in this survey rejected strip clubs, expressing ambivalence, disinterest, and discomfort. These rejections however faded for some men in light of all male group settings, where visiting strip clubs offer men routes to engage in, and shore up hegemonic formations of masculinity, suggesting that this respectability was consigned to all male group settings. That said, some men also expressed unease and shame in group attendance reflecting the diversity in formations and expressions of masculine identities; here for some men ritualised group attendance to strip clubs did not represent 'a winning style' or way of being a man.

Paying for Sex

Similar to strip and lap dancing clubs, it has been argued that prostitution now forms part of a new respectability for 'sexual commerce' (Bernstein, 2007). Some studies report that rates of paying for sex have risen over the past decade contemporaneously to other social and cultural patterns linked to the sexualisation of culture (Coy et al, 2012). Historically men who pay for sex have remained on the periphery of analyses (Mansson, 2001). In the past decade however a new body of research, which focuses on men's demand for prostitution, has begun to emerge.

The survey findings in this study echo previous research in the field, in that only a minority of men (17.8%, n=27) had paid for sex (see also, Mansson, 2001; Coy et al, 2007; 2012). The majority who had, however, had done so on multiple occasions, as table 5.2 shows, less than a fifth had done so only once.

Table 5.2: How Often Respondents Paid for Sex

Frequency	N	%
More than 15 times	**8**	**29.6**
10-15 times	3	11.1
6-10 times	3	11.1
2-5 times	7	25.9
Once	5	18.5
Something else	1	3.7
Total	**27**	**100**

Findings on where men had paid for sex reflect the social organisation of the sex industry (Coy et al, 2007) in that the majority (78.8%, n=21) had done so off street, with only one having paid for sex on street and five both on and off street.

A reverse pattern exists between men who pay for sex and visit strip and lap dancing clubs. While group contexts represented the most common setting for strip and lap dancing clubs, as Table 5.3 shows, two thirds (66.7%, n=18) had paid for sex while alone.

Table 5.3: Context in Which Respondents Bought Sex

Context	N	%
Alone	**18**	**66.7**
With friends/colleagues	3	11.1
Both	6	22.2
Total	**27**	**100**

This could suggest that paying for sex may not be as normalised as visiting strip and lap dancing clubs is as a group activity. Previous studies however have found that group settings can mobilise men to make positive decisions to pay for sex, particularly when abroad and as part of a pre-marital 'stag' trip (Horvath, 2012), where 'hegemonic formations of masculinity' can be inscribed (Thurnell-Read,

2011). Similarly, it has been argued that the liminal space associated with so called 'sex tourism' enables men to pay for sex and cultivate 'masculine subjectivity' through differences in power and privilege and positioning women as imagined exotic 'others' (Katsulis, 2009, p. 2).

A third (33.4%, n=9) of men in this study who had paid for sex had done so as part of a group, and (42.3%, n=11) both whilst abroad and in the UK. How men described perceived differences in paying for sex abroad and in the UK fit with the notion of touristic liminality loosening social norms together with imaginings of women as 'exotic others'.

> Being abroad puts one in a very different psychological position; it made me more open to paying for sex, made me feel more powerful, having money and being able to buy someone for sex, with no complications. Before that I would never have considered paying for sex. It felt to me that it gave me space to act in this way (Q18, R7).

> The girls are generally a lot hotter abroad (Q18, R2).

Tessa Horvath's (2012) study however, also found that while 'stag parties' abroad enable men to pay for sex in groups, some men made efforts to separate from the group and to travel in order to pay for sex alone: men she terms 'lone rangers'. For

some men then, anonymity when paying for sex is important and 'lone rangers' both as visitors to strip clubs and as men who pay for sex may offer interesting routes for future explorations of how the sex industry intersects with formations of masculinity, of different ways of being a man.

Rejections and Abjections

While a knowledge base is building around men who pay for sex, less attention is given to considerations of those who do not, and why they choose not to pay for sex. Most of the men who responded to the survey had never paid for sex (79.4%, n=120), of whom over four fifths (83.2%, n=99) reported that it was not something they would consider doing in the future. Over two-thirds (65.8%, n=79) chose to say more. Rejections of paying for sex were underscored by five main deterrents: lack of intimacy; paying for sex as exploitative to women; against moral and religious codes; abject fear; and no 'need'. These are now explored in more detail.

Emotional connection and reciprocal desire and pleasure were for this group central to an enjoyable sexual experience.

> Sex is a physical expression of love, without sentiment, I can't feel good with myself and can't perform (Q13, R73).

> If I'm having sex with someone, the mental/emotional interaction is part of the whole thing. Intimacy is pretty

much the turn on, the mechanical
stuff is very much secondary (Q13,
R34).

Supposedly with paid sex it doesn't
really matter if the woman enjoys it
as well, which kind of ruins most of
the fun. Sex is not that interesting if
you are the only one enjoying it
(Q13, R16).

Linked to narratives of sex divorced from emotion as antithetical to pleasure, was a
concern around issues of consent, and paying for sex as exploitative to women.

Plus consent issues, one can never be
completely sure if the woman does it
out of free will (Q13, R16).

The following respondent extends his understanding of consent beyond issues of
force, free will and choice, to raise broader questions about potential emotional
impacts for women in prostitution.

Fundamentally, despite all the
discussion about women making a
free and positive choice and being
empowered by selling sex, I can only
see prostitution as exploitative. If a
person chooses to sell sex I think you
have to respect that and be careful not
to stigmatise it, but I do see it as a

> compromising thing, which must be
> very hard to do without damaging the
> seller (Q13, R12).

Other responses offered critical reflections, which linked prostitution to broader contexts of crime and the potential emotional impacts for women in prostitution.

> The whole industry encourages
> human trafficking and it generally
> leads to a lot of crime. This is all on
> top of the fact it destroys the women
> involved (Q13, R46).

For some, concern for individual women in prostitution extended to women generally.

> I would not want to be involved in
> the sex industry, I wouldn't want to
> encourage it. I don't believe it would
> be fair for the woman being paid. I
> don't believe it would be fair for
> women in general (Q13, R22).

Here paying for sex was linked to violence against women and reducing women to 'sex objects'.

> It's abusive (Q13, R9).
>
> Women as sex objects (Q13, R71).

Faith based understandings of sex as something sacred to be shared only within marriage framed paying for sex as being akin to being unfaithful, and as a violation of religious codes.

> I believe in the law of chastity no sex
> before marriage (Q13, R3).

> Breaking my vow (Q13, R59).

Frameworks of social morality were also offered to condemn paying for sex.

> Sex without love isn't right (Q13,
> R68).

The risk of sexually transmitted diseases also deterred men from paying for sex in this study, and fits with perceptions of women in prostitution as reservoirs of infection (Coy et al, 2007).

> Don't want to risk the chance of
> getting an STD (Q13, R58).

> That's how you get AIDS (Q13, R74).

Here sentiments of abjection were expressed, where paying for sex was viewed as 'seedy' or 'gross' and men who pay for sex as 'deviant'.

> Dangerous, stupid, disgusting (Q13,
> R69).

> Seems a bit seedy (Q13, R31).
>
> That's gross! (Q13, R37).

These responses stigmatise both women in prostitution and men who pay for sex, and in this conform to the 'I'm not 'that' guy' convention of 'MenSpeak' as outlined in the previous chapter. Here men construct particular ways of being men, or men's practices, as abhorrent and 'other' in order to position themselves as different. This sits in tension with what is empirically known about men who pay for sex, that: 'they' are 'rather normal Mr Average' (Kinnell, 2006), paying for 'mundane sex' (Coy et al, 2007). 'I'm not 'that' guy' then works to break what both Jackson (1996) and Kelly (1987) have argued are 'continuities, between apparently deviant acts and the normal expression of (socially constructed) masculinity (Jackson, 1996, P. 22).

As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, the 'male sexual drive discourse' (Hollway, 1984) which understands men's sexualities through notions of uncontrollable biological driven 'needs' and 'urges', means that often men who pay for sex are understood to be satisfying biological urges. Sexual need was formulated slightly differently across survey responses, where successful sexual histories worked to preclude any 'need' to pay for sex. Interestingly, the following man expresses this through the market language of prostitution: to procure sex.

> I have been relatively successful in
> procuring sex free of charge so far
> (Q13, SR10).

While for some, being married also worked to curtail the 'need' to pay for sex: sex here becomes something a man acquires or gets for 'free' within marriage.

> I'm married so I get it for free almost
> every day (Q13, R36).

Not 'needing' to pay for sex then formed a manifest part of successful masculine sexual subjectivity for some of the sample; here the biological need discourse becomes implicit. This participant for example equates paying for sex as a form of desperation, which implies a need in 'other' men.

> I've never been that desperate (Q13,
> R8).

These narratives of rejection and abjection highlight myriad ways of being a man, and self-positioning in relation to other men. The importance placed on intimacy by this sample troubles normative notions of men's sexualities as predatory, instrumental and as being based on a desire for sex detached from emotion and intimacy. That said, the reformulation of the sexual drive discourse, discussed in the last section, reveals how articulations of heterosexual masculinity can change shape, but maintain a style that reproduces hierarchies between men through boastful competitiveness.

Adventurous Consumption

Respondents who were more open to paying for sex in the future were in the minority (16.6%, n=20). Here responses can be organised around two main framings. The first linked paying for sex to broader patterns and modes of sexual consumerism

and commerce, the second to sexual adventure. A common thread across these two framings, and what set them apart from those who rejected the idea of paying for sex is an absence of a gendered, or any other socially located analyses of the sex industry. In both then, paying for sex, as with strip clubs, was implicitly and sometimes explicitly framed as a taken for granted and inherited possibility in their lives. An effect of this taken for grantedness is that some respondents equated their position to 'liberal' attitudes towards sex.

Open-minded (Q13, R78).

Similar to the adventurer discourse detectable across positive responses to visiting a strip club, paying for sex was framed as a socially decontextualised 'opportunity'.

For the experience, and for the lack
of complications (Q13, R75).

Would probably try it at least once
(Q13, R44).

The next respondent reduces women (or men) in prostitution to a consumer good or product available to serve his curiosity.

Curious about how good the sex
worker is in bed (Q13, R64).

These responses echo those discussed in the previous section, where some men framed the potential of going to a strip clubs as 'adventurous', these expressions of

curiosity are couched in an implicit sense of entitlement linked to a taken for granted knowledge of, and access to, the sex industry. For others this taken for granted entitlement was acknowledged and moved from implicit to explicit expressions of privilege and gendered power.

> If I am not in a relationship and want
> a quick fuck with a hot escort, why
> not? (Q13, R66).

The possibility to pay for sex was constructed by some as a taken for granted opportunity, or an acknowledged and relished entitlement, what underscores all of these narratives is a discourse of paying for sex as a practice of commerce and everyday consumption (Katsulis, 2009). The following response articulates this succinctly, where paying for sex is stripped of social and cultural contexts and neutralised to a commercial transaction.

> It's a commercial transaction like any
> other. I can't help but think that it
> should be treated as a regulated
> commercial enterprise like any other.
> Protect consumers and suppliers
> within some sort of socially accepted
> paradigm of good standards, but don't
> consider it illegal because it doesn't
> adhere to some people's ideas of
> morality - morality is subjective and
> based around a plurality of cultural
> experience and background; one
> person's morality is often

significantly different to another's
(Q13, R20).

The gendered asymmetry of prostitution is obscured here, where (disproportionately) women in prostitution are euphemised to 'supplier', and men (disproportionately buyers) are euphemised to 'consumers'. This 'market language' (Niemi, 2010) more than obscuring gender as a central organising feature of prostitution, more specifically (re)invisibilises men and men's practices. As Niemi argues, while a new focus on men who pay for sex has emerged it seems to be: 'accompanied with the use of commercial language that tends to minimize the abuse involved and to degender' (Ibid: p. 161).

The Trouble with Pornography

While most men had never paid for sex, and most men had never visited a strip club, almost all (93.3% n=141) had, at some stage across their life course used pornography. Pornography occupied a unique place in the lives of the men who took part in this study, in that it represented a constitutive part of growing up and for many was described as a source of personal conflict and turmoil. As Figure 5.2 shows, of those who reported having used pornography, two thirds (68% n=95) had viewed pornography before adulthood, during a formative stage of their lives where sexual and personal identities are negotiated: between the ages of 6-14.

Figure 5.2: Age at Which Respondents' First Viewed Pornography
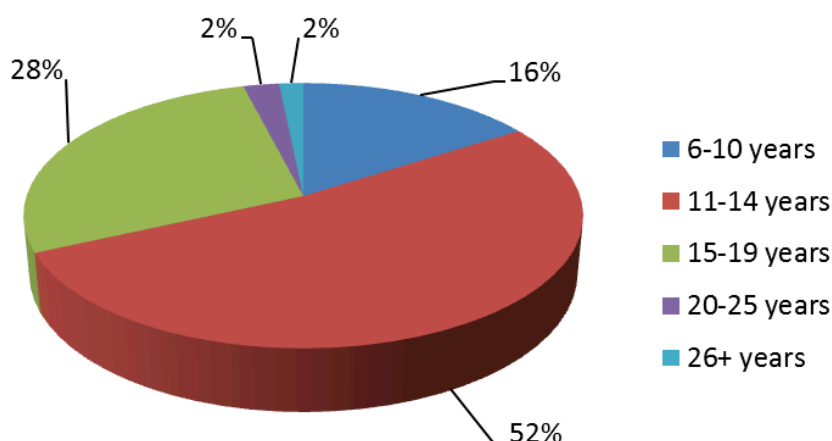
Using pornography was by far the most common engagement with the sex industry across this sample of men. A large majority reported using it online (90%, n=126) whilst at home (87.9%, n=123), with almost half using pornography on either a daily or weekly basis (46.4%, n=65).

Frequency of use presented an interesting finding in that nearly half (46.4% n=65) of respondents chose 'something else' when presented with a Likert scale of possible frequencies, as shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Frequency of Pornography Use

Frequency of use	N	%
Weekly	**45**	**32.1**
Daily	20	14.3
Every other month	5	3.6
Monthly	5	3.6
Something else	**65**	**46.4**
Missing	1	
Total	**141**	**100**

Here respondents used the reflective space to specify frequencies where one of the tick box options would have sufficed, for example: '3 or 4 times a week' (Q23, R 23), or in order to avoid putting a label to their usage 'from time to time' (Q23, R9). Others used the free text box to describe shifting patterns of use, from phases of regular use interspersed with 'no use'.

> Depends, I go long periods without use, then sometimes weekly, usage frequency has changed over the years (Q22, R 15).

Over half (50.7%, n=33) of those who chose 'something else' however, described having stopped using pornography, or as 'trying to avoid' pornography.

> I try to avoid it at all costs. I seem to go in cycles (Q22, R45).
> I try never to (Q22, 55).
>
> I stopped; it's difficult but possible (Q22, R60).
>
> Right now I stopped viewing porn because it decreased my libido with real girls (Q22, R40).
>
> I strongly avoid it now that I know the harm it causes (Q22, R44).

That nearly a quarter of men who reported pornography use said that they had stopped, or were trying to stop due to negative experience highlights how for some men pornography can be a source of personal tension and conflict. This is explored in the following section.

What's the Harm?

Given the centrality of 'harm' to sexualisation debates, and pornography debates more broadly (see Chapter Three), the survey asked whether respondents thought pornography was 'harmful' for women or for men, or both. This question was purposively broad in order to capture men's own understandings of harm and to explore their awareness of, and perspectives on debates. The decision to include this question was also made with an acknowledgement that it may be read, by some, as a leading question and possibly as an 'indictment'. As outlined in Chapter Three, questioning the 'unexamined norm' - men, and men's practices - may evoke defensive responses.

Eleven men overall did not answer this question. Of those who did, over two thirds (68.5%, n =96) thought pornography was harmful for both men and women. Eighty-two men chose to leave in depth reflections on this question, which have been organised around two styles of expression: unequivocal responses (n=50) and equivocal responses (n=32). Unequivocal responses offered vehement assertions often through narratives of experience, which predominantly framed pornography as entailing negative impacts for users and society more broadly. A minority unequivocally refuted harm.

Equivocal responses were less committed to framing pornography as harmful and raised questions about distinctions in styles of pornography and definitions of pornography, created hierarchical and conditional frameworks of harm, and spoke about what were framed as 'benefits' of pornography.

Jensen (1998) and Boyle (2000) argue that a shift towards questions of how pornography is *implicated* in processes of harm, rather *causes* harm may be more beneficial than seeking to draw causal links between pornography use and production, and harmful behaviours and attitudes. A common thread across both equivocal and unequivocal responses was how they were made in relation to, and sometimes in tension with, what this chapter describes as a 'tacit knowledge or knowing' of pornography's 'implication' in violence against women and gender inequality.

Figure 5.3 summarises the patterns in how men spoke about pornography and harm in equivocal and unequivocal ways, with an overlap of violence against women and gender inequality. Each theme is then further explored below.

Figure 5.3: Patterns in How Men Spoke about Pornography and Harm

Unequivocal Responses   **Equivocal Responses**

Negative Impacts

Personal Accounts

No Harm

Violence Against Women & Gender Inequality

Hierarchical and conditional Harm

Distinctions and Defintions

Benefits
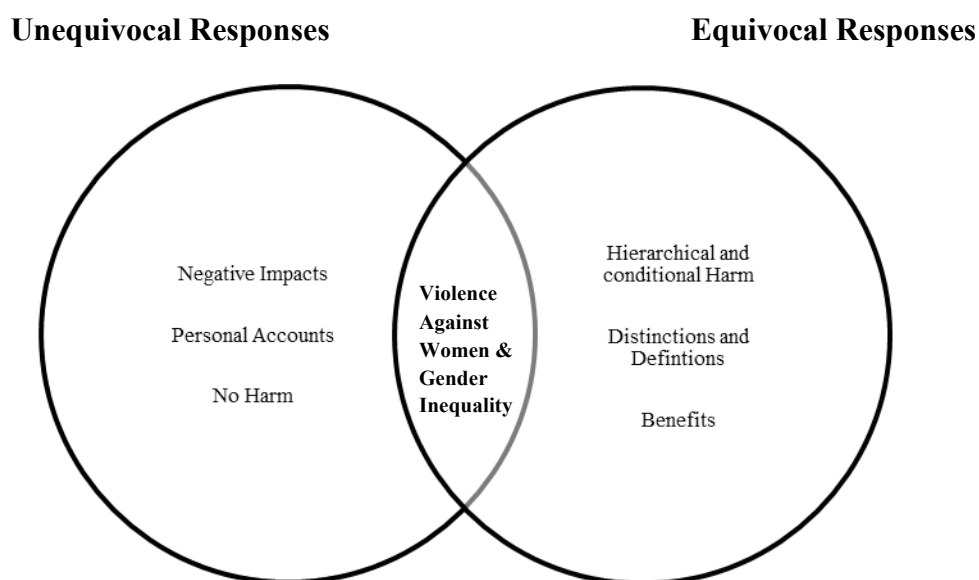
Negative Impacts

Men here often wrote in the third person to offer descriptions of what they understood to be negative impacts of pornography for both women and men. The negative impacts described by these respondents outlined how in their views, pornography can contribute to a 'skewed' view of sex, void of emotional connection and relational pleasure.

> It develops a skewed sense of sexuality for men to live up to (Q25, R17).

> I believe that pornography is harmful to both men and women as it undermines/and replaces real intimacy and sex with a detached two dimension a using of a partner for private gratification (Q25, R84).

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It serves as a poor example of sexual
and power relationships. In porn the
aim is for male gratification. In a real
interpersonal relationship this is not
the case (Q25, R14).

It destroys a real view of sex, love,
and relationship (Q25, R28).

Pornography use was also framed as detrimental to gender relations, by encouraging
men to view women as 'sex objects' leading to an inability to relate to women or to
view women outside these terms. Responses here extend beyond negative impacts
for users, to describe what they saw as a set of consequences for women as a group
and gender relations more broadly. Concern rested on women feeling pressure to
conform to sexual practices of pornography, forming a negative body image and
feelings of sexual inadequacy.

A lot of men develop negative ideas
and beliefs about women from
pornography (Q25, R44).

It can cause problems in terms of how
men relate sexually to women, and
even how men relate generally to
women. I think this could lead to
anxiety, guilt, or obsessive behaviour
that can actually be distressing to
experience. I also think that
pornography misleads men as to what
male and female sexuality is, and

> what makes good sexual relations…
> there are obvious dangers in having
> to form relationships with men who
> are misinformed as to what makes
> good sexual relations. Not to mention
> the pressure that they may be under to
> conform to body types popular in
> pornography (Q25, R32).

Pornography was viewed by some as entrenching divisions between men and women, by promoting sex based on unequal power relations.

> Men are conditioned by it to treat
> women in a certain way; women are
> conditioned to do whatever the man
> wants without consideration
> for themselves. Given the size of the
> porn industry (bigger than sports
> industry) it influences daily life; men
> treat women in the street as objects,
> women accept the objectification of
> women because of porn's influence
> on advertising (Q25, R40).

These perspectives echo some feminist critiques of pornography, in particular those, which link pornography to violence against women and gender inequality (Dworkin, 1981, 1994; Itzin, 1992; Dines, 2010; Whisnant, 2010). Tyler (2010) notes how such analyses have been consigned to 'anti sex' feminism, or as unsubstantiated exaggerations, which makes that similar concerns originate from within the community of lead 'consumers' – men - all the more interesting. The following

section offers personal testimonies of experience from survey respondents, which locate their concerns within experientially rooted critiques of pornography.

Personal Accounts

The personal accounts of negative experience depict a process of struggle and conflict in relation to some men's use of pornography. Here, eleven men wrote in the first person to offer their personal accounts. For these respondents pornography was understood as inflecting how they view themselves and women, and thus form intimate relationships.

> Pornography harms my ability to have healthy relationships and get close to people by reducing the incentive to take the potential emotional risks in finding real relationships (Q25, R60).

> The "hit" of porn encourages quick fixes and solutions and also distorts my perceptions of myself and women, making me lack confidence in my ability to attract a relationship (Q25, R60).

Physical impacts of pornography use also featured as a negative outcome, where men spoke of porn induced erectile dysfunction and performance anxiety.

> I along with many other men got
> porn-induced erectile dysfunction
> (Q25, R47).

Similarly, some men spoke of how pornography can intervene in their sex lives and they reported finding it difficult to become aroused with their partners or specifically with 'real' women in their everyday lives.

> I cannot become aroused to normal
> everyday women (Q25, R53).

An undertone to this demarcation between women in pornography and women in 'normal everyday' is that women in pornography become fetishized 'others'. Some men also outlined how pornography impacted how they saw women in their daily lives.

> I can't look at women the same (Q25,
> R55).

> It's changing the way I look at the
> opposite sex and I can't help but see
> them as sex on legs - I want to see
> them for what they are; a human being
> (Q25, R1).

In these accounts pornography was framed as initially offering escapism and as a coping mechanism for stress and depression, but had in its effects worked to compound these feelings, leaving a sense of shame, guilt and isolation.

> It's a pretty difficult thing to articulate and I guess a lot of my view is informed by my own experience of being emotionally repressed and in a depressed state. I sought the easy release and gratification of pornography, but on some level I always found it emotionally painful. Maybe because it is ultimately disconnected and isolated (Q25, R18).

No Harm

Whilst unequivocal refutations of pornography as harmful were in the minority – four men- the responses here cited a lack of 'scientific' evidence.

> There is absolutely no scientific evidence to suggest pornography is harmful to either the consumer or the participants involved in the production of it (Q25, R30).

Pornography as a positive sex aid, and enabler of sexual creativity and imagination was also cited to reject notions of harm.

> By saying pornography is bad, it can be interpreted that sex is something to be ashamed of. A lot of people are thankful for the industry, often because it helps stimulate their love life (Q25, R72).

The above response could be read as a defence in relation to what he views as a potentially repressive critique: asking about harm. Similarly, another respondent interpreted 'harm' to mean 'immoral' or 'wrong', which was also viewed as restricting sexual freedom and diversity of sexual identities. Here pornography is equated to a sexual 'activity'.

> I think demonising any form of sexual activity is damaging as it engenders sexual and personal neurosis and creates a culture in which a person's sexuality and sexual choices can be deemed "wrong" or "immoral" by a hierarchical and prejudicial society (Q25, R29).

These responses mirror the ways in which critical approaches to pornography can often be conflated with moralism (Coy and Garner, 2012). Age and consent were also mobilised to refute potential harms of pornography, which jars with the findings that two thirds of the sample had viewed pornography before adulthood.

> I don't see any harm in consenting adults watching pornography (Q25, R43).

Equivocal Responses

Equivocal responses were less committed to making or dispelling links between pornography and harm, and more to problematising the notion of 'harm'. This was

articulated in three ways: by delineating conditional and hierarchical frameworks of harm; drawing distinctions across pornographic styles and genres and raising questions about how to define pornography; and by highlighting what were seen as benefits and gratifications of pornography.

Conditional Harm and Hierarchical Harm

> Depends on context. Depends on definitions. Depends on participants (Q25, R25).

Equivocal responses located potential harms of pornography within broader social contexts of gender inequality to create hierarchical and conditional frameworks of harm. Here, pornography featured as a lesser facet to more problematic social patterns of gender inequality.

> I would say that a lot of pornography is demeaning to women, and by and large I would imagine pornography could affect sex and relationships adversely - however I think sexism in our culture is more negative to women in other areas, and there are greater threats to intimacy than pornography (Q25, R27).

Harm was also ranked along what was framed as differences between reality and fantasy, which separated and suspended pornographic production processes from its

use. Here, pornography was understood as 'less' harmful than 'real life' sexual practices.

> I don't think it is as bad as real world sexual irresponsibly. If a guy sleeps around in the real world he is hurting himself and others much, much more (Q25, R80).

> Doing something bad is much worse than simply looking at something bad. Imagination does not equal reality (Q25, R80).

Minimising the potential harms of pornography to other behavioural and socio-cultural patterns seen as problematic and as 'more' harmful, was accompanied by responses which offered caveats and conditions. From this perspective evidence of exploitation was recognised as harm, but the mantra of 'consenting adults' featured strongly to frame pornography use as perhaps unwise, but not otherwise harmful.

> It's probably not particularly healthy but if it is indulged in freely by consenting adults then I don't think there is much harm done. Obviously if there is force or under-age participants (either sex) involved in the making or viewing of said, then that's a different matter (Q25, R49).

A key criticism of perspectives, which link pornography to behavioural or ideological harm, is that they collapse nuances of pornography and oversimplify

processes of media reception. Hardy (1998, p. 3) for example notes how attempts to 'prove' that pornography 'causes' harm will always be confounded by the fact that human subjectivity intervenes between stimulus and response. This perspective however, frames pornography as a text rather than practice, specifically a practice of inequality, and it could be argued functions as a form of defensive MenSpeak on the level of knowledge production, and in this 'abusive production and consumption practices largely disappear from the agenda' (Boyle, 2008a, p. 37). Similarly consumers' active interventions and capacity to resignify messages in pornography were also proposed as factors in determining harm; here emphasis was cast on the consumer's ability/inability to draw distinctions and boundaries around fantasy and reality and to exercise 'self-restraint'.

> I think the individual harm you can do to yourself is very much linked to an individual's abilities of perspective and self-restraint (Q25, R48).
>
> Pornography is not the same as forced sex, and it is not degrading to women as long as other things are taught. Men should understand that women fulfil many roles (Q25, R72).

Distinctions and Definitions

Equivocal responses about potential harm raised questions about how to define pornography and also to outline what was seen as diversity in styles of pornography.

> There is more than one type of
> pornography. Some forms may be
> others certainly not (Q25, R23).

For some respondents however, diversity in styles was more of a theoretical potential than a practical reality as a mainstream style of 'everyday pornography' (Boyle, 2010) was identified as brutal and misogynistic.

> I think that it's possible to make
> respectful, fun, sexy porn conveying
> a genuine sense of intimacy, but a
> large majority of the porn on free
> 'tube' sites is misogynistic and brutal
> (Q25, R41).

The following man again describes what he sees as the potential for pornography to be a positive and beneficial educational resource. This man draws distinctions between pornography and 'erotic' art by associating each to different relations of power: pornography for this man equates to a dichotomy of dominant/submissive and 'erotic art' to mutual non hierarchic sexual relations.

> This is assuming that we are making
> a distinction between pornography
> and erotic art? Pornography that is
> based on a dominant/submissive
> system is harmful. On the other hand
> art that celebrates mutual sensuality
> and equal enjoyment of sex is not
> harmful in my opinion - rather such
> art could well be used to set a good

> example of healthy, non-hierarchic,
> sexuality (Q25, R37).

Benefits

Equivocal responses also outlined what were seen as the benefits and gratifications of pornography. Here porn was framed as an educative resource.

> It (pornography) can educate watchers to a certain degree and perhaps make nervous men or women less scared about having sex. This may include learning the specific anatomy genitals (Q25, R21).

This man's argument mirrors empirical studies, which have found that young people often see pornography as an educational resource and 'instruction manual' for sex (Coy, et al, 2013; see also Horvath, et al, 2013). Linked to pornography as an educational resource, equivocal responses also framed pornography as contributing to sexual adventure and experimentation and as broadening 'sexual horizons'.

> It also broadens sexual horizons so couples can perhaps enjoy different positions or acts, which they didn't previously think about (Q25, R27).

These men conflate pornography and sex, a 'casual equation' (Boyle, 2010), which obscures the commercial processes of production and contexts of inequality therein.

In this pornography becomes naturalised, occupying a potentially authoritative and formative space in men's sexual lives, expectations and practices.

Violent Overlaps

While responses to the 'harm' question differed in styles of expression, and levels and direction of agreement, they shared a common thread in the way they made links between pornography and violence against women and gender inequality. These links were made in different ways and for different effect. For some, explicit links were made in order to support a notion of harm and to describe harm, while for others violence against women and gender inequality represented reference points against which to refute harm, as with conditional and hierarchical notions of harm.

Men made these links through what they saw as dominant styles and conventions of pornography.

> Men in porn seem much more aggressive than is necessary (Q25, R21).

> In general I would say that a lot of pornography is demeaning to women (Q25, R16).

> There is also a bizarre (in my opinion) fixation on anal sex in these videos, which could be the subconscious acknowledgement that this type of porn is actually all about

objectifying and dominating the women in them, not for giving them pleasure (Q25, R19).

I do not want ever again to see choking and that sort of thing or any scene where you feel you see in the woman's face that she'd ideally be out of the room rather than go on, (Q25, R34).

I was never into anything with explicitly violent themes; I 'just' like looking at women's bodies. But even within that fairly normal (and I would say relatively wholesome) niche there are so few examples of women being depicted with equal power or taking pleasure from what's happening (Q25, R18).

This overlap represents a shared tacit knowing of the ways pornography is *implicated* in violence against women and gender inequality (Jensen, 1997). This tacit knowledge then forms a nucleus to how men take on, make sense of and crucially form 'commitments' to pornography (Hardy, 1998). It could be argued that an organising feature of men's pornography use is the way they are required to negotiate this tacit knowledge with their use of it. For some this apparently represents a source of conflict, so much so that they had decided to abstain from using pornography. For others this knowledge can be in continual negotiation, here defensive modes of MenSpeak can function to mitigate and downplay this

'knowledge', through justificatory conventions and notions of 'I'm not 'that' guy' -
'I just like looking at naked women' (as quoted above).

For some men, this tacit knowledge does not represent a barrier to, or point of tension for their pornography use. One man offered revealing reflections about how violence against women for him formed part of the appeal of pornography, and narrates how pornography intersects with, and reinforces cultural (and his own) misogyny (Barry, 1996).

> Porn has bad effects, both for men and women, it reinforces (speaking for myself) my desire to treat women as objects, something which is reinforced in this culture. I am honest with myself so I see porn as being very much about male desire dominating in sex and this turns me on. Rape is a hidden subtext to porn, in fact I think that is part of its attraction to men to have so much power over women (Q25, R36).

The recent resurgence in pornography debates includes a claim that the digital age has not only increased access to, and availability of pornography, but also impacted the style of pornography (Tyler, 2010; Dines, 2011). In this, it is argued that boundaries of soft and hard-core materials have been blurred, and that mainstream pornography has become more violent and degrading to women. The above respondents' description of rape as a hidden subtext to pornography, in order to

appeal to men's sexual desires is according to Tyler (2010) openly acknowledged and harnessed for commercial success across the US industry, where:

> …the acts required are becoming more extreme and are increasingly pushing the physical and emotional limits of the women who perform them (p. 56).

For the following man, pornography 'depicting' male power over women represents an outlet with recuperative appeal for what he describes as gendered frustrations.

> I do not think that pornography depicting male dominance and women whose role is to please the man is inherently harmful. I think it can be a valuable outlet for frustration, because dealing with women's foibles and narcissism can be extraordinarily hard work, which brings little reward. The assumption that porn appealing to a dominant male point of view is inherently oppressive strikes me as based in a lack of understanding of men's psychology, and I profoundly believe that men should not be punished for not working the same way women do. I also believe that there should exist, within society, certain spaces which are exclusive to men - and that the

freedom to view and enjoy pornography appealing to male fantasies and a male point of view without the intrusion of critical feminist voices should be one of those spaces. (Q25, R52).

The anonymous space of the online survey represented for this man a place to express sexism and misogyny, and at the same time justify them through defensive MenSpeak. Here again, biological gender difference - or more specific to this man's rhetoric neurosexism (Fine, 2011) -a discursive heritage is recalled and reinvested as a way to downplay and justify pornography's links to violence against women and gender inequality. The final part of this man's response also reveals how for some men pornography can provide a space, which forges symbolic allegiances between men.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored what a sample of 151 predominantly White British men say they do, and do not do, with respect to paying for sex; visiting strip and lap dancing clubs and pornography. While most men had never been to a strip club, and even less had paid for sex, and rejected the possibility of doing either in the future, almost all respondents had used or viewed pornography at some stage across their life course. These differences mark pornography out as occupying a unique space in men's lives, with almost all reporting that they had viewed pornography before adulthood.

Rejections of visiting strip clubs formed for some around perceived discomforts and critical reflections. Here, strip clubs were framed as exploitative settings for both women and men. Similarly, rejections of paying for sex in the future linked the practice to violence against women and gender inequality. A striking feature of these responses is how they were expressed through vocabularies and frameworks of understanding which chime with critical feminist positions on the sex industry. These positions however sit in tension with men's practices in relation to pornography. While many men critically reflected on pornography and gave negative accounts about their use of it, almost all of the survey sample had at some stage used pornography.

The question about harm revealed how men form relationships and habits with pornography in relation to, and for some in tension with, what this chapter termed a tacit knowing of its *implication* in violence against women and gender inequality. This tacit knowing, it is argued, forms a nucleus to how men make sense of pornography and their use of it, and for some men is a source of personal conflict and negative experience. For a few however, this tacit knowledge can form the impetus and appeal for their pornography use. While some commentators, and indeed some of the men in this survey frame pornography as an enabler of sexual diversity, freedom, and creativity, operating within fantasy space for many men pornography use held 'real life' negative impacts.

Those men who were more open to visiting strip clubs in the future spoke about it as part of a mundane possibility based on a taken for granted access to the sex industry. Those who were more open to paying for sex expressed a similar taken for granted

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consumer discourse. These narratives, this chapter argues, reflect how men take on and experience privilege in more nuanced shades than through a sense of conscious entitlement. Here, entitlement is articulated through subtle framings of the sex industry as an unquestioned phenomenon, a taken for granted inheritance not recognised nor acknowledged as a form of social advantage. A characteristic of this discourse of inheritance was in places also infused by market language, which framed paying for sex as just another socially dislocated consumer opportunity, in which gender and other axes of inequality were absent from consideration. This served to hide men's sense of entitlement. Moving beyond the sex industry the chapter that follows, discusses how men spoke about sexualisation more broadly.

CHAPTER SIX: Sexualisation: Definitions, Geographies and Meanings

Where the previous chapter focused on the sex industry, this chapter and the next explore how men make sense of broader spheres of sexualised popular culture. This chapter presents findings from in depth interviews with eleven men about sexualisation, and explores how they defined, mapped and made sense of this contemporary cultural scene An important distinction between the sex industry and wider media and cultural landscapes is the different modes of practice each are based on. While some products and media texts may require an active 'seeking out', unlike the sex industry, individuals are often positioned as involuntary consumers in relation to popular cultural outputs which feature across public space and are assimilated into a multitude of texts and medias. As one participant noted about sexualised advertising: 'these images are very every day and they're there whether you want them or not' (Paul, intv1). Sexualisation has therefore been described as 'the wallpaper of young people's lives' (Bailey, 2011, p.23). While this framing is useful for getting at this passive positioning of individuals in relation to sexualisation, it has two central flaws.

First, to have broader value to debates the parameters of inquiry need to be extended beyond a preoccupation with the lives of young people, to include considerations of how adult women and men feature in the frame. As discussed in Chapter Three, this demarcation between young people and adults so characteristic of policy and some academic debates around sexualisation, are beset by a logic of contradiction. On one hand sexualisation is critiqued as a 'social problem' and charged with (among many

things) reinforcing gendered stereotypes and reducing women to 'sex objects'; and yet on the other, is legitimised by consigning 'it' to 'adult sexuality' (Bailey, 2011; Papadopoulous, 2010). In this, gender stereotyping and sexism across cultural landscapes are not the problem, but rather only the age at which individuals enter the cultural field (Coy and Garner, 2012; Coy, 2013). 'Premature' sexualisation becomes the focus of concern and sexism is implicitly deemed inevitable and admissible. Essential in these discussions are inclusions of the ways adults, and of particular relevance to this thesis, men, experience, respond to, and make sense of 'sexualisation'.

A second flaw in the 'wallpaper' framing is that while it attempts to capture the omniscience and ubiquity of themes, scenes and references to sex across Western cultural landscapes, it re-mystifies an already opaque concept and makes intangible the terms of, and references for discussion. Indeed 'sexualisation' as a concept has and continues to be problematised for being too vague or too homogenous, (Attwood 2006; Egan & Hawkes 2008; Gill 2008, 2011; Buckingham, 2009; Duschinsky, 2013). As Chapter Three, outlined, methodological difficulties linked to researching sexualisation, specifically working out definitions and the scope of study led to a set of questions being incorporated into the research design, including: What is sexualisation? Where is sexualisation, and what does 'it' look like?

The first part of interview one was spent exploring these questions, and opened by asking participants what interested them about the research. This offered immediate insight into how participants understood, and located themselves within the topic. Following this, participants were asked what they understood by the term

sexualisation, whether and where they notice 'it' across socio-cultural and personal landscapes. This chapter presents findings from these discussions and offers an empirical base and extensions to theoretical and policy debates by outlining how the men in this study described and defined, located and made sense of sexualisation.

Motivations: Concern, Critique and Conflict

All of the eleven men who took part in the interview process expressed personal and political investments in the research topics. These investments formed and were articulated around three overlapping themes: concern, critique and conflict. Concern rested with potential impacts of sexualised media for young people, particularly acute for the fathers within the sample. Simon for example was fluent in the language of contemporary debates, and in particular those of UK policy responses which link sexualisation to gender stereotyping and the mainstreaming of pornography (see Coy and Garner, 2012, for an overview).

> We have a four year old son and we are both concerned, not particularly comfortable about the way the world is going in terms of the objectification of women, and sort of increased masculinity of men, and also the mainstreaming of pornography, not just the porn industry but into other industries like media, advertising, and magazines, and it makes us uncomfortable (Simon, Intv1).

Chris's concerns also mirrored UK and international policy frameworks of 'premature' sexualisation. In particular billboard advertising prompted Chris to

consider young people's, and his own position in relation to what is referred to as the sexualisation of youth (Papadopolous, 2010; Bailey, 2011).

> I think if I had a young daughter and she was getting exposed to lots of images of you know? Go to Topshop and there's lots of clearly 14 or 15 year olds dressed in a way that you think, I mean on the walls, not the pages but the walls. You know this is what's designed to be sexy? And you think where do I stand in that? (Chris, Intv1).

Jim's motivation to take part formed around both concern and critique. Jim described what he saw as contradictory discursive landscapes which, on one hand incite and legitimise discourses of 'porno-sex' across public and media spheres, and on the other what he terms 'prudish attitudes' which regulate and stigmatise.

> It's an area where in Britain we are jumping between a ridiculous prudish attitude where it's ok to fire someone for having a picture of a blond girl on their desk, and a massive sense of openness. So comedians talking about 'water sports', and that's ok and you can pick up the Metro and read articles about 'spanking', 'pegging'[9] whatever you like, but if you pull them up on a computer at work somehow you're in the pervert box (Jim, Intv1).

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[9] Pegging is a sexual practice when a woman penetrates a man's anus with a strap on dildo and watersports is sexual practice erotic play involving bodily fluids, typically urine, saliva, and less commonly, blood (Online Urban Dictionary, accessed, 11th June 2013).

Jim implies a personal investment in the issues based on first-hand experience of being professionally reprimanded for accessing material at work which he sees as socially legitimised by, and in, mainstream culture. Jim was also keen to highlight positive aspects of what he framed as a loosening of sexual barriers and taboos across public and media spheres: this he saw as a break from repressive patterns of controlled sexuality, 'middle class morality' and 'anti-sex' feminist conjecture.

However, similar to the direction of policy discourse, Jim drew a line at young people to reflect on, and to raise concerns about generational differences between his own experiences with, and access to pornography as a young man and those of young people today.

> I'm in quite a privileged position because I didn't see pornography really until I was in relationships and then I used it in relationships, whereas you can see ridiculous hardcore pornography before you've been kissed and that's something I can't get my head around (Jim, Intv 1).

'Ridiculous hard-core' pornography is perhaps a euphemism reflecting this participant's own tacit knowledge of the 'violent overlaps' characteristic of contemporary mainstream pornography, as discussed in the previous chapter. Where Jim has successfully negotiated and mediated his own subject position in relation to this knowledge, he expresses concern about young people's ability to do the same.

Paul's motivations to take part formed around critical reflections on what he saw as the commodification of the body and a 'drift towards a culture of display and surface' (Intv1). That men's bodies are beginning to feature in the frame as sexualised spectacles was a particular contention for Paul, and formed part of a broader narrative, which linked 'sexualisation' to consumer capitalism and neoliberal individualism.

Personal conflict and struggles with their pornography use prompted three participants to take part, and formed a base for critical reflections on possible linkages between mainstream popular culture, the sex industry and gender inequality. James's conflict resided in a struggle to reconcile his own critical understandings of sexualisation as 'commodification' and 'objectification' with what he describes as its appeal.

> I find that I have quite a contradictory attitude towards this sort of stuff. I think quite often I feel like ideologically and morally in many ways repulsed by the kind of, the commodification of sex and stuff like this, but also I find myself drawn to it (James, Intv1).

Some found it more difficult to articulate the source of their conflict, however detectable here were struggles to negotiate 'successful' subject positions within 'the measures of a man' (see Chapter Four) template. Louis, Will and Barry made references to feeling displaced or 'different' in relation to peer practices within the sex industry and attitudes to sex. Discomforts about conventions and modes of MenSpeak as outlined in Chapter Four, also represented a source of tension and

underpinned participants' motivations to take part. Michael and Barry expressed

frustrations with what they described as restricted and constricted space to speak

about sex, as well as performative and predatory modes of MenSpeak.

> I think it's an area in which I personally and
> society as a whole is conflicted about its position
> on. It's important stuff; it's not really talked about
> that much - we don't really talk about it (Michael,
> Intv1).

Elsewhere during the interview, Michael also spoke in confused and exasperated

tones about what he viewed as the 'casual' attitudes held by his contemporaries about

going to live sex shows while abroad. That his friend had paid for sex also led him to

question his own attitudes towards the sex industry, and suggest a troubled subject

position in relation to his peers.

Barry was one of three men whose experiences with pornography had led him to take

part. Whilst the crux of his conflict existed in his tussles to reconcile his

pornography consumption with his stated ethical anchors, a more subtle but pertinent

friction existed for him in the predatory sexual talk of his peers and cultures of

masculinity more broadly.

> People don't talk about it from a male perspective
> at all. And so I think research which is exploring
> men's perspectives is important, and that's why I
> wanted to speak to you about it. You know, men
> talk about sex, but they don't. They'll talk about it

> in a pub in a laddish way, and such like but really
> they don't talk about sex that much in any sort of
> sense of what it means, how sexual intimacy…
> men don't talk to each other about that it's seen as
> un-masculine and I find that strange and that
> culture strange (Barry, Intv1).

Louis opened the interview by highlighting differences between his own and his friend's attitudes to sex and relationships.

> I was talking with my friend the other day about
> something similar and we were talking about our
> differences and similarities and what we want
> and don't want out of life and we started on about
> sex, and sexual relationships, and there was a
> difference and we were coming from polar
> opposites really (Louis, Intv1).

This difference continued to underscore our discussions throughout the interview process, where Louis drew distinctions between his own outlook and those of his friends and social network on sex, specifically the way they 'spoke' about pornography and women and engaged in the sex industry. A sense of displacement and confusion shaded Louis' reflections, who along with Michael and Barry, was struggling to locate himself within the measures of a man as discussed in Chapter Four.

George on the other hand, explicitly located his interest in the research as being based on his own tussles with 'masculinity', or in his own words, 'masculinities and its discontents' (George, Intv1).

Andrew was motivated to take part based on a recent engagement with feminist politics via his girlfriend, which had brought to the fore what he described as a simmering discomfort with, and critique of, the sex industry - specifically pornography. Andrew also offered personal accounts of how using pornography during adolescence had in his view shaped his expectations of sex, which he sees as negatively impacting his early relationships.

> My views on sex really ruined my first long term
> relationship because our sex life wasn't how it
> was meant to be (Andrew, Intv1).

Negotiating subject positions amongst peers also represented a source of conflict and discomfort, particularly in contexts where sexualisation provides a resource for 'doing' masculinity or as outlined in Chapter Four, 'being THE man'. Some participants expressed concern about the possible impacts of pornography and styles of mainstream popular culture for young people; here they echoed much policy and (some) academic commentary, which outlines potential cultural harms of sexist visual economies.

Critical reflections also formed around what was described as commercialisation and commodification of the body. Presenting these motivations for taking part in the research, helps bring men into debates around sexualisation and to position them as

both critical agents and stakeholders in the issue, who are often either taken for granted, completely invisible, or used to represent implicit reference points for argumentation (Garner, 2012). These expressions of concern, critique and conflict also reflect how sexualisation can intersect with men's lives in complex and often fraught ways. More specifically they highlight how some men's pornography use and appeals from sexualised visual culture, may sit in tension with their stated commitments to gender equality politics, and evoke personal conflicts. As these motivations infused the interview process as a whole, they also pepper the findings of this thesis.

Discussion now turns to how men in this study defined, mapped and gave meanings to 'sexualisation'. Findings have been conceptualised through three overlapping themes: definitions; geographies; and meanings. 'Definitions' present the ways participants described and defined 'sexualisation' and in this (re)interpreted and (re)produced the language of policy and academic debates, offering both support to, and extensions of them. 'Geographies' outlines where participants located and how they mapped the places, spaces and manifestations of sexualisation and 'meanings' explores the different socio-political frameworks participants drew on to make sense of sexualisation.

Definitions

As discussed in Chapter Two, policy and academic debates evoke 'sexualisation' as an ephemeral and omniscient phenomenon. Similarly, this was echoed across discussions during interview one where rather than a definitive and stable concept, sexualisation was described as a *process* operating across media and socio-cultural

landscapes with three defining and overlapping features: commodification; objectification; and what is defined here as 'boundary play'.

Commodification and Objectification of Women

Sexualisation was described as a function of consumer capitalism where 'sex as business' (Jyrkinen, 2012) was read as the main ethos underscoring a profit motive of the advertising and culture industries. This was characterised by what was described as an incongruous and instrumental 'use' of sex across visual and media culture.

> The sexualisation of culture is where it's very clear somebody has said 'we're going to use sex to sell this thing' (Chris, Intv1).

> I guess it's about the use of imagery and sexualised imageries to sell products (Louis, Intv1).

Participants also offered gendered analyses to highlight women's bodies as the main signifiers of sex.

> I notice it in advertising where it's painfully obvious, that they could be advertising you know a shampoo but it's still a semi naked woman (Andrew, Intv1).

Sexualisation as a process and function of consumer capitalism was further articulated as 'the commodification of women and sex', a notion which also featured as fungible with 'objectification of women's bodies'.

> 99 per cent of it is based around the objectification of women really I guess, and it's used in advertising I think it's quite linked to the commodification of women I guess the commodification of sex (Jack, Intv1).

> Principally the way women have been limited to a role as an object in society, so for instance the first time ever I noticed it was probably the Wonder Bra adverts, remember them? Basically a pair of breasts but the woman might have well have had a bag on her head, and It was basically 'sex sells' (Simon, Int1).

These narratives are expressed through feminist vocabularies. Objectification theory has been, and in some sections of feminism continues to be a central critical tool for exploring how gendered power operates across visual economies, and also for some, the sex industries. As Gill (1998) outlines objectification has gained a taken for granted understanding as 'turning a human being into a thing, an object' (Kilbourne, 1999, cited in Gill, 2008, p. 437). Nussbaum (1995) offers a seven-feature model[10] of what constitutes objectification of a person, and Langton (2009) adds a further

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[10] Instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership and denial of subjectivity (Nussbaum, 1995, cited in Papadaki, 2014).

three, which are of particular relevance to how participants in this study defined 'sexualisation' as the sexual objectification of women.

> 1.Reduction to the body: the reductions of a person as identified with their body or body parts; 2. Reduction to appearance; the treatment of a person primarily in terms of how they look or how they appear to the sense; and 3. Silencing: the treatment of a person as if they are silent, lacking capacity to speak (Langton, 2009: 228-229, cited in Papadaki, 2014).

Participants linked mainstream visual economies of advertising and popular culture to sexual objectification of women in ways, which chime with this definition. Similarly, sexualisation was also understood as a verb where, like Langton's (2009) definition of objectification, 'to sexualise' is to *reduce* everything to sex and 'sexiness'. For Jim this occurs in and on the person, where a person can (hetero)sexualise and be (hetero)sexualised.

> It's like transposing issues of strength of character of ability to talk to people, attractiveness, intelligence moving them all towards how good are you at attracting the opposite sex, or being sexy (Jim, Intv1).

As discussed in Chapter Three and in the next, within some sections of feminist thought objectification is considered outmoded as a framework for making sense of women's positions within contemporary visual cultures. However, that the men in

this study gendered these discussions using this framework and vocabulary reflects the successes of feminist politics and debates in penetrating 'malestream' spaces, and sensitising men to issues of gender inequality. The previous chapter outlined relations between men, and dominant ideas about what it means to be a man as formative to the landscapes of men's lives and how they make sense of sexualisation: this chapter reveals how men are also negotiating 'sexualisation' with an awareness of, and for some engagement with, feminist and gender politics.

Boundary Play

Participants also defined and described sexualisation in relation to boundaries. George for example referred to histories of sexual censorship to link sexualisation to a loosening of boundaries around what can be and is represented about sex across contemporary visual culture.

> There is much more now that can be shown, that
> can be depicted (George, Intv1).

Such shifts have been theoretically linked to changes in: global media regulation and policy; technological advances such as the rise in digital and online media (Paasonen, 2007); and changes in social attitudes to sex (McNair, 2002). Participants also extended on a generic loosening of boundaries to describe sexualisation as a crossing or blurring of boundaries. Here representations of sex and sexuality across media spheres were constructed around dichotomies of 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable'. Barry echoes a theoretical contention that contemporary cultural scenes are

characterised by 'the mainstreaming of sex' into leisure and entertainment (Attwood, 2009).

> I think it's the fact that sex has become indistinguishable from other types of entertainment, you can't watch anything now without there being elements of sexualisation which 20 years ago, If my Gran watched the X Factor I don't know what she'd be thinking (Barry, Intv1).

Similar to policy concerns, participants also made demarcations between adult and children to express concern for young people in light of what was framed as inappropriate sexualisation of youth.

> What was that t-shirt Next had withdrawn? 'so many boys, not enough time', for 8-10 year olds!'... Everyone knows a (inaudible) sexuality is a saleable concept but when you've got it as the only saleable point how far do you go? So that's it equating youth to sexuality instead of adult sexuality (Jim, Intv1).

Jim also used boundaries to demarcate the spheres of popular culture and the sex industry: for Jim, mainstream media and the sex industries remain separate domains based on notions of 'real' sex and 'symbolic' sex.

> I would draw a distinction between, and maybe this is odd, between stuff that is sex, like porn,

like prostitution. I would say I wouldn't put that into sexualisation, that's sex, there's no deliberate boundary smudging there (Jim, Intv1).

While most participants were critical of this 'boundary play', some also raised questions around tensions between censorship and 'control' in relation to representations of sex and sexuality across cultural spheres.

Next year it is the 50th anniversary of the Lady Chatterley's trial where it finally became legal to put the word fuck, so that's an indication of how far it's come. Obviously for better or worse, obviously for good or for bad, not that I would want to go back to the bad old days. I would describe myself as a last resort as anticensorship (George, Intv1).

Chris also linked sexualisation to a loosening of boundaries around social attitudes to sex and cultural representations of sex, to implicitly argue that contemporary cultural scenes represent a kind of inevitable progression: in this he also implicitly conflates critical responses to such boundary play with censorship and control.

What was once completely outrageously sexualised fifty years ago has been drawn upon and bought into the mainstream culture and people were probably having the same reaction to it - 'that film is too racy' - and then the next Mary Whitehouse comes along and tries to put a hold

> on it or turn back time, or try to control it (Chris,
> Intv1).

Chris outlines a pertinent tension characteristic of contemporary debates and any epoch wherein sex and sexuality become a focus for public policy agendas and debate: tensions which arise from, and relate to broader definitional difficulties and tangles. 'Boundary play' across cultural landscapes was detected by participants, and is debated across academic and policy arenas. These debates often pivot around interconnected questions of form and location: in the former dichotomies of acceptable/unacceptable forms of representation and in the latter a new visibility of sex in commerce, culture and everyday life. Mapping the boundaries of sexualisation is therefore a central challenge to debates around it.

Geographies

> It's so ingrained and insidious that it's almost invisible. It seems hard to think of a place where I wouldn't see it. It could be on the front of a paper in my car, might be a hording on a side of a bus, and I think it might be in headlines in the newspapers in the shop buying a pint of milk. It seems ordinary and dull, but maybe that's a testament to the generality of it (Paul, Int1).

This section explores where across social and cultural spheres participants said they notice, and detect this commodification and objectification of sex and women and 'boundary play'. Similar to policy framings participants evoked sexualisation as a spectre, and as being so ubiquitous that it becomes invisible. Paul's words above, for

example, fit with the 'wallpaper' description presented at the opening of this chapter from national policy responses (Bailey, 2011).

Elsewhere, sexualisation has been described as a 'continuum' of commercial practices, which converge to form the 'background noise' of society at large (Standing Committee on Environment Communication and the Arts, 2008, p. 6). In this, similar to what Paasonen (2000) notes about pornography's liminal cultural position in contemporary contexts, it could be argued that the parameters and sites of 'sexualisation' become porous and difficult to map.

National and international policy responses have however extended notions of ubiquity to identify specific products and cultural sites which form part of sexualisation, including (but not limited to): music videos; film and television; print and online medias; advertising and computer video games (APA, 2007; Papadopoulos, 2010; Bailey, 2011). Similarly the men in this study identified music videos and advertising as the main 'concrete' cultural sites that promote commodification and objectification of women's bodies, and entail boundary play.

> I guess it's all over, it's all you see on billboards
> really (Andrew, Intv1).

> I notice it a lot in music videos and there are a lot
> of very sexualised images of women, so it's not
> uncommon to see a video where there's a male
> singer and he'll be surrounded by women dressed
> in a particular way and their only function is to

> look sexually attractive and available to the star
> of that video (Jack, Intv1).

The men in this study also extended the 'reach' and mode of sexualisation beyond material artifacts to argue that 'it's not just a visual issue' (Louis, Intv1). Here sexualisation was also described as a speech style, which manifests and is articulated across personal and interpersonal landscapes. Chris detects a new ease with which to talk about sex.

> I do feel like since the 90s it has you know? It is
> more commonplace for people to talk about sex
> (Chris; Intv1).

This 'new ease' in talking about sex was also linked to a 'pornification' (Paul, 2005; Paasonen, Nikunen and Saarenmaa, 2007) of everyday language. This participant describes a crossing over of words or phrases synonymous with pornography into everyday parlance.

> Acceptability of porn words, that's definitely
> something, acceptability of words that you would
> only use in porn and now in everyday
> conversations (Jim, Intv 1).

He offers an example which highlights this 'boundary play' and how conventions of MenSpeak (see Chapter Four) change across different generations.

Oh and 'she's dirty I bet she likes being fisted',
it's kinda I have heard a lot of kids saying that
whereas in my school being fisted was being
punched (Jim, Intv1).

Within the first two minutes of the first interview Jim had himself referred to 'pegging', and 'water sports'[11] and continued to refer to 'porno sex' at different stages across the interview process, which often seemed incongruous. As the interviewer this was difficult research terrain to negotiate (see Chapter Three) and highlights the way boundary play around pornography, may offer (some) men 'new' spaces to yield and enact gendered power in subtle and seemingly 'normalised' ways. He continues to make his argument about boundary play across generations.

Jim: If I remember the 70s it was all men in suits
buying gin and tonics for classy women and now
it's all Skins, (Channel 4) you know fingering
girls in sorry to put it in finer you know on sofas.
And daisy chaining, daisy - chaining was used as
a joke, by I can't remember. Do you know what
daisy chaining is?

I: No. I don't know what daisy chaining is

Jim: It's, I had to check. It's basically you know,
mouth to genitals, mouth to genitals, mouth to
genitals, mouth to genitals.

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[11] Pegging is a sexual practice when a woman penetrates a man's anus with a strap on dildo and watersports is sexual practice erotic play involving bodily fluids, typically urine, saliva, and less commonly, blood (Online Urban Dictionary, accessed, 11TH June 2013).

I: Right

Jim: You know, these kinds of things are kind of
everywhere and the boundaries are just being
gently pushed.

This particpant's words here function on two levels: he describes boundary play and MenSpeak, but also 'does' boundary play and MenSpeak, to 'gently push' the boundaries' of comfort for the researcher (see Chapter Three) revealing subtle operations of some men's oppressive practices.

Louis also located sexualisation within everyday discursive realms of MenSpeak, where 'porno-talk' forms a resource for 'doing masculinity' or 'being THE man' in relation to his peers.

One of the most shocking conversations I've
heard, and I have heard it several times and it is
equally as shocking when you hear it, he says
[Louis's friend]: 'when you do it with them
[women] you got to spit in her mouth they love it'.
I'm like 'who would love that?' And I think if I
spat in your mouth would you love it?... Another
one, a friend the less than monogamous one, he
said the craziest thing he ever done was when he
slept with a girl he punched her in the ribs and I

said 'what do mean you punched a girl in the ribs!!?' (Louis, Intv1). [12]

For Louis, these porn infused sexual practices and modes of talk are a source of both discomfort and dismay, which highlights that while theoretical commentary outlines a proposed normalisation of pornography within everyday scenarios and lived experiences, pornography occupies a precarious cultural position. Similarly, for Michael his friends' 'casual' attitude to the sex industry is also a source of dismay and discomfort.

> So in Thailand it's like a default basically to go and see the ping pong shows[13] and you hear about that and you think is that an example of what's considered to be a typical night of entertainment? I felt a bit shocked by that because it didn't seem comparable to maybe going to see a traditional Thai dance or something like that but it felt like maybe that's an example of how it's more everyone becoming more casual about that kind of thing (Michael, Intv1).

Participants also located 'sexualisation' as manifesting within editorial styles across mainstream magazines and online 'news' forums. Here, operations of media and

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[12] 'Monkey Punching' and 'Spitting' are both sexual practices. The former is synonymous with anal sex, and is often depicted in pornography premised on an intensification of sexual pleasure and sensation on impact of the punch. Spitting in a sexual partner's mouth during sex is also linked to 'degradation porn' (Urban Dictionary online).

[13] Ping Pong show is often part of a strip performance in Thailand which involves women using their pelvic muscles to hold, eject, or blow objects from their vaginal cavity. Such objects include: long string; whistles; pens; cigarettes; candles; darts; spinning tops; razor blades; chopsticks; and ping pong balls (Urban Dictionary online).

cultural sexism were described as being based on more than objectification and commodification of women's bodies, to include what was evoked as a form of discursive surveillance. Paul here describes editorial styles of women's lifestyle magazines as empty rhetoric but with insidious effects of peeping and gazing.

> A salacious use of language, stuff like *Hello*, *Take a Break* they seem to rehash the same images over and over, but replace the people and the questions, like who's underweight? Overweight? Who's wearing a bikini? Who's got caught snogging? There seems to be a salacious undertone but it's all dull though and stereotyped. It all feels for me, a bit meaningless and dull really in the same way that it's tittle tattle (Paul, Intv1).

Jack also identifies a similar process and style but with deeper analysis, Jack expands Paul's observations to outline this discursive style as contradictory and as a way to police women's bodies.

> There's a constant presentation of women essentially in their underwear and the language used to describe or accompany that imagery is: 'look at this' is this woman thin enough? Sexually attractive enough? Sometimes though they feign concern for the woman like suddenly she's too thin, but that's just another way of looking at the person and objectifying them and I think there's a lot of that stuff around. Celebrity culture peering at women, making fun of them, suggesting that

> they look wrong or that they don't measure up:
> 'cellulite', 'sweat patches' 'bad wardrobe choice'.
> And underlying all of that is the assumption that
> women should be attractive in a particular way
> for men (Jack, Intv1).

Simon also explicates an 'explicit hypocrisy' (Coy, 2013) across editorial styles of tabloid newspapers which he describes as working to both incite and indict sexualisation.

> And it will have an article of concern about
> teenagers and kids using porn websites in their
> bedrooms and then the next page there's celebrity
> titillation which is 'isn't she small', 'look what
> she's done to herself' or ' 45 too old for a woman
> to have her photo taken', and it seems
> contradictory (Simon, Intv1).

This media style has been theorised as 'the tabloidisation' and 'intimisation' (Paasonen, 2007) of media culture more broadly, where the personal, emotional and sexual take precedence over information and education. Similarly, this contradictory media discourse and policing of women's bodies may also form part of what McNair (2002, p. 107) has described as a 'wider culture of confession and 'public intimacy' of 'striptease culture'.

Participants' analyses however extended to gender their scrutiny, and to frame this style of media discourse as an operation of cultural sexism, which does more than sexually objectify women: it symbolically spies on, and berates them (see also

McRobbie, 2009; Gill, 2010). These definitions and geographies of sexualisation were strikingly critical; however as is explored next, these critiques, like the boundaries of sexualisation proved to be porous.

Meanings

> The mystical word here is commercialism
> (George, Intv1).

The most resounding way men made sense of sexualisation was through a critical lens, which positioned it as cultural artifacts and practices of advanced consumer capitalism and neo-liberalism. Paul linked sexualisation to a form of commercial exploitation.

> There's something, a move away from a social to
> a more individualistic experience, and when
> money's involved it exploits those little chinks in
> our perceptions, personalities and we think we
> can buy ourselves a better life (Paul, Intv1).

These critical reflections however were often punctuated by a defensive mode of MenSpeak, which functioned to dismiss or downplay men's own initial critiques. The following section explores this pattern in more detail.

Inevitable Inequalities

While participants were explicitly cynical and critical about sexualisation in this context, some also seemed committed to neutralising or appeasing what they

identified as the ills of consumerism, inappropriate sexualisation of youth, and for some, sexism. Such commitments were expressed through notions of inevitability. These contradictory discourses of critique and disavowal were articulated through notions of historical and biological determinism and assumed heterosexuality. Louis for example, deconstructs what he sees as underlying imperatives of advertising industries through understandings of gender and sexuality as biologically constituted.

> They're [advertising industry] pursuing your basic tool, survival reproductive instincts and they're selling to guys and girls in different ways but on a base instinctual level (Louis, Intv1).

Louis underlines what he sees as basic biological gender differences to further articulate his point

> I think there are differences about men and women and I think the differences, the fundamental difference is that men are very visual, not saying every man is visual, but women are more likely to be - don't know how to phrase that - be more thoughtful… I think is it's everywhere because as I say we are sexual beings we are designed to try to attract each other, and to be attracted to each other. So it's everywhere and the only place you notice it is when it's on the television or it seems excessive. That's what I think (Louis, Intv1).

Similarly, Chris also draws on biological determinism to mediate (hetero)sexualised styles of visual cultures, which he had earlier bemoaned for being inappropriate and tacky.

> Women are designed to be attractive, humans are a mammal where the female always has enlarged breasts, and stuff like that, there's a walking advertisement for sex right there… I think the eroticism of the female is more appealing to both sexes, it's more appealing than a naked man (Chris, Intv1).

The past was also a reflection point for some, where contemporary cultural scenes were considered in tandem with socio-cultural histories of pornography.

> It's worth remembering that pornography has existed in all forms from drawings on the walls of houses in Pompeii and written pornographic text (George, Intv1).

Similarly, Simon depicts pornography and 'objectification' of women as a kind of cultural tradition, which in a contemporary frame has been mainstreamed.

> We've always had this objectification, it's the mainstreaming of it, pornography goes back a long time, and obviously historically putting women on a pedestal or treating them in a certain way goes back a long time (Simon, Intv1).

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Men's often sophisticated and engaging earlier critiques of sexualisation sat in contrast to the banality of these statements. The past was also a reference point for Chris to reflect on his initial critical analysis of sexualisation. Here Chris's critique is reconsidered and he questions whether sexual practices and attitudes to sex have changed or whether a shift exists more in media and technological modes.

> Our whole perception of what's acceptable is constantly changing. I'm talking a couple of thousand years. So yeah to say people are doing it more and more, yeah they are more than they were in the 1920s but not necessarily more than they were doing in 1420, do you know what I mean? But back then they didn't have benefit of TVs, billboards and all (Chris, Intv1).

While subtle, these narratives hold an effect of deeming media sexism, and the sex industry, as inevitable facets of social life linked to either biological gender difference or historical patterns and 'traditions'. Through this process gender inequality is obscured and made inevitable. Here we can identify another convention of defensive 'MenSpeak', which functions to downplay, mitigate and deny structural inequalities, through the reproduction and reinvestment of discursive legacies of androcentrism. This reliance on and resilience of discourses of inevitability is also fortified in academic literature, where similarly, gendered dimensions of sexualisation are obscured by history.

> The increased visibility of commercial sex is often cited as a symptom and a cause of the

> sexualisation of society. But commercial sex is not a new phenomenon; the exchange of sex for money was part of ancient Greek, Roman and Egyptian societies, for example (Attwood, Bale, and Barker, 2013, p. 33).

These discursive strategies could form part of what Gill (2011) describes as 'a new modality of sexism' where in so-called 'post-feminist' climates critique is made difficult or 'unspeakable'.

> … a key way in which sexism operates is precisely through the invalidation and annihilation of any language for talking about structural inequalities. The potency of sexism lies in its very unspeakability (Gill, 2011, p. 63).

While the men in this study did indeed 'speak' about gendered inequalities linked to contemporary cultural landscapes, the frameworks they drew on to make sense of such inequalities in effect worked to undo and disavow their critiques. Here rather than being unspeakable, gendered inequalities become inevitable: rendered admissible and naturalised through biological and historical determinism. If considered as a mode and function of defensive 'MenSpeak', this discourse of inevitable inequalities works to stabilise unequal gender relations, vindicating both individual men and men as a group as gender relations reconfigure in light of feminist challenge and success.

Conclusions

Exploring participants' motivations for taking part in this study revealed that these men were personally and politically invested in the issues. Investments, which were articulated through three overlapping motivations: concern, critique and conflict. These motivations offer an everyday voice to academic and policy concerns, which are often discussed as moralistic, protective and censorial agendas. Moreover, that they come from men helps position men as stakeholders in the issues, whose views are often ignored or invisible. Where the previous chapter highlighted sexualisation as a salient site to explore contemporary formations of masculinity, the expressed conflicts and critiques presented in this chapter also highlight how sexualisation can represent a site of tension for men.

A striking feature of discussions in this part of the interview, was how men's narratives often chimed with much policy and academic work. Rather than a definitive and stable concept, sexualisation was described as a *process* operating across media and socio-cultural landscapes. Here, men identified three defining and overlapping features analytically conceptualised as: commodification; objectification; and 'boundary play'. In the latter, participants outlined what they saw as a blurring, crossing or loosening of boundaries around visual representations of sex across cultural fields and social attitudes to sex. Some also offered explicitly gendered analyses to link what they described as a commodification of sex and bodies to the sexual objectification of women.

While sexualisation was located across specific media and cultural sites and texts, such as advertising and music videos, the most resounding way men 'mapped'

sexualisation was through notions of ubiquity and by unpicking everyday and media discourses. In the former, a significant extension to policy and theoretical debates was locating sexualisation beyond visual economies, as a 'pornified' style of talk manifesting and articulated across personal and interpersonal landscapes. Sexualisation was also detected across contradictory magazine editorial styles, which both incite and indict sexualisation: here participants extended on notions of sexual objectification of women to illuminate a form of media sexism which surveys and berates women.

These framings, and in parts the vocabulary used, share much with feminist accounts and debates around sexualisation. In particular, the men in this study explicitly gendered sexualisation. This supports Gill's (2009, 2011) contention that the concept is too broad and homogenising to capture the specificities of contemporary representational practices across visual cultures. On closer inspection however, for some their critical narratives, which linked sexualisation to sexism were underscored by contradictions. Here the frameworks men drew on to make sense of sexualisation reduced and downplayed sexism and inequality to biological and historical determinism. Here the discursive function of defensive 'MenSpeak' extends beyond maintaining relations of hegemony between men, to maintain relations of inequality between women and men as inevitable inequalities.

CHAPTER SEVEN: 'There's Just Loads of Naked Women Here in Sexual Poses'

This chapter builds on the previous one in its concern with how to make sense of 'sexualisation' as a contemporary phenomenon, but refocuses the lens from how to name, frame and locate 'sexualisation', to explore how men engaged with representational styles across popular visual culture. The youth of sexualisation debates means that discussions often make scarce reference to the myriad texts and modes that the term attempts to describe. Empirical research which speaks to, and works with 'consumers' about sexualisation in tandem with these representational styles and practices is scarce yet essential in deciphering everyday negotiations of this cultural scene. This chapter contributes to this endeavor by exploring how the men in this study responded to, read, and reflected on a sample of images sourced from popular culture (see Appendix 8, which also includes a code for each: this code is used throughout this chapter when citing participants' words in relation to a specific image) and presents findings from the image work undertaken during interview one.

Chapter Three discussed why and how this method was used. The benefits and drawbacks of this image work are considered first here in tandem with participants' initial reactions on seeing the images presented as a set. Moving on, the chapter offers further analysis of this part of the interview process and findings have been organised around three themes: responses, readings and reflections. The 'responses' section outlines how participants responded to the imagery in three main ways: through critical rejections of them, but also the imagery was seen as invitations to

sexual gazing and evaluations. The images also evoked biographical and confessional responses and accounts about how sexualisation intersects with men's lives. 'Readings' explores how participants offered close textual analysis of the images, decoding narratives of gender and sexuality from them. The final theme, 'reflections' explores the ways participants linked the images to a set of socio-cultural frameworks to make sense of 'sexualisation' more broadly.

Looking Differently

This part of the interview process was unstructured. Images were laid out across a table without instruction and participants set the tone and direction for discussions with the researcher prompting and pursuing particular routes salient to the research aims. The strategy held a number of benefits: one being that the 'image work' helped to further contextualise the research topic, and in particular offered a concrete reference for the preceding and proceeding discussions. Presenting the images without direction also offered the benefit of eliciting unmediated reactions some of which, as discussed later, were emotional and in some cases sparked personal and biographical reflections.

A potential drawback of using images outside their intended contexts such as public space advertising, print media, and online domains, is that it raises questions as to whether findings here are relevant to how participants receive such texts in their day-to-day navigations of public and online space. That said, and as discussed in the previous chapter, in most participants' accounts sexualisation represented a source of personal and political friction, which some found difficult to articulate. For this group the image work offered a point of focus that allowed a broader set of personal

and political angsts and 'irks' to be identified. Overall, presenting images shorn of their usual context offered space for what Rebecca Whisnant (2010, in Dines et al, 2010) terms 'a new receptivity': here the methodology of 'reflective space' (see Chapter Three) created an opportunity to see the images differently and to encounter them in 'a reflective and critical context' (Dines et al, 2010). Indeed, a recurring notion expressed by participants early in this part of the interview process was that decontextualising the images brought fresh ways of seeing.

> It looks different when you put it like that. So when it's a part of a magazine with the context, football listings or something, reviews, jokes, but when you put it out flat like that you do look at it very, very differently… (IM3/4) You know that's the kind of thing you'd see in a girl's mag or maybe on the telly every night, but when it's in the context of advertisements you don't really think much of it (Barry, Intv1).

Similarly, Andrew describes how when sexualised imagery features within broader contexts of mainstream media, he takes it for granted reflecting how for him such imagery has become 'normalised'.

> (IM13) If you saw that in the magazine, I wouldn't think twice about it, I think that's normalised, but when it's taken out of context you think that's soft porn (Andrew, Intv1).

James responds to the images laid out across the table as a whole: 'well. It's quite amazing' (Intv, 1) and Jim shares a sentiment of surprise and outlines how decontextualising imagery creates a 'new receptivity'.

> I think it is quite surprising when you look at it
> like how many there are, and how also looking at
> them now is making me think (Jim, Intv1).

Presenting the images shorn of their usual contextual furnishings also evoked basic and stark readings, and in this surprise, confusion and shock.

> (IM10) Wow! 'sale'. That's really blatantly
> (laughs) commodification 'sale' knocked down
> priced women (James, Intv1).

> (IM2) I'm amazed at that ad. She's got a bottle in
> her mouth, legs miles apart and she's sitting in a
> windowsill suggestive, and well who is that for?
> (Simon, Intv1).

For Barry the advertisement for the computer video game *Grand Theft Auto* sparked biographical reflections on his own critical interjections on cultural misogyny (Barry, 1996) during adolescence, which leads him to raise questions about whether other people reflect in the same way.

(IM9) I used to play *Grand Theft Auto*, and I used to go around shooting hookers, because that was my mission and go to strip clubs, and you get to the point where you think; 'well, this isn't normal to be playing a game that represents these things'. And it's clearly an 18 game, but the people never really think when they're playing it, 'what am I mimicking here'? (Barry, Intv1).

Taking images out of their intended contexts for these participants provoked surprise, critique and confusion. Some seemed angry and upset, particularly for those who later expressed conflict about their pornography use. The following section extends on these initial reactions and presents participants' more considered responses to the imagery.

Responses

The findings presented in this and the section which follows, show that while participants made nuanced readings across individual images, they also identified an overarching stylistic convention across the images as a set. This overarching style they described as being seeded in sexist and gendered stereotypes, prompting critique and a sense of fatigue with contemporary visual economies. On the surface then, these responses to the imagery could be understood as critical rejections. However, at the same time these rejections were underscored by another more pertinent response, in which the imagery was read as invitations to sexual gazing and sexual evaluations.

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Lynx as a brand presented a point of contention for all participants who rejected their advertising style as 'tacky'. Some expressed feeling jaded by the way the brand appeals to men as assumed consumers.

(IM12/13) I would notice the Lynx and think 'ah bloody hell another ad about how men are stupid' (Jim, Intv1).

I like to think of myself as a bit more sophisticated, that my head isn't easily turned just because there's a bum wiggling at me. I don't feel that easily bought and I'm not for sale and there's the paradox that all this is an invitation to buy, but this isn't for me, I'm more complicated (Paul, intv1).

Paul and Jim critically reject Lynx's brand narrative as exploitative in the way it addresses men through gendered stereotypes and as having 'unsophisticated' urgent (hetero)sexualities. These two participants position themselves outside of Lynx's intended audience through a 'grammar of individualism' (Gill et al, 2005) congruent with the 'I'm not 'that' guy' strategy of self-positioning, or more precisely self-distancing, from particular ways of being men as outlined in previous chapters. James, on the other hand describes a more fraught process of critical interruption and rejection: rather than self-positioning outside of discourse he describes being caught up in it, attracted to the imagery but also repelled by it.

(IM12/13) I guess it is still appealing in a way. If I see one of those adverts, my instant reaction is to be attracted to it, even though you have better sense the overriding thing is the appeal of it and then you're like what is this? (James, Intv1).

Here the 'overriding appeal' of women's sexualised bodies supersede the broader narrative within which they appear, and destabilises his (aspirational) critical rejections. Through angered and frustrated tones, Michael expresses a similar sentiment.

Sometimes I find them [images] slightly arousing. The trouble is I don't want that to be, I don't want to be confronted by all this stuff all the time, I want to be able to choose. I don't want to be complicit in this use of women basically (Michael, Intv1).

Michael was particularly critical of the images and seemed angst ridden throughout this part of the interview, as if somehow by having the display of women's (and some men's) bodies compiled and concentrated into one space was too much for him. As his words suggest, for Michael visual economies which 'use' women's bodies creates tension between his stated and aspirational 'pro-feminist' values and that he finds the imagery 'arousing'.

For Paul the imagery sparked consideration of how he responds to similar images more broadly to describe a satiated 'switching off'.

> I think it comes to the point where you switch off
> and I struggle to see anyone that I'd go for.
> There's a definite stereotype or expectation, or
> there's a particular body type that is foisted onto
> you (Paul, Intv 1).

Rather than a plethora of meanings, Paul identifies an overarching stylistic convention across the images based on homogenous stereotypes. While for Paul the images evoked weariness, Michael seemed more upset and angry during this part of the interview, so much so that I chose to pursue these emotional responses.

> I: You don't sound very happy by all this, you
> sound conflicted and a bit bothered by it all.
> Michael: It is bothering (pause) but you've got no
> choice, you are either going with the flow or
> against it, but you're always in reference to it. If
> you are in that web you're always dealing with it
> (Intv1).

For Michael the images form part of what he depicted as confining visual regimes, which for him and for Paul evoke a sense of suffocation and compulsory participation. Similarly, Jack was also very critical of the images as a set.

I: If you're quite critical of it all [style of imagery] how do you negotiate that?

Jack: I don't know if I do. I suppose I don't, I think increasingly I just don't look anymore, where you're just so jaded by it (Jack, Intv1).

Jack also described jaded fatigue and satiated rejection of similar styles across cultural landscapes, alongside a process of active interruption on what he sees as a ubiquitous potential for sexual gazing at women.

I don't seek it out or I don't respond to the prompt, in the same way, because I know, because I've thought about it enough, because part of me is going 'oh you can have a look at Kelly Brook and contemplate having sex with her' and that's what the images are about (Jack, Intv1).

That Jack identifies such imagery as prompts and invitations to sexual gazing is revealing and echoes a recurrent undertone present across participants' responses more broadly. While participants rejected the imagery, these rejections were rooted in responses where they were seen as 'invitations' to sexual gazing and evaluations. For example, Jim rejects the invitations from the Lynx advertising but not before he

has evaluated the women within the images in terms of how sexually attractive he finds them.

> (IM12/13) They're just a bit crap; they're not that sexy. They're a bit clichéd a bit dumb and I don't find the girls particularly attractive which doesn't help (Jim, Intv1).

Similarly, Chris reflects across the sample of images as a whole to echo the notion of 'new receptivity' (Whisnant, 2010 in Dines et al. 2010) outlined in the opening of this chapter, and to express intrigue, and ultimately to make sexualised evaluations about the women within the images.

> There's just loads of naked women here in sexual poses, that's what's interesting. Some I find attractive, some I don't (Chris, Intv1).

Jack also draws a stark conclusion about what he sees as an underlying invitational aim of this style of imagery, which, as he sees it, is to make sexual evaluations.

> You just decide whether you want to have sex with them or not (Jack, Intv1).

Chris also remarks of American Apparel's advert:

(IM1) 'I want you to come and fuck me now',

that's what she's saying (Chris, Int1).

Jim expands on an invitational style to equate the image with ease of sexual access to the woman posing in the shot.

(IM2) So that, she's being rude, and I could have

sex with her quite easily if she's being that rude

(Jim, Intv1).

(Hetero)Sex here for Jim is consumptive not relational and something, which is 'acquired' from women: the heteronormative dichotomy of women as keepers and men as seekers of sex underscoring his statement. This participant also offered a contrasting response, to another image from the same brand in which the model is reclining, which he reads as an 'annoying' privileged sexual passivity. The image work in this instance brought to the fore simmering misogyny.

(IM1) I'd be annoyed by that, like, if she just lies

there and looks pretty until you're turned on (Jim,

Intv1).

These responses of sexual evaluation and audit, are developed further in the next section which explores how for some, the images sparked what one survey respondent termed 'pornographic recall'.

Pornographic Recall

> Some images I link back to some porn I have
>
> watched in the past, so now a more 'innocent'
>
> image can lead to pornographic recall (Q25, R29).

While the term is taken from a different strand of data collection to the findings discussed in this chapter, 'pornographic recall' held traction here in the way men made similar links between the imagery presented in this part of the interview process and pornography. Barry for example, explains how the imagery was similar to pornography premised in the way it evoked a penetrating and reductive gaze.

> When you see these images, it's all about the look,
>
> there's nothing else in it, and I guess when we
>
> speak about pornography that's the same (Barry,
>
> Intv1).

For some pornographic recall was based on formal and stylistic conventions in some of the images.

> (IM2) It does make me think there is such a
> strong subliminal message going on there and it
> is related to pornography (Chris, intv1).

> (IM1) I guess the most obvious thing to me is
> that advertising all the poses are poses they use in
> porn magazines, yeah that one (Andrew, Intv1).

Links to pornography were also made through a notion of what is termed here 'sexual use value' or in short what 'someone' could or would sexually 'do' with the images.

> (IM1/2) I can see someone masturbating over that catalogue (Jim, Intv1).

The images were also considered in relation to pornography to draw distinctions, where for some particular images and brands were identified as similar but different to pornography based on what is 'promised' and delivered within them. James and Paul for example describe 'Lads Mags' as being 'less honest' than pornography, in that they fail to deliver expected pleasures, or an assumed sexual use value.

> [Lads Mags] I find them a bit more insidious than actual just hard-core pornography, because at least hard-core pornography is just honest about what it's doing. (James, Intv 1).

Paul reads this as exploitative of men.

> (IM17) You have Nuts in there, and I see something inherently dishonest in things like that, because there's a huge display, invitation and enticement like 'look what's going on' and then when you go inside there's nothing much really going on other than what's on the cover. So there's a thing for me where there's a titillation going on there and exploitation (Paul, Intv1).

Paul and James's words, suggest how 'boundary play' characteristic of mainstream popular culture can disrupt (some) men's expected pleasures or pay offs. Here, mainstream media, which use pornographic codes and conventions, are rejected as exploitative: pornographic recall in this frame is a failed stylistic strategy of the 'commercialisation of sex' (Boyle, 2010, p. 3). In whichever frame, pornographic recall has its genesis in men's fluency in codes, conventions, and functions of pornography, and raises tensions for some men between what they expect from imagery and what is delivered.

Confessions

The images also served as a touchstone for personal and biographical reflections. Here participants offered accounts of the ways similar imagery and pornography can intersect with and shape their lives. These confessional responses were expressed through narratives of conflict and turmoil. For James ubiquitous access to sexualised imagery and pornography creates a sense of dissatisfaction premised on patterns of perpetually seeking instant gratification.

> I think it does make you feel, to some degree, dissatisfied. This kind of constant sexual imagery and things, it has caused problems for me in relationships. This kind of constantly looking for this next (gestures clicking a computer mouse) instant thrill, rather than looking for something that's going to be more satisfying in a whole sense (James, Intv 1).

Jack voices a similar sentiment to describe how the images hold a surface appeal of instant gratification but ultimately lack potential for fulfillment, which creates a sense of dissatisfaction.

> I suppose it's a bit like learning that you don't like eating really sugary food all the time, and that what you are more sustained and fulfilled by is something more substantial and all of these images are like, with the possible exception of Beyoncé, (IM6) is that they're really sugary, they are the image equivalent of sugary food. They have an immediacy and surface appeal, but they lack substance and don't sustain you. They're not inspiring, they're not beautiful images, some of them have beautiful subjects but they're not beautiful images (Jack, Intv1).

For Jack, the imagery sparked deeper reflections on what Jensen (1997) describes as 'the pain of pornography'.

> It doesn't really make me feel that nice, well if you look at it, it's painful basically. I can't describe it in any other way, it's like physical pain in my gut. It feels wrong like I'm not really being true to myself because it's not really what I want, it's titillation but it's not what I want I'm not being true to myself but I'm not living in a way that makes me happy. It sounds quite grand, but it's just, that's how it is (Jack, Intv 1).

James outlined how for him, such imagery sets him in a mode of perpetual evaluation which inflects his expectations of women and sex.

> James: I think it does create this sense of entitlement amongst men to, to feel that they deserve a hot girl on their arm and I guess that feeds into a lot of things that you know, can center around sex.
>
> I: And does it do that with you?
>
> James: I don't know if I feel entitled, but I think I maybe as I was saying before, you know in a relationship, you feel maybe that sense of dissatisfaction. You know like maybe I could get with that girl who's a bit hotter. You try to combat that but I think those things definitely pop into your mind I guess (Intv1).

Similarly, Andrew describes how cultural constructions of femininity can shape his expectations of women. Women here are categorised in terms of sexual appeal value, where a 'normal girl' 'is depicted as 'less than' and constructed through, and in opposition to, women in popular and porn culture.

> All of these images, narrow your field of what you think is good looking to the point where you're with a normal girl who is good looking but she's not on your radar at all for girlfriend material, because she's not up to the standards (Andrew, Intv1).

These confessional responses relate to a central policy concern: that stereotyped versions of femininity, as promoted across popular culture and pornography, may impact girls and women's self-esteem and body image and also impact men and boys' expectations of sex and relationships.   This is a concern Andrew both acknowledges and gives support to.

> That's one thing that is really difficult because my girlfriend is size 14-16 and is really weight conscious and there's not a single woman here who is like size 10 or less than size 10. It's like unless you're less than a size 10, then don't turn up to work. And my girlfriend, who I worship and who I think is stunning is too scared to come climbing because she thinks other people will be looking at her (Andrew, Intv 1).

The image work also evoked confessional responses where men spoke about personal conflict, in feeling drawn yet repelled by sexualised imagery. In order to make sense of this conflict, and ultimately to self-appease, men also positioned themselves as victims of their own biology, and sexual urges (O'Connell-Davidson and Layder, 1994).

> I do think you know phew (laughs), I can't help **it** but I wish that, that doesn't mean I agree with it (Michael, Intv1).

> You know you still have that niggling thing. Definitely if I look at a lads mag, I will (laughs)

definitely feel like 'oh god what am I doing' (James, Intv1).

No matter how anti porn I am I still have drives that I can't repress and that I'm embarrassed to admit, but I still find them good looking (Andrew, Intv1).

These responses reflect findings outlined in Chapter Four, where participants' described how complicit engagements in predatory modes of 'MenSpeak' can evoke a fractured sense of self and personal compromise. For these participants being aroused by, or attracted to sexualised images evoke a similar sense of conflict. Barry for example outlines how his responses to these and similar images and pornography more broadly can, as he sees it, sit in tension with his sense of self.

Barry: (IM12/IM1/2) If I wasn't in the context of doing this interview I would find her, her, and her attractive I probably wouldn't like the fact that I find her attractive I think, because I find her attractive because she isn't wearing any clothes she's wearing underwear.

I: Why don't you like the fact that you're attracted?

Barry: Because I don't think in my normal life when I meet women, looks are not the first thing I am attracted to. I think that watching pornography is out of my character in terms of how I see women, I think through sexualised

culture you are primed to be turned on by that

sort of thing and the most perverse thing about it

is that it's just ingrained into you (Intv,1).

Barry frames the imagery as forming part of a broader process of cultural grooming which for him has its genesis in pornography. This idea echoes Whisnant's (2010) argument that men who use pornography are 'pre-groomed' to 'accept', and are 'prepared' for pornography well before they begin to use it. The broader cultural and social spheres of sexism and misogyny for Whisnant, prime consumers to silence their 'ethical qualms' about pornography by the time they become habitual users. She argues that a process of 'cooperative grooming' takes place between pornographers and consumers who both have separate stakes in sustained consumption. The pornographers stake being a profit motive and consumers she argues is an investment in 'how he has come to experience sexual pleasure' (2010, p. 115). In this process Whisnant argues, men who use pornography become 'abusers and abused, consumer and consumed' (p. 115).

The paradox in such models and men's narratives as presented here, is the expressed (participants) and constructed (theoretically) lack of agency. This is not to dismiss Whisnant's model completely, but to raise caution about how such discourses can inflect men's narratives and understandings of their own practices and provide a vocabulary for defensive 'MenSpeak', which functions to dismiss and mitigate personal accountability.

The idea of cultural grooming was echoed by Andrew for whom this part of the interview also sparked confessional responses about how broader realms of

sexualisation infuse and inflect how he views women in his everyday life. As with Barry, Andrew sees the imagery 'grooming' him to make sexualised evaluations and imaginary acquisitions of female colleagues and friends, a thought and disposition he states is troubling.

Andrew: [the images] They make you feel like you can own people, like you can just buy however many girls for your iPhone who will just strip off at your command

I: Well I suppose you could, ok, and *you* feel that?

Andrew: Yea, that's why, in some ways, why I felt quite strongly about it because I find myself thinking I could just pay this person to sleep with me and just be done with it, and just skipping that whole getting to know, that section of the relationship and maybe I could just pay to see you naked.

I But you struggle with that thought?

Andrew: Yea I do, I think it now and again and it's just, it's just not a thought you should have about people especially when they're are your friends, like 'I'd like to have a pictures of you naked'

I: How come you struggle with that?

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Andrew: Well, it's not a normal relationship idea, like girls pose naked for magazines, therefore all girls should pose naked? But they shouldn't, really they should be just like us and have a relationship with someone else because seeing images like this around all the time that makes me want to see my colleagues in similar situations (Intv,1).

These confessional responses reveal how for these participants, sexualised popular culture and as explored in the next chapter pornography, can intersect and jar with men's identity, self-image and values (Whisnant, 2010, p. 116). For some the formal conventions of the imagery sparked and exasperated what appeared to be turmoil about their practices within the sex industry: both Andrew and Barry expressed troubles with their pornography use, and also for Andrew paying for sex. These troubles are discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the relevance here is what they reveal about the ways broader realms of mainstream popular visual culture can, according to men's accounts in this study, intersect with their experiences and use of the sex industry. Andrew's confessional response wherein he made links between ubiquity of sexualised imagery and him making sexual evaluations of friends and colleagues, suggests support for women's objection to pornography in the workplace as normalising and legitimising men treating women as sex objects.

Readings

This section moves on from discussions about how participants responded to the imagery, and presents the ways they made close textual analyses of individual images. Men spoke here about composition and style, and organised images into sets

based on who they imagined the assumed consumers to be. The recurrent lens though which participants made these readings was gender. Findings have therefore been organised around femininities and masculinities.

Femininities

Historically, feminist scholars have analysed relations of power operating across and within visual culture to expose a gendered dichotomy of 'active' and 'passive': with women positioned as passive objects of an active and 'possessive' male gaze (Mulvey, 1975). Participants were fluent in this visual language, reading the images through this gendered lens. These readings also echo how men described and defined 'sexualisation' as 'objectification' of women (see Chapter Six). Simon for example, outlines how for him a generic pattern of representation is present across all of the images: that women feature as passive objects of a controlling male gaze.

> (IM13) They say you are in control, that's the point they put you in control. What she's doing is for you. Even the *Men's Health* one with men and women, he's holding her in position (Simon, Intv1).

Bordo (1993b) argues that reading women as 'passive' oversimplifies what it means to be an object of the gaze, and argues, 'inviting, receiving, responding are active behaviors' (Bordo, quoted in Eck, 2003, p. 693). Similarly, participants read particular images as disrupting this gendered dichotomy, to observe what they read as 'active femininities': particular women and images were understood as being 'in control' and as working to disrupt the usual flow of sexual gazing. Jim for example

compares American singer Nicki Minaj's 'prostitutey' pose (IM15) to that of American Appeal's model (IM1), to conclude that Nicki Minaj is 'in control' and to frame the image as a potential source of fear and performance anxiety for men.

> That's not about the woman being available that's about a woman in front of you doing whatever you pay her to do. I think a lot of men would be scared of that because you get the impression she'd be very good at it and she would be very bored of you not doing what you're supposed to do before you finish. It's very 'prostitutey' type too, the pose, the stripper heels, it's kind of aggressive as opposed to that being passive (IM1) that's kind of like she could easily stand up in that position and hit you with the lollipop so she's in control of that more actually (Jim, Intv1: IM15).

On the surface Jim reads differences across these two images based on composition, the subjects eye line, body language and pose. These differences however are underscored by a continuity of 'women as sex', either available for free and with 'ease' or for purchase. Jim's reading is also congruent to broader cultural discourses which sexualise and racialise women, with the 'white' woman portrayed (and read) as passive and 'black' woman as 'hyper' sexualised other (Rose, 2008) which may evoke erotic appeal - or in Jim's case fear.

Jim's reading also reflects a familiarity with conventions of 'porno-chic' where pornographic aesthetics, conventions and gestures cross over into mainstream cultural landscapes (McNair, 2002). Elsewhere, such codes of pastiche have been

described as a form of symbolic violence that obscure and minimise the structural foundation and social organisation of the sex industry (Coy, Wakeling and Garner, 2011), whereby the violence and exploitation which can form part of prostitution, are reduced to cultural fodder and ironic symbolism. Jim's narrative reveals how Nicki Minaj, 'the woman' dissipates to symbolise transactional modes of the sex industry: 'it's about a woman doing whatever you pay her to do'. Here, the commercial tropes of the sex industry are transposed into popular culture where evaluations and imaginary acquisitions of women are made.

American recording artists Beyoncé and Lady GaGa were also marked as disrupting gendered dichotomies of active and passive, based on what men read in the images as choice, 'empowerment' and a 'knowing (hetero)sexiness' (Gill, 2012).

> (IM11) Lady Gaga - she's deliberate I like her, she's basically saying ''look how fucking sexual I am. I'm doing this'. So it's much more led (Jim, Intv1).

> (IM11) Lady GaGa, even though she still dresses like she's not got any clothes, she still dresses like you can, the image that she's more empowered, she looks like she's chosen what she's wearing (Andrew, Intv1).

These readings link to a shift in the ways women are represented and indeed self-present, across contemporary visual cultures, from notions of 'objectification' to 'subjectification' (Gill, 2007: 2009c): 'women are not straightforwardly objectified

but are presented as active desiring sexual subjects' (2007, p. 151). Gill links this representational shift to a broader postfeminist media sensibility detectable across cotemporary discourse. Two aspects of this sensibility, she argues, include a shift from 'objectification' to 'subjectification' and a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment. This she contends is 'profoundly problematic' in the way it evacuates notions of cultural influence or indeed politics from analysis. In this postfeminist media sensibility women are 'presented as autonomous agents no longer constrained by any inequalities or power imbalances whatsoever' (2007, p. 153). For Gill, this is a more pernicious form of exploitation than 'pre-feminist' representations of women as passive objects.

Michael detects this stylistic difference in GaGa's image, but is less convinced than Andrew and Jim that this signifies 'empowerment': in stifled language he tries to work it out.

> (IM11) Lady Gaga is interesting. It's unbelievable the stuff she gets away with in her videos, and they're sort of like... I'm not sure if it makes it ok to be honest, but she does know what she's doing. So you know it's a bit different but she still... she uses her body so maybe there's a bit of a bite in it (Michael, Intv1).

Michael detects a difference in GaGa's style based on her own contrivance in the process of sexual display, although he is confused. Sensing Michael's intrigue I offer him an outline of critical feminist debates as outlined above, which he then translates for himself.

So they kind of know what they're doing right? It's good that they are able to somehow turn the machine back on itself or to learn how to use the controls. It doesn't mean to say that it's positive though really. Yeah ok, it's better than total objectification of anonymous figures and that, but it's still like using the same language. It's like in art, art that uses commercialism, Andy Warhol did it and Damian Hurst does it. It's very clever and very manipulative of the system it exists within but that doesn't legitimize the system it's in. It does draw people's attention to it in a way but I don't know if Gaga wants to, I don't know what she's up to, to be honest. There are no answers (Michael, Intv1).

Similar to critical feminist perspectives, Michael is cynical about how far Lady GaGa's self styled sexualised image represents transgression from 'the system', or in a theoretical frame, from structural inequalities and 'new modalities' of sexism.

Similarly, American recording artist Beyoncé was also seen as being in 'control' and empowered, which for Jack evokes a different reaction than the other images.

(IM6) I think the Beyoncé one is interesting because I react to that less, it doesn't feel as, it feels more artistic actually and she seems more empowered in the situation and obviously how she looks in her body is obviously part of what being sold and what what's compelling in her

output, her video or live stuff. She doesn't wear a lot of clothing and she has a sexy body, and that's definitely an angle that she's working. But it doesn't feel like, it somehow feels like there's a level of empowerment that is completely absent from this kind of imagery (IM1/2), (Jack, Intv1).

I ask Jack to elaborate on what he perceived the differences between the images to be.

I think there is a sense where something is being offered in these images, a women's breast/vagina is being offered. - here (IM13) here (IM1) here (IM17) you can open it up, here I am. But in this image (IM6) it's not being offered, it's not being offered to you in the same way. She's doing something else, which I think she's chosen to do, which is some kind of other statement which I would say is about her artistic statement which is about her being a dancer and being able to move her body in a particular way (Jack, Intv1).

Jack reads an embodied agency and creative impetus in Beyoncé's image. The potentiality of Beyoncé's body beyond sex disrupts Jack's usual gazing.

And of course you could look at that and think she has a beautiful body, but I don't have the same response to that. I don't, I fundamentally don't, because of the way she's presenting herself or being presented. I don't have the response as when I look at that (IM16) and there's a bit of my

> brain when I look at that and think I'd like to fuck
> that girl and that (IM2) yeah, but there is a bit of
> your brain that goes off basically, even though
> I'm sort of embarrassed because it's so tacky
> (Jack, Intv1).

The underlying difference between the image of Beyonce and those of American Apparel and 'Lads Mags' advertising is a difference in their sexual use value. In other words, for Jack Beyoncé's is not a 'pornified' femininity, whereas Lucy Pinder's from *Nuts* magazine is. Jack's words chime with the theme of pornographic recall discussed earlier in this chapter to explain how participants linked particular images to pornography through styles, 'sexual use value' or processes of 'looking'. Similarly Jack describes how some of the imagery, for him, sparks pornographic recall which leads to sexual evaluations. While Jack links his response to biology through conventions of defensive MenSpeak, - 'that bit in his brain goes off'- taken in context to his broader pornography biography (see next chapter) this response is better understood as a social and learned one. Here habitual use of pornography intersects with representational practices and styles across popular culture and 'triggers', makes inevitable (to Jack at least) sexual evaluations. That Jack also feels embarrassed by the appeal of the 'Lads Mags' echoes narratives outlined in the previous section, where men responded to images through a contradictory complex of critique and appeal, which in their accounts sparked personal conflict.

Simon was far more resolute in his readings of the imagery. While he noted differences in styles of representation he also identified a unifying theme of sexism

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across the images as a set, which whilst evoking anger for him was not a point of personal conflict.

> Simon: The American Apparel is trying to tell women that this is your role - to look like this for men and men will like you. That one, your pubic hair and stretch out (IM1) what's that about? Look like this and men will like you!? Ahhh just!!!??
>
> I: You seem a little angry.
>
> Simon: Yea I am, it makes me upset and that's just awful, really awful treats women as if they are just consumable products that you attach to a brand, but that is just awful (Intv1).

Simon was unique in the sample in that he was the only interviewee who had never used pornography, been to a strip club nor paid for sex. In contrast for those whom the imagery sparked personal turmoil and conflict all had experience of at least one aspect of the sex industry. While it is not possible to draw correlations between men's use of the sex industry and readings of images from a small scale study such as this, it is possible to note a stark difference between those who expressed conflict about the imagery and sexualisation more broadly based on personal experience and struggle, and Simon's lack of experience and lack of struggle. This is explored further in the next chapter.

Men's readings of active, passive and 'pornified' femininities across the imagery echo theoretical debates around the gendered politics of visual cultures, and positions men as critical agents, who are sensitised to gender and feminist politics. The expressed conflict and turmoil linked to feeling both drawn and repelled by sexualised imagery, reveals how men can occupy precarious positions within 'post-feminist' media sensibilities, where visual cultures appeal to a penetrating male gaze, but also as gender relations reconfigure, it could be argued disrupt its flow.

Masculinities

Contemporaneously with/to a shift in styles of representing masculinities across media discourse, new attention has been given to how men are constructed across media and visual landscapes in sexualised ways (Bordo, 1999; Gill, et al 2005; Rohlinger, 2002). Gill et al (2005, p. 38) argue that 'men's bodies are on display as never before', both in terms of volume and style - as objects of a desiring gaze. Whilst the set of images were disproportionately of women, they also featured images of men (IM3/4/5/14). This section explores how participants read these images in discernibly different ways to how they read the images of women, revealing how men as object/subjects of the (male) gaze can occupy very different positions.

Jack reads the image of celebrity footballer David Beckham through a similar lens to the images of women: they 'say the same thing' and are framed as invitations to sexual gazing and evaluations.

> I'm focusing at the women, but it's all really, I
> don't know. It's interesting seeing that Beckham
> stuff (IM4) because it's kind of doing what the
> other imagery is doing, which is saying 'have a
> look, think about fucking me' (Jack, Intv1).

Jim on the other hand rejects any possible invitations to sexual gazing from the imagery of men, and reframes David Beckham's body from an object of sexual desire to a signifier of masculine aspiration and capital.

> (IM4) I don't see that as sexual, you can't see his
> genitals. I'd be surprised if anyone thought that
> was erotic. I can't see anyone masturbating over
> that; they might fantasise about having that body
> (Jim, Intv1).

Apart from revealing Jim's template of the erotic as being enshrined in pornographic use value, significant here is how Beckham's body signifies for him aspirational rather than sexual value. This echoes film scholar Ken McKinnon's (1998) contention that while historically men's bodies have featured across visual cultures as sexual spectacles, the possibility of same gender sexual gazing has been disrupted and disavowed by regulatory masculinity and homophobia. Thus representations of men's bodies become subjects of action rather than objects of sexual desire, as the latter would form a sense of 'uneasy pleasure'. Simon and Jim both disavow the possibility for same sex sexual gazing, and identify a gendered difference across the style and composition of images which feature men and women to reinsert dichotomies of active and passive.

The men are in these kind of energetic active poses, like I'm going to do some sit ups (Simon, Intv1).

The images of men are almost exclusively to do with a look you can work on, so sexuality is nothing to do with it. It's to do with work. So lots and lots of stomach crunches, being disciplined about what you eat. It's not a very sexual image at all I think (Jim, Intv1: IM4).

Chris audits Beckham in terms of masculine 'capital' to describe what he sees as the epitome of successful masculinity, or being 'THE man', this causes for him personal tension in the shape of envy.

David Beckham, it's funny look at him. He's interesting, the complete package, how does that affect me as a man? I look at it and think ridiculous. He's the ultimate success he's good looking, hot wife, sportsman, very successful, makes you want to shoot him down (Chris, Intv1).

As an appeasement Chris then evaluates Beckham's failures, to implicitly reflect on and negotiate his own position within a system of hierarchal success that he himself has invoked through regulatory MenSpeak.

He has a terrible voice. I'm passed the point where I think should I look like that? (Chris, Intv1).

Andrew, Jim and Chris reject men as eroticised objects to recode their bodies as signifiers of action. James on the other hand does not so much reject but complicate the notion of men as sexual objects altogether.

> I don't think men are objectified to the degree or level. They are generally you know the more powerful, the more wealthier, they have the whip hand socially as it were (James, Intv1).

Inequality between women and men for James, means that the suggested increase in volume and shift in styles of representations of men across visual culture, does not equate to 'equal opportunity objectification' (Hatton et al 2011, citing Frette, 2009; Taylor and Sharkey 2003). Social histories and contexts of gender inequality mean that images of men are produced and indeed received differently. Andrew argues that men can gain social capital and women can be belittled via cultural fetishisations of their bodies.

> The way society is made up sexualising a woman is like the instant put down… because then you belittle a woman instantly by taking her clothes off. Whereas Beckham, the porn ad, which is just porn, a camera rotating around his body, and it ends up with him just wearing his underwear as a man, that's just the epitome, everyman's dream in effect is to be like 'my body is so amazing that everyone ogles it' (Andrew, Intv1).

Interestingly we see here how measures of a man and modes and conventions of MenSpeak also infuse men's readings of the images. The image work created space for men to construct different configurations of masculinity, and to self-position within them: the 'I'm not 'that' guy' convention of defensive MenSpeak was mobilised. Participants also read images through who they imagined the assumed (predominantly male) consumers to be. Here, images were organised into categories based on representational styles, where 'types' of men were constructed and connected to 'types' of imagery or more precisely types of women. *Nuts* (the Lads Mag), the marketing material for 'Katz' strip club and 'Viago' stag tour travel company for example, were all delineated as part of 'laddish culture' which none of the participants identified with, some outright rejecting it and others marking it off as something related to 'other' men.

> I would put this style (IM12/13) in with the *Nuts* magazines (IM17) and they're speaking to a certain kind of man. These kinds of things probably this one as well, (IM24) the iPod and stripper stuff (IM19/IM23) that's a group. There's something 'Lads Mags' about all of them (Chris, Intv1).

James offers a similar reading of Lynx advertising as tacky to reject and distance himself from the brand narrative and what he sees as 'laddish culture' more broadly.

> It just creates this image of women as like, this stereotypical dream girl for a 16 year old boy I guess, just there to service your every need and yeah and I guess it's the kind of maybe also

because I feel like I don't particularly fit into that Laddish culture maybe it's a bit of snobbery on my part (James, Intv 1:IM12/13).

Through this mode of MenSpeak men construct an abject masculine 'other' in order to self position and in effect obscure their own oppressive practices. Chris for example rejects and creates a distance between himself and 'a certain kind of guy' who consumes Lads Mags, but at the same time makes sexual evaluations of the woman on the cover of the magazine to explore whether 'he would shag her'.

Chris: I look at her (IM17) and I think if I saw you in a bar I would move to the end of the bar to avoid her.

I: How come?

Chris: Because of what she's advertising - I don't want to know. I would just assume she's not interested in the kinds of things I am. Would I shag her?[14] Yeah, probably but I'm not gonna hang around for breakfast in the morning. But that image of Nicki Minaj (IM16) I'd think she's interesting and would want to speak to her. Rhianna (IM18) is definitely somebody you think you'd hang around for the weekend.

Chris's 'classing gaze' (Skeggs, 1997) extends beyond denouncements of the 'type' of man who consumes 'Lads Mags' to include the model Lucy Pinder who features

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[14]   I did not ask whether the participant would have sex with the model during the interview.

on the front cover. Here Lucy's association with glamour modeling means she has failed in her negotiations of 'respectable' femininity (Coy and Garner, 2010) and while Chris would 'shag' her, he would not stay around for breakfast. This discursive mode obscures continuities across men's practices and functions to dismiss Chris' own practices of inequality. In this it could be argued that the cultural figure of 'the lad' has no central identity.

A discursive pattern also detectable in recent focus from the mainstream press in the UK and sociological analyses of so called 'lad culture', is to locate types of behaviors with types of men (see, Phipps and Young, 2014; Mail online, 2015; The Guardian, 2015). 'Laddism' has become a conduit through which discussions about men's oppressive practices are played out in ways, which dismiss and obscure how 'laddism' it could be argued extends beyond this 'subcultural' construction of masculinity.

Phipps and Young (2014) outline a three-stage genealogy of 'laddism' which begins in the 1950's with the launch of playboy magazine and its 'errant display of adolescent masculinity' (ibid, p. 10), homophobia and misogyny. Moving on, the rise of the 'new lad' during the 1990's commonly associated with magazine genre 'lads mags' is framed as a backlash to feminism and a rejection of the so called 'new man' figure around the same time: a competing construction to the 'traditionally macho' cultural archetype of manhood (Nixon, 2003). In the contemporary frame 'laddism' has been linked to broader cultural landscapes of sexualisation, and defined as:

> …young, hedonistic, and largely centered on homosocial bonding…often consists of 'having a laugh, objectifying women and espousing politically incorrect views… ['Laddism'] is a particular cultural or subcultural practice..it is not performed by all men (Phipps and Young, 2014, P. 10).

While it is important to call out manifestations and articulations of misogyny and sexism, framing laddism as a subcultural practice obscures how men's practices can and should be understood along a continuum (Kelly, 1987; Jackson, 2006; Cowburn and Pringle, 2002; Vera-Gray, 2015), and such distinctions may not be as useful as they first appear. Whether implicitly or explicitly most of the men in this study spoke about their own practices which could also be considered conventional to so called 'laddism', yet at the same time distanced themselves from this particular cultural construction of masculinity. The' young hedonism' of 'the lad' perhaps makes him visible, meanwhile variations of 'laddism' across different men and different social axes of class, race, age and sexuality become invisible.

Similarly, Jim reads *Grand Theft Auto's* advertising style as 'brutal sexism' from which he distances himself.

> I wouldn't be one of those guys going around beating up a prostitute on a game, it's crap… it's brutalism, brutal masculinity being a good thing (Jim, Intv1).

Jim himself, across the interview process exercised a less overt style of harmful masculinity, which he dismisses and downplays and in this constructs a hierarchy of harmful masculinities and positions himself as different to 'one of 'those' guys'.

Reflections: Critiques and Disavowal

The image work also sparked deeper discussions around the themes explored in the previous chapter: definitions, geographies and meanings of sexualisation. This section builds on these themes and findings, specifically how sexualisation was defined and described through notions of commodification and objectification, which were then rebuked by discourses of inevitable inequalities, reflecting a contradictory pattern in defensive MenSpeak of critique followed by disavowal.

The Lynx adverts proved to be the most evocative in gendering discussions: the brand's style was framed as speaking of historical gender relations, which set the premise for discussions of contemporary gender relations. All participants read the imagery as ironic sexism, or what Whelehan terms 'retro sexism' (2000). James, for example, saw the use of irony and pastiche as an excuse to be sexist.

> (IM13/14) That thing about being ironic, seems
> like an excuse to get away with being sexist and
> that looks like an example of that, harping back
> to the 1950's house wife, nice and submissive
> and obedient (James, Intv 1).

Similarly, Andrew and Michael reject this irony to describe Lynx's advertising as 'really sexist, it's ridiculously sexist'.

(IM13/14) They're trying to get away with it. 'We might be sexualising women but we are doing it in a cool way, and ironic way'. But yeah, I don't know, it doesn't make it any more acceptable (Andrew, Intv1).

It's just so ridiculous that I guess it seems harmless but on the other hand if you don't see it as a joke it is quite insidious and damaging (Michael, Intv1).

Barry also framed Lynx's imagery as sexist, and argues that the irony entails a confessional 'in joke' between men.

(IM13) It's the type of thing that men joke about in a pub all the time, the type of thing women should be doing (Barry, Intv1).

Paul rejected Lynx's style as a residue of postmodern advanced capitalist culture, and dismissed the pastiche and repetition of past images and forms, as transparent (Lash and Fridman, 1993).

(IM13) And there's Lynx. And is that ironic? I don't know I can't be bothered. I've deconstructed it, I'm not interested, and they're selling us something I already know. And my own view of it would be oppositional anyway maybe because of capitalism's capacity to resell you back your old memories, like in film. Postmodernism

recreates, so for the most part ads have to be
avoided they're not art they are there to sell stuff
and so the new ironic style, the old seventies stuff
that was sexist and I wonder how far it is possible
to be ironic without sexist? (Paul, Intv 1).

These critical reflections and rejections of Lynx's use of irony and pastiche chime with the way some men rejected the notion of 'banter' as harmless, discussed in Chapter Four, where, it was framed as forming part of MenSpeak and as functioning to downplay and mitigate men's sexism and oppressive practices through excusatory dismissals. Here the domains and forms of 'MenSpeak' could be considered to extend beyond local sites of interpersonal interactions between men, to include symbolic realms and representational practices and narratives across mainstream media and advertising, where Lynx's narrative style becomes a form of defensive MenSpeak.

Sexualisation has been framed as potentially offering routes to greater sexual freedoms, diversity and expression (McNair, 2002; 2013; Attwood, 2006). For some men in this study however the gendered and socio-economic contexts of sexualisation troubled notions of sexual freedoms. The images for James sparked cynical reflections, which framed sexualisation as commercialised sex and sexuality, and as impoverishing sexual freedom and expression.

I don't necessarily think looking at a nude images
and being turned on is a bad thing, not something
I should feel guilty about, it's not a bad thing. But
in the society we live in it is women who are

> viewed as sex objects and men who are doing the kind of consuming, pretty much universally I guess. Then I think that's where the problem comes from and the fact that it's all about money, and it's not about people just expressing their sexuality and people sharing in that, you know wonderful, thing (James, Intv 1).

For Michael the images formed part of a broader pattern of commodification, extending beyond sex to include sexual identities and practices. He reflects on potential pressures for young people negotiating sexualised advertising and describes how the imagery as a whole, works to brand and sell 'aspirational promiscuity'.

> I think when promiscuity becomes an ideal, that's a high pressured thing to have to feel like that when you're younger; and I think these images certainly endorse promiscuity as a way as like a thing to aspire to in the same way as an expensive, some product. It's a product like a product; promiscuity is like a product (Michael, Intv1).

Michael's likening of promiscuity to a product reflects how articulations of heterosexuality are central to measuring up as a man and conventions of predatory MenSpeak. Empirical studies with young people have also found how creating an aura of sexual success can be a source of masculine capital, in the shape of 'lad points' (Coy et al, 2013), here the process of sexualisation is a conducive context for doing masculinity, and being 'THE' man.

Extending on the definitions and meanings of sexualisation presented in the last chapter, the idea of 'boundary play' was again mobilised to frame sexualisation as residue of historical patterns and traditions. For Michael men are the intended and historical consumers of sexualised imagery, the purpose of which is to 'catch their eye'.

> I think it has been going on for absolutely ever, if you think about French posters from the 19th century for Absinth and stuff. I guess these days they're not that covered up I guess the degree to which it takes to catch someone's eye, by someone I mean men (Michael, Intv1).

Similarly, Barry constructs sexual gazing at women as a kind of masculine tradition, a practice of masculine heritage, whilst also noting how boundaries have shifted across time.

> I think it's always been there, you know my granddad used to like Playboy… You walk down the high street and see that (IM13) but 20 years ago that would have been a hard-core image in a magazine and now it's on a billboard…Men have always been interested in looking at naked women but there's been a shift along where what was once reasonably hard core is now the softest, and now my generation has grown up with that and it's never really hit home, that that's really strange (Barry, Intv1).

By linking styles of contemporary imagery to historical traditions and masculine heritage these narratives conform to the theme of inevitable inequalities as introduced in the previous chapter. Here men made sense of sexualisation in contradictory ways: initially critically rejecting it but also subtlety dismissing it as inevitable. As outlined above the image work sparked a similar pattern and discursive style, where men's critical reflections were followed or accompanied by a discourse of inevitable inequalities where historical determinism subtly downplayed their initial critiques. Elsewhere, however, this pattern was more explicit and articulated as biological determinism, which helped men to neutralise and dismiss gendered aspects of sexualisation.

> Men have always liked undressed women - their brains are wired differently to females (Barry, Intv1).

> Men are more engaged more by visual images of females, whereas females are engaged by emotional aspects (Louis, Intv1).

> Essentially when men and women look at each other, the thing is yeah is that when people look at each other they are thinking about having sex with each other. I think ultimately. And so all of this imagery works on that level, it's contrived to tap into that impulse to consider what it would be like to have sex with that person whether you would want to have sex with that person, and to toy with to play with the idea of sex with that person (Jack, Intv1).

Women's bodies are nicer than men's. I think
men's bodies are boring (Andrew, Intv1).

The last chapter identified a contrast between the narrative styles of men's initial critical reflections on and around sexualisation, and their narratives of disavowal. A contrast is also evident here between the complexity and often sophisticated critiques men initially offered, and the banality of biological determinism. That these men so easily revert to biological understandings of gender to make sense of the imagery reflects their commitments to this discursive legacy and reinvestments of their masculine heritage. Inevitable inequalities as a convention of defensive MenSpeak functions to downplay, dismiss, and to ultimately vindicate men - both as individuals, and as a collective class - from contributing to gender inequality.

Conclusions

Initial responses to the images show how this method can create space for critical reflections. Here images sparked biographical reflections and also represented a base to form and articulate critiques of contemporary cultural representations. Participants responded to imagery as a set, seemingly rejecting the narrative styles within them as tacky and as being based on gendered stereotypes. However, responsive frames in which participants made sexual evaluations also underscored these critical rejections, and the imagery was seen as invitations to sexual gazing. Part of these evaluations included 'pornographic recall' where images were linked to pornography through stylistic conventions, sexual use value and processes of 'looking': this pornographic recall operated through men's fluency in pornographic conventions.

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The image work also sparked confessional responses where participants expressed what could be read as personal conflict about their own practices across the sex industry. Sexualised popular culture for these participants evoked ethical quandaries and held what could be understood as conflicted appeal. This raises considerations for how sexualisation may represent a barrier to men's wholesale engagement in gender equality agendas.

The readings section explored how men identified a formal consistency across the imagery as a set, but also divergent forms. In the former women were read as being passive sexual objects of a penetrating male gaze, while in the latter some of the images were described as disrupting the usual flow of sexual gazing based on women's 'active' choices. Men as object/subjects of the (male) gaze can occupy very different positions. Men were less inclined to read the images of men as invitations to sexual gazing, instead men were framed as active subjects, and their images were read through frames of aspiration and work.

As with the previous two chapters participants drew on critical feminist vocabularies to make sense of the imagery and to apparently reject the images. However, as with the previous chapter, these critical voices were muffled by a more resounding narrative of disavowal: the inevitable inequalities convention of defensive MenSpeak was mobilised to downplay and dismiss men's initial critical reflections. Here, sexual objectification of women, commercialisation of sexuality and sex, were subtly disavowed as inevitable products and conditions of historical and biological determinism. Central to this narrative pattern was how men made sense of being men

and their sexuality through biological urges, a theme which forms a central thread in the next chapter, which explores men's commitments to pornography.

CHAPTER EIGHT: All the Roads Lead to Pornography

This study set out to explore sexualisation in a broad sense and yet across the survey and interview process pornography became a focus, both thematically and in how men related to, and made sense of the issues. This is reflected in the way all but the first empirical chapters are to varying degrees, infused by discussions of pornography. Chapter Five presented findings from the online survey which explored men's experiences of, and practices within the sex industry: here pornography use differed significantly both quantitatively and qualitatively from paying for sex and visiting strip and lap dancing clubs. Nearly all respondents reported that they had used or viewed pornography at some stage across their life course: the reflective responses revealed that pornography featured as a point of personal tension for many. In Chapter Six, pornography emerged as an organising feature in how interviewees defined, mapped and made sense of 'sexualisation', and similarly, in Chapter Seven, in how men responded to, read, and made sense of a sample of images from mainstream popular culture. This final empirical chapter reflects this thematic tilt and has pornography as its focus.

Findings are drawn from discussions in the final stage of interview one, which explored men's use or not, of the sex industry. As with the online survey, these discussions revealed a sliding scale of experience: while most men had never paid for sex, and most had never been to a strip and lap dancing club, all had used or viewed pornography. For most interviewees, pornography was a constituent part of growing up and of becoming a man, and represented a point of entry into sexualised cultures. As with survey respondents pornography also evoked the most personally and politically infused reflections.

Men are lead consumers and producers of pornography (Senn and Radtke, 1990; Alexy, Burgess and Prenky, 2009; Flood, 2010), and it has been argued that boys are more likely than girls to be exposed to, and to seek it out online (Flood, 2009; Horvath et al, 2013). Why? What is it about pornography that makes it so central to most men and boys' lives and experiences? Theoretical accounts and empirical explorations are often undertaken as efforts to dispel, complicate or make links between men's use of pornography and men's harmful practices. A 'laboratory genre' of research has evolved which focuses on men's use and the potential attitudinal and behavioural 'effects' of it (for examples, see: Malamuth and Ceniti, 1986; Tyden and Rogala, 2004). This 'effects model' (Gauntlett, 1997; Boyle, 2000) has overshadowed considerations of why pornography may come to hold a place in men's lives, what pornography means to the men who use it, and possible complexities of their use. In this the potential ways that social, cultural and personal landscapes intersect with and shape men's use of pornography are obscured.

Methods that explore these broader landscapes can shed light on potential ambiguities and tensions, and may also harness greater understandings of how, and why, pornography comes to hold a place in most men's lives. Narrative methods can offer useful insights to this endeavour, (Jensen, 1997; Hardy, 1998), by 'listening to stories' and taking account of personal histories, trajectories of experience and broader social and cultural landscapes within which they form and collide. This chapter, therefore explores the 'life stories' of how pornography comes to hold a place in men's lives.

Findings are presented through what this study terms 'pornography biographies' comprised of two sections. The first presents a three-stage trajectory in how pornography came to feature in men's lives with different 'use values': boyhood, early adolescence, and late adolescence. 'Use value' was introduced in Chapter Seven to show how some men evaluated particular images in terms of their pornographic 'sexual use value': meaning how well they would serve as aids to, or could be 'used' for masturbation. The second 'use value' explored in this chapter is 'social use value', to frame the ways pornography can feature and function in men and boys lives as a source of social capital in being and becoming men, and for incubating relations of hegemony and allegiances between men.

The second section explores the place pornography occupies in men's adult lives. This section organises participants into two sets based around two main experiential frames and emotional responses to using pornography, drawing on Hardy's (1998) concept of 'commitments' to pornography. Hardy also identified three chronological phases to men's pornography use, each defined by what he terms a particular 'commitment' to pornography, characterised by a particular way of using it.

> In the first phase, which usually begins in early adolescence, the manner of use is social and the commitment casual. In the second phase beginning in late adolescence the use becomes sexual and private but the commitment is conditional, while in the mature phase, men are reconciled to pornography (Hardy, 1998, p. 102).

'Casual commitments' denote the way men described their use of soft-core magazines, as being based on 'natural curiosity' and as something they could 'take or leave': casual commitments are asexual in early adolescence and in adulthood can remain so based on 'a cool masculine denial' of any sexual interest. If men move on to form 'conditional commitments' in adolescence, their use of pornography is private and sexual, and characterised by temporality. As men's use matures and begins to intersect with their relationships with women, their engagement is more likely to involve conflict.

> By early adulthood serious doubts about pornography plague the consciousness of many men (ibid, p.109).

A 'deferred moral reckoning' in this phase means men will either abandon pornography altogether, or move to form 'reconciled commitments' to it.

> This stage where it is reached also represents the full maturity of the individual as a porn user: the point when the nature of the commitment ceases to be conditional and temporary and becomes reconciled and indefinite (ibid, p. 113).

Findings presented in this chapter both echo and jar with Hardy's model, differences and similarities discussed throughout. The pornography biographies, of the 11 men who took part in the interview process are now discussed.

Becoming 'THE' Man: Pornography as a Social Inheritance

> I first saw pornography in the bushes when I was
> around ten or eleven, something like that (Andrew,
> Intv1).

The men in this study socially inherited pornography during boyhood. Participants' relayed stories of what Flood (2009) terms 'accidental exposure' or what Hardy (1998) refers to as 'stumblings' between the ages of ten and twelve. These boyhood encounters were unsought and occurred for most, in public space.

> I remember seeing it [pornography] in primary
> school - on the ground, there was a torn out page
> (Jack, Intv1).

> We found a magazine I'm not sure where, I seem
> to remember some workman doing the roads or
> something and they had one of those hut things,
> and they had pornography there (Paul, intv1).

> There were a couple of occasions where around
> the rural village where I lived it would be slung in
> corners there would be like magazines, you know?
> (Michael, Intv1).

These early encounters can be considered public social affairs: pornography at this stage held no sexual use value for these men. The early encounters however are socially valuable in that they serve as inductions for boys to pornography. Louis,

reflecting on his own boyhood encounters, draws a distinction between 'seeing' pornography at this stage and 'consuming' pornography at later stages in his life.

> I had probably seen porn playing cards or magazines around 11 or so, but I had never really consumed then (Louis, Intv1).

While Hardy acknowledges these boyhood encounters they do not feature on his biographical timeline, such that they warrant only a casual comment.

> It would seem that pornography is something boys stumble upon usually in school or in some other place (Hardy, 1998, p. 103).

Similarly, Flood's (2009) framing of accidental exposure lacks analytical depth, such that he too casually dismisses these encounters.

> Minors may stumble across pornographic magazines and films which are the property of older family members or which have been discarded, or may be deliberately introduced to such materials by others (p. 47).

A perhaps unintended deficit of these framings is that they are insufficient descriptions for capturing how these 'stumblings' are seeded in legacies and residues of preceding generations of (mostly) men's pornography production and consumption. These residues, when stumbled upon in boyhood, form a process of

induction and re-distribution: in this sense boys socially inherit pornography they do not simply 'stumble' upon it.

In overlooking or minimising boyhood encounters, pornography remains under theorised as a social phenomenon, and subtly consigned to an inevitable and natural part of growing up as a boy, and subsequently men's, lives and sexualities. Indeed, as outlined in the previous two chapters, men take on notions of 'inevitability' linked to biological determinism as a way to make sense of gender disparities across pornography consumption, and more broadly relations of inequality between women and men. Even Flood himself accepts an explanation of why boys are more likely to actively seek out online pornography, which subtly reproduces gender difference as an organising feature of everyday lives.

> In general, boys are more interested than girls in visual depictions and more likely to view online adult oriented sexually explicit material (2011, p.56).

Such analytical deficits and oversights subtlety contribute to a broader set of dominant ideas about men's sexualities, which essentialise pornography in their lives. Boyle (2010) for example, outlines how media representations of porn users position it as a 'natural' and 'essential' part of men's sexualities. This she argues is achieved through popular television narratives and magazine editorial styles, which use an 'insider language' to articulate a shared understanding.

> … [pornography] is an 'in' joke, a homosocial
> experience a 'natural' expression of youthful
> sexuality even a mark of distinction and source of
> cultural capital (Boyle, 2010, p. 144).

This 'insider language' was evident within the interview process. For Chris it had resonated and infused his reflections on his own boyhood inheritance.

> When I was 10 there was a stash of nudey mags in
> a place where I suppose other boys could go, you
> know just one of those deals where you just
> respected it to leave it there - pornography library
> for all the young boys - and that was before
> puberty (Chris, Intv1).

Chris is fluent in this insider language which normalises pornography as a taken for granted shared experience for boys and men: 'you know just one of those deals' which serves to form unspoken allegiances. Here socially contingent aspects of Chris' public space inheritance and the ways it is formed through legacies of patriarchy are obscured. Similarly, Simon's adult reflections on his own public space inheritance of pornography are subtlety laced by a taken for granted knowing, or an 'insider language' that pornography forms a kind of heritage, 'that thing' linked to men.

> Well my dad used to have a factory, so there was
> that thing where there was a copy of 'Razzle'
> (Simon, Intv1).

Boyhood inheritances are a significant moment in men's pornography biographies, yet are often overlooked or only casually remarked upon. These are unsought social encounters which induct boys into to a broader process of gendered socialisation in which pornography is taken for granted as inevitable part of men's sexualities. The social use value of pornography at this stage then is one of induction.

Shared Curiosity: Forming Allegiances

Moving on from boyhood and public space inheritances, participants marked early to mid-adolescence as the next formative stage in their pornography biographies. At this point pornography remains public, and becomes a social affair through peer-to-peer sharing.

> Around 14 we traded magazines at school and some boys had access to what they would describe as their fathers; so most often shared in some way till the age of 16 or 17 (Paul, Intv1).

At this stage pornography becomes for some, an active process and practice of homosociality, where boys reinvest their inheritance with and through one another. Barry outlines how at this point pornography was for him a shared social affair, defined and normalised by what he terms 'male adolescent curiosity'.

> When I was at school we used to watch pornography in groups and there was that male adolescent curiosity aspect to it (Barry, Intv1).

Notions of 'sexual urge' and curiosity also characterised Jim's stated interest in pornography during early adolescence.

> Back then it was all automatic sudden urge of interest about naked women's genitals, or the potential for naked women's genitals. That was weird that was automatic, that feels automatic, it doesn't feel like you're choosing it, or you're trying to work at it, it's like 'oh my god I'm fascinated by this and I can't think why anyone wouldn't be' (Jim, Intv1).

Jim's description of how his emergent sexuality collides with pornography subtly reveals how adolescent sexual curiosity can be easily equated to a manmade product, such as pornography: such that pornography and not Jim's emergent sexuality is naturalised.

While at this stage pornography featured in men's lives in public and social ways through peer sharing, participants also spoke about using pornography alone for masturbation during early adolescence.

> I had a friend when I was in my mid-teens and he had some mags when I was 14/15 or something I would look at those and masturbate; you know hormones raging (Simon, Intv1).

Pornography then at this stage has both sexual and social use value. A discernable difference however, was detectable in the ways participants spoke about their private

use during early adolescence and private use during adulthood. The former was characterised by openness and shared knowledge that other boys were doing the same thing, whereas in adulthood this shared knowledge becomes implicit, or rather implied through Boyle's (2010) 'insider language'. Pornography in this phase then holds both sexual use value, serving as masturbation material, but also social use value in that it helps form allegiances across peer groups, boys and men, in subtle and overt ways.

Going Solo

The final phase in this three-stage trajectory is late adolescence/early adulthood where some participants spoke about 'going solo': seeking out and using pornography alone and in private. Barry links this shift to changes in how he began to understand and relate to the 'measures of a man' template as discussed in Chapter Four. As he outlines here, by the age of seventeen sexual success in 'real life', in his view, should have precluded any 'need' to use pornography.

> But by the time you get to 17 or 18 people start talking less about it, but doing it more in a solitary way, because when you're young there's a curiosity, but when you're an adult you talk less maybe because you think 'I should be having sex' (Barry, Intv1).

For Barry the preceding two phases, public space inheritance and shared social use, had shaped for him an easy segue into going solo, one that he frames as out of his control.

> From 17 it becomes solo, it does become an
> unthinking habit and you sleep walk into it (Barry,
> Intv1).

This chronological pattern was the most frequent in how pornography came to feature in participants' adult lives. However, there were variations: James recalls being more interested in pornography from an early age, and seeking it out alone or 'going solo' earlier than his peers.

> I was more interested in it from an early age than
> my friends, they were kind of like 'why are you
> looking at that'? So I guess it naturally occurs at
> different times (James, Intv1).

James frames his early interest in pornography as 'naturally occurring', which jars with how for most including James, this 'interest' is sparked by manmade heritages of pornography across public space.

> James: I think I was about just in secondary school
> about 11 or 12, I'd go down, or I did on a couple
> of occasions and steal the *Daily Sport* on a couple
> of occasions.
>
> I: What just nick it?
>
> James: Yep [laughs]
>
> I: [laughs] How did you know it was in there?

James: Well, it's on the front cover isn't it?

As with Jim cited earlier, who equated his emergent sexuality with pornography, James' narrative depicts a similar conflation, where sexual curiosity and pornography are framed as a 'natural' allegiance.

Simon's experiences also diverted from the trajectory outlined above. While he recalled public space inheritance in boyhood, and peer-to-peer passing downs, he did not move on to independently seek out or to form an adult 'commitment' to pornography.

> I grew up in a rural area until I was 12 then I moved to X and that [pornography] was there in the hedges. I've never pursued porn on my own…
> I found some on my computer because a friend who was staying with me put it there (Simon, Intv1).

Dominant discourses about men and their sexualities, and as discussed across this thesis those used by men themselves, often frame pornography use as inevitable and 'natural'. This thesis argues that this is socially rather than biologically contingent. Pornography enters men's lives through residues and legacies of patriarchy, which are reinvested through practice and discourse. From boyhood, through adolescence and into early adulthood, pornography forms a central part of the landscape of growing up as a boy and becoming a man. The next section will discuss men's adult commitments to pornography: Hardy's 'mature phase'.

Committing to Pornography

> Com·mit·ment
>
> 1. The state or quality of being dedicated to a
> cause, activity, etc.
>
> 2. an engagement or obligation that restricts
> freedom of action (Dictionary online, 2014).

Hardy (1998) uses commitments to describe men's relationships with pornography across all three phases of his trajectory. Within this study however, 'commitments' is considered an incongruous way to frame how pornography featured in men's lives during boyhood and adolescence. These stages are better understood in this thesis as forming part of a process of socialisation and normalisation: this study argues that it is in adulthood that men begin to make 'commitments' to pornography. The dictionary definition of commitments (above) fits well with the ways participants spoke about pornography and their lives: all expressed a state of dedication to it, and some described perceived restrictions on their agency. All but one in this sample went on to form a commitment to pornography as a man.

While patterns and contexts of pornography use varied across these ten men's accounts, resounding similarities could be drawn in how they made sense of, and emotionally experienced their pornography use. For some, using pornography was framed as a source of personal and political turmoil and struggle; while others framed pornography as seemingly inconsequential and as occupying a mundane, and taken for granted space within their lives. Two commonalities however were evident across all 10 men who reported adult use: that their use of pornography is best understood as commitments and that these commitments are formed in relation to,

and for some in tension with, 'a tacit knowledge' (see Chapter Four) that pornography is implicated in violence against women and gender inequality (Jensen, 1997). As such these 10 men's adult use of pornography have been conceptualised around 'troubled' or 'negotiated' commitments to capture the two central ways men made sense of and emotionally responded to pornography in their lives at the time of interview. Each type of commitment is now explored in more detail.

Troubled Commitments: Michael, Barry, Jack, Andrew and James

Five of the 11 interviewees had what can be understood as troubled commitments to pornography, characterised by what was framed as personal struggle and negative experience. For three of the five their struggles had led them to abstain from using it at the time of interview one. 'Abstinence' is apt here as it captures the expressed temporality and effort in their narratives: 'I try not to do it anymore' (Andrew, Intv1). Two of the five men continued to use pornography in spite of their stated struggles: 'I do and I wish I didn't' (Barry, Intv1). Despite the implied restricted freedom pornography use evokes for these men, they remain dedicated, committed to it.

Similar to survey findings presented in Chapter Five, men in this set narrated how pornography use held for them negative impacts on their lives and relationships. Also chiming with survey findings, ubiquity and styles of online pornography were an apparent source of discomfort for these five men. Here explicit and implicit articulations of their tacit knowledge of the way pornography is implicated in violence against women were made, and represented a barrier to trouble free use of it.

Troublesome Knowledge

> Pornography is so high definition that your brain
> doesn't do anything anymore… basically it
> diminishes real sex… it's so depressing because
> it's so accessible… the complete freedom of
> access to it is damaging because it stumps the
> mind (Michael, Intv1).

The ubiquity, repetition, and hyperbole characteristic of mainstream and online pornography (Paesonen, 2010) was a source of discomfort for Michael, which he described as diminishing sexual imagination. At the time of meeting, these discomforts had led him to both restrict the frequency of his use and also to be selective about what material he sources for masturbation.

> I try not to use it… I try to keep it, towards like
> [laughs] still images, which are 'artistic' [mimes
> quotation marks around the word artistic and then
> makes a wanker gesture and laughs] (Michael,
> Intv1).

Michael also made links between pornography and exploitation.

> Aside from any exploitation issue, I think it's
> damaging because there's nothing left for the mind,
> and I think the mind is at least half of sex (Michael,
> Intv1).

Michael's dismissive framing of pornography as exploitative reflects how his tacit knowledge is so taken for granted that it warrants only a passing comment.

For others however, these links were explicated vividly. At the time of interview one Barry was 'trying to stop' using pornography, and described feelings of shame and guilt linked to a perception of the pornography industry as exploitative. Barry described struggles to negotiate a subject position amongst his peers in relation to pornography: here 'insider' knowledge and language that implicitly and explicitly links pornography to men and vice versa, is a source of both tension and appeasement for Barry.

> I try to avoid it, I try to avoid it, make a conscious
> effort to avoid it. Like most men between ages 24-
> 25 I have used pornography, I have paid for
> pornography, I say paid because I am quite a
> moralistic person. I have high moral standards and
> the idea of going onto tube sites and getting it for
> free, stolen content, that feels far more voyeuristic
> than contributing to something I have paid for
> (Barry, Intv1).

The 'I'm not 'that' Guy' convention of defensive MenSpeak is mobilised here as a way for Barry to draw distinctions between his own practices and those of 'most men'. Barry describes what he views to be ethical pornography use: this however, on reflection becomes an unstable strategy of self-positioning.

> Whereas now, I think that's naïve and I was just
> contributing   to   an   industry   that   I   have

> fundamentally come to dislike… The big issue
> that links into the exploitation thing is the issue of
> consent… I've never watched or knowingly
> watched pornography that was not consensual. But
> you know when you start thinking about the nature
> of consent and a lady or woman in a porn video
> may have signed a contract and legally consented
> but if it's the only way she knows to feed her
> family or drug habit or she's been promised fame
> and fortune (Barry, Intv1).

In questioning the 'nature of consent', Barry's musings reflect radical feminist critiques of the sex industry which form around structural analyses of gender inequality, where 'agency' is theorised in relation to constraint (Coy, 2012). As outlined in Chapter Five, a central organising feature in men's use of pornography is a tacit knowledge of its implication in gender inequality and violence against women. Barry articulates this tacit knowledge, and in doing so makes his commitment to it troublesome. Hardy (1998) argues that before men go on to form 'reconciled' commitments to pornography their commitments are conditional based on the ways it conflicts with men's relationships with women. Barry however, complicates Hardy's contention that the source of conflict is interpersonal relationships with women, since for Barry it is the pornography industry itself.

> Fundamentally it is an exploitative industry and
> even people who feel guilty and they think it's
> because of their wives partners or girlfriend, I
> think it's because they know it's a creepy industry
> (Barry, Intv1).

As outlined earlier in this chapter, pornography in men's lives can be normalised through a shared knowledge that other men use it, further, this can also appease individual discomfort. This insider knowledge however appeared to exacerbate Barry's troubled commitment.

> I started talking to friends and they said 'don't worry everyone does it', and that really bothered me, when they say: 'don't worry everyone does it'. That hurts me even more, they think it's a comfort blanket but it wasn't for me (Barry, Intv1).

Jack described discomfort with violence in some online pornography, here his tacit knowledge is also made explicit and represents for him a barrier to trouble free use.

> I think I've got pretty mainstream tastes, I just want to look at a naked woman basically that's what I'd go for and that's exciting and nice. But if you look at the websites it seems to escalate into more violent stuff quite quickly, there's stuff where women are being treated quite roughly… women faking emotion or pleasure and it also seems to be about them being used, quite passive in the process, about men fucking them and doing something to them and treating them quite roughly… But now there is a market, a large market, and if you go on sites there's 'big tits', 'anal', you know, there's just rough violence. And that makes me uncomfortable… There are men who are just having their tastes desensitised because they are being introduced to nastier stuff,

> are there men where their appetite is changing or
> being shaped in a more violent way? And it's just,
> it's horrible fucking horrible, and it's just so
> available (Jack, Intv1).

Potential impacts or effects of violent pornography for those who use it is a point of concern for Jack, although he positions himself outside of his own discourse, where to his mind 'other men' are having their tastes slowly changed and not him. Jack 'just' wants to look at naked women, a practice he views as less harmful, or indeed harmless compared to those men who masturbate to violence against women. Here Jack's narrative mirrors the hierarchical and conditional harms of pornography survey respondents constructed. Jack's narrative also chimes with debates around pornography, which focus on desensitisation and escalation (see Dines, 2010). Interestingly however, Jack's expressed concerns reflect an inverted version of desensitisation and escalation, where in his account violence against, and domination of women in pornography has sensitised him and interfered with trouble free use of it.

Andrew had also abstained from using pornography at the time of meeting, abstinence he linked to a recent engagement in 'anti porn' politics which had led him to reflect on his own practices. Prior to this, shared knowledge and insider language which linked men to pornography and vice versa had, in his account, normalised pornography in his life.

> Before I think porn had been just a thing, a joke
> between myself and my group of friends, always

> get off quickly… it doesn't affect anyone else
> when you're watching it as a single guy… it's a bit
> like when people say don't buy non fair-trade food,
> because you don't know there are people picking
> thousands of tea leaves a day for a grain of corn
> and things like that so you don't realise how it
> affects other people (Andrew, Intv1).

On deeper reflection however, he suggests a simmering and underlying discomfort with pornography predating his recent rejection of it.

> I knew it already. I was already against porn in
> theory to begin with because I could see how it
> affects relationships (Andrew, Intv1).

For these five men their implicit knowledge of pornography's implication in violence against women is explicated and represents a point of tension and in this a barrier to trouble free use. Their narratives reveal interesting insights for contemporary debates around pornography, which highlight how as pornographic landscapes change so too does how men make sense of and negotiate their own 'ethical boundaries' (Whisnant, 2010) and positions. Hardy outlined how men's use of soft-core magazines can for some, sit in tension with their relationships with women, and involve a process of 'moral deference'. In the contemporary frame and for the men in this study, this moral defence is perhaps made more demanding, when 15 years on and where within online mainstream pornography violence against women is 'the rule not the exception' (Whisnant, 2010, p. 115). This can represent a

barrier for some not only in terms of their relationships with women, but also with themselves.

Emotional Trouble

These five men also framed pornography use as a cause and consequence of emotional trouble. James for example correlated periods of self-defined depression with using porn: here pornography was framed as 'filling a hole' or as being a source of 'escapism'.

> There have been phases where I would watch it every day and then times when I've totally given up, and generally it correlates with if I'm feeling down or if I'm feeling depressed. So I was unemployed for a while last year, I kind of was lost for direction and it became more and more common [to use pornography] (James, Intv1).

Jack described pornography's place in his life in similar terms to James.

> It fills a hole I guess. It's escapism as well; as I say I think I use it more when I'm feeling less happy about my life. It's just that satisfaction, that being, you know? It's kind of creating intensity of emotion (Jack, Intv1).

At the time of meeting, Jack had abstained from using pornography based on what he described as an unhappy and unhealthy pattern of use.

I have an experience of using pornography online and I'm pretty interested in the fact that seems to be part of a kind of unhealthy and unhappy pattern. It's not an enjoyable or happy experience (Jack, Intv1).

Barry also drew correlations between using pornography and depression.

For me it was just often a stress release an emotional release and maybe the depression and masturbating it was a quick morphine hit and it made me feel better for a bit then because I felt guilty it became a cycle of guilt and so the habit became more ingrained (Barry, Intv1).

Alongside these emotional struggles, troubled commitments were also premised on and impacted by what these five men described as a set of negative impacts on their lives and relationships. James described how using pornography had in his view, contributed to a destructive pattern of behaviour and negatively impacted his intimate relationships.

… a long term relationship of mine broke up because we had an open relationship but then I over stepped the mark and I became concerned about the way that I viewed sex and pornography… it led me [pornography] to do things that I didn't want to do really or something that I saw as helpful or healthy... I got to this point where like a fever pitch, just kind of really

overly sexed really unable to turn it off… I think

pornography contributed to that (James, Intv1).

These experiences led James to stop using pornography altogether for a period of six months, which offered the reflective space to consider his life without it.

James: So for about six months I didn't use it at all and then somehow I fell back into it, I felt good about it.

I: Did you feel different not using pornography during that six-month period? What was different about your life?

James: I felt much happier I felt proud of myself… and I think it helped me in just my attitude to women generally, trying not to just automatically, if I see an attractive woman in the street, but I think when I stopped watching porn I could be a bit more Zen (Intv, 1).

While James struggles to articulate this exactly, his confessional reflection hints at a self-perceived correlation between using pornography and viewing women across his day-to-day life through a lens of sexual evaluation. This notion echoes findings presented in the previous chapter, and forms a central concern for some critical analyses of pornography, but is often dismissed as un-evidenced. However, as outlined earlier in this chapter methods which shift focus from an emphasis on paradigms of 'effects' and take account of men's experiences and narratives can reveal how pornography use has implications for men's lives. Findings from both the

online survey and interview process show how men themselves make links between their pornography use, and how they view and relate to women in their everyday lives. While it may be too blunt to argue that using pornography for these men 'causes' and 'effects' sexist behaviours and attitudes, it is possible by men's own accounts, to argue that pornography holds purchase on, and is implicated in how men make sense of the world, their place within it and crucially how they relate to women.

A fine and cautious balance must however be struck between acknowledging men's accounts and deciphering the discursive functions of such accounts. Here, notions of cultural grooming can serve to completely detach men from their own agency and choice in particular practices and processes of inequality. Similar to the way James describes his pornography use as out of his control, 'leading him' to do things he didn't want to do (as above), Andrew framed pornography as playing a central role in shaping his expectations of sex and relationships, and in this his practices within the broader sex industry.

> I imagined our sex life to be like a movie, and my ex wasn't very, well I viewed her as not very open minded because that wasn't how she was meant to behave and that led to the relationship breaking down… porn made me feel like our relationship, I thought our sex life would be different positions and she was just too shy (Andrew, Intv1).

Pornography features in Andrew's biographical reflections as culturally grooming him.

> I think I paid for sex because I thought I should be
> having more sex in a specific way. You could
> argue that if I didn't know about doggy style and
> girl on top, if I didn't know about all the positions
> from sex in porn and all the things that happen in
> porn movies then I wouldn't be interested in doing
> them (Andrew, Intv1).

Here he links his motivations to pay for sex as being based on a desire to emulate sexual practices he has seen in pornography.

> When you first start paying for sex, it's because
> you have an idea of like 'right this time I'll finish
> with a facial and this time I'll get two girls and the
> next' it's all like porn scenarios that you've seen
> and it's like right 'I'm gonna try this out'. And
> that's what my girlfriend didn't do, wasn't doing,
> didn't know about it (Andrew, Intv1).

These narratives of cultural grooming have a double function: on one hand they recognise the way pornography can shape and infuse men's lives, but on the other they may also work to dismiss men's agency in the scenario, framing them as victims. An awkward similarity may be drawn between binary debates around women's positions within the sex industry, where women's apparent agency and choice to sell sex, for example, is pitted against analyses of structures and systems of inequality which restrict women's 'space for action', (Jeffner, 2000 cited in Coy, 2009) and choices. A useful bridge is to abandon an either/or project and consider agency in relation to constraint.

> Agency is always exercised within constraints,
> that inequality is an ever-present component and
> that constraints relate to social not just personal
> power relations (Madhok, Phillips and Wilson,
> 2013,p. 7).

In this frame, men make decisions and choices to use pornography and indeed to pay for sex, at the same time men also inherit personal and social landscapes that legitimise and promote these practices as an essential part of being a man. These masculine heritages, may prepare or 'groom' men to accept as natural particular practices they do not however, determine men's actions. It is men's reinvestments of such heritages which reproduce them. A process, which may be fraught as the following section explores by presenting contradictory frameworks of some men's commitments to pornography.

Contradictions

These men's accounts and stated troubles with using pornography were also underscored by contradiction and what can be described as conflicting commitments. While their expressed troubles with pornography had led some men to changing their patterns of use, such struggles did not prove troublesome enough to sever men's commitments to pornography all together. While at the time of meeting, Jack had abstained from using pornography he did not rule it out from his life completely.

> I do not use porn at the moment, but it's
> interesting, I may use it in the future - that
> situation where I'm at home in the evening where

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> I'm bit bored, frisky it comes up still and it's a
> massive temptation to know there's this universe
> of sexual imagery at your disposal for nothing, for
> no sign up (Jack, Intv1).

Andrew had recently rejected pornography based on what he framed as a commitment to feminist politics: while he described having stopped accessing online pornography, he also explained how he continues to source other materials, which hold for him pornographic use value.

> I still use pictures; I still look at pictures of women,
> people I know, that's what I mean about feeling
> ashamed. Like people I know who I want to sleep
> with, so I fantasise about them…on Facebook
> (Andrew, intv1).

That photographs on Facebook have pornographic use value for Andrew reflects how, for some men, boundaries of pornography are elastic. Andrew's stated commitment to a feminist politics, which rejects pornography, is revealed here to be superficial, paling in light of his commitment to pornography.

James reflects on the way his commitment to pornography sits in tension with his stated support of gender equality politics, to also describe conflicting commitments.

> I have been involved in campaigns and things and
> yeah around women's rights and that really is a bit
> hypocritical to be contributing towards an industry
> that is totally, counter to that… I guess conflict is

the essence of it I guess, wanting to meet the
ideals wanting to push gender equality but then
having other desires that conflict it (James, Intv1).

While James was self-critical, unpicking contradictions across his own narrative, he also leaned on insider knowledge and taken for granted ideas about men's sexualities which link men to pornography and vice versa to muffle personal trouble.

I guess I justify it… you think well everyone
looks at porn now, every guy looks at porn it kind
of makes it, makes you feel less negative about it,
less worried about it, and it normalises it (James,
Intv1).

For these five men their pornography use was characterised by personal and political struggles, which in their accounts formed in tension to a tacit knowledge of pornography's implication in violence against women and gender inequality. In their accounts this represented a 'troublesome knowledge' in that it represented a barrier to trouble free use. Men also reported emotional troubles linked to using pornography and described negative impacts on their lives and relationships. In the latter, pornography was outlined to have grooming and restrictive qualities on their lives. These troubles however were also underscored by contradictions, where men expressed reluctance to abandon pornography altogether: while troubled these men remained committed in some sense to pornography.

Negotiated Commitments: George, Paul, Jim, Chris, and Louis

Unlike those who held troubled commitments, for the men in this set pornography did not appear to be a source of personal turmoil, occupying for these five men a seemingly uncomplicated space in their lives. However, similar to those with troubled commitments these men also made links between pornography, violence against women and gender inequality and some expressed discomforts about these perceived linkages. These discomforts however, were negotiated and resolved through defensive modes of MenSpeak. This is Hardy's (1998) mature phase, in which he argues men come to form indefinite and 'reconciled' commitments to pornography. Rather than reconciled this study presents 'negotiated' as a more fitting description, as this captures how these men's use of pornography was a live and dynamic process, always and continuously bound up with personal and political negotiations.

Instrumental Use

Four of the five men in this set spoke about pornography in dismissive ways, framing it as occupying a mundane and instrumental space in their lives; Jim however attached slightly more importance on it as a route to sexual pleasure and fantasy. At the time of meeting, Chris reported using pornographic films around once a month and mainly whilst alone. Chris spoke about pornography in a dismissive way.

> One of my things about pornography in my life,
> I've always been fine without it… It's a sex aid...

> it's switching on that trigger in the brain (Chris,
> Intv1).

Louis was also dismissive about his use of pornography. Even though he reported using it every day, he described it as an'intimacy replacer' during periods of being single. Similar to Chris, who applied a neuro-scientific understanding of his own sexual arousal - 'that trigger in the brain' - Louis also linked his pornography use to legacies of what Cordelia Fine (2010) terms 'neuro-sexism' - to 'being a visual person'. For Louis, pornography use is a natural consequence of his biology rather than his own volition and practice.

> I would say that pornography is something that I
> consume because I consider myself a reasonably
> visual person, and I wouldn't say that I desire the
> sexual activities actions that are going on in some
> pornography, some might, I wouldn't say they are
> my desires (Louis, Intv1).

The blend of biological determinism, and 'I'm not 'that' guy' conventions of defensive MenSpeak here, aids Louis in distancing himself from 'other' men, as well as his own practices. Paul spoke about how accessing online pornography is both practically and emotionally easy.

> It's an unmediated experience you don't have to
> go into it too much, not have to think about it, just
> switch on the computer and press a button and it
> comes up it's free you don't even have to engage
> or enter the transaction (Paul, Intv1).

This echoes findings from the online survey where the privacy and isolation characteristic of much pornography use can minimise potential emotional trouble or conflict.

While Jim also framed his use of pornography as instrumental, to 'get off quickly', he also described its role in sexual fantasy and in his view permitting sexual explorations void of social judgement or constraint.

> I use pornography because I want to get off, get off easily or I'm fantasizing about something I wouldn't normally fantasise about… It's a flow to fantasies, going into things that I would like to do without having to explain myself (Jim, Intv1).

Extending on this Jim outlines the way he uses pornography in tandem and in relation to women in his life. Aside from the implicit sexual bragging evident in this account, his words reflect how for some men, the interface between fantasy and real life is porous and that pornography may intersect with and shape how men relate to women in their everyday life.

> If I've been out and talking to girls that I fancy and I've been quite drunk, or still drunk the next day, then I'll be flipping back and forth between my fantasies, and the pornography…and there'll be orgasm after orgasm, because you can fantasise and then go back to porn (Jim, Intv1).

Negotiated Knowledge

A commonality across troubled and negotiated commitments is how they were formed in relation to what was identified in Chapter Five, and developed in this one, as a tacit knowledge that pornography is implicated in violence against women and exploitation. As outlined for those with troubled commitments, this knowledge occupied a 'troublesome' space in how they experienced and made sense of their pornography use. For the men in this set, this knowledge had at the time of meeting seemingly been negotiated through modes of defensive MenSpeak.

> If there's violence in it, an undercurrent of
> violence it really doesn't work for me. I don't have
> any need to possess, overwhelm or have, that's not
> my sexual identity (Paul, Intv1).

That some men's sexualities' may be based on a need to possess and overwhelm offers Paul a pivot point from which to self-position as 'not 'that' guy', and to successfully negotiate his tacit knowledge. Jim also distances himself from other men in order to negotiate this knowledge.

> You should have concerns about how the industry
> is set up and that makes my stomach feel a bit
> awkward because I know that there are men who
> see themselves as business and women as the
> product and I don't get that, I would like to see
> that change (Jim, Intv1).

Louis also draws on defensive MenSpeak in order to appease his own discomforts and to negotiate his tacit knowledge.

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It can be quite disconcerting and uncomfortable to think that vulnerable people are manipulated into pornography. I'm not saying that is everyone, but I would suspect that that it is a large proportion of the industry and that's uncomfortable and disconcerting but they're adults however vulnerable you may be you are still held accountable for your actions... just because your vulnerable doesn't mean you can go and murder somebody (Louis, intv1).

Louis reformulates and disavows his initial critique of the pornography industry through a neoliberal narrative, which makes central the sovereignty of the individual. Through this, Louis deflects his complicity in what he first describes as a manipulative industry, and individual choice becomes the 'problem' rather than pornographers and users. Jim also reformulates what first appears to be a critique of pornography as exploitative, to a consumer critique of the product not delivering to his expected pleasures.

It's uncomfortable if someone looks like they're getting hurt or they're not very comfortable or they look like they're pretending to enjoy it and then it's not very convincing (Jim, Intv1).

What represented a point of concern, discomfort or negotiation for most men in this study represented for Jim a positive source of sexual fantasy and signifier of shifting attitudes to sex.

> I don't like anybody getting hurt or humiliated but
> I don't mind people playing with it. And I've
> looked at things like you know, fisting, that's
> becoming quite common, women having sex with
> women involving large object penetration is sort
> of becoming the new thing…That seems to be
> more regarded, new, rather than the crap horrible
> guy pumping a girl who doesn't really want to be
> there, so there are positives (Jim, Intv1).

Similar to the way men in the online survey spoke about harm and pornography by constructing conditional harm and hierarchies of harm, Jim's framing of these 'positives' also formed around hierarchical notions of harm. Here, large object penetration and fisting are seen as an improvement on a 'guy pumping a girl who doesn't really want to be there'. An undertone could also be read from Jim's narrative which questions women's consent in pornography. An undertone, which also extends into his own sexual practice, here he describes how pornography has helped to break down women's 'resistance' to anal sex.

> I think also the tastes of what people are into have
> changed because of pornography. Let's be even
> more honest. I suppose the last 3 people I have
> been to bed with them, none of them have not
> wanted, have not resisted anything to do with anal
> sex. So I guess that's one of the positive things, a
> change. So women are allowed to be sexual and
> try extreme things that they would only have done
> if a man had made them (Jim, Intv1).

Jim further explicates his tacit knowledge to describe 'scary' and 'dangerous' pornography.

> Like rapey type fantasies capturing women in the woods and doing them and ok that might be a consensual video but you don't actually know that as a viewer. And I know there are things like naked women standing next to dead bodies… that's risky sexuality out of the complete crossover from emotional and physical stuff to no emotion at all and that's scary… I don't like some of those loops and that's dangerous (Jim, intv2).

Highlighting differing gradients to men's familiarity with pornography's implication in violence against women, more than a tacit knowledge Jim articulates what could be considered an expertise. While he rejected 'rapey type fantasies', and what could be deduced as necrophilia as abhorrent, an interesting and uncomfortable disjuncture remains between his expertise and strategic self-distancing.

The Exception

Dominant discourses about men's sexualities contribute to a common sense and taken for granted knowledge that 'all' or most men use pornography. This taken for granted knowledge is reproduced across different sites and in different ways: from interpersonal landscapes, as a form of banter, to media landscapes, where men's use of pornography is essentialised and normalised through 'insider language'. This thesis argues that both such banter and insider language can form spoken and unspoken allegiances between men. It could also be argued that across empirical

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research and theoretical arguments a similar narrative unravels: that all or most men use pornography. Seldom presented are discussions of men who do not use pornography, or who reject it for personal and political reasons.

While findings from this study and in particular those presented in this chapter in part shore up dominant ideas that all or most men use pornography, the chapter also creates space to acknowledge and to explore how some men do not use pornography, and how and why some men reject it all together. One interviewee featured as an exception amongst this sample of men in that at the time of meeting he was not a pornography user, nor had he ever formed a commitment to it.

> [Pornography] It's just not something that interests me and that's the easiest way to describe it and that's just who I am (Simon, Intv1).

Simon spoke about the preliminary two phases described in the previous sections of this chapter: public space inheritance, and peer to peer sharing, but unlike other interviewees he never went on to seek it out alone for private use.

> I did see pin ups in factories. Sam Fox KP peanuts and my dad's parents ran a pub and they were there taking nuts to reveal breasts that was there, but no more than page three (Simon, Intv1).

Reflecting on boyhood, Simon's narrative depicts less of an active rejection of pornography and more a mundane disinterest in it.

> It was so minor in my life, I was doing other stuff
> it never took up any of my time… I was just
> interested in other stuff, music was massive for me
> and that wasn't really that sexualised… It wasn't
> there, it wasn't mainstream (Simon, Intv1).

Simon links his disinterest, in part to broader cultural landscapes of his boyhood and adolescence, where in his words sexualisation 'wasn't mainstream'. However, Simon was not the only man in his age range, Jack and Paul for example were similar ages sharing similar cultural space with Simon, and yet both had formed commitments to pornography. That Simon had never committed to pornography positions him as an outlier amongst this sample of men: both interviewees and survey respondents. More broadly, his is an under-explored narrative and experience across empirical studies and theoretical debates around pornography where methods and aims tend to focus on men as consumers of pornography. While this study attempted to recruit men both with, and without experiences of the sex industry, including pornography, most interest to take part came from those with experience, with by far the most common being pornography use.

As Simon was the only man who had never formed a commitment to pornography with whom in depth work was undertaken, it is not possible to make claims about how, and why his experience differed from other participants. However, a noteworthy difference between his narrative and other participants is the way he resolutely rejected broader realms of the sex industry and sites of sexualisation. Simon had never been to a strip and lap-dancing club, nor had he ever paid for sex, and expressed resolute rejections of the potential of doing either in the future. This

differs considerably to other participants who had varying levels of experience across the sex industry and whose reflections here were characterised by contradictions and conflict.

Findings presented in this chapter formed part of a broader discussion around men's experiences of, and perspectives on the sex industry, which have thus far been omitted from consideration. This is due in part to how for this sample of men pornography occupied a distinct place in their lives compared to paying for sex and strip clubs: distinctive in that pornography seemed to be a more personal affair, featuring in their lives for much longer. It could tenuously be argued that these men formed their perspectives on, and experiences of paying for sex and strip clubs through and in relation to their commitments to pornography.

As outlined above, Simon unequivocally rejected both paying for sex and visiting a strip club, in contrast to the broader sample of men, whose experiences, practices and perspectives of these things were more diverse, and apparently more complicated. Levels of paying for sex were the same among those with troubled and negotiated commitments: one man in five from each respective group had paid for sex. However, visiting strip and lap dancing clubs represented a more common experience for men with negotiated commitments, here four out of five men had been to a strip club, and three of those more than twice. Only one of the men in the troubled set had visited a strip club.

Those who held troubled commitments to pornography were very critical about paying for sex, and strip and lap dancing clubs. Here similar to survey findings both

were framed as exploitative industries, and as uncomfortable and undesirable practices. That said however, these critical reflections were also peppered with contradiction, where similar to survey findings those who rejected strip and lap dancing club expressed what could be read as resistance to relinquish the possibility of visiting one altogether. Here, narratives echoed survey findings where individual apathy or critique towards strip clubs was resolved when ritualised and collective invitations to invest in hegemonic projects arise. For these men, their pornography use sat in tension with, and contradiction to these critical reflections.

In contrast, men with negotiated commitments to pornography were less critical about paying for sex and strip and lap dancing clubs, and some mobilised defensive modes of MenSpeak to downplay, dismiss and mitigate gendered aspects of the sex industry.

It could be argued that men's use of pornography is a live and dynamic process, always and continuously bound up with personal and political negotiations, which may also inflect how they make sense of and engage in the broader sex industry. Men's discursive practices about the sex industry can reflect and contradict their actual practices within the sex industry.

Simon's lack of experience and being uncommitted to pornography may have shaped how he negotiates invitations to 'being 'THE' man', as detectable in the following account.

> I've left stag dos because that was where they
> were going [strip club] and I said 'forget it', and

I've gone and got the train back home. I just said
'I don't agree with them it's not my thing' (Simon,
Intv1).

Simon's resolution may be linked to his lack of practices of inequality within the sex industry, for him there is no tension or conflict at the intersection of personal and political, his theory matching his practice.

Conclusions

While findings presented in this chapter were drawn from broader discussions about three aspects of the sex industry, the ways men spoke about pornography and the place it occupied in their lives differed considerably to paying for sex and visiting strip and lap dancing clubs. These differences were quantitative and qualitative. All participants had seen pornography at some stage across their life course, and all but one man had formed commitments to pornography in adulthood; in contrast two had paid for sex, and five had visited a strip and lap-dancing club.

Unlike paying for sex and strip and lap dancing clubs, pornography for the men in this study evoked the most personally invested responses and reflections highlighting its unique position in their lives. Porn featured in these men's lives across a three-stage trajectory: boyhood, adolescence and adulthood. These phases were conceptualised as pornography biographies, to reflect the way for the men in this study their pornography use was seeded in social and personal histories linked to cultures of masculinity, dominant ideas about men, and personal choice. For all interviewees for example, discovering or being exposed to pornographic material formed part of growing up as boys.

At each stage it was argued that pornography holds different use values. Across the second phase, adolescence, pornography is often shared within peer cultures, and in this it was argued has social use value in forging allegiances between young men, and normalising pornography in their lives. The final stage, where as adults men seek it out alone for private sexual use, going solo, depicts a migration from an explicit shared and spoken allegiance to an unspoken taken for granted part of being a man. Framing findings in this way broadens the view from men's use of pornography to also explore the social and personal landscapes of such use. Biographical framings allow space to acknowledge the way men's use of pornography can be a process in continual flux within nuanced motivational, contextual and experiential frameworks.

Following Hardy, and in order to get at the way men are invested in and invest in pornography the chapter framed men's adult use of pornography as commitments. For some, pornography represented a personal and political point of tension which formed a motivational base for taking part in the study. For others, pornography was framed in more mundane ways and perceived as an inconsequential necessity in their lives and social relations more broadly. Two types of commitments were identified here, troubled and negotiated

Hardy (1998) argues those who do not abandon pornography altogether move on to form 'reconciled' commitments to it. This study found less resolution in the ways some men spoke about their adult use of pornography, which on first glance could position them at Hardy's intersection of abandoned or reconciled commitments. On closer inspection however, this thesis argues a more complex scenario unravels in

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adulthood. Contrary to Hardy's assertion that men's 'commitments' to pornography become fully formed in adulthood, are either abandonment or reconciled, a characteristic feature of men's adult use of pornography could be that it is changeable, fluxing and formed around tensions, in constant negotiation and often characterised by trouble. The totem which organises men's commitments, is a tacit knowledge that it is implicated in violence against women, a knowledge which can be a source of trouble and which must be negotiated.

All made links between the sex industry and gender inequality, and specifically in relation to pornography - concern around what was viewed as violent and exploitative styles of pornography. However, echoing survey findings for some this served as a benchmark for ethical self-positioning, or more aptly self-distancing.

Men with negotiated commitments described pornography as occupying an instrumental and inconsequential space in their lives: yet their use of pornography was also subject to personal and political negotiations of what was framed as an exploitative industry and styles of pornography premised on control of and violence against women. A central way these men negotiated this knowledge was through defensive modes of MenSpeak, which critiqued, disavowed and ultimately distanced them from personal accountability.

For those with troubled commitments violence against women and notions of the industry as exploitative appeared non-negotiable, resulting in some abstaining, stopping or mediating their use. A contradiction was detectable at the core of these men's narratives: that they were reluctant to completely relinquish pornography from

their lives altogether, highlighting their levels of commitments. While some men expressed commitments to gender equality, or self-defined as pro feminist men, their commitments to pornography were stronger. Pornography then, it could be argued represents an 'Achilles heel' for these men, which overrides and supersedes, in conflicting and contradictory ways their positions and reflections on other elements of the sex industry.

Extending on Whisnant (2010) and Hardy (1998), who both argue that for men using pornography can evoke personal turmoil and entail a level of moral deference and reconciliation, this thesis suggests that the successes of feminisms in terms of making visible gender inequality across socio-political landscapes, combined with the increased availability of pornography, and shifting practices of it sharpens these tensions. An interesting and urgent route for future study is men who are not committed to pornography, who reject it for both mundane as well as politically motivated reasons: an important and essential missing piece of the puzzle, which may contribute to the task of reforming masculine heritages and dominant ideas about men's sexualities which discursively deem using pornography an inevitable and natural part of being a man.

Rather than a biological inevitability, men's use of pornography is seeded in social landscapes which make it inevitable that boys will socially inherit pornography and broader systems of sexism. As outlined for all interviewees, discovering or being exposed to pornographic material formed part of growing up as boys, and as this chapter has argued represents a kind of gendered inheritance. These often public space discoveries combine with dominant ideas about men and men's

(hetero)sexualities to normalise and essentialise pornography in boys and men's lives. The moment of inheritance is often a public and social affair, this in itself is not the gendering moment, as this may well occur for girls. The gendering occurs across a process of normalisation and essentialisation, which links pornography to men and boys and vice versa. This process operates through dominant discourses, individual and collective actions and across time and contexts. Specifically for pornography to become normalised and essentialised as an inevitable part of men's lives and sexualities, men have to reinvest the stories which are passed on to them about them – a masculine heritage.

CHAPTER NINE: Conclusions

> I call upon white men not to keep reproducing
> white men; not to accept history as a good enough
> reason for your own reproduction. It takes
> conscious willed and wilful effort not to reproduce
> an inheritance (Ahmed, 2014).

Men's accounts, perspectives, and experiences of sexualisaton have largely been omitted or obscured from contemporary discussions. This thesis widens the parameters of debate to include and to position men as critical agents and stakeholders in the issue. The study was guided by two interconnected aims: to explore how men make sense of and experience sexualisation; and how sexualisation may intersect with and shape ways of being a man. These aims presented two central challenges: researching men, and masculinities and researching sexualisation: both theoretically, conceptually and practically opaque subjects of study. A woman researching men also presented interesting tangles for research design, specifically for feminist methodologies. The final methodology orbited around an exploratory, reflective and dialogical approach designed to diffuse or at least manage, power differentials across the research process. The hope here was to foster collaborative and reciprocal exchanges between the researcher and researched and to encourage 'men to speak'.

As described in Chapter Three, in practice such an approach evoked in some cases tense tussles and as the study advanced, what men said, how they said it, and the function and form of men's speech became a key point of analysis and personal negotiation. In this a subsidiary aim emerged: to explore the forms and flows of

(some) men's oppressive practices and how men articulate male privilege and social advantage and sustain relations of inequality.

'MenSpeak' was introduced in the first empirical chapter which explored masculinity and what it means to be man. In this chapter MenSpeak was mobilised as an analytical lens to explore how internal hegemony between men can operate through modes and codes of speech, which both secure individual men a place in a hegemonic order, and also serve to police and regulate other men within it. The concept was developed across the thesis to include three modes of 'MenSpeak' each characterised by different conventions and functions but with overlaps. 'Predatory MenSpeak' for example, was developed through analysis of what men described as aggressive articulations of 'urgent' heterosexuality, representing a route to 'being THE man'. Linked to this, 'regulatory MenSpeak' was developed through what men described as constricted and restricted modes and topics of talk between men, which function to police and regulate one another and in this, ways of being men. The third, 'defensive MenSpeak', was the most recurring, featuring across all five empirical chapters and functioning to downplay and mitigate men's personal and collective accountability, gender inequality, and to disrupt the ways men's practices are interlinked.

Two main conventions of defensive MenSpeak were identified as 'inevitable inequalities', and 'I'm not 'that' guy'. The former captures men's contradictory narratives, where initial critiques of sexualisation and men's practices were made inevitable through notions of historical and biological determinism and gender difference. 'I'm not 'that' guy' captures the contradictory ways some men in the

research context constructed, distanced and yet performed and did a version of masculinity they sought to distance themselves from. An overlap across all three modes of MenSpeak was identified as being that they all function to sustain relations of hegemony between men, and between women and men. Central to the findings presented in this thesis, MenSpeak became a useful analytical lens with which to interpret men's narratives around their own and other men's practices and sexualisation.

How MenSpeak featured across this thesis is now discussed alongside the broader findings of this study, and their implications for future directions in research, activism, policy and practice around sexualisation, gender inequality and violence against women.

All but the first of five empirical chapters were presented in chronological order of the research process. The exception, ***Chapter Four Men Speak About Being Men***, presented findings yielded from the final part of the interview process. Analysis here highlighted how relations between men and ideas about masculinity form central landscapes in men's lives, and in this, can infuse how men make sense of, and experience sexualisation. This chapter offered a foundational backdrop to subsequent findings chapters, and outlined three ways men made sense of being men and masculinity. The first, 'measures of a man' presented men's ideas of masculinity as being based on sex role theories of gender: imagined as a set of behavioral and character traits to be exacted, enacted and restricted in the body, emotional and sexual realms. Here, successes and failures of being a man formed around an ability, or not, to exude and exact control, dominance, leadership and 'urgent'

heterosexuality. These measures held their genesis in legacies of androcentric knowledge, which interestingly the participants in this study chose to reproduce. Given the shifts in gender relations across recent decades and in light of feminisms, the endurance of these discursive legacies is surprising, and suggests reluctance by men to relinquish them. This however, could also signal that whilst some sections of academic scholarship have moved on from sex role theories and biological determinism as a way to understand gender, they still have traction across 'everyday' understandings. An important project then for ending violence against women and gender equality may be to find ways to transpose this theoretical progress from the academy and into the everyday.

The second section 'being THE man' described how these measures can punctuate how men present themselves and form relationships with one another. All male peer contexts were described as the most demanding in terms of feeling pressured or expected to 'measure up' as successful men, and to position themselves within hegemonic projects. Articulations of urgent and predatory (hetero)sexuality were described as a central way for men do this and as such the first mode of 'MenSpeak' was developed. Predatory MenSpeak was presented as a way to conceptualise speech acts between men about women which function to reproduce gender inequality, by reducing women to sexual objects and discursive fodder to form faux allegiances between men. Given the centrality of 'urgent' heterosexuality to dominant ideas of what it means to be a man and codes and conventions of predatory MenSpeak, sexualisation is a salient setting for expressions and articulations of this style of masculinity, and for incubating hegemony between men.

Participants also described personal conflict and discomfort in moments and invitations to this style of MenSpeak, and described what this thesis, following Wetherell and Edley (1999, conceptualised as strategies of self-positioning to negotiate this discomfort. Such strategies included silent withdrawal, deference, and tacit agreement, which in effect help to fortify the hegemonic projects men seek to avoid.

All participants held contradictory and for many fraught, subject positions in relation to the measures of a man they described. Similarly, all participants expressed discomfort and conflict about either taking part in or being privy to predatory MenSpeak. However, all seemed reluctant to challenge it and to relinquish the patterns of hegemony that it helps to fortify. The findings presented in this chapter highlight how relations between men and operations of hegemony therein, can form and shape landscapes of men's lives and evoke conflict, and discomfort which offers depth and ambiguity to the notion of male privilege.

The second findings chapter, ***Chapter Five: Men, Masculinities and Commercial Sex*** presented findings from the online reflective survey, which explored men's experiences within and perspectives on, three aspects of the sex industry: paying for sex, pornography and visiting strip and lap dancing clubs. The survey revealed a sliding scale of experience: while most men had never paid for sex, and most had never been to a strip and lap dancing club, almost all had used or viewed pornography. Of the men who had paid for sex, doing so was a regular and solo endeavour; but attending strip and lap dancing clubs represented an infrequent homosocial group practice, forming part of a 'night out'.

That said, a proportion had paid for sex as part of a group, and there were also a notable number of solo visitors to strip clubs. While the survey did not get to possible differences across motivational moorings and experiential frameworks between group and solo users of strip clubs and men who pay for sex, these may be interesting routes for future explorations.

Of the men who had never been to a strip club or paid for sex, most said of both that it was not something they would consider doing in the future. Rejections here orbited around paying for sex as exploitive to women; as antithetical to pleasure due to a lack of intimacy and perceptions of the practice as abject and immoral. These critical reflections sit in tension with dominant ideas about men's sexualities as urgent and predatory, as well as diversifying men's accounts of the sex industry beyond notions of male entitlement and privilege.

However, those who were more open to paying for sex in the future used consumer discourses to frame it as a taken for granted opportunity. Similarly, while most men rejected the possibility of future visits to strip clubs, those more open to the possibility also framed it as a taken for granted opportunity. These casual equations of access to the sex industry as a consumer opportunity reflect how men's sense of entitlement to women's bodies is often expressed in mundane ways - as an unacknowledged social advantage. All male group contexts were also cited by men as a possible mobilising factor for future visits to strip clubs. Here, individual apathy and ambivalence towards strip clubs was suspended 'for the boys'.

Pornography use differed significantly both quantitatively and qualitatively from paying for sex and visiting strip and lap dancing clubs. Nearly all respondents reported that they had used or viewed pornography at some stage across their life course and the reflective responses revealed that pornography featured as a point of personal tension for many. Given the centrality of harm to pornography debates, the survey included a question, which sought to explore men's perspectives.

While responses to the harm question differed in styles of expression and levels and direction of agreement, they shared a common thread in that they made links between pornography, violence against women and gender inequality. This overlap was framed as a tacit knowledge that pornography is implicated in violence against women and gender inequality. Men's responses here were organised into two categories, unequivocal and equivocal responses. In the former, men's responses chimed with theoretical debates around pornography where they unequivocally linked pornography to harm through gender inequality and violence against women. Personal stories of negative experience and impact were also recounted here as a way to link pornography and harm and reflect that while some commentators, and indeed some of the men in this study, framed pornography as an enabler of sexual diversity, freedom, and creativity, operating within fantasy space, for many men pornography use has 'real life' negative impacts. A minority of unequivocal responses refuted harm, and as support for this, cited a lack of scientific evidence.

Equivocal responses to the harm question were also organised into three thematic modes of refuting or complicating notions of harm. The first involved men delineating conditional and hierarchical frameworks of harm. In the second men

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drew distinctions across pornographic styles and genres and raised questions about how to define pornography. The third way men refuted harm was by highlighting what was seen as benefits and gratifications of pornography.

Whether, equivocal or unequivocal concurrences or refutations of pornography related harms, each narrative style formed around a tacit knowing that it is implicated in violence against women and gender inequality. This knowledge, it was argued forms a nucleus to how men make sense of pornography and their use of it, and for some men, is a source of personal conflict and negative experience. These findings chime with Boyle's (2011) contention that violence against women is part of the 'acknowledged story of pornography' (p. 601), which this thesis argues men must discursively negotiate through defensive MenSpeak. For a few however, this tacit knowledge can form the impetus and appeal for their pornography use.

These are interesting and potentially useful findings in terms of changing men's practices of inequality, they also highlight the potential benefits in opening up spaces for men to talk about, and reflect on their own tacit knowledge. A challenge however remains in finding ways around defensive MenSpeak, especially conventions of it such as biological determinism, and inevitable inequalities.

Chapter Six Sexualisation: Definitions, Geographies and Meanings contributed to the challenge of naming, framing and mapping sexualisation. As outlined in the introductory chapters, sexualisation has been described and depicted as an all-encompassing ubiquitous phenomenon. Men in this study offered support to and extension to this notion of ubiquity, where, rather than a definitive and stable

concept, sexualisation was described as a *process* operating across media and socio-cultural landscapes with three defining and overlapping features: commodification; objectification; and what was conceptualised as 'boundary play'.

Exploring men's motives for coming to the research positioned men as stakeholders in the issue. Here, participants expressed concerned and critical reflections about styles of sexual representation across contemporary cultural landscapes. These motivations offer an everyday voice to academic and policy concerns which are often discussed as moralistic, protective and censorial agendas.

An interesting and striking feature of how men made sense of sexualisation was that their narratives chimed with critical feminist analyses, which link sexualised cultural landscapes to gender inequality and sexism. These narratives support Gill's (2009, 2011) contention that sexualisation is too broad and homogenising a term to capture the specificities of contemporary representational practices across visual cultures. Extending on current discussions participants also located sexualisation as a pernicious mode of sexism detectable across print media, where women's bodies are scrutinised and surveyed. Some also described how language synonymous with pornography had begun to seep into everyday parlance. However, while men made these links, their narratives also entailed contradictions. Here, a pattern of critique and disavowal was identified as a convention of defensive MenSpeak, analytically framed as inevitable inequalities.

Men were explicitly cynical and critical about sexualisation but also seemed to hold a stake in neutralising or appeasing what, was identified as the ills of consumerism,

sexism and cultural misogyny, through frameworks of inevitability based on a biological determinant of gender difference. The banality of biological determinism was an interesting departure and contrast from men's original, often complex and thoughtful critiques, which may reflect men's reluctance to relinquish their commitments to androcentric discursive legacies, and to reinvesting this form masculine heritage.

Extending on these definitions, geographies and meanings, *Chapter Seven: 'There's Just Loads of Naked Women here in Sexual Poses'* presented findings from image work undertaken during interview one. This chapter contributes to a deficit in empirical research, which explores men's responses to, and perspectives on sexualised visual economies. Initial responses to the images evoked for some anger and surprise, reflecting how this method can create space for critical reflections.

Findings were organised around responses, readings and reflections. The first, respnses, described how men critically rejected the imagery as tacky, sexist or commercialised and at the same time sexually evaluated women within them, reading the imagery as invitations to sexual gazing.

This part of the inteviews process also evoked confessional responses from men, where the imagery presented as a set sparked what was framed as conflict and turmoil linked to being both repelled and yet attracted to the imagery, conceptualised as conflicted appeal. Here, men positioned themselves as victims of their own biologically driven sexualities and urges. Linked to this, for some men the imagery also sparked confessional responses about how their use of the sex industry, and

sexualised imagery more broadly, sits in tension with what was described as their commitments to gender equality. Where the previous chapter highlighted sexualisation as a salient site to explore contemporary formations of masculinity, the expressed conflicts and critiques presented in this chapter also highlight how sexualisation can represent a site of tension for men. The image work also sparked confessional responses where participants expressed what could be read as personal conflict about their own practices across the sex industry. Sexualised popular culture for these participants evoked ethical quandaries and held what could be understood as conflicted appeal. This raises considerations for how sexualisation may represent a barrier to men's wholesale engagement in gender equality agendas.

Men also responded to the imagery through what this chapter termed 'pornographic recall'. Images were linked to pornography in three ways: through stylistic conventions, 'sexual use value' and processes of looking. This pornographic recall operated through men's fluency in pornographic conventions. Men's responses here support theories of porous boundaries between pornography and mainstream popular culture, but also extend this beyond stylistic conventions to include how men read and engage in the material.

Similar to some feminist analyses of contemporary visual culture the men in this study offered close textual analysis of the images to decode narratives of gender and sexuality from them. Findings here were thematically presented as masculinities and femininities. In the latter, men spoke in vocabularies congruent with feminist analyses of gendered power relations operating across visual cultures: women were positioned as passive sexual objects of a penetrating male gaze. However, some of

the imagery complicated the usual flow of sexual gazing. Celebrities Lady GaGa and Beyonce for example, were identified as being active and empowered agents, chiming with the theoretical advance from objectification to sexual subjectification. Interestingly men read the images of men through the 'measures of a man' template outlined in the first findings chapter. Men as sexual objects/subjects of the male gaze were rejected, rather they were read as signifiers of action and work or evaluated in terms of masculine capital.

The final section in this chapter extended on a convention of defensive MenSpeak, which was introduced in Chapter Six - 'inevitable inequalities'. Analysis here revealed a discursive pattern of critical rejections, followed by banal regurgitations of biological determinism to disavow what was initially identified as retro-ironic sexism. In this, men decontextualized sexist styles of imagery as socially produced and framed them as inevitable cultural artifacts and signifiers of men's biologically driven and determined sexualities.

The final findings chapter, *Chapter Eight: All the Roads Lead to Pornography* focussed on what were framed as men's 'commitments' to pornography. This focus was prompted in part by the way pornography became thematically dominant across the research process as a whole, both in how men made sense of sexualisation and how they related to it. Avoiding research methods, which obscure personal and socially contingent aspects of men's pornography use, this chapter situated pornography within broader landscapes of men's lives. As such findings were organised around what was termed 'pornography biographies' and outlined a three-stage trajectory in how pornography comes to occupy a significant place in men's

lives. Analysis also highlighted that across each phase of this trajectory pornography has different use values: sexual and social.

Beginning in boyhood the most salient pattern here was public space inheritances, often theorised as stumbling's or accidental exposure. This chapter argued that these moments represent a form of masculine heritage and induction to pornography. The social use value of pornography at this stage is that this gendered social inheritance initiates a process of normalising pornography in boys, and subsequently men's lives.

Following this, during early adolescence pornography featured in men's lives in public and social ways through peer sharing. Participants also spoke about using pornography alone for masturbation during early adolescence. In this it was argued that during this phase pornography held both social and sexual use value. It was argued that the social use value of pornography at this phase is located in how peer to peer sharing of pornography and group acknowledgements that men and boys use pornography, helps to form allegiances between boys and young men. These allegiances continue into adulthood and are fortified through a taken for granted assumption that men use pornography.

The final stage in men's pornography biographies was presented as late adolescence/early adulthood, where participants described 'going solo' - seeking out and using pornography alone. At this stage pornography shifts location and meaning: from a public shared capital between men, to an unspoken yet taken for granted assumption or knowledge that all men use pornography. In adulthood this shared knowledge becomes implicit, or rather, implied through Boyle's (2010) 'insider

language'. 'Going solo' then depicts a migration from an explicit shared and spoken allegiance to an unspoken taken for granted part of being a man. Pornography in this phase has sexual use value, serving as masturbation material, but also social use value in that it helps form allegiances across peer groups, boys and men, in subtle and overt ways.

Moving on from this three-stage trajectory in how pornography came to feature and function in these men's lives, their adult use of pornography was then discussed. Extending on Hardy (1998) and drawing on the dictionary definition, men's adult use of pornography was conceptualised as 'commitments'. A two-part dictionary definition was useful here to capture the way participant's narratives evoked a sense of being dedicated to pornography, but also for some, pornography was described as restrictive to their sense of freedom.

Parting with Hardy, who argues different types of commitments characterise men's use of pornography across the life course, this thesis argues that it is only in adulthood that men begin to make commitments to pornography. These commitments can be characterised by personal and political trouble, but can also be (apparently) inconsequential and instrumental. In this two types of commitments to pornography were outlined: troubled and negotiated. A commonality however was identified between troubled and negotiated commitments in that both were formed in relation to a 'tacit knowledge' that pornography is implicated in violence against women. A knowledge which can be a source of trouble and which must be negotiated.

All made links between the sex industry and gender inequality, and specifically in relation to pornography concern around what was viewed as violent and exploitative styles of pornography. However, echoing survey findings, for some this served as a benchmark for ethical self-positioning, or more aptly self-distancing through defensive modes of MenSpeak, here men could position themselves as 'not 'that' guy'.

Similar to survey findings presented in Chapter Six, a striking feature of interview data was the levels and extent of turmoil and personal struggle reported within men's accounts of pornography use. Pornography it was argued, can feature in men and boys lives as a source of social capital in being and becoming men, and, for incubating relations of hegemony and allegiances between men. It was also argued that it can be a cause of personal conflict and struggle. Pornography was framed as representing an 'Achilles heel' for men, which overrides and supersedes in conflicting and contradictory ways, men's positions and reflections on other elements of the sex industry.

While dominant discourses naturalise, normalise and make inevitable men's use of pornography, the findings presented in this thesis argue that men's use is socially determined, shaped in masculinised cultures and histories, which are reinvested by and through men's practices and commitments. Only one man reported having never committed to pornography and his is an underexplored narrative across pornography debates and more broadly. Such a narrative requires further explorations, which would contribute to changing dominant discourses about men and men's sexualities,

and may also create space for men to part with codes and modes of regulatory MenSpeak. This is pertinent in a climate of ubiquitous abusive pornography.

Conflicts, Contradictions and Commitments

The title of this thesis emerged from a thematic overlap across all five findings chapters. Men's accounts of sexualisation were characterised by tales of personal and political conflict, contradiction and also commitments. Interviewees for example, spoke about how flows of power and hegemony between men can often be a source of personal conflict and turmoil. Invitations to predatory MenSpeak evoked for many a sense of personal fracturing and compromise. Elsewhere, across the survey and interview process men also expressed conflict about their use of pornography, and similarly some of the imagery discussed during interviews sparked tense responses of being both repelled but attracted. In the former, conflict formed for some participants around what they described as their political moorings and commitments to gender equality and pro-feminist politics.

From these stated conflicts however came contradictions. While critical of sexualisation and aspects of the sex industry, men also seemed to hold a stake in defending or minimising their own initial critiques. Contradictions were also detectable across men's practices, where some rejected paying for sex and strip and lap dancing clubs, but used pornography: some even narrated the contradictions in their own narrative.

Following Hardy (1998) men's use of pornography was conceptualised around commitments, however this framing also holds traction for making sense of how

men in this research spoke about sexualisation more broadly. As described these men's expressions of personal and political conflict were often belied by contradiction and overshadowed by what could be understood as a greater commitment to the preservation of relations of hegemony between men and women and men. Commitments articulated through defensive MenSpeak which downplayed links between sexualisation, gender inequality and violence against women. These commitments were also reflected in men's reluctance to challenge one another.

These overlapping narratives highlight the contradictory and precarious positions men occupy in relation to sexualisation, particularly as gender relations reconfigure in light of advances made by feminist politics. The men who took part in this research demonstrated knowledge of gender inequality, often through feminist vocabularies which expressed a desire to improve relations of inequality between women and men. However, these men also remained committed to defending and preserving men's positions of social advantage through subtle and sometimes overt means. These findings contribute to understandings of how inequality is reproduced through everyday practices, even where men claim to recognise, reflect on, and reject it. Gill (2011) argues that sexism is best understood:

> not as a single, unchanging —thing (e.g. a set of
> relatively stable stereotypes), but instead
> reconceptualise it as an agile, dynamic, changing
> and diverse set of malleable representations and
> practices of power (p. 62).

In this frame defensive MenSpeak could be understood as a practice of power which functions to obscure and sustain gender inequality. As socio-political landscapes reconfigure in light of feminist successes, the modes and functions of MenSpeak identified in this thesis may offer tools to decipher the shifting flows and forms of sexism, and means and modes of how gender inequality is (in part) sustained.

This could be analysed alongside Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) 'geographies of masculine configurations': 'local', 'regional' and 'global' levels. As outlined in Chapter Six, some policy responses to sexualisation conform to defensive MenSpeak, where sexist media is detached from broader relations of gender inequality and framed as inevitable. Similarly, men's individual commitments to biological determinism may also be reflected within systems of knowledge, where for example, in 2014 the number one journal ranking in the study of gender was 'The Biology of Sex Difference' (SJR, 2015).

A challenge remains for the projects of gender equality and ending violence against women, in how to engage men in reflections on the issues in ways which acknowledge male privilege and unearned advantage as part of the problem, but at the same time, that leave space for the potential contradictions and ambiguities of men's experiences to be considered. This means finding ways to deconstruct defensive MenSpeak and discourses of inevitable inequities; breaking what Mary McIntosh (1988) terms the 'taboos' of privilege, and acknowledging the 'unacknowledged'.

Continuing the Conversation with Men: Masculine Heritage as a Framework

> HERITAGE: That which is inherited, inherited lot, condition of one's birth, anything transmitted from ancestors, or past ages (Chambers Dictionary, 1998, p. 751).

The first chapter in this thesis outlined the aims and impetus for this research project: to explore men's experiences of and perspectives on sexualisation, and how it may shape and intersect with ways of being a man. As the research process advanced, a subsidiary aim emerged in response to some of my dealings with men: to explore flows and forms of men's oppressive practices and how men articulate privilege and social advantage and sustain relations of inequality. This study sought to explore tensions between men's structural positions of social advantage and men's lived experience. Findings presented across this thesis highlight how existing frameworks for understanding men's social dominance and advantage such as privilege may in some contexts, be too flat to get at the different ways men may experience and articulate their social positions and advantage on an everyday level.

This thesis has unpicked some of the ambiguities of men's often precarious subject positions, especially in relation to one another and their experiences of, and practices within sexualised cultural landscapes. Findings presented here have illuminated the different ways participants negotiate the social power and advantage invested in them. In this, findings reflect that privilege is not always exercised or taken up through modes of control and dominance, and that men's sense of entitlement can be articulated in subtle as well as overt ways. As survey and interview findings show in

relation to strip clubs and paying for sex, men's positions of social advantage, in this case commercial access to women's bodies, can be taken up in mundane ways - simply because they can - and some rejected these aspects of the sex industry altogether. Moreover, men's contradictory narratives of feeling conflicted within yet committed to sexualisation and relations of hegemony between men, reflect how privilege and entitlement may be incongruous descriptors to capture these often fraught experiential accounts. That said, men also seemed committed to defending, naturalising and making inevitable relations of hegemony and inequality.

Across this thesis, frameworks of inheritance and heritage were drawn on as ways to navigate the limitations of privilege as a concept, and to add depth to how men experience and articulate entitlement. They were also used to describe inherited social, cultural and personal landscapes of men's lives. Chapter Four introduced the concept of masculine heritage as a legacy of sex role theories, which infuse men's understandings of gender inequality and sexualisation. These discursive legacies, it was argued are reinvested (and reproduced) through MenSpeak. The relations of internal hegemony described in this chapter can also be considered inherited landscapes of men's lives, which were described by men as a source of personal trouble and as constricting their space for action.

Chapter Five presented how some men articulate entitlement through subtle framings of the sex industry as an unquestioned phenomenon and a taken for granted inheritance, rather than a form of social advantage and privilege. The 'adventurous' narratives and notions of 'why not? - I'll try anything once' linked to paying for sex

and strip and lap dancing clubs, revealed how entitlement can be expressed in mundane ways - by not acknowledging privilege and therefore making it invisible.

Chapters Six and Seven described how men framed sexualisation and sexual gazing at women as a kind of masculine tradition, a practice of masculine heritage. These chapters also built on 'defensive MenSpeak' as a way for men to reinvest sex role theories of gender to normalise and to make inevitable gender inequality. In Chapter Eight pornography was framed as a social inheritance, passed on and up to proceeding generations of men: an artifact of masculine heritage.

If developed more explicitly and beyond its application in this thesis thus far, the concept of masculine heritage may hold traction for continuing conversations with men about changing relations of gender inequality in ways which invite rather than indict, or flatten men's lives and experiences. The dictionary definition offered at the opening of this section is useful in drawing historical linkages, but scholarly work from the field of critical heritage studies is also valuable.

Critical heritage studies question the processes whereby cultural heritage gains legitimisation, by whom and for whom (Harrison and Linkman, 2010; Laurence, 2010). Here, heritage is recognised as a process of 'storytelling' linked more to the future than the past, where objects, sites and practices of heritage can shape national and individual identities (Harrison, 2010). In this frame heritage 'embodies relationships of power, subjugation and inclusion and exclusion' (ibid, p. 97). This means that the process of delineating what counts as 'heritage' is shaped in power relations, which include and exclude particular histories.

Heritage is then, a live process of making and remaking social and cultural landscapes that reflect the power relations that shape them. Understanding this in terms of gender and cultural landscapes, masculine heritage is linked to legacies of patriarchal power and in a more contemporary framing, unequal relations of gendered power. As Shefali Moitra (1996, p.8) notes, 'heritage is that which is worthy of preservation', in this it could be argued that masculine heritage is about the preservation of a masculinised social world, a heritage of privilege. The socio-cultural potency of 'storytelling' in this frame is also useful to understand how through MenSpeak, and androcentric systems of knowledge men have taken privileged positions.

Drawing on this work and the dictionary definition, masculine heritage is presented here as being about history and legacies of men's social dominance, but crucially it can also be understood as a dynamic process which is rearticulated and done: drawing on the historical and yet present, and indeed with potential for transformation. The passing down, up and on involves individual and collective reinforcements and investments in the present across personal and public realms. Individual men can reinvest their masculine heritage to reproduce gendered social landscapes, which can and do reproduce inequality and oppressive practices. In this, masculine heritage is reinforced through action, where men interact with and take on their heritage of privilege but crucially with potential to reject, reshape, or reify and shore up relations of inequality.

Framing men's conferred power and the broader landscapes of their lives as inherited spaces for action, or indeed inaction, highlights how individual men can choose to

disrupt or entrench patterns of gender inequality. While this flexibility of choice exists it is also fused with frictions, as presented across this thesis, and as Connell (2005) illuminates:

> Men no more than women are chained to the gender patterns they have inherited. Men too can make political choices for a new world of gender relations. Yet those choices are always made in concrete social circumstances which limit what can be attempted; and the outcomes are not easily controlled (p. 84:).

Masculine heritage provides an analytical framework through which to understand the ways participants spoke about sexualisation, and being men. Empirically the artefacts, practices and sites of sexualisation were spoken of by some, in ways congruent to a mundane taken for grantedness, where a sense of entitlement is implicitly formed and articulated through 'unacknowledgements' of privilege. As discussed however, this reading alone obscures the potential ambiguities of privilege and indeed how it is articulated and experienced in different often complex, conflicting and contradictory ways. This is reflected in the levels of critical reflections about sexualisation, and narratives of personal struggle outlined across this thesis.

However, personal struggle and conflict aside, men often spoke with forked tongues by expressing implicit commitments to preserving gender inequality. MenSpeak featured as a discursive practice of power and subtle form of sexism, where men reinvested androcentric discursive legacies of biological determinism, which

functioned to downplay and make inevitable gender inequality. Here MenSpeak becomes a practice of masculine heritage, functioning to preserve a gendered status quo. That most participants reported discovering pornography in boyhood also signals that there are artefacts of masculine heritage, which are produced in the interest of men, and men's social dominance and at the detriment and abuse of women. That men commit to pornography in adulthood, while those commitments are sometimes troubled, could reflect a broader commitment to the preservation of such a heritage.

In order to account for different heritages that different groups of men, as well as individual men inherit, masculine heritage need not be static or singular. In this masculine heritage could infuse and reside across personal and social spheres. A commonality however, remains in the 'structural fact' (Messersmchidt, 2000) that 'men' as a social group have held social dominance: indeed this is a defining and formative feature of masculine heritage.

The term does not have to denote purely and only practices and inheritances of privilege and dominance. For example, a matrix of oppression is also relevant here in shaping different heritages, where for example black men, gay men, disabled and working class men inherit different dividends and positions which may shape their experiences, practices and subjectivities. Similarly, different personal landscapes such as family arrangements or religious or faith affiliations can also intersect with, and shape different heritages. The form and flow of masculine heritages can also change across a life course as men themselves change, as well as across different social-political contexts. Men's investments and commitments may also shift across

their life course. Similarly, masculine heritage is not just about or determined by men; both women and men are implicated inheritors of social landscapes and can contribute to its preservation and transformation.

This formulation could be a more expansive frame for understanding the inherited landscapes of men's lives, than privilege alone; one which takes account of how operations of internal hegemony between men can form personal landscapes of action and inaction, and shape and form men's lives and subjectivities in negative ways. Scholars working within critical men's studies are committed to exploring masculinity and men's practices in ways that make explicit and problematise men themselves. Cautious and complex work has been undertaken in this field to avoid theoretical reproductions of power relations that the scholars themselves seek to expose (See for example, Pringle, 1987; Pringle and Cowburn, 2000; Hearn, 1998; Flood et al, 2007; Pease, 2010). In this, 'naming men as men' and not colonising, or dismissing feminist works are central, as is not obscuring privilege.

These are crucial approaches to 'undoing' privilege, and stemming the flow of oppressive practices that it produces (Pease, 2010). So too however, is the requirement to engage 'everyman' in conversations and actions for transforming gender relations.

> To achieve gender equality… we must begin by confronting men's sense of entitlement and privilege. Men must be willing to recognise and challenge their positions of power in society. But equally, we need to recognise and discuss the

ways in which men are short-changed by gender
inequality, and demonstrate how a more equal
society will be better for them too (Government
and Equalites Office, 2014, p. 6).

As explored in the introduction of this thesis, privilege can be understood as
unearned social advantage which if unacknowledged, is normalised and naturalised
to form a sense of entitlement (McIntosh, 1988). Masculine heritage is not presented
as an alternative to privilege, as privilege – inherited social advantage - forms part of
masculine heritage. Findings presented in this thesis however, show how entitlement
is articulated in implicit and sometimes explicit ways. Men's sense of entitlement
was articulated through: 'unacknowledgements'; denials; and defence of privilege
but also for many, their privilege was framed as a source of personal trouble. The
latter is central to the problem posed in the introduction of this thesis of privilege
being too flat to account for potential tensions between men's heritages of privilege
and their experiences.

The framework of masculine heritage offered in this chapter may allow space for a
broader analysis and conversations with men which 'confronts their privilege and
sense of entitlement', but also recognises how men can also be 'short-changed' by
on-going relations of gender inequalities. The framework captures the ways men
inherit social and personal landscapes, which may also restrict their lives, such as
regulatory MenSpeak, the measures of a man template discussed in Chapter Four,
and internal hegemony between men more broadly. Crucially masculine heritage
may also offer space for practices of change, as while men can reinvest and reify

privilege and relations of inequality, they can also potentially reject and reshape heritages of privilege.

Men's stated conflicts presented across this thesis represent a potential point of intervention, a talking point and in this masculine heritage could be a useful concept, which invites men to personal and political reflections. This may contribute to men joining up the dots across a continuum of men's oppressive practices, subtle and overt, their own and 'other' men's. Masculine heritage as a concept forms part of traditions of making sense of men's social dominance and oppressive practices, and yet while implicating individual men it also attempts to invite men to discussions and reflections on their own collective and individual gendered heritages, an invitation which also offers room for practices of change.

Violence against women is a cause and consequence of gender inequality (EVAW, 2008) and vice versa: one sustains and reinforces the other. Unpicking the social landscapes within which VAW exists is vital to the project of ending it, as is understanding how particular social contexts and cultural settings may incubate it. In her report on the causes and consequences of violence against women in the UK, the United Nation's special Rapporteur Rashida Manjoo, recognised the way sexist media cultures can disadvantage women and girls, and in this 'preclude the enjoyment of all their human rights, including the right to a life free of violence (p.14).

The introductory chapters of this thesis framed sexualisation as a conducive context for VAW and gender inequality, and as forming part of a cultural continuum of

violence against women. Findings presented in this thesis offer empirical weight to these theoretical framings. Some men for example, made links between using pornography and viewing women in their everyday lives through an evaluative pornographic lens. Similarly, many of the images discussed during interview two were read as invitations to sexual gazing, and were linked to pornography through their 'sexual use' value in that they evoked a penetrating reductive gaze. This bears weight for gender relations and has material impacts for women.

Sexist visual economies provide a resource for men to take part in predatory MenSpeak, which, as outlined in Chapter Three reduces women to sexual objects in order to form faux allegiances between men. Men's investments in this mode of MenSpeak help maintain and reinforce relations of hegemony between women and men, and men and men. In this, sexualisation as a cultural context becomes an arena of practices of inequality, and a conducive context for violence against women.

Findings presented in Chapter Five and Nine outlined how men form commitments to pornography in relation to, and sometimes in tension with a tacit knowledge that it is implicated in violence against women. That (some) men successfully negotiate this knowledge in order to continue using pornography reflects a culture of dismissal among men, which symbolically deems violence against and exploitation of women inevitable and admissible. Here, men's resistance to relinquish their social advantage discredits their own self-declared commitments to gender equality. It could be argued that men who choose to use pornography are complicit in women's social disadvantage, and virtually contribute to the material abuse of women who 'perform' in pornography.

The sex industry reduces women to sexual commodities for men's consumption. Contemporary visual cultures routinely represent and display women within narrow terms, as predominantly: white, young, slim, able-bodied, sexually knowing, and crucially, sexually available for men. A discernable shift however is also detectable in the articulation of these styles of representation. The transition from women as sexual objects to subjects, if accepted, means that feminist rejections of systems of patriarchy and sexism, have been incorporated, co-opted- quite literally - into the bodies of this new self-sexualised femininity. Rather than an emblem of women's empowerment and sexual liberation, I along with others argue that this represents a new mode, and a more pernicious form of sexism linked to advanced capitalism and neo liberalism. That women appear to be active agents in this new regime of self sexualised femininity makes criticism difficult, and cloaks the continued structural gendered inequalities which form the backdrop to sexualised popular cultures and the sex industry, and women's decisions and choices therein.

Popular culture and the sex industry emit messages about gender which it could be argued encourage, minimise, and incubate practices of inequality. Violence against women in all its forms can thrive in such a setting. Liz Kelly first laid out the continuum of violence against women in the 1980's to capture the range and extent of women's experiences of violence often missing from legal codes. If extended beyond incidences and experiences of material violence to include the way legacies of patriarchal social relations and continued gender inequality culturally manifest as a conducive context, then sexualisation, it could be argued forms part of a cultural continuum of violence against women and girls.

Beyond this Study

The findings from this research are potentially valuable in prevention work with young people in schools and youth settings. A foundational part of sex and relationships education, as well as prevention work around VAW is deconstructing dominant gender stereotypes. This research project was successful in its ambition to create a 'reflective space' for men to think about themselves as gendered beings. This could be taken into many settings, whereby personal reflection could potentially lead to broader social reflections. The method of a 'reflective space' could be invaluable for working with young people to encourage critical engagements and reflections on gender. The framework of masculine heritage could also offer 'in roads' to encourage boys to gendered self-reflection. Similarly, girls may also reflect on their own gendered heritages, such as the beauty and fashion complex which may lead to critical reflections on the ways sexualisation, can restrict girls and women's space for action.

The accounts of negative experience and turmoil in relation to men's use of pornography and sexualisation more broadly, may also serve as points of intervention. In acknowledging and discussing men's personal struggles within sexualisation and their own practices within it, dominant ideas about what it means to be a man can be challenged. If brought to the fore, the restrictive effects of men's complicit practices in relations of hegemony on their own lives as well as gender relations more broadly, may encourage change.

Findings presented in this thesis also offer routes for future more in depth work, which may also enhance our knowledge base and tools for ending violence against

women. That men know that pornography is implicated in violence against women and girls may be exploited for good, and more in depth work here may elicit findings, which contribute to more men rejecting pornography as an oppressive practice. Further, exploring why men continue to use pornography despite their own ethical dilemmas, may also reveal valuable findings in terms of how gender inequality and VAW are sustained through men's individual and collective practices.

That many men in this study expressed a satiated jadedness, often critically rejecting visual styles of contemporary popular culture offers an often-overlooked part of the story and more work on men's critical rejections of sexualisation is required. Similarly, men who choose not to use pornography represent a missing and under developed point of analysis. More work here may lead to new and alternative discourses about men and men's sexualities to take shape, but may also reveal valuable learnings, which could be extrapolated into broader culture for change.

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APPENDIX ONE: Recruitment Poster

MEN

Do you have something to say about 'sexy' media images, strip/lap dancing clubs, paying for sex and pornography?

If you would like to help with research which seeks to explore men's experiences of, and perspectives on these things **please get in touch.**

- -

If you would like to participate in the research or want to know more......

E: researchmenspeak@gmail.com

http://www.wix.com/menspeak/menspeak

If you would like to participate in

the research or want to know more.....

E: researchmenspeak@gmail.com

http://www.wix.com/menspeak/menspeak

I If you would like to participate in

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APPENDIX TWO: Frequently Asked Questions

Men Speak Research Study

Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for thinking about taking part in this research study, before you agree to take part it is important you understand what; how and why I'm doing this research and to understand what measures I will be taking to safeguard the information that you give to me.

Who are you?

I am a PhD student studying at London Metropolitan University.

Why are you doing this study?

To 'fill the gap' - there's a lot of discussion going on in the press and the Government at the moment about 'sexed up' media and culture and very little focus is given to men's perspectives on, and experiences of the issue.

How will you do this?

Face to face interviews.

What will you do with the information I give you?

The information will form part of a final thesis and from that I may write conference papers, or journal articles.

Will I have access to the findings?

You are welcome to a summary of the findings, the research is due to be completed in December 2013, you can either contact me closer to the time of completion or I'll email you.

Will you identify me in the thesis, use my name?

Absolutely not. Parts of your interview or questionnaire may be used as a quotation in the thesis or subsequent work, however, your name or any other identifying details will not be used alongside the quote, unless of course you wish to be identified.

What about during the research? How will you protect the information I give you?

You will be anonymised throughout the process. As a research student I am bound by very strict ethical guidelines laid down by the University, part of this includes adherence to the data protection act (1988). All information you offer will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

What will you ask me?

I will ask for your perspective on 'sexed up' media culture and for your experiences (or not) of the sex industry such as paying for sex, pornography and strip/lap dancing clubs.

How long will it take?

It's hard to say, depending on how much/little you say. If you agree to be interviewed, I will ask that we meet twice, for around an hour each time. We will have a three week break between meetings, during this time I will send you the transcript from the first meeting

Will you record the interviews?

Yes, if you are happy for me to do so. I will transcribe it immediately afterwards and delete the recording, and to reiterate the transcript will be anonymised.

Can I pull out at any point in the research or what if I don't want to talk about certain topics?

That's fine you can pull out of the research at any point, and if you don't want to talk about certain things that's fine too.

What if I change my mind after the research and I don't want you to include the findings from my participation?

Again, that's fine I won't.

Are there any risks to my health or wellbeing if I take part?

There are no risks to your physical health, but we will be discussing things which you may, or may not feel embarrassed about but on the other hand much of the discussions will be around issues and products which form part of mainstream culture.

Will I get paid?

I'm afraid not in money or vouchers, but you will be helping in filling the gap in knowledge on men's perspectives on the issue.

With many thanks.

APPENDIX THREE: Interview Topic Guides and Proformas 1,2,3

Welcome: introduce yourself; explain the research; describe the structure of the interview; explain what you'll do with the findings; check participant is ok for discussions to be recorded and explain confidentiality and anonymity. **FAQ and consent form-** *Any questions?*

Open
What interested you about the research? *Can you say more? In what way?*
What do you understand by the term 'the sexualisation of culture'? What does it mean? Have you heard that before?

Mapping Sexualisation: Leading on from the previous discussion
- Can you say where you notice 'sexualisation' in your day-to-day life?
- Think about the different cultural forms/texts/modes/ spaces where you notice it.
- *How much do you notice it?*
- *What do you think about it?*
- *Increase over time?*
- *Shift in style?*
- *Are there things/areas which seem more 'sexualised' than others?*
- *How do you respond?*
- *Engage/disengage? Seek it out? Consume?*

Image Work*: Introduce image exercise; check participant is happy for you to show the images. Lay them out on the table and allow the participant to lead discussions even if awkward. Follow up on immediate response.
Discussion prompts:
- What do these images say to you? About men, women, sex, sexuality?
- Who do you think they're for?
- Impact expectations of women/sex? Self image?

Experiences with the sex industry: Pro-formas 1, 2, 3 and discussion

Close Interview: Any questions? Anything you want to discuss? Explain next steps and follow up, **THANKS** support service sheet

PRO FORMA 1

Have you ever paid for sex?

If no. Consider in the future?

Frequency?

Context?

With whom?

Motivations/Triggers?

Pleasures?

Discomforts?
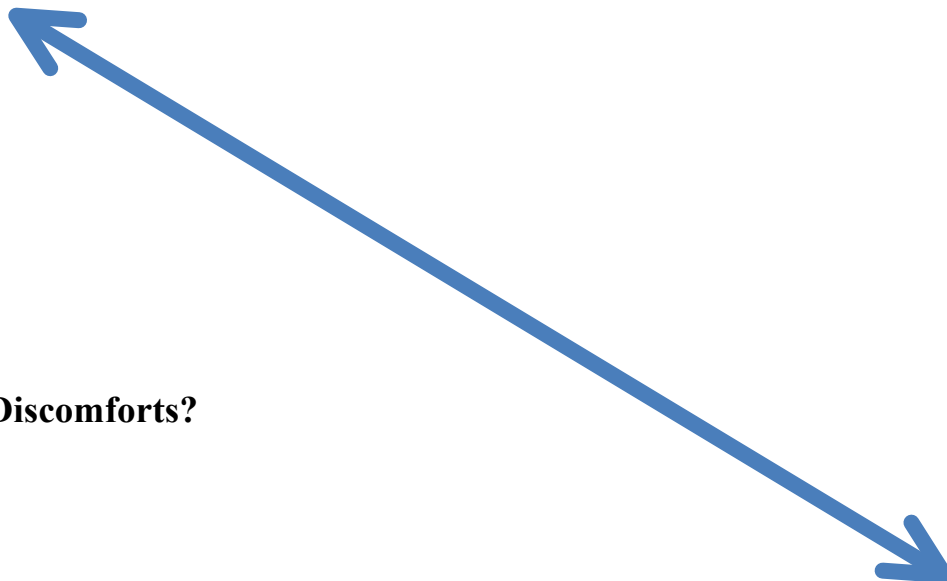
Discussion Notes

PRO FORMA 2

Do you use/ever used pornography?

If no. Consider in the future?

FrequencY?

Context?

With whom?

Age first time? Anything changed over time?

Motivations/Triggers?

Do you think pornography is harmful?

z

Pleasures
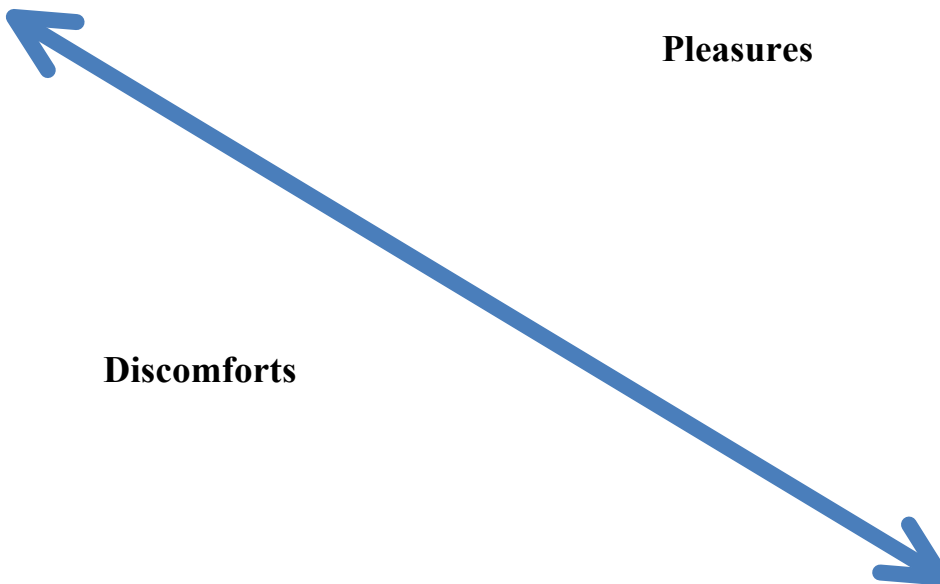
Discomforts

Discussion Notes

PRO FORMA 3

Have you ever been to a strip club?
If no. Consider going in the future?

Frequency?

What do you think of them?

Context?

With whom?

Motivations/Triggers?

z
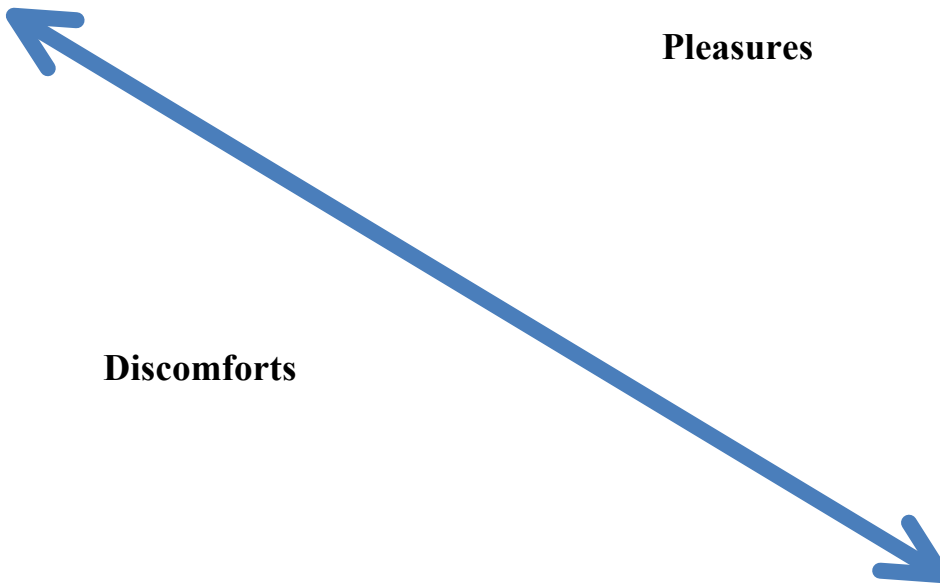
Pleasures

Discomforts

Discussion Notes

Interview Two

WELCOME: renegotiate consent; outline content and structure of meeting: 'space to talk about anything from meeting one that you or I may want to. Also I want to talk about 'masculinity' and being a man in context to sexualisation;

Is there anything you want to talk about from the transcript/meeting one?
Anything stand out? What was it like reading it?

Offer a summary of initial thoughts/analysis of meeting one:
To surmise what I gained from meeting one: NOTES

How do you understand masculinity?

What is it?

Do you feel like there are any expectations of you as a man?

Anything else you want to discuss?

APPENDIX FOUR: Consent Form Interviews

Men Speak Research Study

Consent form: Interview

Researcher: Maria Garner

Interview one/two:

Participant ID:

I have read and understand the FAQ information sheet for the above study and am aware of the purpose of the study and how the findings will be disseminated.

I am aware and understand the potential personal risks in taking part.

I agree to be interviewed face-to-face.

I give permission for the interview to be audio recorded and for the transcript to be included in analysis for the final thesis.

I understand that parts of my interview *may* be used as a quotation in the thesis or subsequent work and that identifying details will NOT be used alongside the quote

I understand that Maria Garner will:

destroy the recordings of the interviews following transcription;

anonymise the transcript by removing personal details and will securely store the interview transcript in a locked filing cabinet;

send a transcription of the interview to me so that I may make further comments;

may share the anonymised interview transcript with her academic supervisors;

at my request send me a summary of the research findings;

I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any stage without penalty

Signed (participant)_____

Signed (researcher)

---   Date:_____

APPENDIX FIVE: Consent Form Online Questionnaire

[TO APPEAR ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE]

Research study

This questionnaire will ask about your experiences (or not) of visiting strip/lap dancing clubs, paying for sex and your use (or not) of pornography. You are not obliged to complete the questionnaire and you are free to withdraw yourself from it at any point. Your participation is anonymous and I am obliged to handle the data you provide in accordance with the data protection act (1998). The questionnaire will take around 15--20 minutes to complete. The information you provide will form part of the final PhD thesis and potentially further academic publications. The research is due to be completed in December 2014. If you would like a summary of the findings please contact me by email: researchmenspeak@gmail.com.

If you would like to take part please read the following questions. If you agree and click yes the questionnaire will follow.

With many thanks.

1. I confirm I am 18 years of age or older

2. I understand that the data I provide will be anonymous, confidential and will be stored under compliance with the data protection act (1998).

3. I understand that some of the comments I leave on the questionnaire may be used as

a quotation in the thesis or subsequent work and that any details that might identify me

will NOT be used.

4. I understand that the researcher may share the data I provide with her academic

supervisory team.

5. I understand that I can withdraw from the questionnaire at any point without penalty.

6. By answering yes to the above questions, I consent to taking part in the research study and to the data I provide being analysed for inclusion in the final thesis.

APPENDIX SIX: Online Questionnaire

FRONT PAGE

This questionnaire will ask about your experiences (or not) of visiting strip/lap dancing clubs, paying for sex and your use (or not) of pornography. You are not obliged to complete the questionnaire and you are free to withdraw yourself from it at any point. Your participation is anonymous and I am obliged to handle the data you provide in accordance with the data protection act (1998).

The questionnaire will take around 15-20 minutes to complete. The information you provide will form part of the final PhD thesis and potentially further academic publications. The research is due to be completed in December 2014. If you would like a summary of the findings please contact me by email: researchmenspeak@gmail.com.

If you would like to take part please read the following questions. If you agree and click yes the questionnaire will follow. With many thanks.

CONSENT FORM: Questions 1-6 (see Appendix 5).

STRIP/LAP DANCING CLUBS

All your answers are anonymous and will remain confidential.

7. Have you ever been to a strip/ lap dancing club?

     Yes   No

8. Would you consider going to a strip/lap dancing club in the future?

     Yes   No   Maybe

Please tell me why you would/would not/may consider going to strip/lap dancing club in the future?

9. Generally what was/is the context of your visit(s)?

Stag party

Work event/business meeting

Night out

Something else, please say?

10. How often?

Once

2-5 times

6-10 times

10-15 times

More than 15 times

Something else, please say?

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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                          │
│                                                          │
│                                                          │
│                                                          │
│                                                          │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

11. Generally who do/did you go with?

Alone

In a mixed gender group

In an all male group

With one male friend

With one female friend

With your partner

Other, please say more?

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                          │
│                                                          │
│                                                          │
│                                                          │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

PAYING FOR SEX

12. Have you ever paid for sex?

     Yes   No

13. Would you consider paying for sex in the future?

      Yes   No   Maybe

Please say something about why you would/would not/may consider paying for sex in the future?

14. How often?

Once

2-5 times

6-10 times

10-15 times

More than 15 times

Something else, please say?

15. Do you usually pay for sex/was it:

Off street i.e sauna/parlour/flat?

On the street?

Both?

16. Are you usually/ were you:

Alone?

With friends/colleagues?

Both?

17. Where in the world do/did you pay for sex?

Abroad

UK

Both in the UK and abroad

If you have paid for sex abroad please say in which country?

18. Do you think there are any differences between paying for sex abroad and in the UK?

Yes

No

Not sure

If yes, please say what?

PORNOGRAPHY

19. Have you ever used/viewed pornography?

      Yes   No

20. Would you consider using/viewing pornography in the future?

      Yes   No   Maybe

Can you say more?

21. How old were you when you first viewed pornography?

22. How often do you use/view pornography?

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Every other month

Something else, please tell me?

┌───┐
│   │
│   │
│   │
│   │
│   │
└───┘

23. Where do you usually access the material?

Home

Work

Friend's house

All of the above

Something else please say?

┌───┐
│   │
│   │
│   │
│   │
│   │
└───┘

24. How do you usually access pornography?

Online

Via mobile phone

Hard copy magazine

DVD

TV pay per view

Cinema

Something else, please tell me?

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25. Do you think pornography is harmful for men, women or both?

Men   Women   Both   No I do not think pornography is harmful

Please say more?

```



```

THE LAST BIT

26. How old are you?

27. How do you describe your sexuality?

28. How do you describe your ethnicity?

29. How do you describe your relationship status?

Single

in a relationship

Something else, please say?

30. In which region of Britain do you live?

East Midlands

East of England

London

North East

North West

Northern Ireland

Scotland

South East

South West

Wales

West Midlands

Yorkshire and the Humber

WANT TO HELP OUT MORE?

Thanks for taking the time to complete this survey. It's very much appreciated.

This is one of two strands of research looking at men's responses to sexualised media, and experiences of the sex industry. This questionnaire barely scratches the surface.
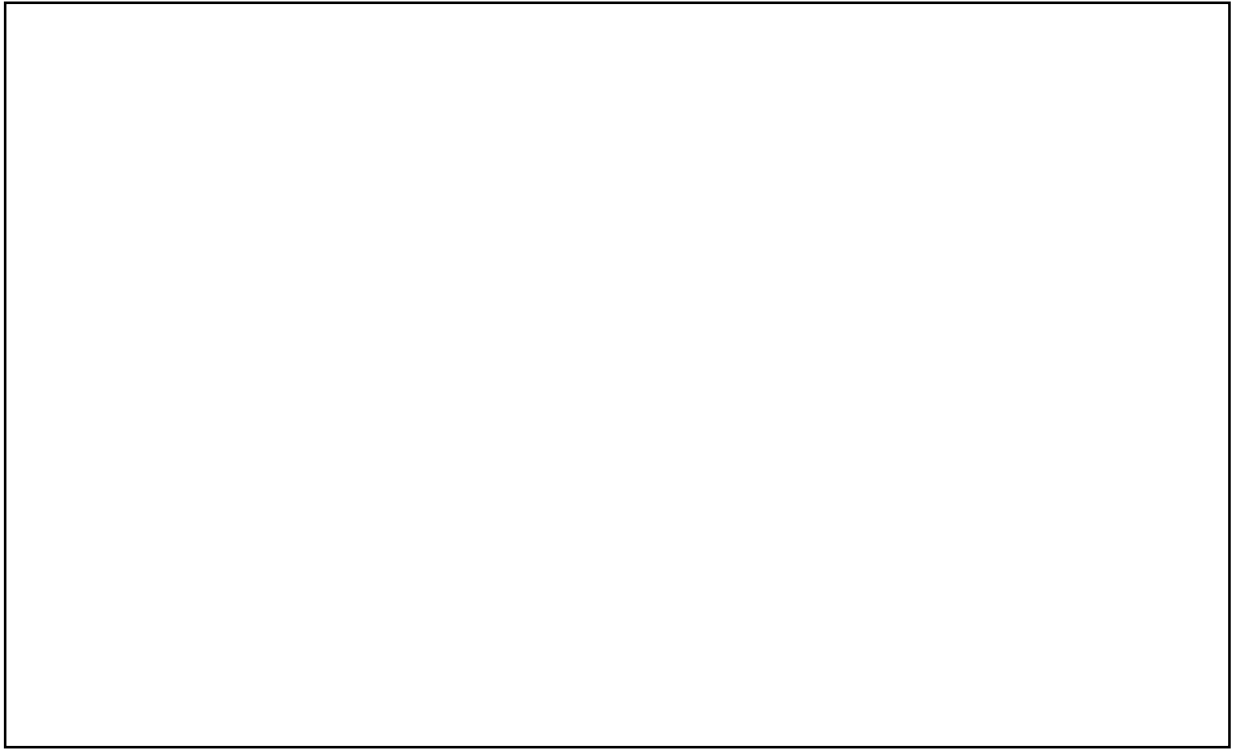
If you found it restrictive and would like the opportunity to say more about the themes it raised, I am also recruiting for men to take part in face to face interviews -where we would explore the themes in more detail and also work with images and other medias from popular culture.

If you would like to take part in an interview or want to know more then please get in touch: researchmenspeak@gmail.com

Alternatively, if you prefer not to be interviewed but still want to say more, please do so in

the free text box below. Once again thanks. researchmenspeak@gmail.com

REFLECTION

APPENDIC SEVEN: List of Support Services

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire the information you have provided is really valuable and is much appreciated.

If taking part in this research has raised any issues for you the following helplines/information/networks may be useful to you:

The Samaritans:

www.samaritans.org

08457 90 90 90

Relate

0300 100 1234

www.relate.org.uk

The Beaumont Trust
Helpline: 07000 287 878

www.beaumont-trust.org.uk

The everyman project

http://www.everymanproject.co.uk/

0207 263 8884

be you

http://www.beyou.org.uk/

01189 597269

Men engage

www.menenage.org

APPENDIX EIGHT: Images and References

*Images have been removed from electronic file due to copyright issues.

Image Index Number	Description	Source
IM1AmericanApparel 1	Fashion Brand	2009, online catalogue: accessed April 2012
IM2 American Apparel 2	Fashion Brand	2010, online catalogue, accessed April 2012
IM3 Armani1	Fashion Brand	2010, online accessed April 2012
IM4 Armani 2	Fashion Brand	2010, online accessed April 2012
IM5 Attitude	UK Gay lifestyle magazine	2011, Attitude Media Ltd, online accessed April 2012
IM6 Beyonce	American recording artist	2010, online accessed April 2012
IM7 Diva	Lesbian and Bi-Sexual lifestyle magazine	2008, Millvres Prowler Ltd, online accessed April 2012
IM8 French Vogue	Fashion magazine	2011, Conde Nast Publications Ltd, online accessed April 2012
IM9 Grand Theft Auto	Advert for computer video game	2007, Rockstar Games, online accessed April 2012
IM10 Katz	Flyer for a strip/lap dancing club	2012, online accessed April 2012
IM11 Lady GaGa	American recording artist	2010, online accessed April 2012
IM12 Lynx 1	Advert for men's deodorant	2011, BBH Global, online accessed April 2012
IM13 Lynx 2	Advert for men's	2011, BBH Global, online

	deodorant	accessed April 2012
IM14 Men's health	Men's lifestyle magazine	2009, magazineonline.co.uk, Jellyfish online marketing Ltd, online accessed April 2012
IM15 Nicki Menaj 1	American recording artist	2006, online accessed April 2012
IM16 Nicki Menaj 2	American recording artist	2011, online accessed April 2012
IM17 Nuts	UK men's lifestyle magazine 'lads mag'	2010, IPC Media, accessed online April 2012
IM18 Rhianna	American recording artist	2008, online accessed April 2012
IM19 Peek-A-Babe	Advert for Android phone application, which allows user to strip clothes off of models	2011, Speed of Light, Online, accessed April 2012
IM20 Top of the Pops 1	Compilation music Album cover	1989, online accessed April 2012
IM21 Top of the Pops 2	Compilation music album cover	1979, online accessed April 2012
IM22 UK Chocolate	UK 'urban' online magazine	2008, UK Chocolate, online accessed April 2012
IM23 Vamos	Travel company specialising in for pre-marital 'stag' trips	2011, online accessed April 2012
IM24 Virtual Girl	Free download for desktops where women strip for user.	2012, Totem Entertainment, online accessed April 2012

APPENDIX NINE: Interview Participant's Demographic Information

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Sexuality	Relationship status	Employment
*MSP1	36	White	Heterosexual	In a relationship	Musician
MSP2	31	White	Heterosexual	In a relationship	Medical Doctor
MSP3	41	White	Heterosexual	Single	Unemployed
MSP4	37	White	Heterosexual	Single	Middle Management
MSP5	34	White	Heterosexual	Married	PhD student
MSP6	49	White	Bi Sexual	In a relationship	Unknown
MSP7	66	White	Queer	In a relationship	Academic
MSP8	28	British Caribbean	Heterosexual	Single	Unemployed
MSP9	26	White	Heterosexual	Single	Teacher
MSP10	25	White	Heterosexual	Single	Journalist
MSP11	26	White	Heterosexual	Single	Unemployed

* Coding scheme MSP1 = Men Speak Participant 1

A coding scheme has been used to protect the anonymity of participants.