

THE ROLE OF ADULT PORNOGRAPHY IN
INTIMATE PARTNER SEXUAL VIOLENCE PERPETRATORS' OFFENDING

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter is one of a rapidly growing number of scholarly articles, book chapters, and monographs that treats adult pornography and its negative effects as both major social problems and subjects of worth of in-depth scholarly inquiry. The main objective of our contribution is twofold: (1) to briefly review the research on the association between pornography and intimate partner sexual violence (IPSV) and (2) to recommend some strategies that educators and advocates can use to help reduce men's consumption of porn and the myriad of harms caused by such media.

DEFINITION OF ADULT PORNOGRAPHY

Not to be confused with erotica, which is "sexually suggestive or arousing material that is free of sexism, racism, and homophobia and is respectful of all human being and animals portrayed" (Russell, 1993, p. 3), pornography hurts on numerous levels. Women and men are represented in many different ways in pornography, but two things all pornographic images of and writings about them have in common is that females are characterized as subordinate to males and the primary role is the provision of sex to men.

Adult pornography has significantly changed over the past few decades due to the Internet. Much, if not most, of it today is "gonzo - that genre which is all over the Internet and is today one of the biggest money-makers for the industry - which depicts hard core, body-punishing sex in which women are demeaned and debased" (Dines, 2010, p. xi). A common feature of contemporary porn videos is painful anal penetration as well as brutal gang rape and men slapping or choking women or pulling their hair while they penetrate them orally, vaginally, and anally (DeKeseredy, 2015a).

Such images are part-and-parcel of today's adult Internet pornography but violent sexual images are available elsewhere. For instance, Bridges, Wosnitzer, Scharrer, Sun, and Liberman (2010) examined 304 scenes in 50 of the then most popular pornographic DVDs and found that nearly 90% contained physical aggression (mainly spanking, gagging, and slapping) and roughly 50% included verbal aggression, primarily name-calling. Males constituted most of the perpetrators and the targets of their physical and verbal aggression were "overwhelmingly female." Moreover, female targets often appeared to show pleasure or responded neutrally to male aggression. To make matters worse, as the porn industry grows and attracts an ever growing consumer base, it is generating even more violent materials featuring demeaning and dehumanizing behaviors never before seen (DeKeseredy & Corsianos, 2016).

It is not only anti-porn scholars and activists who assert that violent sex is now a normal part of the industry. Even porn producers publicly admit that it is the status quo (Abowitz, 2013; Dines, 2010). As well, racism is a central element of some of today's pornography. Consider the following titles of videos uncovered by DeKeseredy (2015b) during a Google search using the words "racist porn" on September 3, 2014. His hunt generated 22,000,000 results in 0.40 seconds and one salient example of the titles listed is *Racist Bitch is Forced to Have Sex with a Black Man*. Actually, many of the racist videos offer stereotypical images of the "sexually primitive black male stud" (Jensen, 2007, p. 66). Certainly, men and women of color are not the only people to be racially exploited by the porn industry. Keep in mind these films featured on the widely used site Xvideos. Com: *Sexy Latina Rides a Black Bull in Front of her Husband* and *My So Asian*.

Whether or not researchers ever obtain an absolutely accurate estimate of the percentage of people who consume adult pornography, most leading experts on the topic agree with Robert Jensen's contention that "It's become almost as common as comic books were for you and me" (cited in Gillespie, 2008, p. 3). In fact, studies of youth show that almost all boys in Northern Europe have at some point in their lives been exposed to pornography and 42% of Internet users ages 10 to 17 in the U.S. had viewed cyberporn (Hammaren & Johansson, 2007; Mossige, Ainsaar, & Svedin, 2007; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007). These are not innocent users who accidentally come across sexually explicit images, voices and texts. Nor are they constantly bombarded with such material. Rather, they make a conscious effort to consume and distribute porn, and many consumers use it to inform their sexual attitudes and behaviors, some of which involve sexually assaulting current or former female partners (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013).

PORNOGRAPHY AND IPSV

Large- and small-surveys conducted in Canada and the U.S. between the late 1980s and late 1990s uncovered a sizeable portion of women who have experienced pornography-related sexual and physical abuse in intimate adult relationships (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Harman & Check, 1989; Russell, 1990). The correlation between pornography and sexual assault is not restricted to North America. In Italy, for instance, one study of high school students uncovered strong associations between sexually harassing or raping peers and porn consumption (Bonino, Ciairano, Rabaglietti, & Cattelino, 2006). Another Italian survey of high school students found that females exposed to psychological violence committed by family members and to sexual violence by any type of perpetrator were significantly more likely to watch porn, especially violent porn, than females who were not exposed to such abuse (Romito & Beltramini, 2011). In Sweden, a study of 1,933 boys uncovered a higher rate of violence porn use among

those who reported sexually coercing someone compared to non-delinquent youth (Kjellgren, Priebe, Svedin, & Langsrtom, 2010).

The bulk of later empirical work on adults' experiences with porn and IPSV involved gathering data from rape crisis workers who conducted phone and face-to-face interviews with sexual and physical assault survivors (Bergen & Bogle, 2000, Shope, 2004; Simmons, Lehmann, & Collier-Tennison, 2008). Collectively, this research reveals a strong linkage between men's porn consumption and female victimization. For example, Shope (2004) found that an abuser's use of porn doubled the risk of a physically assaulted woman being sexually assaulted.

More recently, using face-to-face interviews with 55 rural southeast Ohio women who were sexually abused during the period while they wanted to or were trying to end a relationship with a husband or live-in partner, or where such a relationship had already ended, DeKeseredy and Hall-Sanchez (in press) uncovered that 34 of their interviewees experienced porn-related sexual abuse. They also identify five significant themes related to men's porn consumption and their use of IPSV: learning about sex through pornography; imitation and comparison; introducing other sexual partners; filming sexual acts without consent; and the broader culture of pornography (e.g., sex work and fetishes). Candace highlights the first theme experienced by three women in the sample:

I met a guy one time out West that I had a sexual experience with that was extremely rough and afterwards he had told me that no one had ever talked to him about sex. He learned from pornography. And so he shaved his balls because he didn't know it was, I mean I know a lot of people do. Someone is learning from porno as an educational thing?

Some studies, most of them conducted from the early 1980s to the late 1990s (see DeKeseredy & Corsianos, 2016), show that many women have been harmed or upset by their

partners' requests or demands to imitate pornographic scenarios, underscoring DeKeseredy and Hall-Sanchez's second theme: comparison and imitation. Consider Alison's experience. Her ex-partner viewed violent porn and she describes the familiar language and demeaning behaviors often feature in gonzo videos:

I remember him making me give him oral sex and holding me by the hair and I don't remember if it was after a fight or what. He's done that I don't know how many times. He used to urinate on me and then want sex, I mean after getting hit and stuff.... He would talk the whole time he was doing that and saying things like uh, "you're my bitch" or "you like it bitch don't you." And stuff like that. Um, "this is my ass, you know I'll kill for my ass." Stuff like that and it would be just as violent as the beating and basically you just lay there and let it happen.

In total, seven women reported the introduction of other sexual partners. Below is Silvia's experience:

He had ended up being with a man and he would make me watch... When he wanted sex in a group thing or with his buddies or made me have sex with a friend of his. See one time he made me have sex with a friend of his for him to watch, then he got mad and hit me afterwards. And I didn't quite understand why he got mad.

Cara is one of 4 women who was unknowingly videotaped during consensual and non-consensual sex. Her ex-partner used alcohol to try to "loosen" her up and to make her try new sexual positions. This incident prompted her to leave him:

When I woke up there was like a light on me. He works at the TV station here....

Anyways, um, he was videotaping it... and that was it, I said this has got to end. And he still carries the video tape around to this day. I have yet to view it.

Denise's ex-husband uses a videotape of a sexual assault to maintain control over her, even after their separation:

He ended up tying me up and blindfolding me and then, without my knowledge, videotaped it. And then after we had split up for good, he left the tape on Bill's car that was at my house and a letter with it saying that it was spread all over town. I contacted the police department and they wanted to watch the tape and I wouldn't give it to them. And then the officer that responded to it called his wife and told her, because this town is a small community and everybody knows everybody and I used to work there. He called and told her and she went and told my best friend because they are neighbors.

Turning to the last theme, the overall culture of pornography, DeKeseredy and Hall-Sanchez uncovered various nuanced reports from five interviewees about how the broader pornographic culture affects women's lives. Billie's ex-partner, for example, "wasn't really into porn" that she knew of, but throughout the course of her interview, she strived to make sense of his fetishes that ultimately played a major role in her sexually abusive experiences:

He had a few particular fetishes. And uh, you know at first I thought it was okay but then it became really uncomfortable but he wasn't you know, wasn't willing to change that. And I guess maybe a part of me still loved him and maybe wanted to, you know, please him, but it was just, you know, perverse to me. It was like it went against the grain of everything I ever held, however I ever looked at sex and how it was supposed to be in a relationship. Um, so, but like I said, I mean, I was a completely different person. He totally changed me. It was all an emotional, physical, spiritual thing. It was all twisted up so it is really hard to explain.... And, also like, and he was kind of like a masochist type.... He became the sadist.

Eliminating pornography might not have an effect on these men's violent conduct. Yet, there is no doubt that the data presented here and elsewhere demonstrate that pornographic media are a major component of the problem of IPSV and other variants of woman abuse. We also know for sure that, like violence against women, pornography is deeply entrenched in our society. How could it be such a lucrative business if only a small number of people used it (Lehman, 2006)? Moreover, we know that pornography consumption has a major impact on men's attitudes, beliefs, values, and, in many cases, their behavior. The "script" of heterosexual pornography is hostile to men's expression of empathy with their female sexual partners (Dines, Jensen, & Russo, 1998; Funk, 2004; Jensen, 2007), and some violent men use pornography as a "training manual for abuse" (Bergen & Bogle, 2000, p. 231). Certainly, many of the men who abused the women interviewed DeKeseredy and Hall-Sanchez (in press) were graduates of what Bancroft (2002) refers to as "the Pornography School of Sexuality" (p. 185).

INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Given the extent to which pornography is used by male IPSV offenders, it seems a minimal recommendation that all IPSV practitioners screen perpetrators for pornography consumption. However, doing what is minimalist is not enough and a much more thorough approach is necessary. An integral part of this should first include complete prohibition of pornography consumption for perpetrators while in intervention. The Association of Treatment for Sex Abusers (ATSA) establishes this as a standard for treatment programs with adolescent and adult sex abusers. It is an appropriate baseline because IPSV perpetrators receive treatment or intervention in varied contexts. Practitioners working with female survivors of other types of intimate violence should, as part of their screening process, also universally explore for patterns of pornography use.

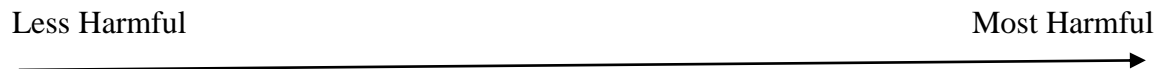
As a part of their treatment, perpetrators need a way to examine the connection between their pornography use, their sexist attitudes, and their sexually abusive behaviors. The continuum of harm exercise is one effective way of achieving this goal (Funk, 2014). Presented in Figure 1, practitioners should put this continuum on a flip chart or white board. Then they should ask offenders to locate the following behaviors on the continuum in relation to each other and to identify the degree of harm inherent in each behavior:

- View women I meet as a body part
- View my partner as her sexual body part(s)
- Prostituting my partner
- Prostituting my daughter or son
- Participating in bachelor parties where women are dancing naked
- Participating in a party where women are dancing naked and then are prostituted (such as drawing to see who gets a blow job)
- Look at porn sites that advertise “young girls”
- Using language with other men about women’s body parts and what we would like do to them
- My 8-year old son comes across pornography while searching for a Mario Brothers Game
- My 10-year old daughter comes across pornography while searching for a Mario Brothers Game
- Showing my 11 year old son pornography
- Showing my 13 year old son pornography
- Showing my 16 year old son pornography
- Showing my 21 year old son pornography

- Paid for a women to have sex with my son
- Watched bestiality porn
- Watched rape porn
- Watched snuff porn

FIGURE 1

THE CONTINNUM OF HARM



Space limitations preclude a detailed exploration of other activities and strategies that practitioners can to use to integrate a critical examination of pornography into intervention with male IPSV offenders. However, we would be remiss if we did not briefly address the importance of working more broadly because male pornography use has reached the point of being both normal and normalized in our society. Consider that the average age in which males start consuming Internet porn is 11 (DeKeseredy & Corsianos, 2016; Dines, 2010). As such, that men who perpetrate IPSV also use pornography should not be seen solely as a property of the individual. Rather, pornography consumption should be viewed as a social problem requiring social strategies to curb it. Educating men in general about the harms of pornography use and working for broader social change are critical factors that will, if done in concert, ultimately increase the effectiveness of individual-level intervention with male IPSV offenders.

These efforts can help provide an atmosphere in which men show respect for each other and change attitudes, increase knowledge, and change behavioral intentions (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013). One example of this kind of social change effort (which focuses on adolescents) is *In The Picture*. Developed in Australia by Maree Crabbe as part of the Brophy

Family and Youth Services' community education project *Reality & Risk: Pornography, Young People and Sexuality, In the Picture* comes on a DVD and has 82 resources designed to comprehensively address the issues of explicit sexual imagery that many of our youth are encountering on a regular basis.

We run the risk of forever treating the survivors and perpetrators of IPSV without changing patriarchal social norms and by not moving more aggressively towards prevention. One of our key efforts should be helping boys and men develop what Michael Kimmel (2008) coins as a "new model of masculinity":

Young men must understand on a deep level that being a real man isn't going along with what you know in your heart to be cruel, inhumane, stupid, humiliating, and dangerous. Being a real man means doing the right thing, standing up to immorality and injustice when you see it, and expressing compassion, not contempt, for those who are less fortunate. In other words, it's about being courageous. So much of Guyland encourages cowardice - being a passive bystander, going along with what seems to be the crowd's consensus (p. 287).

CONCLUSION

Pornography is poisoning our society on many levels, including contributing to IPSV. This requires a multidimensional approach. One or two methods alone will not succeed and the work involved in confronting pornography is destined to be ongoing and ever changing, as will be the porn industry and its collaborators' resistance to attempts to eliminate degrading, violent, and racist sexual media. As Jensen (2007) puts it, those who want to end the pornification of our society "have a lot of work to do" (p. 184). What we and many others believe are effective means of doing so are suggested in this chapter, but there are, of course, many more initiatives that

could be proposed and have been by others (e.g., DeKeseredy & Corsianos, 2016). The ultimate goal is for all of us, whatever role we play, to get involved in community-based efforts to curb pornography and IPSV.

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