

A qualitative exploration of nonconsensual pornography sharing experiences and influences
among adult males

by

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Abstract

This study explores nonconsensual pornography sharing experiences and influences among older-generational males to answer the following research questions: *What does the sharing of nonconsensual pornography look like among older-generational male peer groups? What influences men to engage in NCP sharing?* Interviews were conducted among a sample of 18 adult males, 35 years and older, who have engaged in nonconsensual pornography sharing behaviors within the past 5 years. Participants were asked questions about their technology use, nonconsensual pornography sharing methods, and what influences might be associated with their NCP sharing behaviors. Qualitative analysis indicates that among adult men, nonconsensual pornography sharing is commonly facilitated through technology and sharing behaviors are influenced by patriarchal standards of society, the need to perform masculinity, and engage in male bonding. Following this analysis, it is recommended that further research be conducted to differentiate between nonconsensual pornography behaviors motivated by nonharmful and harmful intent.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to two very important people in my life that have offered support in their own ways. My husband, Dennis Webb, has supported me not only during the research process but also inspired the original research concept. Thank you for always being my emotional support and sounding board for some great and not-so-great ideas. My sister, Michelle Lamoureux-McLain, whose support through this process has also been a great help and comfort. Always available, I know during writing all-nighters I can reach out to her at 3:00a with questions, comments, or complaints and she will forever be there.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Technological innovations over the past decade have allowed social interactions to transition from the confines of the physical world and into virtual spaces. Whether the intent is to communicate, exchange information, or circulate media, there is a social media platform that allows users to do so anonymously or not. While virtual spaces can provide a convenient platform for social interactions, they can also be used to facilitate deviant behaviors (Henry & Powell, 2018; Marganski & Melander, 2015; Pina, Holland, & James, 2017). For example, digital technologies are being used to facilitate intimate partner abuse and violence (Henry & Flynn, 2019; Maddocks 2018). One of the most prevalent types of technology facilitated intimate partner abuse and violence is known as image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) (McGlynn, Rackley, & Houghton, 2017), which refers to a progression of different behaviors that lead into each other and fall on the continuum of sexual violence (Kelly, 1998). IBSA was introduced as a particular kind of abuse against women to bring into focus the overlapping nature of different forms of abuse including revenge porn, sexualized photoshopping, up-skirting, sextortion, voyeurism, etc. (McGlynn, Rackley, & Houghton, 2017, pp.27). With such a broad spectrum of concepts, IBSA allows women to conceptualize and describe their personal experiences with abuse. On the other hand, IBSA creates challenges for sociologists and criminologists because of its association with these different terms (i.e., revenge porn, nonconsensual pornography, and technology facilitated sexual violence) (Maddocks, 2018). While most researchers have studied the phenomenon of revenge porn (Bates, 2017; Hearn & Hall, 2019; McGlynn, Rackley, & Houghton, 2017), which refers to “the leaking of private images by a vengeful ex-partner” (Maddocks 2018, p.346), it is unclear how it is similar and different from other types of IBSA.

One form of IBSA that has not been studied as frequently is nonconsensual pornography (NCP), which refers to “the act of an individual victimizing another individual through the creation, control, or distribution of sexually explicit media without consent” (Henry & Powell, 2018; Franklin, 2014). NCP has been conceptualized as a form of sexual abuse and control (DiTullio & Sullivan, 2019), sexism and a way for men to follow gender norms (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2016). Others have noted that NCP is the result of the intersection between risky sexual behaviors and technology normalization (Stanley et al., 2016; Velez, 2019). Prevalence of NCP has been linked to gender and age. NCP behaviors are associated with masculine gender norms as a way for men to promote their sexual accomplishments (Hall & Hearn, 2019). Sharing sexually explicit media in general has also been linked to gendered behavior (Whisnant, 2010). Adolescents and emerging adults have been cited to be the most vulnerable to incidents of NCP victimization (Ruvalcaba & Eaton, 2020) but this could be due to the fact that the majority of NCP studies include younger generation samples (Walker & Sleath, 2017). Older adults are greatly underrepresented within NCP literature.

With NCP, the victim does not always know that they are being victimized as explicit images and videos can be created, distributed, and circulated without the subject’s knowledge (Henry et al., 2019). If one of the strongest motivating factors of image-based sexual abuse and revenge porn is to somehow harm the victim (McGlynn et al., 2017) then what other incentives could a perpetrator be motivated by if harm is not the primary objective? DeKeseredy & Schwartz (2016) suggest that “it is not only ex-partners seeking revenge who nonconsensually share explicit images. There are also people who do so for a variety of other reasons, such as to make money, for a ‘joke’, or for no particular reason at all” (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2016, pp.6). DeKeseredy has been one of the few researchers to acknowledge these alternative motivations for NCP,

but motivations without harmful intent have not been explored at great detail. Motivations associated with age may adjust over time to meet the needs of their current life stage, the traditional points in a person's life where daily rhythm and routine alter drastically due to a change in a person's role in society (Helsper, 2010, pp.355). A major hurdle all researchers must overcome when exploring NCP motivations, intending harm or not, is obtaining data from perpetrators of these behaviors. Reporting victims' experiences has assisted in policy creation and NCP criminalization efforts (Fay, 2018; Lageson, McElrath, & Palmer, 2018; McGlynn, Rackley, & Houghton, 2017), but the need for similar reporting practices of perpetrators' behaviors and motivations is essential to adequately address these issues. The purpose of this thesis is to expand the current sociological knowledge related to NCP and address research gaps by exploring the motivations, and perceptions of adults who engage in NCP behaviors by answering the following research questions: *What does the sharing of nonconsensual pornography look like among older-generational male peer groups? What influences men to engage in NCP sharing?* Utilizing a qualitative methodological approach, this study will rely on data collected through in-depth interviews with a sample of men born in 1985 and before to examine their motivations for sharing and distributing sexually explicit photos and/or videos of others without consent. Normalization of technology use among younger generations has led to policy implementation and educational programs highlighting the dangers associated with sexting behaviors and incidents of NCP. By gaining a better understanding of the same types of behaviors among adults, this study could inform similar policies and programs to educate perpetrators or protect victims who might be less knowledgeable of technology norms.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Nonconsensual Pornography Conceptualized

Nonconsensual pornography (NCP) has been studied interdisciplinary within diverse contexts using different methodologies (Bates, 2017; Franklin, 2014; Walker & Sleath, 2017; Wood et al., 2015). The variations in terminology, definitions, theories, and methods create a unique challenge in compiling previous and current knowledge associated with NCP into a concise literature review. NCP conceptualization has roots in intimate partner violence (DiTullio & Sullivan, 2019; Marganski & Melander, 2018), technology facilitated abuse (Henry & Powell, 2018; Messing et al., 2020; Powell, Scott, & Henry, 2020), and image-based sexual abuse (Franklin, 2014; McGlynn & Rackley, 2016). Depending on the approach and framework, NCP has been limited to only sexually explicit images (Bloom, 2014) or expanded to include images and videos (Bates, 2017).

Perpetrators of NCP use various methods of sharing sexually explicit media. As technology continuously evolves, so do the channels of distribution. A majority of studies find that sexually explicit media is shared through online websites such as pornography channels, social media, or public forums (Henry & Flynn, 2019; Walker & Sleath, 2017). Henry and Flynn (2019) examined 77 high-volume websites known for dealing in NCP imagery and found that the increased demand for what is known as “revenge pornography” (Powell & Henry, 2017) has resulted in the rise of available NCP media and similarly labeled products from the pornography industry. With such a vast and diverse industry such as pornography, it is almost impossible to determine with 100% accuracy which images are nonconsensual or simply advertised as such to appeal to a particular consumer base, heterosexual males seeking sexual pleasure through the

objectification of women (Henry & Flynn, 2019, pp.1934). Dekker et al. (2019) found that the perception of consent also changed the way NCP is consumed by men, with men spending more time and concentration on images that were identified as nonconsensual over consensual ones. Public sharing is not the only distribution methods to gain attention as private sharing has also been found to be a prevalent form of NCP (Henry & Flynn, 2019). Private sharing is often linked to the practice of sexting, the digital production of sexually suggestive or explicit images and distribution by mobile phone messaging or through the internet on social network sites, extending it to the sending of sexually suggestive texts (Lee & Crofts, 2015; Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019). Sexting is usually studied within the parameter of two individuals consensually exchanging sexual messages between each other (Roberts & Ravn, 2020; Weisskirch & Delevi, 2011). During sexting activities there is an oftentimes unspoken agreement that the sexually explicit media is “for your eyes only” (Riccardelli & Adorjan, 2019) and sending it to someone outside of that agreement is considered an anomaly to the social practice and unacceptable (Reyns, Henson, & Fisher, 2014).

The discussion of consent is a common theme that spans across NCP literature. Although the term “nonconsensual pornography” infers the omission of consent, this is not always a clear determination among researchers, perpetrators, and victims. NCP includes many gray areas including assumption of consent through active participation (Dekker et al., 2019). Sexting activities sometimes referred to as “sending nudes” (Riccardelli & Adorjan, 2019) has complicated the understanding of consent because although the initial creation of the media was consensual, the sharing with others than originally intended may not be. The origins of the sexually explicit media influence the understanding of consent, for example if a woman takes a nude photo of herself and sends it to a man willingly that activity alone can imply a certain level of consent that

translates to further sharing (Velez, 2019). Early NCP criminalization efforts resulted in legislation that excluded victims who self-recorded the images that were later distributed without their consent (Franklin, 2014). These early laws further alienated many NCP victims from seeking legal justice because the act of taking the photo or video disqualified her from being perceived as a victim.

Other studies have suggested that NCP is not the result of risky sexting activities or intimate partner abuse, but instead the consequence of sexism (Kreager et al., 2016; Velez, 2019), societal gender norms (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2016) or exclusion of bodily autonomy (Patella-Rey, 2018). Various studies that have measured the prevalence of NCP between males and females have demonstrated time after time that the majority of NCP incidents are perpetrated by men (Bates, 2017; Henry & Powell, 2017; Pina, Holland, & James, 2017; Walker et al., 2019). The phenomenon of NCP is not limited to the beliefs and motivations between just the people involved, but how society treats women and the limited space women are given to own their own bodies or images. Bodily integrity, personal autonomy and ownership of one's physical body, can translate to the digital image of that body as well. Particularly, NCP victims who do not distinguish between their physical and digital self will perceive incidents of NCP the same as physical sexual assault (Patella-Rey, 2018, pp.786). While women are expected to keep their sexuality private, men are encouraged in contrast and when these opposing ideologies clash it results in NCP (Patella-Rey, 2018).

Nonconsensual Pornography vs. Revenge Porn

NCP is often combined with a similar phenomenon known as revenge porn, a term that is commonly associated with the "leaking of private images by a vengeful ex-

partner” (Maddocks, 2018, pp.346). The term revenge porn has also taken a primary position due to its use by policy makers and the media. McGlynn and colleagues (2017) suggest that revenge porn holds a specific place within the continuum of sexual abuse as it is another way for perpetrators to control their partner, even after the relationship has ended.

Technology facilitated abuse generally refers to the use of technology as a means of controlling someone else’s behaviors and can include forms of sexual, mental or emotional abuse (Henry & Powell, 2018; Messing et al., 2020; Powell, Scott, & Henry, 2020). Using telecommunications such as text messages, private messaging platforms, and social media to initiate, escalate, and maintain romantic relationships has become normalized among younger generations. Studies examining how the use of this technology has influenced different aspects of romantic relationships has focused primarily on samples of college students (Marganski & Melander, 2015; Reyna et al., 2014; Stanley et al., 2016; Wood et al., 2015). While telecommunications have been a vehicle for students to create and maintain relationships with one another, these same technologies can make college students more widely accessible and as a result more susceptible to unhealthy online behaviors and, in extreme cases, controlling behaviors (Nielsen, 2009; Sharples, Graber, Harrison, & Logan, 2009).

These types of controlling behaviors related to technology use include but are not limited to checking call histories, checking cell phones bills, sending excessive number of texts, monitoring a partner’s personal social media account, posting inappropriate material on social media the partner does not agree to, using GPS devices to monitor a partner’s location, installing hidden webcams within a home to monitor a partner’s behavior, installing spyware on a partner’s personal device, insisting upon a partner disclosing personal passwords, and monitoring any other type of telecommunications the

partner may use (Burke et al., 2011; Melander, 2010). When these types of controlling behaviors are unsuccessful and there is a breakdown within the relationship, this is where we typically find examples of revenge porn (Bothamley & Tully, 2018; Gavin & Scott, 2019).

If the motivations for the nonconsensual sharing of explicit media is not revenge, then should NCP and revenge porn be studied alongside one another? Walker et al., (2019) introduced several motivating factors to a sample of university students and compared the self-reported results. The main motivations cited were “for fun/as a joke” or “to seek advice/discuss” (Walker et al., 2019, pp.14). Motivations such as seeking revenge or to hurt or shame were only reported when victims were asked about their perceptions of perpetrator motivations (Walker et al., 2019, pp.16). These findings suggest that there are discrepancies between the motivations behind NCP and revenge pornography and further research is needed to gain a better understanding of how the concepts differ.

Doing gender also influences the motivations behind NCP and revenge pornography. Generally, revenge pornography is shared among male circles and distributed for the enjoyment of other men. Henry and Flynn’s (2019) examination of revenge pornography distribution channels found virtual spaces that heavily catered to men, outside the bounds of normal pornography consumerism. Descriptive terms frequently used by multiple NCP websites included “share your wife”, “ex gf pics”, “wife sharing”, “ex-girlfriend” (Henry & Flynn, 2019, pp.1940). Revenge pornography is seen as a way for men who feel they have been wronged by a previous partner to assert their perceived masculine dominance and gain back the control they feel they have lost through the shaming and humiliation of that partner (McGlynn, Rackley, & Houghton, 2017). By contrast, men engaging in NCP behaviors not necessarily motivated by

revenge are still utilizing the nonconsensual sharing of sexually explicit media to reaffirm their masculinity but to other males, not themselves (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2016). DeKeseredy's male peer support theory lays the theoretical framework for this understanding of NCP motivations not influenced by harmful intent (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013). Taking these differences into consideration, I suggest that although incidents of revenge pornography can almost always be applied to NCP, incidents of NCP should not routinely be classified as revenge pornography. Furthermore, such a distinction should be made when examining the motivations and consequences of NCP and revenge pornography because not all measures will overlap between the two concepts.

Nonconsensual Pornography & Age

NCP is not a phenomenon limited by gender or age, but it is commonly studied in the context of adolescent and young adult male perpetrators and female victims (Bates, 2017; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2017; Maddocks, 2018; Walker & Sleath, 2017). Adult samples of 25 years and older are underrepresented in the study of NCP, as a majority of the literature consists of males and female sample groups between the ages of 13 and 25 (Walker & Sleath, 2017). Among the studies that have included adult samples, Gamez-Guadix et al. (2015) compared the prevalence of sexting and online sexual victimization among Spanish adults. They found that 2/3 of the sample had engaged in sexting behaviors and 1/3 had reported incidents of online sexual victimization. These findings suggest that engaging in sexting behaviors significantly increases the chance of online sexual victimization. Women were also more likely to be victimized in this way which is consistent with previous studies indicating women are more likely to experience sexual coercion and victimization than men (Gamez-Guadix et al., 2015, pp.151). This imbalance of victimization by gender carries into older age groups as well. Gamez-

Gaudix and colleagues (2015) found that although the prevalence of sexting behaviors seems to decrease with age, 43% among adults aged 25-34, 37.3% among adults 35-45, and 21.4% among adults 45 and older, online sexual victimization is still an issue among older adults regardless of the decrease in sexting behaviors.

Studies directly related incidents of NCP among adult samples are even more limited than those focusing on general sexting behaviors. Ruvalcaba and Eaton (2020) examined the rates of NCP perpetration and victimization in the United States. Within their sample of 3,044 participants aged 18 and older, the mean age was 40.31. Their findings suggest that NCP perpetration is a gendered form of sexual abuse commonly committed by men and emerging adults, ages 18-29, are at a higher risk of victimization (Ruvalcaba & Eaton, 2020, pp.71-72). These limited study results give a glimpse into the NCP behaviors among adults but are inadequate in demonstrating its true prevalence. Further research is needed to expand our understanding of adult NCP behaviors and motivations.

It is essential to study NCP behaviors among a variety of populations, including adults. As we progress through life our beliefs, values, desires, and goals will change to adapt to our new life stages. These are not only influenced by our personal experiences, but our interactions with the society we live in. Relationships and sexual behaviors amongst Millennials, Generation Xer's, and Baby Boomers will be different as each generational group is at a different life stage and have mentally and emotionally developed within contrasting social norms and practices (Rowntree, 2014; Twenge, et al., 2015). These generational differences reflect varied personal values, which translates into distinct behavioral patterns (Twenge, Campbell, & Freeman, 2012). Information and communications technologies (ICT) researchers have examined the association between internet use and age across generations. How teenagers and young adults are using

modern technology is different than their parents and grandparents. Helsper (2010) attributes these differences to occupational shifts and relationship developments. The occupational transition from student to employee results in a decrease of personal freedom, but an increase in disposable income. Technology also facilitates unique opportunities for older adults to socialize and maintain relationships they otherwise would not have the time resources to foster alone (Karavidas, Lim, & Katsikas (2005).

Nonconsensual Pornography & Doing Gender

The gendered discussion of NCP goes beyond which gender is most likely to be victimized by another's control of sexually explicit media; it includes how each gender's participation in the creation and distribution of said media is perceived. Although women have reported higher rates of NCP victimization (Walker & Sleath, 2017), men have been known to create and distribute their own versions of explicit media too. To examine the motivations, behaviors, and consequences associated with NCP, it is important to recognize how gender influences the dynamics between men and women who participate in the phenomenon. Why are women more likely to be victimized by NCP even though explicit media of men also exists within the same digital spaces? I would suggest the answer lies within the oppression of women within perpetuated gender norms and the patriarchal structure of digital spaces (Ricciardeli & Adorjan, 2019). It is no secret that while women are actively shamed by patriarchal societies for embracing or taking agency over their sexual selves, men are encouraged to, or at the least ignored, for doing the same (Dragotto, Giomi, & Melchiorre, 2020; Kreager, Staff, Gauthier, Lefkowitz, & Feinberg, 2016). For example, a study on adolescent sexual behavior and peer acceptance revealed a gender double standard: girls reported a 45% decline and boys reported an 88% increase in peer acceptance after becoming sexually active (Kreager et al., 2016, pp. 384). Dragotto and colleagues (2020) discuss the disproportionate rates of

women receiving criticism for posting sex-related messages, including sexually suggestive comments or experiences, on Twitter compared to similar postings by men. Women also receive conflicting advice and societal pressures to both send nude or semi-nude photos in order to entice men into romantic relationships and refrain from sending such photos in order to be respected by those same men (Mckinley & Lavis, 2020). These double standards and conflicting expectations created by the patriarchy affect women in all spaces, physical and digital.

The phenomenon known as “unsolicited dick pics” (Amundsen, 2020; Hayes & Dragiewicz, 2018; Mandau, 2019; Waling & Pim, 2017), refers to “the colloquial term for men sending images of their own penises via email, messaging application, or text” (Hayes & Dragiewicz, 2018, pp.114), has appeared in NCP studies and discussions. The connection between men sending unsolicited dick pics and NCP lies within the motivations to victimize women on both ends of the sexting practice. Women are not only victimized by the photos they are of themselves, but also the photos that are shared with them. Hayes and Dragiewicz (2018) compare the cultural perception of unsolicited dick pics within the context of erotica, exhibitionism, and entitlement in order to demonstrate that while the phenomenon is widely acknowledged as a form of sexual harassment, it is also generally accepted by society as normal behavior. This social acceptance of men engaging in sexually coercive behavior contributes to what Hayes & Dragiewicz (2018) refer to as *sexual entitlement*. The offender believes himself to be superior and, “Therefore, he sees himself as being entitled to have sex when he wants from those who are less powerful/less important than himself” (Hayes & Dragiewicz, 2018, pp. 115). Behaviors related to sexual entitlement have been associated with sexual victimization of women and children (Bouffard, 2010).

If men are motivated to engage in sexually coercive behavior such as sending unsolicited dick pics by their own sexual gratification regardless of who they harm, can the same motivations apply to NCP? The current literature surrounding NCP is still limited in scope and depth, but the search for perpetrator motives is a common theme across research. Riccardelli & Adorjan, 2019 discuss the limitation of accounting for developmental stages within their sample group and suggest further study on how that might influence sexting normalization and the gendered pressures from peers that motivate the sharing of sexually explicit media. This study will attempt to address a specific gap Henry and Flynn (2019) address in their limitations section for more qualitative research with perpetrators on the motivations of IBSA and the ways in which images and videos are being shared through other means such as cell phones, email, and private social media pages. Little is known about NCP perpetrator motivations, but Walker and colleagues' (2019) study on this topic provides some insight. In this study, men and women believed that perpetrator motives for NCP included: to discuss or objectify, seek relationship advice, for fun or as a joke, to gossip about, because they always share these types of things with friends, to get attention, to show off, or because they were asked to. Participants only noted vengeful motivations when victims were asked to ascertain the reasons behind their perpetrator's actions (Walker et al., 2019, pp. 13-14); as such, it remains unclear as to whether revenge porn should be considered a form of NCP. Although the consequences are not any less painful for the victim, it is possible that NCP perpetrators will not view their actions as harmful or abusive if their motivations are linked to sexual entitlement, fun and joking, or showing off. than those who distribute revenge pornography. To better understand a perpetrator's motivations, we can not only progress the knowledge of NCP but also and help develop policies and assistance programs that target these harmful behaviors.

Chapter 3 - Theoretical Framework

Male Peer Support Theory Origins and Development

Male peer support theory began to take shape in 1987 as a response to criminologist scholars examining the relationships between all-male peer groups and violence against women (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013, pp.48). During the 1980's and into the 1990's criminologists and sociologists sought to expand the theoretical and empirical knowledge related to different aspects of women victimization at the hands of men. Historically, domestic violence has existed since early humans first began to cohabitate (Wrangham, 2019), but related phenomena such as intimate partner abuse or dating violence, did not gain mass scholarly attention until the 1950's and 1960's (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013). Even then, the number of studies focused on sexual assault in intimate relationships were limited.

Social support theory was popular among psychologists to demonstrate how individuals tend to remain healthier when they have support systems, such as family or friends, than those who do not (Cohen et al., 2000). Over time, scholars in other fields reconceptualized social support theory to address violence against women generally using it to explain how support systems (human and materialistic) can influence the decline of victimization (Casey & Beadnell, 2009; Ellis & Wright, 1987; Popp & Peguero, 2012). DeKeseredy (1988) followed this trend and suggested that social support theory could also be applied to the rise of victimization, contradictory to original findings. When dealing with women who are victims of domestic abuse, the role police officers, lawyers, and other professionals play can either help the victim or hinder their mental and physical health by failing to provide proper assistance, causing the victim to endure further abuse (DeKeseredy, 1988). This conceptualization of social support gave way to a new theory

that focused on male peer support. Male peer support theory goes beyond the concept of the societal patriarchy, male domination at a societal level, and focuses on familial patriarchy, male dominance at a domestic or intimate level (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013). The theory was designed to explain why some men, due to their attachments to patriarchal male peers, viewed some college female dating partners as appropriate targets for physical, sexual, and psychological assaults (DeKeseredy, 1988). This study uses the same premise but extends the theory beyond college-aged peers.

Male Peer Support Theory and Doing Masculinity

DeKeseredy's (1988) original male support theory model explored the social support and resources men receive through culturally accepted gender norms that ultimately influence how men and women interact with one another. The United States, for example, is controlled by a patriarchal society which holds men at a higher status than women. As a result, men who are encouraged by their male peer groups to display their masculinity through power or control will do so at the expense of those they view to be lower than themselves. Not only does a patriarchal system determine the social ranking of those "doing masculinity" (Messerschmidt 1993) but also how to portray that masculinity and "masculinity studies show us that the decision to be violent to women and others is affected by gender, class, and race/ethnic relations that structure the resources available to accomplish what men feel provides their masculine identities" (DeKeseredy & Schwartz 2016, p.3-4).

Emotional suppression is another example of how men are taught to display their masculinity but can lead to violent outbursts and the need to control things exterior to themselves to replace the interior control they have lost. This need for external control has been found to be targeted towards women (Walker et al. 2019). Fleming and colleagues (2015, p. 251) studied men's violence against women and found that "social

constructions of masculinity and male gender norms are an important root cause underlying men's disproportionate violence perpetration." When applying male peer support theory to the social structure of dating, the stress that comes with romantic relationships can cause men to seek advice from their peer group as to how to deal with the strain (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013, pp.52). This reasoning was then expanded to generalize interactions (not always related to stress) that men have with their peer groups and eventually contributed to the creation of contemporary forms of male peer support theory. Physical violence or aggression is not always the outcome from men doing masculinity in an attempt to prove their manhood.

One modified version of male peer support theory is what DeKeseredy refers to as "the absence of deference" (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013, pp.62). Sexual aggression and the lack of deference among male peer groups have been cited in several studies as contributing factors to violence against women (DeKeseredy & Flack, 2007; Jahnke, 2012; Schwartz & Laggett, 1999). Sexual aggression or coercion might not be actively encouraged by male peer groups, but it is also not actively discouraged. As long as there are no negative consequences experienced, men will continue to engage in risky or abusive behaviors. DeKeseredy & Schwartz (2013) attribute absence of deference to rape cases on college campuses. To cultivate a safe learning environment for women, students are commonly required to participate in sexual harassment or abuse training, but even after these administrative efforts, sexual assaults continue to happen on college campuses across the United States. If male peer groups are not also supporting these efforts and sexual assault perpetrators go unpunished, there is little incentive for them to stop. Absence of deference is a way for men to do masculinity by doing nothing at all. Morris & Ratajczak (2019) cite male peer support theory as one of the most utilized theories to understand men's use of many forms of violence against women. As

previously mentioned, in cases of sexual assault on college campuses, multiple studies have noted male peer support theory as a predictor (Casey et al., 2017; Hayes et al., 2016; Mahlstedt & Welsh, 2015).

Male Peer Support Theory and Virtual Sexual Expression

Men are generally encouraged to express themselves sexually while women are expected to remain sexually naïve. Men doing masculinity through sexual expression can result in abusive behaviors such as sexual harassment, sexual coercion, or rape as previously mentioned. These behaviors are encouraged by male sexual entitlement, referring to the socially constructed belief that men are entitled to sex (Bouffard, 2010; Pemberton & Wakeling, 2009). This brand of male superiority combined with societal expectations of sexual expression has encouraged other risky behaviors such as sexting and NCP. Sexting, the sending and receiving of sexual messages, images, and videos, has become a normalized component of initiating and maintaining sexual relationships with the popularization of technology use (Stanley et al., 2018). It is important to note that these expressions are not always associated with intent to harm (Roberts & Ravn, 2019).

When it comes to sexting, context matters and must be taken into consideration when determining if sexting behaviors fall within sexual entitlement or healthy sexual expression. Sexting is an interpersonal form of communication that requires the participation of two or more individuals. Sexting coercion through sexting can be one-sided or two-sided depending on the relationship dynamic between the participants. Jackson & Scott's (2017) examination of sexual learning experiences through the lens of practice theory also has implications for understanding sexual behaviors, such as sexting, through male peer support theory. Some sexual behaviors are learned by observing others engaging in those activities. If a couple is sending and receiving sexually explicit

messages with one another and one or both parties do not know what types of messages to send that would appeal to the other, a quick internet search can yield thousands of results. One person might also go to their peer group for advice or assistance taking sexually explicit pictures or videos.

What happens when sexting behaviors lead to negative consequences? Gender norms have created a double standard related to sexting behaviors. Ricciardelli & Adorjan (2019) discussed the perception differences between teenage boys who send sexually explicit photos of themselves to others and girls who do the same. Overall, girls were more often coerced to send nude photos of themselves, but boys did so without being asked. Also, if the nude photos were shared with peers outside of the sender and receiver, the girls were perceived to be “sluts” or “whores” (Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019, p. 569) while boys experienced little to no judgement from their peers. These results strengthen the absence of deference theory as the male peers offer no negative consequences to the boys’ sexting behaviors but react negatively to the girls’ similar activities.

Male Peer Support Theory and Nonconsensual Pornography

Sexual entitlement has often been linked to a social practice known as sending dick pics. What commonly differentiates sexting behaviors and sending dick pics is the absence of consent. When men send nude photos of themselves to women it is generally considered to be in the context of sexting, but when the practice is referred to as “sending dick pics” it is perceived that the recipient was not expecting to receive them and/or they were unwanted. When men engage in sending dick pics to unsuspecting recipients, they are exploiting their cultural gendered expectations and acceptance of sexual expression through pleasure seeking and sexual entitlement (Hayes & Dragiewicz, 2018, pp.115).

NCP is another form of sexual entitlement that has gained theoretical attention, including male peer support theory. Unlike sending dick pics where men are sending nude photos of themselves to others, NCP is generally associated with the sharing of explicit photos or videos of someone else to others they were not intended for (Maddocks, 2018; Velez, 2019). There are multiple channels of sharing and including sharing within the same physical space or sending digital media via electronic means. Regardless of the method, sharing pornographic media has been used to strengthen male bonds since pornographic films made their debut in the late 1900's. Men would gather in male dominated spaces to consume pornographic material while engaging in other masculine behaviors such as drinking, smoking, or gambling (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013, pp.112-115). NCP is still shared in face-to-face setting but sharing behaviors have also transitioned into virtual spaces that are male dominated. Social websites like Reddit and 4chan have specific forums dedicated to the sharing and discussion of NCP (Henry & Flynn, 2019). These channels of distribution and other similar serve as communities of support for men to engage with one another and validate their NCP behaviors and motivations.

Male Peer Support Theory and the Present Study

NCP behaviors and motivations are commonly associated with gender norms and masculinity (Reed et al., 2016; Ross et al., 2019) and as such can be examined through the lens of male peer support theory. Some reported motivations associated with NCP have been perceived as nonproblematic by perpetrators (Walker et al., 2019) and this study's goal is to expand upon those findings through the understanding that male perpetrators rely on one another to validate and support related behaviors.

The Current Study

The current study is designed to answer the following research questions: *What does the sharing of nonconsensual pornography look like among older-generational male peer groups? What is influencing these males to engage in NCP sharing?* Previous studies related to NCP have included sample groups of adolescents, teenagers, and young adults (Walker & Sleath, 2017) who are learning how to balance hormonal desires and navigating societal gender expectations simultaneously. In contrast, this study will include a sample group of adults, an understudied population, who have expectedly been indoctrinated to their societal gender norms. It is anticipated that male peer support theory will serve as the appropriate theoretical tool to examine NCP behaviors and motivations across generations regardless of the differences associated with age.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

Permissions

This study was approved by the Kansas State University IRB where both the principal investigator and researcher are affiliated. Data collection began after IRB approval was received (IRB #10335). Informed consent (detailed in following sections) was obtained from each participant during this study and no participants refused or retracted their consent for the duration of this study.

Rationale for Qualitative Methods Design

The methods utilized during this study are designed to gain a better understanding what NCP sharing looks like among adult men and what influences them to engage in NCP sharing. I have designed this study to build off the workings of Walker et al. (2019) as one of the few studies to include data on the intent to harm and no harm intended through NCP perpetrator motivations. The open-ended question interviewing method utilized in this 2019 study found associations between consensual sexting behaviors of NCP victims and nonconsensual sharing motivations of NCP perpetrators (Walker et al., 2019, pp.15-16). These initial findings provide validation for a more in-depth exploration into NCP perpetrator motivations. As the main measures in this study, human behaviors and motivations are complex and require a rigorous methodological approach. A qualitative combination of holistic account and emergent design methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.182) will allow for a deeper examination of the various perceptions and multiple factors that are associated with NCP perpetration.

A holistic account approach, exploring a complex problem by investigating multiple perceptions and factors that interact in different ways to see the “bigger picture” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.182), speaks to the complicated nature of NCP. As this

study seeks to differentiate between the concepts of NCP and revenge porn, each incident of sexually explicit media sharing must be investigated separately even if committed by the same perpetrator. Reported motivations for NCP have been diverse and numerous, but they cannot account for the singular experiences of every perpetrator or victim. Only primary sources can give a detailed and accurate account of their behaviors and motivations related to NCP. Each study participant must be allowed to share their experiences in their own words, and this is most effectively done when the researcher gives them the space to do so (Boellstorff et al., 2012).

An emergent design allows the researcher to follow the lead of the participants and alter the direction of the study as needed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.182). It is anticipated that some participants will share more detailed information than others and while some may offer visual references or documentation, others may not. When discussing sensitive topics such as sexually explicit media, the researcher should be thoughtful in their approach with each participant (Pritchard, et al., 2018). Similar information can be collected through different means, such as the rephrasing of interview questions or preceding certain topics with other less sensitive topics to build trust between participant and researcher (DeKeseredy, 2019).

Previous studies have identified several limitations associated with studying NCP and by collecting multiple forms of data including interview data and other documents, this study should address and negate some of those limitations (Bothamley & Tully, 2018; Gavin & Scott, 2019; Maddocks, 2018; McGlynn, Rackley, & Houghton, 2017; Velez, 2019; Walker et al., 2019). For example, concepts such as consent or sexually explicit media can have different meanings across populations and as a result, participants will answer related questions according to their understanding of the concepts which might not align with the study's intentions (Ricciardelli & Adorjan,

2019). An emergent methods approach will allow for further clarification through a flexible interview process addressing such limitations and providing greater reliability of the study results.

Target Sample & Population

The target sample for this study includes adults (those born on or before 1985) who have experience related to the sharing and/or distribution of sexually explicit photos or videos of someone other than themselves. The age requirement of participants is essential to the success of this study and was chosen to allow for participants who fall within the “Boomer”, “Gen X”, and “Xennial” generations, as this age group is underrepresented in current NCP research. Incidents of NCP perpetration during their young adult and adolescent years will not be taken into consideration as this study seeks to examine behaviors and influences of adults. The age-related behaviors of NCP perpetration have not been studied, but according to intimate partner violence research (the broader concept which NCP often falls under), there is a shift in “age related patterns” (Johnson et al., 2015) and this study seeks to differentiate between behaviors and motivations of the target age group from those that have dominated the field up to now (Stanley et al., 2018; Roberts & Ravn, 2020; Dekker et al., 2019).

Following sample sizes of the limited number of qualitative NCP studies previously conducted (Bates, 2017; Roberts & Ravn, 2020), and taking into consideration the difficulty that is associated with interviewing perpetrators of deviant behaviors (Levitt et al., 2008) this study’s sample size is 18 participants, meeting the initial sample target size of 10-20 participants. Participants were recruited through online channels and snowballing methods.

Sample Recruitment

NCP consists of covert behaviors, most of which are facilitated through online platforms and virtual applications (Walker et al., 2017). Due to the hidden nature of sharing NCP it is difficult to distinguish a population in this study. While it is true that some NCP offenders have been identified through criminal cases, this is an unreliable source to identify potential participants as NCP legislation and criminalization is inconsistent within the United States (Lageson et al., 2018). To create a sampling frame within a hidden population, there were two recruitment initiatives: one targeted those online spaces where NCP acts have been carried out and the other relied on snowball sampling.

This study utilizes nonprobability sampling and participants were recruited through online social media platforms and the Kansas State University news publication “K-State Today.” A call for participant volunteers was posted on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter as these platforms have messaging capabilities known to be used for the sharing and distributing of sexually explicit media (Zemmels et al., 2015). A call for participant volunteers was posted to various subforums on Reddit, 4chan, and Discord servers where postings include related keywords such as “revenge porn”, “snapchat”, “incel”, “voyeurism”, “sexting”, “intimate image sharing”, “onlyfans” etc. These keywords have been cited in previous NCP study interviews (Roberts & Ravn, 2020; Walker et al., 2019; Velez, 2019) and assisted this study in recruiting appropriate participants that represented the target population. The Kansas State University news publication “K-State Today” was sent by email to each student, staff, faculty member, and other registered users. An email call for volunteers was submitted for distribution amongst this group as well.

The other recruitment strategy utilized was snowball sampling, which refers to participants recruiting individuals from their social networks (Boellstorff et al., 2012).

Two potential participants who meet the screening criteria were identified and consented to participate in the study. Those two participants then provided the identities of six additional participants. Due to the nature of NCP, those who engage in such behaviors will oftentimes know others who do so as well (those who they are sharing media with). Following this rationale, snowball sampling was an appropriate method for this study and proved fruitful with the presentation of 14 of the 18 participants.

Interview Process and Informed Consent

Participants who were recruited through online platforms or by the snowball method were contacted through their preferred method of communication. These communication methods included email or messaging platforms such as Reddit, Discord, Facebook, Instagram, etc. Informed consent to participate in the study was obtained from all participants prior to any interviews being conducted. For those interviews conducted through video conferencing or audio recording, an informed consent statement was read to each participant. Then verbal consent was obtained from each participant before conducting interviews, including those to be video recorded, audio recorded, and/or have the text transcript saved. For interviews conducted through text/chat messaging, an informed consent statement was provided by text and the participant grant consent likewise. Each participant was informed of the potential risks associated with this study, however limited. Discussion of sexual experiences and behaviors can be uncomfortable or even triggering for some individuals. Each participant was informed of their right to discontinue the study at any time without explanation. After consent had been granted by each participant, the researcher proceeded with the interviews.

Regardless of which interview style the participant chooses, each interview was conducted on a one-on-one basis between participant and researcher. This is also intended to provide participants a comfortable space to discuss sensitive topics. Each

interview lasted between 60-90 minutes, with an average of 79 minutes. All interviews took place between the two-month period of December 18, 2020 and February 20, 2021. A semi-structured interview style (Kvale, 2008) was chosen for this study because every possible experience and influence related to the sharing of sexually explicit media cannot be pre-determined and the flexibility to listen and respond in kind is essential to the success of this study. Open-ended questions also allowed for further examination of nuances and particular topics of interest as they come about during the conversation (Boellstorff, 2012).

Development of Interview Guide and Questions

The interview protocol utilized in this study has been adapted from Castillo-Montoya's (2016) interview protocol refinement framework and virtual ethnographic works (Boellstorff et al., 2012). The qualitative nature of this study ensures that participants are given the space to describe their experiences and articulate the meaning they make of those experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The first step is to focus on the alignment between the interview questions and the research question (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, pp.812). Due to the sensitive nature of this study and the rather invasive personal questions that are required within the interview process, the questions were presented in stages beginning with general experiences with technology use and building up to specific questions related to experiences with NCP. This layering process assists in building a rapport between participant and researcher without subjecting the participant to feelings of criticism or judgement. The research questions are designed in a way to allow the participants to tell their stories and "elicit relevant answers that are meaningful and useful in understanding the interviewee's perspective" (Patton, 2015, pp.471) while also staying on track with the study's purpose.

The second step was to organize the interview questions in a way that promotes

an inquiry-based conversation (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, pp.813-815). Interviewing strangers can put a strain on the conversation flow between participants and researchers and conducting interviews through virtual platforms can add another level of ambiguity that the researcher must take into account and make-up for. Not only should the interview questions assist in building trust with participants, but the interview process itself should reassure them that the aim of the study is to help others better understand the participant's unique experiences and perceptions. Interviews conducted through virtual platforms must overcome these limitations through other means, such as "textual listening" (Boellstorff et al., 2012, pp.101). Offering participants a choice of interview styles (i.e. video, audio, or textual) can make them feel more comfortable and as a result, open up more freely to discuss sensitive topics. For those participants who chose a text-based platform, the researcher compensated for the omission of conventional cues such as volume, body language, or inflections of tone through textual listening. Attention was given to the growing trend of typographical conventions such as the use of emotes to express emotions.

Before determining what influences older generational males to share sexually explicit media without the subject's consent, it is important to discuss their experiences with sharing NCP to understand what might influence the sharing. This ordered structure of interview questions accomplishes two objectives: gradually easing the participant into progressively more sensitive topics and gathering information related to experiences that will inform proceeding question related to influences. Interview questions have been divided into four topic stages:

- A. General demographic information
- B. Technology use
- C. Sharing behaviors and motivation

D. Ending remarks

Questions refer to nonconsensual pornography as “sharing of explicit photos or videos” as a way to eliminate negative stigmas or personal bias associated with the latter term. Feelings of shame or guilt related to the term “NCP” might cause participants to implicitly or explicitly alter their responses. Hall and Hearn (2017) demonstrate this possibility within their discussion of revenge porn preparators who altered their narratives to position themselves as victims (Hall & Hearn, 2017, pp.167). An interview guide (Appendix A) provides the researcher with a list of questions for each stage of the interview as well as prompts that may lead to further questioning. The flow of the interview and order of the questions within each stage were influenced by the information given by the participant to follow their train of thought and follow up on useful points.

At the end of each interview participants were thanked for their contributions to this study and asked if they would like to be informed of the results and/or publications, none elected to be contacted after the study for any reason. Confidentiality is essential in this study as it deals with sensitive topics and each participant is referred to by a unique pseudonym in all data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data analysis included multiple techniques such as winnowing (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012) and coding (Rossman & Rollis, 2012). Winnowing the data refers to the process of focusing on some parts of the data while choosing to disregard other parts that are less essential to the research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.192). Interviews that include open-ended questions can collect crucial information from participants but can also lead to the collection of anecdotal information that is of no consequence to the study. Particularly, when participants are asked questions about their personal lives or experiences (Boellstorff, 2012).

Data coding assists researchers in identifying key themes, trends, or patterns and can be done through different means. Code labels can either be generated through “in vivo codes” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) where the participant’s phrases and/or words are used directly or by open coding which consists of the researcher generating more generalized themes and assists in establishing connections between data. As a result, three key themes were identified: NCP sharing is a way for older-generational males to facilitate upholding societal patriarchal standards, “doing gender” (Messerschmidt, 2009, p.85), and male bonding.

Validity Strategies

The findings were validated using the qualitative validity strategies of replicability and being adequately grounded in theory (Katz, 2012; Desmond, 2012, p.573). The data collected in this study are replicable across different context of NCP because some of the processes identified during analysis have been found in other studies (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013). Objectification of women was commonly discussed by multiple participants in this study and has been found in other NCP sharing contexts as well (Henry & Flynn, 2019). Causal relationships have been drawn between pornography consumption and NCP sharing (Boyle, 2011; Maddocks, 2018), a topic that was discussed with multiple participants in this study as well.

Male peer support theory (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2016) was the guiding thread for this study’s theoretical framework. In answering the research questions, common themes were found in this study of NCP sharing, consistent with other male only peer behaviors, such as violence against women) explained by male peer support theory (Fleming et al., 2015). Participants indicated that their NCP sharing experiences were limited to only men, similar findings were indicated in occurrences of revenge porn and

cyberbullying (Franklin, 2014; Marganski & Melander, 2015; McGlynn, Rackley, & Houghton, 2017).

Using deductive reasoning, the theoretical framework for this study was tested. Male peer support theory suggests that perpetrators will engage in NCP behaviors due to the motivation to demonstrate their masculinity and the encouragement they receive from other males. The experiences detailed by male participants in this study further validated male peer support theory through the engagement and encouragement they receive from their male peer groups that influence their sharing behaviors.

Reflexivity Statement

When conducting research on sensitive topics such as NCP, it is especially important for researchers to acknowledge their positions within the projects they undertake. Qualitative researchers commonly utilize a reflexivity statement to demonstrate this acknowledgement (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). Furthermore, as suggested by Berger (2000), my own reflexivity in regard to this study is crucial as I share some characteristics as my participants and am familiar with their shared experiences.

For the past decade, my husband has worked within a male dominated industry, in terms of both workers and consumers, and interacts with the general public on a daily basis. One evening my husband disclosed to me that a customer he does business with regularly offered to show my husband a photo of his wife's bare breasts. Although my husband politely declined his offer, another male bystander gladly accepted. The offering individual promptly retrieved his smartphone and presented the photo to the bystander viewer. After a brief discussion of the image, the offering individual returned his smartphone to his pocket and exited the area. At the time, I did not understand why someone still engaged in a relationship with their wife would choose to share such an

intimate image with another male. When I expressed my surprise and confusion, my husband simply stated that this type of behavior was common among his male customer base and that had not been the first (or last) time such an offer had been extended to him. In fact, he could name off the top of his head more than ten men he knew personally who would regularly share explicit images and videos of their wives or girlfriends with anyone that expressed interest. Prior to this conversation I had not realized the practice of NCP distribution was so commonplace among males. It is this realization that helped me decide my thesis topic.

As a female on the cusp of my targeted sample age I would fall under the parameters of potential victimization according to previous research (Bates, 2017; Gamez-Guadix et al., 2015). Being within this victim demographic puts me in a unique position when interviewing perpetrators. To my knowledge, I have not experienced incidents of NCP but I do know others within my social circle who have been both victims and perpetrators. It is important to ensure my research is conducted in a way that allows my participants to express themselves freely and without judgement. My personal bias or assumptions regarding NCP victimization cannot influence the study's design or results. By following a technique known as "fair dealing" (Dingwall 1992) this study is designed in a way to allow for multiple perceptions without placing any in a more prominent position than others. During interviews, participants are encouraged to express their own views and influences concerning NCP perpetration rather than following the researcher's guide of pre-determined motivations.

Chapter 5 - Results

Sample Characteristics

Interviews were conducted within a sample of 18 self-identified white males, ages 35 to 58 with a mean age of 42.89, who have experience with nonconsensual sharing of sexually explicit images or videos. Of the 18 participants, two self-identified as gay, two as bisexual, and 14 as heterosexual. Interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis with each participant that lasted between 45-90 minutes with an average of 79 minutes. All interviews took place between the two-month period of December 18, 2020 and February 20, 2021.

Qualitative Results

The research questions guiding the qualitative analysis were: *What does the sharing of nonconsensual pornography look like among older-generational male peer groups and what influences men to engage in NCP sharing?* The participants engaged in a variety of discussion topics ranging from non-relevant to novel to the research questions. From these discussions emerged two main themes to answer research question one and three main themes to answer research question two related to the sharing of NCP among older-generational adult males. NCP sharing among older-generational males peer groups is facilitated by technology more than any other method of sharing explicit images and the NCP sharing only takes place between males. NCP sharing is influenced by a pressure to uphold patriarchal standards of society, do gender, and engage in male bonding.

What NCP Sharing Looks Like:

To answer the first research question (*What does the sharing of nonconsensual pornography look like among older-generational male peer groups?*), participants were asked about how the sharing takes place. How, where, when, and with who are NCP images being shared? These questions are particularly important to clarify among this sample group because of the age range. Generally, older adults are less experienced with technology than their younger peers and this impacts how they share NCP.

Participants were asked about their social media usage and which platforms they use to share sexually explicit photos and videos. Among the social media platforms identified was Facebook (88.8%), Twitter (66.6%), TikTok (61.1%), Reddit (55.5%), Instagram (38.8%), and other (16.6%). While each platform was used to share sexually explicit materials, the content included both women they knew personally and those they did not, such as general pornographic images being passed from user inbox to inbox. Those who indicated using Facebook messenger to share sexually explicit media 86% shared personal photos or videos leaving 14% sharing general pornographic material. 20% of Twitter users shared personal media through Twitter's direct messaging platform, 5% utilized TikTok messaging for personal sharing, 90% of Reddit users, 75% of Instagram users, and 35% use other messaging platforms to share personal sexually explicit material. Felix, a 41-year-old who shares NCP through Reddit and 4chan, explains why he chooses some platforms over others when sharing NCP.

Felix, 41: *"Some direct messaging apps are better than others for sharing nude photos. I think Facebook and Instagram have privacy agreements in their terms of service that state you can be banned for posting certain subject matter. I don't know if they actually keep an eye on private messages, but just in case I don't*

want to take the chance. Reddit and 4chan are much more porn-friendly so I stick to those.”

The type of messaging platform utilized by the participants is also influenced by their social network of friends, family, and acquaintances. It is not surprising that the majority of participants identified Facebook Messenger as their primary messaging app when the Facebook Messenger app had 106.4 million downloads in 2019 followed by Snapchat with 45.98 million (U.S. mobile messengers, 2019).

Two participants identified text messages and in-person to be their only sharing platforms. Daniel, a 36-year-old tradesman, and Chris, 42 explain why NCP sharing only happens in person among their peer groups.

Daniel, 36: *“Sitting around drinking some beers with friends and swapping stories and pictures. I would never share these pictures with anyone else and never online. What goes online stays there forever.”*

Chris, 42: *“Only among friends. Friends won’t screenshot stuff and sell it or post it somewhere else.”*

Daniel and Chris follow the lead of their male peer groups and share NCP when it is prompted by other group members. If the group is sharing NCP in person, then they are doing so as well. If the group is sharing NCP images through a group text, they are doing that too. According to them, there is no need to post NCP on online platforms because that is not where their target audience (the male peer group) is consuming it.

Chris also touched on the subject of online privacy and that by controlling how he shares NCP, he is also controlling who has access to that media and what happens to it. Not all participants had these privacy concerns which might be due to age and lack of technology experience. Bill, a 58-year-old electrician, frequents 4chan to consume pornography and share NCP.

Bill, 58: *“Jack [Bill’s son] sent me a funny email one time and when I clicked the link I got www.4chan.org. Porn everywhere! Everything is anonymous and that’s where I get links to send everyone.”*

Brandy: *“Are you sharing links of pornographic content or your own posted photos?”*

Bill: *“Everything. It’s all anonymous so you can’t tell”*

Brandy: *“What makes you think 4chan is all anonymous? How do you ensure the personal photos you are posting stay anonymous?”*

Bill: *“What do you mean?”*

Brandy: *“Even if usernames are not displayed there are ways people can identify users. Do you block out faces or identifying features before posting your explicit photos? Have you heard of reverse image searches?”*

Bill: *“I don’t know what any of that means but it does not matter. No one will ever find it. There are millions of posts every day on that site.”*

Every participant shared NCP through online platforms. Unlike Bill who posts on message boards and through email, others shared using chat-based applications. Discord was a common platform identified by the majority of participants. Discord allows users to create public or private chat rooms to communicate in real-time and is commonly used for video gaming. Steve is among those who use Discord for video game communications, and this is when he usually shares NCP.

Steve, 49: *“We’ll [male peer group] be playing WoW¹ and waiting to start the raid and just passing stupid stuff back and forth in d-chat [Discord]. Someone asks what I’ve gotten recently and I send it.*

Technology is constantly advancing and changing and regardless of age, individuals are experiencing more and more online. Messaging platforms like Facebook Messenger and Discord will keep being developed and users like Steve will utilize them for social interactions. By the participants detailing what NCP sharing looks like in their experiences we know where, when, and how it is happening.

The second theme to emerge from the first research question was that NCP sharing is limited to males only. Every participant discussed their sharing behaviors were between male peers only, no NCP was shared with other females. Rick, a 36-year-old self-identified bisexual, explains why he only shares NCP with other men.

Rick, 36: *“I’m not going to share women’s nudes with other women, they would think it pervy.”*

Brandy: *“How would you describe the sharing of women’s nude photos without their knowledge?”*

Rick, 36: *“I see what you did there! I pleade [plead] the 5th.”*

Another participant, Chris, a 42-year-old self-identified heterosexual, also made it clear during the interview that his NCP sharing was with “other men only”.

Chris, 42: *“I only send and get stuff from other men only.”*

Brandy: *“Is there a reason for that?”*

¹ World of Warcraft is a massive multiplayer online role-playing game developed by Blizzard Entertainment inc.

Chris, 42: “*Oh, probably that it’s just a guy thing. I’ve never gotten pictures from women, so I never share pictures with women. Maybe I should?*”

This all-male behavior that NCP sharing seems to encourage is consistent with the theoretical framework of male peer support theory (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2016). Male-only behaviors have also been displayed in other phenomenon explained by male peer support theory such as intimate partner violence (DeKeseredy & Flack, 2007).

Three themes were identified when answering the second research question, *what influences men to engage in NCP sharing?* Although each participant provided a number of unique details and anecdotal stories, three strong themes were identified across every participant’s experiences. NCP sharing was a way to uphold patriarchal standards, do gender, and engage in male bonding. Many participants explained the different ways societal pressures influence their NCP sharing behaviors. Other participants described how gender standards influence NCP sharing. And finally, male bonding was a topic many participants engaged in as well.

Upholding Patriarchal Standards Through NCP

Men and women are socialized to follow the gendered patriarchal standards set by their society. In answering the research question: *What influences men to engage in NCP sharing?* many interview participants discussed the pressure they felt to uphold patriarchal standards. Not only among their peers, but to family, coworkers, acquaintances, and at times even strangers they felt the pressure to establish or maintain a masculine image. While participants did not always agree on what this masculine image consisted of, they all agreed that engaging in NCP behaviors made them feel like the man they were expected to be in some way. Some of the masculine traits the participants identified included maintaining men at the top of a gendered hierarchy through respect, sexual prowess and engaging in sexual relations with numerous women, being physically

fit and strong, being a leader or holding a position of power (i.e., executive professional, doctor, lawyer, high ranking military personnel, etc.), and holding power over women.

Numerous participants identified being respected as a masculine trait. If they felt respected, then they felt like they were living up to patriarchal standards of being a man. When asked if it was more important to be respected by men or women, Fred, a 35-year-old tradesman, explains his views on male/female relations and how respect and women's feelings fit into the dynamic.

Fred, 35: "No I don't think it really matters what women think of men in general. Women will always need men and men will always fill that protector role for them. It is just the way it is and that symbiotic relationship is what keeps the world working. Will women respect me less if they know I showed my buddies their nudes? Probably but it's not the woman's respect we are after.... It's respect from other men that we want."

If faced with the choice of being respected by men or respected by women, Fred has chosen to be respected by men because that is what places him higher up the patriarchal hierarchy. In his view, a man's respect is more valuable than a woman's. Dean, a straight 35-year-old video game streamer had similar feelings about seeking validation from other men at the expense of others, usually women.

Dean, 35: "I am going to be totally blunt with you, the only girls guys care about are the ones they are 1. related to or 2. trying to fuck. Any other girl's opinion, we do not care about but we do care what other men think about us. Whether it's right or wrong, guys are in powerful positions and if you want something you need to be on their good side and showing any straight guy some titties will get you there."

Participants were also asked to identify what patriarchal masculine standards they aspire to and achieve. The responses were mixed. Although the majority of participants had identified sexual prowess and experience as a trait of masculinity, only three expressed their desire to meet that standard. Sam, a 39 year-old who identifies as bisexual refers to himself as an “alpha male type” and views his sexual orientation as an opportunity to have many sexual encounters.

Sam, 39: *“What’s the point of having a penis if you aren’t going to use it as much as possible?”*

Mark, a 54 year-old who works in Information Technology agrees with Sam’s view on having many sexual partners.

Mark, 54: *“A high body count – that’s what you need to be a real man in today’s world”.*

Bill who, like Same, also refers to himself as an “alpha-male”, was the third participant to express patriarchal-based relationship goals.

Bill, 58: *“When I do eventually get married I want to know what I’m doing in bed and I need experience for that”.*

Brandy: *Do you expect your future wife to also be sexually experienced?*

Bill: *“No. I’m too old to have any grand delusions of bagging a virgin wife but the less number of notches in her bedpost the better”.*

Bill’s expectations of having a female partner with fewer sexual partners and less sexual experience than himself aligns with his pursuit to fit a certain masculine image. During the interview process he referred to himself as an “alpha male” 29 times. He takes pride in portraying a masculine image and having a partner who presents as the patriarchal standard of femininity would contribute to this image.

Professional athletes such as football and basketball players are oftentimes depicted by the media as being the standard for the male physique. Regardless, if the average male has the resources or opportunities to exercise and diet similar to that of a professional athlete, do men want these bodies or are they told by their patriarchal society that they should want them? Peter, a 55-year-old, who identified his profession as “Cowboy”, suggests that the latter is the more appropriate answer and men are generally unconcerned with keeping up with athletic bodily expectations.

Peter, 55: *“Girls care about muscles and fit bodies, guys do not. Athletes are paid to keep their bodies in shape, the normal guy is not going to dedicate that much of their time to the gym. Other than gym rats, they are something else all together ROFL!²”*.

This discussion of patriarchal standard examples other than NCP, such as masculine physical attributes, is worthwhile because it demonstrates that there are different ways for men to live up to such expectations but many, such as those in this study sample, choose sharing NCP instead. Rick, a 36-year-old streamer and social media influencer who identifies as bisexual, echoed similar sentiments about why he would choose to show his peer group NCP rather than his physical traits that align with patriarchal standards.

Rick, 36: *“If I’m chilling with the dudes and want to impress them I’m not pulling my shirt up to whip out my abs. I’m pulling my phone out to whip out some hot noods [nudes]. If I tried to flex on my friends to ‘prove I’m a man’ I would get clowned hard, but if I show them a sexy video some chick sent me then I’m the man.”*

² ROFL is an acronym for “roll on the floor laughing”.

One participant, Jeff a 36-year-old streamer, shares NCP as a way to exert power over his female partner. Within a patriarchal society, men are expected to be the head of the household and provide the majority of the family income. Jeff's NCP sharing is motivated by financial gain which is then used to assert dominance over his girlfriend. Jeff regularly posts pornographic images and videos of his girlfriend on a OnlyFans³ (OF) account he created and controls without her permission or knowledge.

Jeff, 36: *“Women greatly underestimate their influence over men. My wife sends me nude pics all the time probably daily and recording our sex is a favorite of mine, she knows this. When covid started to really ramp up and all the stay-at-home orders started being set I saw an opportunity and decided to take advantage [advantage]. TikTokers kept going on and on about this OnlyFans app so I wanted to see if you could really make money off of it.”*

Over the past 18 months as of the interview date, Jeff had uploaded 600 nude photos and 30 nude or partially nude videos of his girlfriend to his account, generating approximately \$5,320.00 between subscriber payments, pay per view access, and viewer donations. The income he has generated from this sharing format is managed by Jeff alone and at his discretion. Jeff explains why this increase in income is so important to him.

Jeff, 36: *“We are exactly the same as every other couple in the world that we fight about money. She has a more lucrative career than I do with unlimited earning potential so I thought this sort of thing could even the playing field a bit better.”*

³ OnlyFans is an internet paid subscription service that allows original pornographic content to be posted and purchased.

The person who brings in the majority of the income has more of a say on how it is spent and she uses this to her advantage [advantage].

Because Jeff could not meet the patriarchal expectation of providing the majority of his family's income with his career alone, he shares and profits off NCP to bridge the gap and place himself back at the head of the household. The increased income allows him to have more control over financial decisions taking some of that control away from his female partner at the same time.

Steve, a 49-year-old entrepreneur and voice actor, is similar to Jeff in that he shares NCP as a way to gain power and control over women, but Steve is not in a relationship with the women he wants to take power away from. Steve supplements his income through voice acting and regularly uploads audio porn to the r/gonewildaudio subreddit⁴, explained by Steve as:

Steve, 49: "a community where smut is passed back and forth. There are people who write audio porn scripts then there are people like me that take the scripts we like and voice record them and upload the file back to reddit and then there are the people who listen".

A virtual exploration of the r/gonewildaudio forum presented a plethora of audio porn scripts and audio files tagged by subjects ranging from the vanilla friends-to-lovers scenario to the more hard-core kink scenes like CNC (consensual nonconsensual or rape-

⁴ Reddit is a large community made up of thousands of smaller communities. These smaller, sub-communities within Reddit are also known as "subreddits" and are created and moderated by redditors like you (Reddit Help).

play). Steve prefers to voice act scripts containing kink content and specializes in what he calls *“pretty dark shit”*.

Steve, 49: *“I really like scripts that include scenarios like Stockholm Syndrome where I kidnap the listener and describe the nasty things I would do to them and punish them if they don’t play along. I strictly stick to voice acting though, no videos, only fans, or live-chats. I can understand how these women assume from the type of material I post that I would probably be alright with getting risqué photos, but I’m not. I am a professional and the lack of respect for me as a working artist diminishes my art.”*

Reddit users do not make money from their activity on r/gonewildaudio but instead solicit donations and/or subscriptions to other websites such as Patreon, PornHub, TikTok, etc. With some audio file posts having over 5,000 upvotes and hundreds of comments, voice actors generate a fanbase of listeners of all genders and sexual orientations. Steve has gained many female fans who, along with donations and gifts from his Amazon wish list, regularly send him pornographic images of themselves. Steve does not know these women personally, but he saves many of these images to share with his male peer group.

Steve justifies his sharing behaviors by claiming that if the women who send his unsolicited nude photos don’t respect him enough to not do so, then he should not have to respect their privacy either. The power dynamic is shifted from these women making Steve uncomfortable, by sending his unsolicited pornographic images, to Steve using those images for his own gain, taking back the power he felt he had lost.

Steve, 49: *“Anyone who is careless enough to just send nudes out into the nether to someone they don’t even know obviously does not respect themselves or just do not care what happens to their nudes. I have a couple of guy friends who get a*

kick out of the shit women send me. Some of these women are very creative with their photos – tied up and stuff like that. If they don't care, why should I?"

These examples demonstrate the different ways men utilize sharing NCP to uphold patriarchal standards. Sharing NCP allows them to pursue these standards in their own way whether that is through gaining respect from other men, sexual prowess, or power.

Doing Gender Through NCP

Patriarchal standards do not only dictate what masculinity is but also how to portray that masculinity. How individuals chose to display their gendered traits is known as “doing gender” (Messerschmidt, 2009, p.85). The participants describe their experiences “doing gender” to demonstrate their masculinity and the rewards they receive from doing so. Doing gender is not limited to behaviors related to NCP but the theme of proving masculinity to male peers appeared in every interview. For example, Rick shares his thoughts on the reactions he receives from the male peers he shares NCP with:

Rick, 36: “They [male peers] are always excited to see new photos and what is a better way to cheer a guy up having a bad day than [then] to send a tit pic?”

In this case, although Rick is gaining the feeling of accomplishment from helping a friend rather than receiving words of praise or admiration as other participants had described. Society has conditioned many men to adopt a “man up” attitude towards expressing emotional needs. Part of this cultural expectation influences how men comfort one another or express emotions. Rather than offering his friend a hug, an unacceptable action between men, Rick offered his friend a more acceptable “tit pic”.

Unlike Rick who used NCP as a way to comfort a male peer, Larry, a 45-year-old self-identified “basic straight white male” describes the times he has been given a “literal

pat on the back” in response to his sharing. This pat on the back from his male peer elicited a good feeling that encourages further NCP sharing.

Larry, 45: *“I’ve had at least 15 mates give me a literal pat on the back after seeing my girl’s dump truck. Obviously I would keep showing her off.”*

The consistent encouragement and rewards Larry is receiving from his male peer group is a major influence on his NCP sharing behaviors. This type of male peer interaction can also influence the sharer’s decision to share and the frequency of their sharing. Ned, a 40-year-old mechanic, discussed the types of rewards he has received from other men after sharing NCP of his sexual partners.

Ned, 40: *“I’ll get comments like, ‘you’re the luckiest man alive’, ‘I wish my old lady looked like that’, or ‘who did the work?’. That’s my favorite one because I smile, look them in the eyes and say, ‘all natural’”.*

I took note of Ned’s facial expression as he said “all natural”. His eyes lit up with the very sense of pride he was discussing and his smile was so big I could see a clear view of his front top and bottom teeth. I do not know if this emotional response was due to Ned reminiscing about his partner or the words of praise from his peers but he did tell me later during the interview where his influences came from.

Ned, 40: *“The guys definitely. I would not say ‘pressure’ I would use the word having fun.”*

Ned’s refusal of the descriptive word “pressure” further demonstrates that individual experiences are unique but still have themes in common. He may not feel pressured by his peer group to engage in NCP sharing like Rick or Mark, but their male peers are still influencing them regardless of the mechanism (i.e. pressure, encouragement, rewards, etc.).

Bill's male peer group he frequently shares NCP with has a long-established competition that, unlike John's peer group, does focus on the women within the photos and videos and their specific desirable attributes. Breast size, body frame, weight, facial features, the need for make-up or not, hair length and color, and thigh gaps are only a few of the physical traits these men analyze and assess to determine their group social hierarchy.

Bill, 58: *"It's just a competition, we aint [are not] the only ones who do this kind of thing. Whoever has the hottest girl gets bragging rights over the others, that is until they are outdone by a new hot girl. It's just what guys do and you would be hard pressed to find even a handful of men who don't. They are liars if they say otherwise."*

Patriarchal standards also influence men's perspectives on NCP sharing. The phrase, "It's just what guys do" was used by every participant in one way or another. One participant stated "It's just what guys do", another said, "This is the way it is with men", a third replied "Boys will be boys" to several of the interview questions, a fourth commented "It [NCP sharing] is what it is". Each participant had their own way of phrasing the same thing: NCP sharing is behavior among men that is widely accepted and at many times expected.

Doing gender through competition and the girls must look good

Although George stated his wife sends him 365 nude photos a year, he only shares "maybe 50" with his peers because some poses look better than others.

Male Bonding Through NCP

In answering the research question: *What influences men to engage in NCP sharing?* many interview participants described how their NCP sharing behaviors facilitated male bonding and friendship. As discussed previously, individual experiences

are unique and not each male peer group bonded in the same way. The types of NCP facilitated male bonding that was identified by multiple participants were competition and pornography consumption.

Male bonding through competition is not a new concept, there are reasons why the sports industry is worth was estimated to be worth \$75.7 billion in 2020 in spite of a global pandemic (Heitner, 2019). Instead of sports some men utilize NCP sharing to facilitate competition, as Rick explained previously not all men rely on physical attributes. Most participants noted their peer groups having some sort of social hierarchy. Their descriptions of experienced with NCP sharing suggest that competing through NCP sharing helps them reach a higher social ranking. Jeff explained that if a member of the group refused to participate in NCP sharing they would be removed from the group.

Jeff, 36: *“You don’t want to be that guy in the group.”*

Brandy: *“What is ‘that guy’?”*

Jeff, 36: *“You know, that guy. The guy who’s a wet blanket and ruins the fun. If they don’t read the room and bring something to the table then I can only assume they are judging and just won’t get invited to many things again.”*

The phrasing “won’t get invited to many things again” was a gentle way of saying the person refusing to engage in NCP sharing would be ousted from the group.

Sam did not feel pressure from his male peer group to engage in NCP sharing but sharing explicit photos of women they knew was a way to compete even if he did not always believe the other men were truthful.

Sam, 39: *“My curiosity is always peaked [piqued] but unless the guy is really gushing about a specific girl why bother asking? I assume the photos of really hot girls aren’t even someone they know. Just showing up to show up.”*

The phrase, “just showing up to show up” gives insight into the competition between men within the peer group. They are following one another in order to out-do the other’s masculinity or to place themselves higher within the masculine hierarchy. John, a 45-year-old who very recently started living as an openly gay man, described the pressure, he felt from a peer groups in the past (before he was openly gay and dating women) to engage in NCP and how he coped with that pressure.

John, 45: *“Not everyone is out there just sharing nude photos with friends for shits and giggles. Even if we don’t want to, sometimes you do it to fit in. I used to hang out with these four guys who constantly swapped photos back and forth whenever one would start dating someone new, which was pretty frequent. I don’t think any of them stayed with the same girl for more than 6 months or so. Any who I was constantly the odd one out because my girlfriend was long term. Instead of showing her pics I showed old girlfriend pics instead.”*

Although none of John’s peer group explicitly told him he would be outcasted from the group if he didn’t engage in their NCP sharing behaviors, the understanding was there that he needed to either “fit in or get out.”

John, 45: *“These guys were constantly trying to prove something to one another, you [Brandy] call it sexual prowess but I call it a dick-measuring contest. The guys would say stuff to each other like, ‘see how fat her ass is? You [any other member of the group] wouldn’t be able to even get your dick all the way in her with a ass that big and a dick that small’, followed by whoever was insulted pulling out their own phone to compare girls’ butt sizes.”*

John’s description of the men trying to “prove something” to one another made me wonder if the act of NCP sharing is what is important to the group members or is it the refusal to participate in the group approved competitive activity? Would the group have

been just as offended if their peer member refused to participate in their fantasy football league? Trevor, a 43-year-old mechanic shed some light onto these questions.

Trevor, 43: *“I won’t lie, ya we want to see who everyone is with. It’s guy’s nature to compare. But if you ain’t comfortable then say so and Google some nudes! The contest can easily be turned from hottest girl to weirdest pose.”*

According to Trevor it is not the subject of NCP sharing that matters but an individual’s willingness to participate in group competition. It is important to others that each member is agreeing to engage in bonding activities. Trevor further explains how group members can participate in NCP sharing.

Trevor, 43: *“If you don’t have a FWB [friends with benefits] now then show us an old fling. If you don’t have any photos show us some stuff forwarded to you. If you really don’t want to show anything like out of respect or whatever, then Google something good. The internet is for porn so use it.”*

Trevor’s acknowledgment of how pornography can be used as a substitute for personal NCP introduces another subtheme to male bonding, pornography consumption. DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2016) have linked pornography consumption to male peer support systems and image-based sexual abuse. Pornography can encourage the objectification of women. Steve also acknowledges the impact the internet and the pornography consumption have had on the normalization of NCP sharing within some groups.

Steve, 49: *“I make audio porn for women and women typically make imagery porn for men. Women aren’t finding my audio files on their own, they are being shared. Kink.com stuff is getting shared, nudes are getting shared, my girlfriend’s boobs that look just like this other girl’s boobs are getting shared. There’s no distinction.”*

Before technology advanced to an individual customization level, pornography was consumed in groups out of necessity. The number of videos or photos were limited and commonly shared. Even though pornography is now widely available and mostly produced for individual consumption some men still choose to engage other men in group consumption as a form of male bonding and encouraging friendship. Carlos, a 55-year-old self-identified openly gay man, explained that he only shared pornographic images with close friends: *“Those types of images are only for a few of very close friends.”* While Carlos has shared pornographic images of himself and others, he does not know on his private social media accounts, he has not engaged in NCP sharing of previous partners with his peer group. As an artist he utilizes pornography as a way of artistic expression. He enjoys finding pornographic images of “good-looking” men on the internet and creating collages. I hesitate to identify this type of sharing behavior as nonconsensual pornography, because while Carlos does not know the subjects in his art and does not have their explicit consent to be shared on social media, the images are found on the internet so their origin might be consensual, or it might not. Due to this unknown element, the information Carlos provided gives insight into male bonding through pornography consumption but not NCP specifically.

Men engaging in male bonding through sharing pornography might not make the distinction between pornographic industry material and NCP. Objectification of women goes beyond the pornography industry. Even if the men know the women in the images personally, that connection is not acknowledged as part of the sharing process and NCP is consumed the same as pornographic images of strangers. Walter discusses how pornography consumption might influence NCP sharing among male peers.

Walter: *“When I’m watching porn I’m not thinking about who that actress is or where she came from. I’m enjoying the scene and the view. Swapping nudes is*

the same thing. I'm not seeing so-and-so's wife, I'm seeing a nameless beautiful figure. It would be creepy if I was excited to see LARRY'S wife, but not so creepy to be excited to see a sexy photo Larry HAS. See the difference?"

While I could not "see the difference," I could understand how Walter would see the difference.

Male bonding is an important element in maintaining friendships among men and each peer group chooses their preferred activities to facilitate that. The competitive nature of NCP sharing was discussed by many participants. Sometimes the competitions were friendly with no repercussions for refusal, but others were subject to pressure to participate and feared the consequences of not. Normalization of pornography consumption can explain why some groups choose to bond over NCP sharing and others do not. The objectification of women being present in both sharing of consensual pornographic materials and nonconsensual.

The experiences shared by the 18 older male participants in this section help us understand how NCP sharing is happening and three possible influences: upholding patriarchal standards of society, doing gender, and male bonding. These themes are consistent with male peer support theory, discussed in Chapters 3 and 6. The themes are directly related to how male peers interact with one another and to what extent NCP sharing is expected and encouraged, both overtly and covertly.

Chapter 6 - Discussion and Conclusion

Nonconsensual pornography is a problem that does not discriminate against age, gender, race, nationality, or sexual orientation. For example, previous studies have identified both victims and offenders of NCP to include men and women (Walker et al. 2019), adolescents and adults (Bloom, 2014; Melander, 2010; Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2018), and American and non-American nationalities (Dir & Cyders, 2014; Dragotto, 2020; Gámez-Guadix et al., 2015; Stanley et al., 2016). While the phenomenon of nonconsensual pornography has been gaining attention over the past couple decades, some demographics are underrepresented in many samples such as older adults and the elderly, sexual orientations other than heterosexual, and transgender individuals. This study begins to fill the first two gaps, age and sexual orientation, but further research is needed in these demographic areas to gain a better understanding of these NCP offender behaviors.

The qualitative study design allowed participants to speak about their own experiences in their own language on the platform of their choice (i.e., in-person, Discord, FaceTime, Reddit, etc.). NCP is a broad phenomenon defined differently across academic disciplines and among policymakers. Due to this lack of cohesion concerning what behaviors are connected to NCP or could be considered a different phenomenon entirely, causal relationships are difficult to determine and should be presented with caution (Maddocks, 2018; Walker et al., 2019). This study set out to answer the following research questions: *What does the sharing of nonconsensual pornography look like among older-generational male peer groups? What influences men to engage in NCP sharing?* The qualitative analysis identified three major themes across interviews: NCP is being shared among older generational adult males in a variety of ways, NCP sharing is

influenced by societal patriarchal standards, and NCP can be used as a form of male bonding (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013).

Among the study participants, societal patriarchal standards influenced the type of NCP they shared, who they shared it with, and gave insight into their motivations for engaging in the sharing. Pornography consumption is a common theme that can be found across NCP literature (Boyle, 2011; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2016; Fay, 2018; McGlynn, Rackley, & Houghton, 2017, Velez, 2019). Participants discussed their own pornography consumption throughout the interviews, and few made distinctions between that and consuming NCP. Some participants expressed that the two are the same and interchangeable, for example sharing paid or free pornography media as a substitute for NCP. This non-distinction between pornography consumption and NCP demonstrates how the normalization of pornography consumption extends to NCP sharing as well. An examination of pornography websites found many keyword searches directly related to NCP media such as “revenge pornography” and “ex-wife nudes” (Henry & Flynn, 2017).

The patriarchy teaches men from a young age to hold power over women, physically and not. Pornography allows men to hold power over women by objectifying them. Some participants acknowledge that they do not think of the women in pornography or NCP as the individual. Again, there is no distinction made between the sex worker on kink.com and Larry’s wife who his peer group knows personally. Women’s bodily autonomy has been a major target of the patriarchy for centuries (Patella-Rey, 2018). NCP allows men to take the control away from women over their personal images and use them as they see fit whether those actions align with the woman’s desires or not.

Patriarchal standards give men the “blueprint” to masculinity, but it is up to the individual how they express that masculinity and to what degree. Every participant in

this study chose to express their masculinity and “do gender” (Messerschmidt, 2009) through NCP sharing. Most often this sharing was between members of their male peer groups but not always, some shared NCP with strangers or acquaintances. Messerschmidt states that “men use the resources they have to communicate gender to others [and] demonstrate they are ‘manly’”, (Messerschmidt, 2009, pg.85). This need to demonstrate masculinity can result in competition among male peer groups and NCP is how many participants coped with this expectation. When competing for their rank within the peer group hierarchy participants discussed how the competition evolves from sharing NCP to critiquing NCP. James and John discussed how their male peer group members will try to outdo one another by sharing NCP with the most desirable women they have access to. Trevor acknowledges that it’s “guy’s nature to compare” and John explains how his NCP sharing rewards him with the top position of his peer group’s hierarchy.

NCP sharing is a practice that allows men to do gender and demonstrate their masculinity on an even playing field. The competitive nature of the phenomenon encourages men to participate, either through choice or peer pressure. As George and Trevor explain, if an individual has access to technology, they do not have to have access to a sexual partner’s “nudes,” they could share any of the millions of pornographic images that can be found on the internet. This also points to how widespread pornographic consumption has become and how many men utilize pornography and NCP to do gender (Boyle, 2011) without much of a distinction between the two.

The physical sharing of NCP is not always where doing gender ends; the NCP imagery is sometimes just as important as the sharing act. If the women in the shared NCP have feminine physical attributes that are desired by men such as large symmetrical breasts, round firm buttocks, slim waist, and long hair (Dragotto, Giomi, & Melchiorre,

2020) that can help increase a man's masculine image. This helps explain why participants such as George are picky about which images they share and only choose to share those that are the most desirable and fit the patriarchal standard for female beauty.

Pornography consumption has been facilitating male bonding for decades (Boyle, 2011; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013). Several studies have drawn connections between pornography consumption and violence against women and image based sexual abuse (Flemming et al., 2015; Henry & Flynn, 2019). Multiple participants brought up NCP and general pornography consumption at the same time. Among some peer groups such as Trevor and Steve's, any pornographic image regardless of its origin could be substituted for NCP.

Theoretical Implications

The results of this study are consistent with male peer support theory (DeKeseredy, 1988). Male peer support theory suggests that men encourage each other to uphold gender norms set by society (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2016) and the participants of this study further validated that argument with their discussions on upholding patriarchal standards through NCP sharing.

NCP sharing happens within groups and those involved can show their support by either engaging actively or passively. DeKeseredy (1988) suggests that men encourage one another to engage in violence against women by not showing their disapproval. The participants of this study described experiences where they observed NCP sharing but did not participate. This passive participation would still be considered support. Participants also engaged in sharing NCP by substituting images with other pornographic material as a way to participate, further encouraging others within the group to continue sharing NCP.

Male peer support theory has focused on in-person peer groups (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2016; Walker & Sleath, 2017), but more research is needed about how these groups interact through virtual channels and how they encourage each other to follow gender norms in these online spaces. How these male peer groups will “do gender” will differ than in-person. More and more social interactions are being facilitated online. The COVID-19 global pandemic is an excellent example of how important and vital online communities have become and future theories need to make space for these social changes.

Policy Implications

Criminalization of NCP has received mixed responses and victim blaming has been identified as one of the key issues (Bothamley & Tully, 2018; Fay, 2018; Hearty, 2019). This sequence of events: **Woman sends private nude photos to man → Man does not gain consent to share private nude photos → Man shares private nude photos with peers (NCP) → Woman discovers NCP sharing and seeks legal action against man**, has been consistently reported in many legal reviews and court cases related to NCP (Bloom, 2014; Fay, 2018; Lageson, McElrath, & Palmer, 2018) has caused complications in the defining and criminalization of NCP among policymakers (Maddocks, 2018). Victim blaming is often the result of NCP cases where the victim originally shared the private media with the offender who shared it without the victim’s consent. Arguments have been made both in favor of the victims and the offenders, “Why did she send it in the first place?” (Mckinlay et al., 2020) being one of the common narratives for blaming the victims, shifting the responsibility from the offenders. None of the participants of this study had consent from the women whose images they shared but this was not a major concern among them. In fact, only 4 out of 18 participants even acknowledged the idea of consent until the interview asked about it (citation). Do men

who share NCP not care about consent or is the idea of consent not even considered? More research is needed to answer these questions but if we knew more about the relationship between non-consent and NCP sharing then victim-blaming narratives would be weakened.

Educational programs for older-generational adults about the dangers of NCP sharing are also suggested. Some participants did not have a good understanding of how to keep their information private on the internet and how their private images could be accessed by others. As individuals age and enter different life stages their technology knowledge and use also changes (Helsper, 2010; Karavidas, Lim, & Katsikas, 2005). Schools and universities have started offering educational programs for children and young adults about the risks involved in sexting behaviors (Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2018; Zemmels & Khey, 2015). Similar educational programs would be beneficial to both offenders and victims of NCP. Educating offenders on consent, privacy, and potential consequences and victims on safe sexting behaviors and the existence and prevalence of NCP are needed.

Limitations and Strengths

The qualitative data presented in this study does have limitations. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions no interviews took place in person. Interviews were conducted through online platforms so some methods of communication such as body language were not able to be observed and analyzed. Most interviews were conducted by instant messenger or chat applications which eliminated any visual context during communications. While this is considered a limitation, the anonymity that the internet provides is also a strength as participants could speak freely without fear of face-to-face judgement.

Interviews were conducted by a 35-year-old Caucasian female and while not every participant knew my age, they did all know that I was female. Because this study is based on gendered expectations and the participants were discussing their experiences objectifying women the gender of myself and the participants is important to note. Although I do not know how my gender influenced their responses, it would be irresponsible of me to assume it had none. The taboo nature of the discussions is also a limitation, as some participants may have altered their accounts or omitted information, they did not feel comfortable disclosing. Participants were informed all data collected would be confidential and anonymous, but some are located in regions where sharing NCP is a criminal offense, and this may have been an influence as well.

Qualitative data was collected from 18 participants, a rather small sample size. The taboo nature of this study along with the timing of data collection occurring during a global pandemic made it difficult to find participants. NCP sharing is not always out in the open and generally happens between peers or others who are also sharing NCP. As an outsider to these activities snowball sampling was the most effective way to find participants.

Future Research

This study has implications for future research. A greater understanding of NCP offender experiences and motivations is needed. Previous and current studies have focused on victim experiences and NCP sharing has been connected heavily to revenge porn (Walker & Sleath, 2017). The participants of this study did not give any indication that they intended to harm the women in the images they shared, and no references were made to the term “revenge porn”.

Another direction for future research is to include more samples from ignored populations such as ethnic and racial minorities, women, nonbinary and nonconforming

genders, and LGBTQ+ communities. NCP sharing has also been framed as a heteronormative experience (Priebe & Svedin, 2012). Individuals who identify with the LGBTQ+ community are often left out of the NCP sharing conversation but as demonstrated in this study, pornography sharing is a homosexual experience as well. In reference to male bonding, future research is needed to explore how demographic differences impact how male peer groups bond. Objectification of women has been noted in other male bonding studies but are framed in a white, heteronormative lens (Hall-Sanchez, 2014; Vaynman, Sandberg, & Pederson, 2020). I suggest expanding target demographics to include diverse races, ethnicities, religions, political ideologies, levels of education, and economic classes.

The current study focuses on NCP sharing experiences among adult males over the age of 35 to address a gap in previous and current NCP literature. It was noted in previous sections that as men enter new life stages their experiences and influences change as well. I also suggest more longitudinal studies that follow male NCP sharing experiences over time to explore the subject in generational and life stage contexts.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to further explore the NCP sharing experiences of adult males. The experiences shared by the 18 participants of this study help gain a better understanding of how nonconsensual pornography is being shared among adult men. It is commonplace now that NCP sharing is facilitated through technology and many explicit material exchanges take place in virtual environments such as social media, email, and text communications. Previous studies have also noted technological influences in NCP sharing (Walker & Sleath, 2017), the current study demonstrates the importance of tracking technology advances because as new platforms are developed the nature of NCP sharing will change as well.

NCP sharing among adult men also takes place among male peer groups where the sharing behaviors are not only accepted but encouraged between peers. The influences behind NCP sharing among adult male peer groups differ between groups but this study identified three major themes related to influence: upholding patriarchal standards, “doing gender”, and male bonding. Each theme also related to the theoretical framework of this study, male peer support theory. The encouragement between peers to engage in NCP sharing is overt as well as covert.

The findings of this study can advise and guide future studies exploring both nonconsensual pornography and revenge pornography. The discussions concerning participants’ thoughts on the affect NCP sharing might have on their victims can inform policy-making and educational programs for adults. NCP and revenge pornography policies are not standard across the United States and oftentimes left up to the discretion of state legislators (Bothamley & Tully, 2018; Fay, 2018). The more we understand about these phenomena the better we can support NCP victims in the legal system. Educational programs are also key in helping adults understand technology and the effects NCP sharing can have on all those involved and help victims better protect themselves.

Chapter 7 - References

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Appendix A - Interview Guide

Stage 1 - Demographic Information:

1. Please tell me about yourself.
 - If not provided, prompt for at least age.

Stage 2 - Technology use:

2. What different types of technology do you use on a regular basis?
 - What types of activities do you use _____ for?
 - Computer/laptop
 - Webcam
 - Tablet
 - Cellphone (non-smartphone)
 - Smartphone
 - Gaming device
 - Are there other types of technology you use on a regular basis we have not discussed yet and what types of activities do you use them for?
 - Do you share any of the before mentioned technologies with anyone else?
 - Who and in what capacity?
3. Do you have any social media accounts?
 - Suggested prompts:
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
 - Parler
 - TikTok
 - Tumblr
 - Reddit
 - LinkedIn
 - Pinterest
 - YouTube
 - Twitch
4. Do you share any user accounts with anyone else?
 - Who and why?
5. What types of activities do you engage in on _____?
 - Suggested prompts:
 - Posting personal information
 - Posting information of other people
 - Keep up with family members
 - Keep up with friends
 - Keep up with others
 - Circulating news articles
 - Circulating pop culture references (memes, cartoons, etc.)
 - Sharing photos or videos of yourself
 - Sharing photos or videos of other people
 - Information seeking or research
6. What messaging applications or platforms do you use?
 - Suggested prompts:
 - Text/SMS messaging
 - Email
 - Facebook
 - Discord
 - Snapchat
 - WeChat
7. Who do you communicate with through the before mentioned applications or platforms?

8. What kinds of things do you message other people about?
 - Suggested prompts:
 - Staying in touch/sharing news
 - Sharing photos or videos
 - Professional/work related
 - Educational
 - Gaming
 - Shopping

9. Do you currently subscribe to any paid content platforms?
 - Suggested prompts:
 - OnlyFans
 - Snapchat
 - Patreon

Stage 3 – Sharing Behaviors and Motivations:

Key motivation themes to listen for and prompt for additional information when referenced:

- For fun/as a joke
- To seek an opinion, ask for advice, or discuss
- I always share these types of things with friends
- For profit/money
- To fit in or look cool
- To get attention
- To prove I have them
- I was asked to share them
- To begin or maintain a relationship
- To show off
- To hurt the other person and/or seek revenge
- To make fun of with harmful intent

10. What format do you typically use for sharing photos and videos?
 - Suggested prompts:
 - In person, physical pictures
 - In person, digital media
 - Digital media, messaging apps
 - Digital media, social media postings

11. Why do you choose these formats to share photos or videos?
12. In what ways have you used technology to initiate or maintain intimate or sexual relationships?
 - Dating apps
 - Communication
 - Flirtation
13. What does the term “sexually explicit photos or videos” mean to you?
14. Have you ever used technology to create or share sexually explicit photos or videos of yourself?
 - How, when, and for what purpose were they created?
 - Who were they shared with and how?
15. Please describe your experiences using technology to create or share sexually explicit photos or videos of someone else.
 - What is your relationship to that person/those people?
 - When and what purpose were they created for?
 - Who were they shared with, when, and how?
16. Did you have the subject’s permission to create or share the photos/videos?
 - If yes – How did you obtain permission?
 - If no – Why did you not obtain permission?
 - What do they know about the creation or sharing now?
17. Why did you choose to share them with _____?
18. Did you feel you received anything in return from sharing with this person/these people?
 - Material things
 - Sharing in return
 - Respect, admiration, or other emotions
19. What privacy concerns do you have associated with technology or social media use?

Ending Questions:

20. Is there any other information you would like to add about any topics covered in this interview? Are there any questions that I did not ask that you think I should include?
21. Would you like to refer anyone else to participate in this study?
22. Would you like to be notified of any study results and/or publications?
 - If yes – What is your preferred contact email?