
Gender differences diminish among young porn users

[Society & Culture](#)[1]

[Society & Culture](#)[1][adolescence](#) [2][gender differences](#) [3][pornography](#) [4][Youth](#) [5][Sweden](#) [6][Forskning.no](#) [7]

Swedish girls and boys fantasise about the same kinds of porn-inspired sex. Young Norwegians also learn about sex from pornography.

Teenage boys are still beat out girls their age in use of pornography in Sweden.

Nine out of ten boys look at porn, as compared to three out of ten girls, according to a Swedish study encompassing 877 young people. Their average age was 16 when they were asked about their habits.

The gender differences were not particularly significant among the porn users.

“Girls are generally more negative about porn. But among the ones who use it we saw surprisingly little difference between boy and girls,” says Magdalena Mattebo of Uppsala university, one of the researchers involved in the study.

Inspiration

“Given that the girls used porn less you would think that it would have a different impact on them,” says Mattebo.

About half of the boys and the girls who use porn fantasise about sexual activities inspired by pornography, even though boys fantasise much more often.

A third of them in both sexes try out these fantasies with partners.

“It’s the ‘normal types of sex they most often try in this respect, vaginal and oral sex,” says Mattebo.

However, the number of girls who allow themselves be inspired by porn was so low – just 41 of them had tried out what they’d seen – that the researchers cannot say their answers are representative.

Natural part of life as a teenager

The researchers asked students at 53 high schools in Mid-Sweden about their sexual habits. In a part of the questionnaires the teens were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with certain statements.

Most of them consider it natural to look at porn and say it is part of the daily life of teens.

Some of them who do not use porn also agreed on that account.

“This could indicate that the youth are flooded by pornography and have to relate to it even if they don’t

actively watch it,” says Mattebo.

The Swedish study showed that the teens who use pornography are more sexually experienced than the ones who don't.

Many answer that porn is arousing, but more boys than girls think it can be instructional.

Trying to be good lovers

As in Sweden, more males than females in Norway search for porn and use it frequently.

About half of all young men are porn consumers several times a week or daily. Only one percent of young women use it so frequently, according to a study in Norway from 2013. This survey targeted a slightly older group, aged 18 to 30.

Young Norwegians also attempt some of the activities they see in pornography when they have sex with partners, confirms Psychology Professor Bente Træen of the University of Oslo.

“Many young adults experience that they can learn from pornography – new positions and anatomy. About 96 percent of the porn consumers think there is nothing problematic about their use of it,” says Træen, based on the Norwegian study conducted last year.

“Demands are made today to be a good lover. Porn shows what you don't learn from other adults. If you watch normal pornography you run rather large chances as a young adult of trying it out,” she says.

Mattebo thinks we should be asking what effect porn has on young people as time passes.

“In other studies young people talk about strong expectations regarding what sexual activities they should agree to, and demands on their appearance. Hardly any of them discuss pornography with adults. If no one gives them other inputs offered by porn, it can become the norm for sexuality,” says Mattebo.

Adaptable industry

Træen doubts the Swedish study found anything meaningful about the differences between ways girls and boys are inspired by what they see.

There were 120 girls in the study who watched porn. Only six of these said their sexual behaviour had been affected by it.

“This makes too tiny a group,” says Træen.

In addition, the study revealed nothing of what kind of porn the teens watched.

Mattebo and colleagues have previously investigated what boys look at and are now in the process of following up their study to determine more about how and why young people of both sexes use porn.

Very few studies look into the content of porn films, according to Træen. More recent research shows that the professional porn providers show more egalitarian images of men and women than is found in amateur pornography. The professionals don't simply take the man's perspective.

“The porn industry demonstrates an enormous adaptability to the market. When women emerge as a user group, they modify the content to what the women want to see,” says Træen.

Girls were the most prone to answer that porn can be degrading to women. More boys than girls think that porn promotes traditional gender roles.

Acceptance or taboo?

The Swedish study indicates some negative impacts of porn consumption among teens.

More boys than girls in the study said they think porn can be habit-forming. Mattebo says that “porn impotence” has become a concept in Sweden. Some young men find it hard to be aroused with looking at pornography.

Mattebo thinks there are some interesting gender differences in this study.

A third of the boys who often looked at porn said they used it more than they would wish.

The opposite was the case with girls – many said they looked at less porn than they wanted to.

“We can only speculate as to why. Maybe the boys who wished to cut down had developed dependence. But it could also be because using porn a lot is still associated with shame. The impact of that could be that the boys say they would prefer to use it less, while the girls don’t dare to use it more,” says Mattebo.

Contrarily, Træen thinks the taboos are gone.

“Use of porn is accepted nowadays. Parents are more liberal to porn than they used to be and there’s more acceptance for women watching it too,” she says.

[Read the Norwegian version of this article at forskning.no](#) [8]

 [A Swedish study has looked at the link between teens' sexual experiences and pornography. \(Photo: Colourbox\)](#) [9]

 [?A third of the teenagers who use pornography have let it inspire them in real sexual activities,? says Swedish researcher Magdalena Mattebo, who has conducted a study of teenage sex activities. \(Private photo\)](#) [10]

 [Young Norwegian adults are also inspired by porn, according to Psychology Professor Bente Træen. \(Photo:Lasse Moer/UiO\)](#) [11]

 [porr1_None.jpg](#) [12]

[Burning porn in Norway, fighting rape in France](#) [13] [Let's use porn to change sexual behaviour](#) [14] [Online generation starts watching porn earlier](#) [15] [Cyber-bullying is worse than porn](#) [16] [Porn won't ruin your sex life](#) [17]

[Magdalena Mattebo's profile](#) [18] [Bente Træen's profile](#) [19]

[Pornography and Sexual Experiences Among High School Students in Sweden. Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics, april 2014, vol. 35, nr. 3. \(Abstract\).](#) [20]

[Ida Kvittingen](#) [21]

Glenn Ostling

April 14, 2014 - 06:36

This field is not in use. The footer is displayed in the mini panel called "Footer (mini panel)"

Source URL: <http://sciencenordic.com/gender-differences-diminish-among-young-porn-users>

Links:

- [1] <http://sciencenordic.com/category/section/society-culture>
- [2] <http://sciencenordic.com/adolescence>
- [3] <http://sciencenordic.com/gender-differences>
- [4] <http://sciencenordic.com/pornography>
- [5] <http://sciencenordic.com/youth>
- [6] <http://sciencenordic.com/category/countries/sweden>
- [7] <http://sciencenordic.com/category/publisher/forskningno>
- [8] <http://www.forskning.no/artikler/2014/april/387460>
- [9] http://sciencenordic.com/sites/default/files/porr1_None_0.jpg
- [10] http://sciencenordic.com/sites/default/files/Magdalena_Mattebo_Foto_privat_None.jpg
- [11] http://sciencenordic.com/sites/default/files/Bente_Treen_Foto_Lasse_Moer_UiO_None.jpg
- [12] http://sciencenordic.com/sites/default/files/porr1_None.jpg
- [13] <http://sciencenordic.com/burning-porn-norway-fighting-rape-france>
- [14] <http://sciencenordic.com/lets-use-porn-change-sexual-behaviour>
- [15] <http://sciencenordic.com/online-generation-starts-watching-porn-earlier>
- [16] <http://sciencenordic.com/cyber-bullying-worse-porn>
- [17] <http://sciencenordic.com/porn-won%E2%80%99t-ruin-your-sex-life>
- [18] <http://katalog.uu.se/empInfo/?languageId=1&id=N9-1313>
- [19] <http://www.sv.uio.no/psi/english/people/aca/bentra/index.html>
- [20] http://journals.lww.com/jrnldb/Abstract/2014/04000/Pornography_and_Sexual_Experiences_Among_High.3.aspx
- [21] <http://sciencenordic.com/content/ida-kvittingen>