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The sexual marketing of eastern european women through internet pornography

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THE SEXUAL MARKETING OF EASTERN EUROPEAN WOMEN
THROUGH
INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY

A Thesis

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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BY

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Source: IOM Lisbon initiated Cooperação, Acção, Investigação, Mundivisão (CAIM) Project, Including a Public Awareness Campaign Against Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking.

Eastern Europe



Source: <http://www.geocities.com/wenedyk/ib/easterneurope.html>

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Acknowledgments

I have been passionate about the global sex industry pertaining to Russian and Ukrainian (Eastern European) women for about six years. My interest about the global sex industry started as an undergraduate at the University of Cincinnati (UC). At UC, I became interested about the modern-day slavery known as sex trafficking. Sex trafficking is a global problem that contributes to the growing multi-billion sex industry. Sex trafficking is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act. It is one subset of human trafficking, which also includes trafficking for labor or forced servitude” (Holman 2009, 102). It is estimated that somewhere between “600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked each year. This figure does not include victims who are trafficked domestically for sexual exploitation or forced labor. If included, these victims would raise the tally to between two and four million” (Holman 2009, 102). Women and children are trafficked the most across international borders for purposes of sexual exploitation (Holman 2009). The sex industry markets women, men, and children as sexual commodities. These individuals are easily sold, bought, and traded for sexual pleasure.

Sex trafficking became an important concern in my life and I learned that people are marketed as cargo from various parts of the world. I learned that many people are sexually exploited from Eastern Europe and this affected me a great deal. I was born in Eastern Europe, in a country known as Belarus (former Soviet Union) and immigrated to the United States as a child. I was unaware of what was going on in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union. I was oblivious of the illegal sex trafficking in my region and of the modern-day slavery, until I attended UC. In my undergraduate political

science class taught by Dr. Laura Jenkins, I learned about sex trafficking of Nepalese women and children to India. Dr. Jenkins educated the class about the growing global problem and how it concerns people everywhere. Thanks to her class, I became interested in learning more about sex trafficking and researching about the Eastern European sex industry.

Many Eastern European women are part of the illegal and profitable business of sex trafficking. I was shocked to learn how Eastern European women are sex trafficked from the region that I was born in. It concerned me how women and their bodies can easily be traded as sexual commodities for money. I became concerned about the women involved in sex trafficking and the sex industry. As a result, I devoted a lot of my attention and interest to this global problem. I knew that I wanted to devote my interest to this problem by writing my senior capstone about sex trafficking of Eastern and Asian women.

After completing my capstone, I knew that I wanted to expand my research about sex trafficking as a graduate at DePaul University. However, my plans changed and my thesis ended up taking a different route. I decided to research about the influence of the Internet in the sex industry. I wanted to analyze how pornographic images market Eastern European women. I hoped that my research would help demonstrate how pornographic images contribute to the growth of the sex industry. The Internet helped me realize how Eastern European women and others like them are marketed as sexual objects and are perceived as commodities.

I hope that one day, Eastern European women and others like them, will no longer be perceived as sexual objects. However, until that day, I want people to know that

modern-day slavery still exists. We as society have to help and prevent women from becoming sexualized objects in the sex industry.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my wonderful thesis graduate committee for helping me with my research; I couldn't have done this without any of your help, guidance and support. You have all been wonderful throughout this long process and journey, and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. I believe that I have been very lucky to have worked with each of you. You have all helped contribute a great deal to my research and I don't think I could have done it without all of your positive contribution to my project, thank you for everything.

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I. Introduction

Years ago, I went on a trip to Israel with my parents and my best friend from high school. One sunny day, my friend and I decided to go to an outside market in Jerusalem to purchase gifts for our family and friends in the states. While walking around the market, we noticed that many of the men selling their merchandise shouted out to my friend in Russian, “*Natasha, Natasha, tri ryblya, ti nasha*” (translation: Natasha, Natasha three rubles (less than three American dollars) and you are ours). At first my friend and I thought it was funny how these men automatically assumed that she was Russian and *all* used the same phrase when addressing her.

Years later, when I began to study sex trafficking of women from the former Soviet Union (predominately Russia and Ukraine), I realized that these men were essentially offering to purchase my friend as a prostitute. Through my research on the sex trafficking industry, I learned that Natasha isn’t just a common female name in Eastern Europe, but this name is used in the sex industry when referring to Eastern European women; the trade in Eastern European women is known as the “Natasha Trade” (Hughes 2001; Malarek 2004). As Donna Hughes explains, “In some parts of the world, such as Israel and Turkey, women from Russia and other republics of the former Soviet Union are so prevalent, that prostitutes are called *Natashas*” (Hughes 2000b, 3).

In *The Natashas: Inside the New Global Sex Trade*, Victor Malarek emphasizes how the “Natashas” have “been shipped all over the world. They are the latest “It Girls” in the burgeoning sex business” (Malarek 2004, 3). These women line the streets of the red-light districts in “Austria, Italy, Belgium, and Holland. They stock the brothels in South Korea, Bosnia and Japan. They work nude in massage parlors in Canada and

England. They are locked up as sex slaves in apartments in the United Arab Emirates, Germany, Israel and Greece. They star in peep shows and seedy strip clubs in the United States” (Malarek 2004, 3). These women are part of the global sex trade and “most people have no idea that these women even exist” (Malarek 2004, 4).

In this thesis, I explore how the sex industry markets Eastern European women into “Natashas” to be bought and sold as commodities. According to attorney Melissa Holman, women from Russia and Ukraine are the “most popular and valuable women in the sex industry today. In Ukraine alone, over 100,000 women have been forced into the international sex trade during the last ten years” (Holman 2008, 103). Currently, research exists about sex trafficking and the sex industry. Holman states that, “Human trafficking is the third-most profitable criminal activity, surpassed only by drugs and weapons. Each year, an estimated \$9.5 billion is generated through all human trafficking, with at least \$4 billion attributed to the brothel and prostitution industries” (Holman 2008, 102). Sex trafficking is considered as one of the most dire human rights abuses facing the world today (Holman 2008).

In addition to the current research about sex trafficking, two internationally acclaimed films address the issue. *Trade* and *Taken* demonstrate that modern-day sexual slavery exists and women are sexually exploited all over the world. These films present strong messages about sexual exploitation and inform the audience about this global problem. *Trade* presents a realistic portrayal of the sex trafficking of women and exemplifies how women are sexually commodified and objectified across international borders for the booming sex industry. Below is a synopsis of *Trade*.

The 2007 film, *Trade*, co-starring Kevin Kline, is a fictional film that presents the dark side of international sex trade through the Internet. The film unfolds with a story of a young Mexican teenage girl named Adriana (Paulina Gaitan) who is kidnapped by criminal gangsters affiliated with an international network of sex traffickers, while riding her bike in Mexico City. Adriana becomes a sexual commodity in the sex industry, and her youth and innocence are sexually advertised on the Internet.

In the film, her brother Jorge learns of his sister's disappearance and desperately tries to find her. He feels responsible and searches for her all over the city. Jorge inquires about her in the red light district in Mexico. He is unable to find her inside the brothels, but notices Adriana and several other children and women being loaded as cargo onto a truck. Desperate to save his sister, Jorge follows the truck to an abandoned building that lodges sex trafficked victims. He meets a Texas investigator named Ray (Kevin Kline), who is also desperately trying to find his missing daughter in the building. Ray understands the pain and frustration that Jorge expresses and decides to partner with him in hopes of finding Adriana before she is sold into the slave trade.

While Ray and Jorge vigorously try to search for Adriana within Mexican borders, they learn that she was smuggled into the United States in a fruit truck. Ray and Jorge also discover that she is auctioned on the Internet as a sex slave. The website that advertises her is dedicated to auctioning young children and women to the highest bidders. Adriana is advertised on a website as a young virgin through photograph images that emphasize her sexuality and youth. Ray and Jorge learn that Adriana is lodged in a house in New Jersey and is kept there until the highest bidder pays for her. Ray decides that the only way he can save her is by placing the highest bid. The film ends with Ray

placing the highest bid on Adriana and rescuing her from the sex industry. The film demonstrates how women are bought, sold and traded within the sex industry.

Trade brings up the role of the Internet in the sex industry and demonstrates its influence in the lucrative business. I don't believe there is enough research on the role of the Internet in this industry. The Internet contributes to a context in which sex trafficking and the sex industry are perpetuated and naturalized. I believe my research will contribute to the existing literature by presenting information about Internet pornography and how the marketing of women as sexual objects on the Internet fuels the sex industry.

The Internet is a globalized network that connects people all over the world. For that reason, I found it interesting to analyze how women and their bodies are marketed as sexual objects through Internet pornography. The sexual construction of Eastern European women online helps feed the stereotypical image of these women as sexually available. These stereotypes produce a demand for such women and they become valuable commodities. In this paper, I argue that Eastern European women and their bodies are sexually marketed through Internet pornography, and that this marketing contributes to the growth of the sex industry.

II. Historical Context: The Rise of the Sex Industry in Eastern Europe

The history of sexuality in Eastern Europe is complex. It is important to understand how Soviet citizens were forbidden to know anything about sexuality for over seventy years (since the establishment of the Soviet Union). The Soviet leaders forbade its citizens to know anything pertaining to sex and sexuality (Kon 1995). For many years the “[Eastern European] sexual life was something of a mystery. For Soviet scholars, the subject was absolutely taboo until 1991; the Western researchers had no access to

primary sources” (Kon 1995, 1). However, researchers Marcus Levitt and Andrei Toporkov argue that the subject of pornography was found in Russian “medieval folk woodcuts, nineteenth-century incantations, eighteenth-century bawdy songs, turn-of-the-century philosophy, and recent avant-garde fiction” (Levitt and Toporkov 1999, cited in Borenstein 2005, 236).

Researcher Eliot Borenstein also stresses that in 1977, the very first contemporary scholarly study of pornography in Russia was a doctoral dissertation in the West by William Hopkins (Borenstein 2005). Hopkins stated that “one of the problems with discussing Russian pornography is that so little of it appears to be designed for erotic appeal” (Borenstein 2005, 236). Borenstein argues that, “Either there was no pornography at all, or the lack of an approved place for pornography meant that any text with strong sexual content could be seen as pornographic” (Borenstein 2005, 237). It is evident that sexuality existed in Eastern Europe, but it was morally and religiously forbidden to be discussed (Borenstein 2005).

Prior to the establishment of the Soviet Union, sex was perceived as unethical due to the medieval Russian Orthodox religious influence in Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe was referred to as the ‘holy Rus’ and religion played an important role in sexuality (Kon 1995). Igor Kon, a world known Russian sociologist, psychologist, and anthropologist researcher points out that, “Russian Orthodox believers like all Christians, regarded sexual affairs and everything associated with them as something unsavory, pertaining to the devil” (Kon 1993, 16). The repression of sexuality in turn delayed the “development of a more tolerant attitude to sex and made all sexual imagery low and salacious” (Riordan 1993, 2).

In the twentieth century, the view of sexuality changed in Eastern Europe with the influence of the October Russian Revolution which had its own ‘sexual revolution’ (Riordan 1993). This revolution opened up a discussion of “ ‘free love’, and introduced the most liberal legislation in the world at the time (for instance, the decriminalization of homosexuality and the legalization of abortion, which became free and available on demand)” (Riordan 1993, 2). Such steps towards sexual liberation allowed more openness to sexuality.

However, this sexual liberation movement did not last long. In the 1930s, the Soviet Union began to shut it down (Riordan 1993). The State began to exert more control over sexuality; as researcher James Riordan points out, “In 1934 the authorities re-criminalized male homosexuality (which became punishable by up to eight years’ deprivation of freedom); abortions were banned two years later (the ban lasted until 1955); all forms of erotic art were censored; and schools ceased to teach sex education” (Riordan 1993, 2). Such behavior by Soviet authorities started to reinforce previous attitudes towards sexuality and as a result, left “the public sexually illiterate” (Riordan 1993, 2).

From the early 1930s and beyond, the main message in the Soviet Union pertaining to sex was, “DON’T DO IT! [and the] image of sexuality was always negative and the need for strict external social control was always emphasized” (Kon 1995, 2). I assume the reason for such attitudes toward sexuality was a continuation of the sexual suppression that Eastern Europe experienced due to religion. The repression left a negative impact on Soviet people since it enforced silence on sexuality, sexual freedom and sexual expression.

The break up of the Soviet Union in 1991 created more possibilities for sexual expression and sexual freedom. Researcher Helena Goscilo argues that before the “[Break up of the Soviet Union], finding pornography in Moscow was less likely than encountering a singing nun at a bazaar. Yet by 1990 *Moscow News* reported a lively trade in girlie magazines at newsstands, pornographic videos inundating the city, and metro stations and dashboards of taxis routinely displayed pictures of women wearing only a pout or a smile” (Goscilo 1995, 164).

In 1991, the “first Russian men’s magazine,” *Andrei* appeared and it was a political fight against sexual oppression. The magazine’s publisher, Aleksei Veitlser states that, “Our magazine began as a political action. It was the sexual revolution” (Borenstein 2005, 239). This liberal magazine was “arguing for an eroticism based on liberation, beauty, and morality, of which the intelligentsia could be proud” (Borenstein 2005, 239). However, the magazine’s basic “economic task is to sell sexual images of Russian women to Russian men” (Borenstein 2005, 244). *Andrei* claimed that unlike the Western competition (*Playboy*), it was more respectful of Russian women; it put their women “on a pedestal of admiration; unlike invader magazines, of which there are more and more in the kiosks. The invaders’ task is simple: to prove, that everything Western is better, more expensive, stronger – and also to turn our women into cheap export that is ready for anything” (Borenstein 2005, 242-243).

The magazine wanted to promote a positive sexual influence in Eastern Europe. One positive aspect of the magazine was the absence of obscene language. Eliot Borenstein states that Eastern European pornographic magazines, “avoided [obscene] words entirely. No one fucks in Russian porn; they have sex, they “make love”

(*zanimat'sia liubov'iu*)” (Borenstein 2005, 237-238). The words of “making love” suggest to consumers that sex is pleasurable and this provides an open-ness about sexuality. By the time the first issue of the Russian edition of *Playboy* appeared in 1995, “its rhetoric sexual revolution seemed decidedly dated” (Borenstein 2005, 238). *Andrei*'s influence may have also contributed to popular Russian films about sex such as, *Little Vera* and *Intergirl* (Borenstein 2005).

Pornography provided Eastern Europe the opportunity to “catch up” with the West and “such an influx ostensibly liberating, uncensored materials might appear as an exercise in freedom according to the modern Western model” (Goscilo 1995, 164-165). The influence of Western media played a vital role in sexual open-ness in Eastern Europe. As the Western media glamorizes sexuality, beauty and femininity, it essentially created more jobs, commodification, and desires for Eastern European women and men. Eastern European women and their bodies became viewed as sexual commodities for profitable gain.

At the same time, the break up of the Soviet Union produced major political and economic changes. These changes caused many people to lose their jobs. Prior to the break up of the Soviet Union, the citizens were “guaranteed employment, subsidized housing, and free medical care” (Mikhailina 1999, cited in Hughes 2002a, 14). However, after the split, the majority of the people were left unemployed and 80 per cent of them were women (Hughes 2002a). Due to these changes in the region, the sex industry began to increase (Farr 2005; Obokata 2006).

Many women were left vulnerable and began to look for jobs abroad in order to support themselves and their families. Many women chose to migrate to Western Europe

and the United States, assuming that they could make money and have a better life. For many Eastern European women, the image of a wealthy and glamorous West became a perception for a standard way of living. The West presents the perception that there are more job opportunities. However, such perceptions are not always true and, as women became more financially vulnerable, they were brought into the sex industry and made into a market of sexual commodities (Troubnikoff 2003; Obokata 2006). The vulnerability of such women was considered a profitable gain for the Eastern European mafia and the sex industry (Hughes 2002a).

The Russian mafia played an important role in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It exploited women in financial need by recruiting them to work good paying jobs (e.g., nannies, waitresses, shop girls, models, models, etc.) (Hughes 2002a). Various job agencies use false advertising to attract Eastern European women to work in various parts of the world, but oftentimes these promising jobs resulted in working in the sex industry (Hughes 2002a). Economist Loretta Napoleoni, emphasizes that many Eastern European women became sex slaves and by “the end of the decade, an estimated 27 million people had been enslaved in a number of countries, including some in Western Europe. These women proved beautiful, cheap, and most importantly, desperate” (Napoleoni 2008, 1). These women were perceived as valuable sexual commodities for the Eastern European mafia.

The Eastern European mafia is considered by Eastern Europeans and other people to be a very powerful criminal organization (Hughes 2002a). It is estimated that by 1996, the organized crime groups controlled around “40,000 Russian businesses, including 550 financial joint ventures with foreign investors” (Farr 2005, 99). According to this

statistic, it is evident that controlling so many businesses would result in high profits. However, they didn't produce as much profit as anticipated. The criminal organizations relied on its main source of income on "drugs and the female body" (Hughes 2002a, 15). Kathryn Farr adds that, "Over 200 illegal sex businesses in Moscow alone (e.g., escort services, prostitution, sex trafficking, and mail-order bride agencies), and most either were owned by the mafia or paid money to them for protection against police raids or harassment from other groups" (Farr 2005, 99). The influence of the Eastern European mafia in the sex industry is a "good example of the way in which pornography mainstreams criminal activity" (McNair 2009, 72). The Eastern European mafia also demonstrates its powerful influence in inter-connected sectors of the sex industry, such as prostitution. The mafia sexually exploits women through prostitution and "commodifies women and markets their bodies for whatever acts men have sexualized and want to buy" (Hughes 2000a, 116).

Prostitution has become part of the Eastern European culture not only through criminal activity, but also through the influence of the media. The media glamorizes prostitution as a lucrative profession (Napoleoni 2008). Prior to the split of the Soviet Union, prostitution was almost nonexistent. Though the "practice was not banned, the government usually marginalized the world's oldest profession. Demand was low, sexual habits were extremely liberal, and contraception and abortion were readily available, so men had less need to rely on hookers" (Napoleoni 2008, 12). After the break up of the Soviet Union, prostitution became more mainstream and Hollywood films glamorized the profession. Napoleoni argues that, "Hollywood blockbusters, such as *Risky Business* and *Pretty Woman*, project an entirely fictional image of prostitution. Many women believe

that by becoming hookers they will meet Mr. Right, as Julia Roberts did in *Pretty Woman*” (Napoleoni 2008, 18). However, the happily-ever-after stories about prostitution “only happen in Hollywood scripts, but they sell books and films because they make people comfortable with its acceptance of “sex for sale” ” (Napoleoni 2008, 18).

Western films about prostitution also helped influence Russian media. For example, the Russian 1989 film *Intergirl (Interdevochka)* is an adaptation of the book by Vladimir Kunin (Goscilo 1995). The film presents the story of a beautiful Russian nurse named Tatyana. Tatyana works as an underpaid nurse at a hospital in St. Petersburg, but is unhappy with her financial situation. As a result, she decides to become a prostitute for international tourists. She relies on her beauty for an additional source of income and earns a lot of money (Goldman 1995). This film equates prostitution with wealth and suggests that it provides a lavish lifestyle. This film helps glamorize prostitution as a lucrative profession to viewers and helps attract women into this profession. Napoleoni argues that, “Like the promoters of the American Dream, the marketers of the global prostitution industry act like great illusionists who sell not only products, but also a new lifestyle” (Napoleoni 2008, 19). However, there is no dignity in prostitution and “many acts of prostitution, including those that are photographed in the making of pornography, are intended to degrade, humiliate and express domination over women” (Hughes 2000a, 2). Hughes argues that such treatment is an act of “misogyny, not respect or affection, and ha[s] nothing to do with love or intimacy” (Hughes 2000a, 2). Nonetheless, prostitution is glamorized and attracts many Eastern European women.

In “The Myth of ‘Pretty Women’ – Russian Women are Victims of Illegal Trafficking”, Karina Mikhailina’s research points out that, “In a 1989 survey of tenth-

graders in Russia, 70 per cent responded their career goal was to become *foreign currency prostitute*” (Mikhailina 1999, cited in Hughes 2002a, 14). This statistic is shocking since Mikhailina’s research stresses that ten years before the “respondents to a similar survey said they wanted to become teachers, doctors, cosmonauts, and actresses” (Mikhailina 1999, cited in Hughes 2002a, 14). It is hard to believe that such a career was found admirable by women in Eastern Europe since sex was considered taboo. However, the women may have considered the job admirable due to the wealth that it produced. In 1999, the Moscow police stated that there “were approximately 80,000 women involved in prostitution in downtown Moscow” (Hughes 2002d, 21). The reality of prostitution is depressing and Donna Hughes stresses that, “No matter how women and girls get into prostitution, it is difficult to get out. Pimps and brothel owners use violence, threats, and addiction to drugs and alcohol to control the woman” (Hughes 2000a, 2).

The European Highway E-55 exemplifies the depressing reality of prostitution in Europe. Many European borders are open and people can freely drive from one country to another. Highway E-55 that runs along the “Czech and German border is known as the Highway of Love. This miserable stretch of asphalt hosts the largest concentration of prostitutes in Europe and the former Soviet Union” (Napoleoni 2008, 10). The women stand along the side of the road and “offer their bodies at rock-bottom prices: half an hour for 35 euros, 45 euros without a condom” (Napoleoni 2008, 10). The reality of prostitution on Highway E-55 demonstrates how it is mainstreamed in Eastern Europe and how the openness of European borders gives “sex work an air of internationalism” (Napoleoni 2008, 10).

However, not all the women working along Highway E-55 are prostitutes; some are sex slaves (Napoleoni 2008). Many of the women are purchased at specialized markets located in northwestern Serbia, known as the Arizona Market (Napoleoni 2008). This market is known among international pimps and traders that come to purchase women. Napoleoni stresses how women are ordered to “take off their clothes while they are standing on the road naked, men walk up and touch their flesh, inspect their skin and even look into their mouths before they make a bid” (Napoleoni 2008, 11). The women and their bodies are examined like animals and reduced to sexual objects.

The Western lifestyle isn't a new ideal in Eastern Europe. Igor Kon and James Riordan suggest that Western media has been presenting glamorous images to Eastern Europe before the collapse of the Soviet Union (Kon and Riordan 1993). During the seventies and eighties, the Western lifestyle emerged as an important influence on Communist Eastern Europe (Kon 1995). Everything that was Western was embraced by Eastern Europeans as fashionable and glamorous. Western merchandise began to circulate in the Soviet market and things such as: Marlboro cigarettes, Dior perfume, Levis jeans, swimsuit bikinis, “tasteful” female nudity in the cinemas, and music were being sold (Waters 1993). Western products were used to glamorize a sexy and appealing life style for Eastern European women.

Sexuality in Eastern Europe is also commodified through beauty contests. In the early 1980s, the Soviet Union regarded the contests of the public display of female bodies as, “typically bourgeois behavior, decadent and depraved, ‘alien to the socialist way of life’ ” (Waters 1993, 116). However, these contests became influential in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Waters 1993). The Western

beauty contests were viewed as sexually liberating by Eastern European women and the “West was seen as exemplar not only of political democracy, but also of lifestyle” (Waters 1993, 116).

Beauty contests appeared in the eighties in Eastern Europe and became profitable for the market economy (Kon 1995; Hughes 2002a). The beauty contests enabled women in Eastern Europe to begin to consider how their physical attributes and sexuality could also make them money. This extended to building the basis for the sex industry. Hughes emphasizes that the media in Eastern Europe correlated beauty with sex. She writes, “Increasingly plays contained nudity, rock music videos displayed women’s breasts, and sexualized images of women were used to market consumer goods. Quickly, glamour turned to pornography and sexual exploitation” (Hughes 2002a, 14). Hughes’ research indicates that images of sexy women became a very profitable business in Eastern Europe.

Sexual images in the media and beauty contests became commonplace; according to Waters, “Wide sections of the Soviet public, in other words, were growing accustomed to the female body on public display, to the body as recognized source of visual pleasure” (Waters 1993, 116-117). Beauty contests allowed women to display their physical assets and mimic the Western culture through fashion. The problem, however, with the Soviet beauty contests was that the women were mimicking the Western norms. The Eastern European women were trying to resemble what is beautiful through Western eyes. For example, as Waters illustrates, the beauty contests associated beauty with slenderness of women and yet the “slender figure is not something the Soviet culture has always equated with beauty” (Waters 1993, 121).

In conclusion, the break up of the Soviet Union is argued to have had a positive and a negative influence on Eastern Europe. The positive side of the break up presented an opportunity for more freedom of sexual expression. The Western media brought an open-ness to sexuality through fashion, music, film, beauty products, and beauty contests. This helped Eastern Europe appear more accepting of sexuality and exposed its citizens to more opportunities for sexual freedom and expression.

Contrary to the positive aspect of the break up of the Soviet Union, the negative side of the break was the rise of organized crime. The influence of organized crime made Eastern European women vulnerable and easy targets for the globalized sex industry. These women and their bodies became easily sexually exploited by organized criminal organizations.

Sexuality in Eastern Europe has developed a new direction in the growth of the sex industry on the Internet. Pornographic images of Eastern European women are internationally available through the Internet. The Internet provides such images of women for economic purposes. Such images advertise these women as sexually available and suggest that the women and their bodies hold an economic value. These images of women help contribute to the sex industry by marketing these women as sexual objects that can easily be bought, sold and traded worldwide.

III. Literature Review

A growing body of research literature analyzes the theoretical approach to pornography on the Internet. Many scholars utilize the concepts of commodification and objectification. This section reviews research literature on the feminist debate over pornography, sexual objectification and commodification, the role of glamorized Western

media in Eastern Europe, sexualization of beauty and whiteness, and the rise of Internet pornography.

Feminist Debate Over Pornography

Pornography has been a contentious issue amongst feminist scholars, writers, historians and activists. Some feminists argue that pornography is sexually liberating for women and a part of freedom speech (Strossen 1996), while others argue that pornography subordinates, suppresses, objectifies, dehumanizes, and violates women (Dworkin 1993; Russo 1998; Hughes 2000b). This section offers a brief analysis of the debates. This thesis is grounded in the feminist framework that criticizes pornography for its role in the subordination and exploitation of women.

The feminist anti-pornography framework was developed in the context of the feminist movement to end violence against women. Ann Russo explains that, “For anti-pornography feminist activists, writers, and scholars, pornography has never been simply an intellectual, academic debate over the interpretation of images; rather, the struggle has been against a multibillion-dollar industry that contributes to pervasive social inequalities and endemic sexual violence” (Russo 1998, 9). Pornographic images and stories often present the rape and physical and verbal abuse of women. Feminists saw it as an industry that was in part responsible for perpetrating as well as intensifying violence against women. Researcher Rae Langton emphasizes that, “We define pornography as the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures or words that also includes women dehumanized as sexual objects, things, or commodities; enjoying pain or humiliation or rape” (Langton 2009, 138). Pornographic images construct women as purposeless in society, other than as sexual beings for use and abuse.

Russo argues that “the feminist analysis of the pornography industry begins with the problem of pervasive violence against women, not with the pornographic images themselves. The compelling issues and questions have to do with the mistreatment, harassment, rape, battery, and murder, not sex per se” (Russo 1998, 11-12). Pornographic images reinforce violence against women and portray it as acceptable in societies. Russo continues to stress that “the imaginative feminist vision is a society free of inequality and violence, not a society free of sexual desire and expression” (Russo 1998, 11-12).

While pro-pornography feminists argue that pornography is more about private sexual fantasies, anti-pornography feminist activists like Andrea Dworkin, argue that the making of pornography involves real women; as she writes,

Women are beaten and raped and forced to and whipped and held captive. The violence depicted is true. The acts of violence in pornography are real acts committed against real women and real female children. The fantasy is that women want to be abused (Dworkin 1993, 11).

Dworkin argues that since real women are used in the production of pornography, it isn't simply a fantasy. In addition, she suggests that men consume pornography may develop a perception that women desire such abuse and/or deserve it.

Despite the fact that Dworkin and other scholars argue that pornography is real and not a fantasy, feminist scholar Laura Kipnis of Media Studies at Northwestern University argues the opposite. Kipnis argues that pornography should be accepted in society because it “is intensely and relentlessly *about us*. It involves the roots of our culture and the deepest corners of the self. It's not just fiction and naked bodies; pornography has eloquence. It has meaning, it has ideas” (Kipnis 2006, 118). For her, pornography is not just about sex, but about sexual expression, and is a form of culture; she writes, “Pornography is both legitimate form of culture and a fictional fantastical,

allegorical realm; it neither simply reflects the real world nor is it some hypnotizing call to action. The world of pornography is mythological, and hyperbolic peopled by characters. It doesn't and never will exist" (Kipnis 2006, 119).

Kipnis' theory is thought provoking, and yet I believe she misses the realities of pornography's production and consumption. Real women are used to produce pornographic images; as Russo argues, "The feminist critical analysis of pornography, however, is not about pornography as a deviant form of sexual expression, but rather about a powerful mass-market industry that normalizes, sanctions, and participates in sexist, racist, anti-Semitic, and other forms of discrimination that are made into sexualized entertainment" (Russo 1998, 18). This lead me to consider how pornographic images of Eastern European women creates the idea that these women want to be dehumanized and treated as sexual tools. Russo stresses that, "The messages in pornography about women's pleasure in submission and pain contribute to men's beliefs that sexual assault victims derive sexual pleasure from the experience" (Russo 1998, 19).

Andrea Dworkin also emphasizes that, "Pornography says that women want to be hurt, forced, and abused, pornography says women want to be humiliated, shamed, defamed; pornography says that women say no, but mean yes—yes to violence, yes to pain" (Dworkin 1993, 23). These images indicate that, "Pornography says that women are sluts, cunts; pornography says that pornographers define women; pornography says that men define women; pornography says that women are what men want women to be" (Dworkin 1993, 24). Pornography sexualizes and dehumanizes women. Pornographic images sexually exploit women and it is "a degraded status, everywhere. No form of

sexual exploitation leads to the liberation or empowerment of women, or enhances the rights or status of women” (Hughes 2000a, 5).

Though some research suggests that pornographic images reduce women to “fuck objects” and strip them of their identities, other research argues the opposite and recognizes it as sexually liberating for women. Kathleen Sullivan, a law professor at Stanford University stresses that, “Pornography is a charter of sexual revolution that is potentially liberating rather than confining to women” (Sullivan 1996, cited in Strossen 1996, 174). This argument suggests that pornography enables women to feel sexually powerful and in control of their bodies. From this perspective, pornography liberates women from conservative ideas as to how women should sexually express themselves. Contrary to Dworkin’s theory that perceives pornography as sexually degrading to women, Sullivan argues that pornography allows women to empower their sexuality and express themselves as sexually liberated individuals.

Maybe for some women pornography is sexually liberating and some may make the choice to work in the sex industry. However, not many young women make the choice outside of their social and economic focus. Russo suggests that some “young girls and women make decisions to work in the pornography industry, but the contexts of their decisions are not ones of economic opportunity and social freedom; their decisions are not socially neutral” (Russo 1998, 23). Some women’s choices to work in the industry may be connected to other issues as Vednita Nelson suggests, “Economic necessity, limited economic and educational opportunities, and sexual abuse, among other social factors, often compel women, who may not be able to secure a living wage and or have

young children to support into sex work, in contrast to other jobs, because on the surface it seems lucrative” (Nelson 1992, cited in Russo 1998, 23).

In conclusion, the feminist debate over pornography offers contrasting frameworks. The first framework defines pornography as sexually demeaning to women and demonstrates inequality, fantasy and violence through its images. The second framework defines pornography as sexually liberating for women. In this thesis, I draw upon the feminist framework that analyzes pornography in terms of sexual objectification and violence against women.

Pornography, Sexuality: Objectification and Commodification

This section analyzes key analytical concepts pertaining to the sex industry: anti-pornography, sexual objectification and commodification of women. The purpose of examining these concepts is to better understand their historical evolution. The concepts help to frame how women are marketed and used as sexual objects in the sex industry.

Many people are exposed to pornography on a regular basis, but may chose to ignore it. Historian Lisa Sigel writes, “Naughty pictures wink from the seaside postcard rack, dirty magazines beckon from behind the convenience store counter, and scrambled images moan over the cable television” (Sigel 2005, 1). She continues to stress that, “Full-length pornographic films can be ordered by mail, picked up in video stores or downloaded over personal computers” (Sigel 2005, 1). Porn is everywhere and is overexposed; however, not many people spend their lives thinking about it (Sigel 2005). However, scholars, writers, and feminist activists believe that “pornography, like sexuality itself, is an issue with deep symbolic importance” (Sigel 2005, 2). What is so important about pornography? Sigel points out that, “Sex sells and pornography proves

the point” (Sigel 2005, 2). Sigel emphasizes that pornography is a growth industry, and in order “to understand the economics of modern society, particularly the economics of consumer culture, scholars need to engage in pornography” (Sigel 2005, 2). Pornography creates sexual images of women through objectification and commodification, and then distributed and sold all over the world.

Sexuality and sexual expression have existed for centuries. *In Mediated Sex: Pornography and Postmodern Culture*, Brian McNair explores the overview of sexuality since the beginning of recorded history. McNair points out that from the “sixth and fourth centuries B.C. sexually explicit pottery, depicting such a heterosexual copulation, orgies, and male homosexual bonding (although the depiction of oral or anal penetration was rare) was produced in Athens and Attica” (McNair 1996, 42). Sexuality was also presented in Indian and Chinese civilizations “of the first centuries A.D., sexual behavior was depicted with relative explicitness, as anyone who has read the *Kama Sutra* will know” (McNair 1996, 42). These civilizations demonstrate that sexuality was openly expressed through art, but these sexualized images weren’t considered to be pornographic until the sixteenth century.

The first pornographic images were presented by Italian artist Pietro Aretino, who in the “1530s wrote the series of sexually explicit sonnets, which were later illustrated with engravings. The resulting images, which came to be known as *Aretino’s Postures*, are especially important in the history of sexually explicit representation” (McNair 1996, 42). Historian Lynn Hunt stresses that the images, “Brought together several crucial elements to form the basis of pornographic tradition...particularly the explicit representation of sexual activity...and the challenge to moral conventions of the day”

(Hunt 1993, 26). Aretino created the ground for expansion of pornography in “Europe over the next two centuries by charting the terrain in which it was formulated, and by setting the parameters of its subject and the techniques of presentation” (Findlen 1993, cited in McNair 1996, 42).

Film professor at University of California, Linda Williams, examines how pornographic images emerged through photography. She states, “Modern pornography really began with the invention first of photography, then of experiments with moving image, such as Musbridge’s *Animal Locomotions* in the 1870s. These experiments endowed representations of the human body with a quality of credibility absent from other picture-making” (Williams 1990, cited in McNair 1996, 45). The images that photography captured helped influence pornography and replicate similar images in the sex industry. Photography captured images of bodies and presented them in ways that other forms of technology at the time couldn’t, but at the same “time as objectifying the human body, photography made possible the heightened fetishization of the female, and positioned the male viewer (and the male photographer) as seeker of knowledge” (Williams 1990, cited in McNair 1996, 45). Photography laid the ground for expansion of sexuality and sex in pornography.

Since the 1990s, many contemporary feminists have criticized and worked against pornography as a specific form of violence against women. Diana Russell offers an influential feminist definition of pornography linking it to male dominance. She defines it as, “Material that explicitly represents or describes degrading or abusive sexual behavior so as to endorse and/or recommend the behavior as described” (Russell 1992, cited in McNair 1996, 48). Russell suggests: “Pornography’s intended effect of arousal is at the

same time an incitement to woman-hatred, an arousal which would bring harm to others, in particular to the women, and sometimes children who are represented as the object of male arousal” (Russell 1992, cited in McNair 1996, 48). Russell argues that in pornography women are objectified as sexual goods in order to produce sexual pleasure for men. Even though women endure physical and mental pain in the production of pornography, these acts of violence are constructed as sexual pleasure and fantasy, and so not seen as violent.

In Andrea Dworkin’s book, *Letters from a War Zone*, she offers a definition of objectification, “Objectification occurs when a human being... is made less than human, turned into a thing or commodity, bought or sold. When objectification occurs, a person is depersonalized” (Dworkin 1993, 30-31). Sexual objectification of women essentially reduces women to sexual objects and tools that function without personhood. Feminist theorists Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon argue that sexual objectification “constitutes a serious harm to an individual’s humanity” (Dworkin and MacKinnon 1997, 340). Objectifying women makes them unequal to men. The women are easily mistreated and sexually violated since they are perceived as sexual objects.

In *Sexual Solipsism: Philosophical Essays on Pornography and Objectification*, Rae Langton emphasizes that sexual objectification is a central theme in pornography (Langton 2009). Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon describe objectification as, “Treating a person as an object, a mere instrument for someone else’s purposes, in such a way that the person in question is reduced to the status of an object for use” (Dworkin and MacKinnon 1997, 138). Pornography sexually objectifies women and reduces women to parts that are used to “sexually stimulate men” (Guinn and DiCaro 2007, 79).

The women are essentially perceived as “fuck objects,” i.e. to be penetrated” (Guinn and DiCaro 2007, 79). Rae Langton also stresses how, “Objectification is a process of projection supplemented by force, whose result is that women are made subordinate” (Langton 2009, 284). The women in pornography and their bodies are stripped of any purpose in life, other than providing sexual pleasure for men.

The problem with pornography isn't how it presents the woman's body, but how it sexually objectifies women. John Araujo's research differentiates how art and pornography are used to present the nude body of a woman. He writes, “Art and science can portray a nude female without robbing her of her dignity and humanity” (Araujo 2002, cited in Loftus 2002, 84). He argues that pornographers “must reduce women into tools of sexual satisfaction in order for women to suit their purposes” (Araujo 2002, cited in Loftus 2002, 84). Araujo suggests that nude bodies of women in art don't dehumanize women, but pornography does.

John Berger's research also emphasizes that in art, women without clothes are considered to be nude and the female body is presented as beautiful and valuable. Berger compares the female nude body to art and states that, “Nudity is a form of dress” (Berger 1977, 53). However, in pornography, Araujo argues that “pornographers reduce women into tools of sexual satisfaction in order for women to suit their purposes” (Araujo 2002, cited in Loftus 2002, 84). It can be argued that women without clothes in pornographic images are considered to be “naked and this reduces them to objects” (Berger 1977, 54). The naked bodies that are presented in pornographic images illustrate women as dehumanized and inferior to men (MacKinnon 1988). Theorist Homi K. Bhaba points out

that “the [female] body is always simultaneously inscribed in both economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power” (Bhaba 1986, 150).

John Stoltenberg, a feminist activist, also stresses that pornography empowers manhood and “eroticizes male supremacy and it makes dominance and subordination feel like sex; it makes hierarchy feel like sex; it makes force and violence feel like sex; it makes hate and terrorism feel like sex; it makes inequality feel like sex” (Stoltenberg 1993, cited in Russell 1993, 69). Stoltenberg’s research also examines how the male penis is given supremacy over the female body and it is perceived as a “weapon and [female] body is your target” (Stoltenberg 1993, cited in Russell 1993, 68). It can be presumed that the reason why the penis is given superior qualities over the female body is based on how society constructs manhood. Stoltenberg argues that men are “perceived as masters, women as slaves; men are superior, women are subordinate, men are real, women are objects; men are sex machines, women are sluts” (Russell 1993, cited in Russell 1993, 68).

David Loftus, a researcher of pornography, has interviewed various men (e.g., black, white, businessmen, rich, college graduates, etc.) about what they think of pornography and how they use it. Loftus emphasizes that the male consumers need to believe the images are real in order to get excited by sadistic or degrading behavior since “it is necessary for them to believe that the woman in the picture is consenting to being in her situation. She may be role-playing an unwilling participant, but at the bottom she is there by choice” (Loftus 2002, 114). While images and text in pornography make it seem consensual, it often is not. Some research stresses that not all women have that choice due to force and coercion into the sex trafficking that is part of the sex industry (Hughes

2002a). Many Eastern European women are sexually trafficked and forced to work in prostitution and pornography (Hughes 2002a; Hughes 2002b).

Sexual objectification and commodification are very similar, however, commodification emphasizes that women's bodies hold an economic value in the sex industry. In "Bodies for Sale – Whole or in Parts", Nancy Scheper-Hughes defines commodification as, "All capitalized economic relations between humans in which bodies are token of economic exchanges that are often masked as something else – love, pleasure, altruism, kindness" (Scheper-Hughes 2001, 2). Scheper-Hughes demonstrates how women's bodies in the sex industry are masked as sexual commodities and sexual objects. The pornographic images mask women's bodies to represent sex. The Internet helps promote images of Eastern European women and demonstrates how easily these women can be bought, sold, and traded in the sex industry. However, commodification of bodies isn't a new phenomenon, but in "the context of transnational capitalism in our rapidly developing technological world, commodification marks us in new ways" (Flewelling 2007, 14). Gail Faurschou's article, "Fashion and the Cultural Logic of Postmodernity", argues that while "postmodernity... is no longer an age in which bodies produce commodities, but where commodities produce bodies" (Faurschou 2006, 72).

Sexualizing Women Through Advertising in Media

There is a body of research about the influence of Western media in Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe has been bombarded with Western images of glamour and wealth in numerous forms of advertisements (e.g., magazines, television, music, fashion, and Internet) (Hughes 2002a). In these ads, the West is often portrayed as a modern influence in terms of music, fashion and beauty. Western media markets Western lifestyles to

Eastern European consumers and one of the most important consumers are the women. They are influenced by Western advertising in fashion and beauty that present Western women dressed in designer labels (e.g., Victoria's Secret, Calvin Klein, Guess, Gucci, etc.), and where women are marketed as beautiful and sexy.

Images of sexualized women are used to promote brand products. Some research demonstrates how the sex appeal of women is used to advertise and sell products. The sex appeal of Western advertising is also present in the construction of pornographic images. I believe research on the construction of sexuality of advertising is applicable to my study of pornographic images. Both media sexualize women's bodies and objectify them as sexual objects. Robert Goldman stresses how "advertising has historically signified the commodity self by the visual abstraction of body parts. We are accustomed to equating persona with unblemished components of the human body – most notably the expressive surfaces of the eyes, mouth, hands, and breasts" (Goldman 1992, 158). Women's bodies are equated with beauty and are sexualized in order to market products.

In *The Erotic History of Advertising*, Tom Reichert examines sexualized images of women in Western advertising since the nineteenth century to the present. Reichert emphasizes how sexual images of women aren't new and "advertisers and marketers have used sex in their promotional efforts since the early days of modern advertising" (Reichert 2003, 10). Reichert stresses that since the nineteenth century, sexualized images of women were used to promote products and ads featured women in low cut-bodices and hiked-up skirts (Reichert 2003). Such clothing was used to attract consumers and Reichert writes, "Images of nude or nearly nude women were used to 'brand' products such as corsets, tobacco, and beverages" (Reichert 2003, 16). Women's sex appeal was

used to draw attention to products and brand the products associated with the images. However, a difference exists between women sexualized in advertising and in pornography. The women in ads are sexualized in order to brand and sell products. Yet the women and their bodies in pornography are sexualized to sell the women as products themselves.

For example, the Gentlemen's Delight tobacco advertisement in the 1870s presented an image of seductive women to draw attention to the product. The brand's image was very sexual and featured "a beautiful dark-haired woman with a broken string of pearls. The woman is collecting her pearls in what appears to be either a seashell or a tobacco leaf. Much to any gentlemen's delight, the attractive young woman is illustrated with her cover draped down off her shoulders, exposing her neck, shoulders and upper arms" (Reichert 2003, 49). The woman's body and her sex appeal attracted attention to the product. Considering the fact that during that time period, most smokers and tobacco users were men, "the image functioned to speak a language common among men" (Reichert 2003, 49). The sexual images of tobacco presented implicit messages that male consumers would be "associating ourselves with beauty, with attractive women, and with classical, yet but subtle, allusions to sexuality as exemplified by the female figure" (Reichert 2003, 49). The tobacco advertisement suggests that men's consumption of tobacco is connected to their ability to access sexy and attractive women.

Reichert's research also examined the "development of sex appeal within product classes: intimates and underwear, designer jeans, fashion, fragrance, beverages, and sex-related products and social health" (Reichert 2003, 17). This advertising expanded and promoted sex into everything that could be marketed. Reichert's study emphasizes that

“sex is powerful, but advertising is no slouch when it comes to influencing people’s lives. It’s one of the most prolific and all-encompassing forms of communication in the world” (Reichert 2003, 20).

Reichert argues that the “clearest examples of sex in advertising revolve around clothing – what models are wearing or not wearing. Sexy clothing and revealing displays of the human body represent a fundamental type of sexual information” (Reichert 2003, 33). This study analyzes what certain clothes suggest to the audience. For example, Western fashion brands Calvin Klein and Victoria’s Secret are considered to be the “most successful marketers of sexualized brand identities” (Reichert 2003, 33). Attractive female and male models are sexualized in producing their ads (Reichert 2003). The ads often have characterized attractive models “in stages of undress, models displayed or posed decoratively, or models engaged in suggestive behavior, either alone or with others” (Reichert 2003, 33). These images again suggest that sex sells.

Sociologist Erving Goffman studied gender and advertising and he provided a way of coding gender in advertisements. Goffman focused on ways in which non-verbal signals communicated important differences in male and female power (Goffman 1979). Goffman concluded that the ads “depicted ritualized versions of the parent-child relationship, in which women were largely accorded child-like status. Women were typically shown as lower or smaller than men and using gestures which ritualized their subordination” (Goffman 1979, 49). Goffman’s research implies that images of women lying down, using bashful knee bends, canting postures or deferential smiles all indicate that women are subordinate and powerless to men (Goffman 1979). The ads try to present the effect that women are denied humanity and reduced to objects.

Economics researcher Rosalind Gill argues the opposite of Goffman. Gill emphasizes that ads empower women and their bodies. Gill emphasizes that women used to be presented as “sexualized representations of women in the media presented them as the passive, mute object of an assumed male gaze” (Gill 2009, 100). Such images presented women unequal to men, but today women are presented as “active, desiring sexual subjects who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interests to do so” (Gill 2009, 100). Theorist Robert Goldman also stresses that women’s sexual empowerment in ads also suggests that women can gain control through the “commodification of their appearance that by acquiring a particular look they can obtain power” (Goldman 1992, cited in Reichert 2003, 14). It can be argued that women are still perceived as sexual objects even though they make the choice to commodify their appearances.

For example, the 1994 advertisement for Playtex Wonderbra with model Eva Herzigova helps demonstrate women’s empowerment. In the ad, Herzigova is shown with her own Wonderbra-uplifted breasts under the slogan ‘Hello Boys’. This slogan’s “humorous and direct address to male viewers marketed a profound change: Herzigova was positioned not only as an object of the male gaze, but also an active subject knowingly playing with her sexual power” (Gill 2009, 97). This advertising demonstrates how women empower their bodies, attract attention from men, and sell the product. Despite the empowerment that the model displays in the ad, I would argue that she is still sexualized and presented as a sexual commodity.

An example of female body empowerment is also displayed through the female midriff. The midriff is perceived as “an erotic interest in many non-Western cultures for a

long time” (Gill 2009, 98). This part of the body has become sexualized and considered empowering to women. It is located between the top of the pubis bone and the bottom of the rib cage. This body part is sexualized and marketers advertise it in relation to a “particular sensibility: a sensibility characterized by a specific constellation of attitudes towards the body, sexual expression and gender relations” (Gill 2009, 98). This body part is perceived as women’s source of capital.

Ads often present beautiful models wearing “open or low-cut blouses that expose cleavage as well as mini-skirts and tight-fitting clothing that display the body, shirts or shirts that showcase chiseled chests, six-pack abdomens and well-defined biceps and quadriceps” (Reichert 2003, 33-34). These images draw attention to the products and send messages about women’s sexuality and bodies (Reichert 2003). For example, Western fashion advertising for Victoria’s Secret, Calvin Klein, Guess, and others use provocative images of women to draw attention to their products (Reichert 2003). Reichert stresses that advertising captivates images of women that are “coerced in situations, ads with young women appearing ready to perform fellatio on middle-aged men, and ads with Aryan-inspired bodies” (Reichert 2003, 204). These images function to grab attention, but also objectify the flesh. Reichert argues that models are made to look sexy not only to sell products, but represent what sexy is (Reichert 2003).

Fashion advertising relies on women’s sex appeal to draw attention to their products, and so demonstrate how sex appeal is glamorized in the fashion industry, even though women may be sexually objectified in the making of these images. Such advertising of women is also present in pornographic images of Eastern European women. Although images of Eastern European women don’t advertise brand garments for

purchase by consumers, these women are also dressed to make them look sexually appealing for viewers on the Internet. The images market the women as sexual products and reinforce that they are commodities available through the sex industry.

The models promote products in the ads through communication with the audience. Reichert emphasizes that models are constructed to communicate in a seductive way through posing and facial expressions. Models communicate sexual interest by “flirting with the viewer or with someone else in the ad. Often models appear to make eye contact with the viewer as they assume a sexually receptive posture. Models can sit with their legs spread, flex their muscles, and move seductively to music” (Reichert 2003, 34). These types of physical gestures suggest what is sexy.

Sexuality is constructed in a particular way that communicates women’s sexual objectification, sexual vulnerability, and accessibility to men. Sex is perceived as powerful and “advertising is no slouch when it comes to influencing people’s lives. It’s one of the most prolific and all-encompassing forms of communication in the world” (Reichert 2003, 20). Sexual imagery in advertising is part of globalization that markets Western goods (Reichert 2003). The sexy images of Victoria’s Secret and Calvin Klein under garments use images of beautiful women to advertise their products.

The media also plays an important role in the sexualization of the youth. Researcher and author of *The Lolita Effect: The Media Sexualization of Young Girls and What We Can Do About It*, Gigi Durham based her research on the classic 1955, novel by Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*. In Nabokov’s novel, Lolita is a twelve year old girl that becomes a sexual victim of her stepfather Humbert. Humbert views her as sexually attractive and a sexual fantasy. Lolita is perceived as the forbidden fruit and becomes a

girl “who seduces without knowing it, who works her charms unconsciously, even unwillingly, who attracts without necessarily being in any of the most obvious ways attractive” (Durham 2008, 25). Lolita is perceived as a sexual object by her stepfather, who molests, and deprives her of her childhood.

Since the time the novel has been published, the term “Lolita” has been associated with nymphet, and has “eagerly invoked in the popular medias, as a sign of just how licentious little girls can be” (Durham 2008, 26). The media generates images of young women dressed in baby doll dresses, Catholic uniforms, and Mary Jane shoes to “evoke male Lolita fantasies” (Durham 2008, 26). Such images send the message that young girls are sexy and available to older men; and Durham writes, “Lolita may be an apt metaphor for the sexy girl in contemporary culture, but not in the ways the term “Lolita” is usually used. The Lolitas that populate our mediascapes are fabrications. They serve the market needs and profit motives, and they are powerfully alluring, especially to the young girls whose vulnerability they exploit” (Durham 2008, 26-27). The media and our culture have produced a gathering of “*prostitutots* – hypersexualized girls whose cultural presence has become a matter of heated controversy. This is the Lolita Effect” (Durham 2008, 27). Lolita is associated with sex, beauty and youth.

For example, international pop icon Britney Spears’ first single and music video “...Baby One More Time” was Lolita-inspired (Durham 2008). In the video, Britney Spears was only sixteen- years old and was “prancing around in a Catholic school uniform and babyish pigtails. She wore her uniform to maximum seductive effect, with the shirt tied high above her midriff and the skirt shortened to micro-mini brevity” (Durham 2008, 113-114). This type of clothing was sexually appealing and presented

Britney Spears as sexy, seductive, hypersexual, and youthful. Britney Spears body was sexually constructed in the video and Durham argues that the “construction of female sexuality in music videos connects sex directly with female body displays and male desire” (Durham 2008, 75). Spears’ clothing presented her as forbidden fruit in a male fantasy. Durham also stresses that the “school girl uniform is easily recognizable as the classic “Lolita” garment – it’s a favorite motif in child pornography. The idea of the sexy little girl is a potent one in the adult imagination” (Durham 2008, 114). Durham’s research illustrates how the image of Lolita is incorporated into the media through fashion and music.

Certain dress in clothing attire is intended to convey “hotness” as a “style of fashion commonly identified as ‘hooker chic’ ” (Durham 2008, 83). Lolita is identified with the hooker chic image and Durham writes that, “Fishnets stockings, hot pants, tube tops, platform or stiletto heels, thongs, lacy lingerie, garters; worn together, they project sex for sale” (Durham 2008, 83). Durham argues that these clothes stereotype women as sex workers and are associated with “women’s sex work: stripping, prostitution, and pornography” (Durham 2008, 83). This style of dress suggests that women are hypersexual and are sexually available. As Jensen and Dines suggest that such clothing, “Functions as a cultural marker of femininity-as sexuality, and also, because garments are coded as sexual, leaving them visible while [sexual pleasure] to heighten the sexual charge of the scene” (Jensen and Dines 1998, 74).

However, these clothes may also suggest that some women make the choice to wear them. Such clothing draws attention to women and their bodies, therefore, some

women wear hooker chic to feel a certain way. Images of Lolita and hooker chic are mimicked in pornographic images on the Internet.

Sexualizing Beauty and Whiteness

The previous section analyzed research on how Western media advertisements sexualize women. I argued that such images of women were also presented in pornography. I believe that the construction of sexualized images in advertising and pornography indicate how women are easily marketed as sexual objects. This section analyzes how race shapes the construction of what is sexually desirable. This section will demonstrate the influence of Western ideals of beauty and its correlation in advertising Eastern European women in the sex industry.

Naomi Wolf, the author of *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*, argues that women's beauty in the media is used by men "as a form of currency in circulation among men" (Wolf 1991, 21). Women's beauty is presented as parallel to money in the consumer economy and "women have learned to understand their own beauty as part of this economy" (Wolf 1991, 21). Beauty has become part of the global market economy that relies on women's sex appeal to sell various products worldwide. However, women's beauty and sexual images aren't only limited in selling consumer goods (e.g. Victoria's Secret). Beauty is also a huge component in marketing beauty contests all over the world. Beauty contests have become universal. These contests market women and their bodies. Beauty contests present a universal perception of how beauty is equated with certain forms of sexual expression. I argue that beauty contests display the sex appeal of women that is also present in pornography.

Researcher Catherine Lumby argues that there is a difference between the sexual representation of women in beauty contests and pornography (Lumby 1997). She stresses that the women in beauty contests are viewed as models. These women are oftentimes presented as thin, dressed in gorgeous gowns and jewels, and send out a clear message, “Look, but don’t touch” (Lumby 1997, 96). The beauty contests put emphasis on physical beauty and present women as sexual objects to be desired, but untouchable. In contrast to the beauty contest models, the pornography models “symbolize the messy tactile world of sex. They’re warm, fleshy and designed to look available” (Lumby 1997, 96). This comparison of women suggests that pornographic models are sexually objectified in comparison to beauty models. However, it can be argued that both types of models are being marketed and sold.

Beauty contests in Eastern Europe have become a way to sexually exploit models all over the world. The contests provided the assumption that “many models were prostitutes. ‘Glamour modeling’ became a euphemism for prostitution” (Hughes 2002a, 14). The reality of the beauty contests was not as glamorous and chic. The Eastern European women in the contests were often mimicking the fictitious sexy Western Barbie doll. The Barbie is marketed to look sexually appealing and is designed to influence women to look the same. Consequently, many women perceive the Barbie as a standardized vision of ideal beauty.

The beauty contests are a way to construct one standard of beauty as a universal standard – the white European standard as reflected in the Barbie doll. The Barbie symbolizes the Western ideal of female perfection, including Eastern Europe. The Barbie was created in 1959 and her body has stayed the same since then. Her measurements

haven't changed, "In a now-infamous formulation, she would be a 5-foot 9-inch woman with an 18-inch waist, 36-inch breasts, and 33-inch hips, and she would weigh 110 pounds" (Durham 2008, 96). Such measurements are unhealthy and unrealistic. Durham stresses that according to a medical analysis, "That's too skinny to menstruate and too skinny to stand upright" (Durham 2008, 96). The Barbie doll presents the negative message that beauty is valued through physical attributes and advertises her body as an ideal norm. However, the Barbie is molded in plastic and manufactured in a factory (Durham 2008). Even though the Barbie is just a doll, she symbolizes ideal beauty that emphasizes that whiteness and other physical attributes are constructed as sexually appealing.

Barbie's image of beauty is used as part of globalization strategies; as Professor Inderpal Grewal of Women's Studies at Berkley University theorizes, "[Barbie] as the white, blonde, straight, "American" female in various ways creating consumer subjects transnationally through global advertising and media" (Grewal 2005, 101). Grewal's research addresses the issue of beauty and race, and how the Barbie is supposed to embody a desirable woman. The glamorized physical and racial attributes of the Barbie, are oftentimes compared to Eastern European women (Farr 2005).

Whiteness is an important component in constructing beauty in the sex industry. Physical beauty as constructed in the West is based on racial hierarchies such that whiteness is oftentimes correlated with being beautiful (Levine-Rasky 2002). Research points out that since Eastern European women are perceived as white, they are oftentimes a more valued commodity in the sex industry because of their association with whiteness (Hughes 2002a). According to Cynthia Levine-Rasky, Eastern European women are more

likely to be desirable in the sex industry since these women are sold within the context of a white supremacist society (Levine-Rasky 2002). The women are often times demanded by men who are also white, but are also demanded by non-white men from various parts of the world (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Israel, etc.).

Gigi Durham argues that beauty and whiteness are marketed through beauty products. Western standards of beauty are marketed to non-Western women who are darker skinned. Such advertising can be found in Asian countries where companies advertise “bleaching cream that stress “whitening” and “brightening” as beauty goals that improve dark skin” (Durham 2008, 106). Western beauty products such as Estée Lauder, L’Oreal, and Elizabeth Arden emphasize that the whiteness is the standard of beauty. For example, L’Oreal’s “upscale Vichy line of skin lighteners is advertised with a photo of a dark-skinned Indian woman’s face being “unzipped” to reveal a (tacitly more beautiful) lighter-skinned self. The product’s slogan is “Skin bright, perfect white” (Durham 2008, 106). This example demonstrates how race is used to construct beauty, but it also “reinforces racism in the conception of beauty” (Durham 2008, 107).

Since Eastern European women are constructed as white, they are not presented with bleaching cream products. These women, are considered to be racially similar to Western women, but also perceived as *exotic*. They are perceived as racially similar to Western women, but culturally and physically different, and this makes them exotic to white Western men (Hughes 2002a). Whiteness is perceived as preferable and valuable in the sex industry and Eastern European women are marketed as exotic white sexual objects.

For example, the Israeli report, “The Missing Factor: Clients of Trafficked Women in Israel’s Sex Industry”, written by NGO activists Hanny Ben-Israel and Nomi Levenkron, analyze how race constitutes a sexual preference in the Israeli sex industry. The report consists of interviews with three categories of male clients that visit the brothels in Israel. The majority of clients are “Israeli Jews (secular, religious, and ultra-Orthodox), second are Arabs (Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians from the Palestinian Authority), and third are foreigners (migrant workers and tourists)” (Ben-Israel and Levenkron 2005, 17). Such men visit Israeli brothels (“discreet flats”, “massage”, “health” facilities) and have sex with women from all over the world. Ben-Israel and Levenkron stress that “an estimated 1,000 to 3,000 women are brought to Israel annually to work in the sex industry and most come from FSU (Former Soviet Union) countries”(Ben-Israel and Levenkron 2005, 7). These women work “seven days a week for up to eighteen hours every day and out of the NIS 120 (US \$27) paid by costumers, they are left with just NIS 20 (US \$4.50)” (Napoleoni 2008, 15). This statistic demonstrates that a substantial amount of Eastern European women are in the sex industry in Israel and shows that “racial and ethnic stereotypes play a prominent role in the sex industry” (Ben-Israel and Levenkron 2005, 24).

Ben-Israel’s and Levenkron’s report also analyzes the clients that visit the brothels and have sex with women who are racially and culturally different from Israeli women. Ben-Israel and Levenkron argue that the racial and ethnic stereotypes are used to purchase sex as means of returning to the “good old days” (Ben-Israel and Levenkron 2005, 23). They also point out that, “Many white men request sex with foreign women because of particular qualities they associate with them: African women are “wild”,

Asian women are “exotic” with “obedience”, Latin American women are “hot” and so on” (Ben-Israel and Levenkron 2005, 24). Such stereotypes help influence views about sex. Unfortunately, this report didn’t elaborate as to why Eastern European women are preferred by clients in the sex industry. However, I believe that Eastern European women present white supremacy with exoticism within the Israeli sex industry and this markets them as desirable.

Annick Prieur and Arnhild Taksdal’s article “Clients of Prostitutes – Sick Deviants or Ordinary Men? Discussion of the Male Role Concept and Cultural Changes in Masculinity”, addresses the issue of control over women from an “inferior” race, as “consolation price, however small, for a man wishing to restore his superiority in the social order” (Prieur and Taksdal 1993, 108). This research exemplifies the power dynamic that is constructed by men from developed nations over women who are racially inferior or from countries considered under developed or developing.

Swedish researcher and sociology professor Sven-Axel Månsson spent twenty years researching male clients that purchase sex in the sex trade in Sweden. In his article “Men’s Practices in Prostitution and their Implications for Social Work”, Månsson offers an interesting explanation as to why men from developed nations engage in sex with trafficked women. Månsson’s theorizes that due to “the extension of equal rights to women is experienced as a loss of male supremacy” (Månsson 2000, 4). This theory helps clarify Ben-Israel’s and Levenkron’s research by illustrating how men in their study wish to reestablish inequality between men and women, by sexually overpowering trafficked women. Ben-Israel’s and Levenkron’s research exemplifies how men who try to uphold their traditional superior authority over women, by demanding women in

prostitution. Such a demand allows men to regain their power over women. Ben-Israel and Levenkron conclude in their research to men's reasoning of purchasing sex with such women due to the fact that, "These women are perceived as "genuine" women, for unlike their Western counterparts, they have taken on the "natural" role they were given – to please men" (Ben-Israel and Levenkron 2005, 24). Ben-Israel's and Levenkron's research illustrates how this perception of women exemplifies the attitude towards women in the sex industry.

Finnish researcher Elina Penttinen examines the influence of Russian and Baltic women as part of the globalized sex industry in Finland. Penttinen's research consisted of interviews with Eastern European women that worked as sex workers in Finnish sex bars and nightclubs. Penttinen refers to these women as "Eastern girls" (Penttinen 2008). Before the 1990s, "Eastern girls" didn't exist in Finland and Finnish men often traveled East to purchase sexual services with these women (Penttinen 2008).

After the 1990s, these women could openly travel West and work. Some women made the choice to work as prostitutes since they were unable to make sustainable money back home. The "Eastern girls" emerged as sexual commodities in Finland that became "associated with sexual drive and also moral looseness" (Penttinen 2008, 1). These women made the choice to sexually perform and work in the clubs (Penttinen 2008). Many of the women traveled to Finland knowing that they would work temporarily as prostitutes and could return back to Russia (Penttinen 2008). Researcher Lynne Attwood stresses that prostitution has been glamorized in Eastern Europe; she suggests, "Prostitution has become part of the Russian culture because money glamorizes its profession" (Attwood 1993, 75). Many women make the choice to prostitute their bodies

in order to make money. However, such choices construct the image that Eastern European women are sexually loose and available.

Penttinen theorizes that Eastern European women are constructed as desirable sex workers through globalization in Finland. Penttinen argues that “globalization is inscribed on bodies and how individuals are subjectivated by globalization that is, produced as subjects” (Penttinen 2008, xiii). Penttinen’s argument demonstrates how globalization of Eastern European women constructs the “social body in the context of globalization” (Penttinen 2008, 39). Women’s bodies become subjects of globalization that are easily formed through principles of “marketization and consumerism” (Penttinen 2008, 39). Penttinen emphasizes that since the breakdown of the Soviet Union, Russian women have become valuable in the Finnish sex industry. Prior to the breakdown of Soviet Union, the sex business in Finland valued “exoticism and orientalism, and stereotypes associated with Asian, African and Latin American women” (Penttinen 2008, 53). Eastern European women were stereotyped as sexually and culturally different from Finnish women, but their racial similarity establishes an economic value in the sex industry.

When the Soviet Union broke apart, many Eastern European women were sought-after in the West (Penttinen 2008). Penttinen’s research stresses that these women became desired due to their “fair skin and being more European in that she is almost like the woman whom is differentiated from, yet significantly different” (Penttinen 2008, 53). These women are perceived to be racially similar to European women, but also different. These women are stereotyped as a combination of “subservience and independence, and

they embody femininity naturally as the opposite of masculinity and correspond to Eastern ideals of beauty” (Penttinen 2008, 53).

Penttinen’s research argues that commercialization and stereotyping of these women has constructed the concept of “Eastern girls” in Finland (Penttinen 2008). The Finnish sex business “demands and relies on these women, who are exchangeable and exotic and are willing to satisfy the sexual demands of the male consumers” (Penttinen 2008, 2). Such demands increase the global sex industry and reinforce the power of globalization in the sex industry. The global sex industry is internationally perceived “as an effect on global power, which reiterates and reinforces the techniques and mentalities of the dominating system of power” (Penttinen 2008, 31). The global sex industry is powerful and reveals this through sexual exploitation of women worldwide. As Hughes argues, “Women don’t emerge from sexual exploitation into positions of power, respect or admiration. They remain powerless as individuals and an underclass as a group” (Hughes 2000a, 2-3).

In conclusion, research demonstrates that beauty and race market Eastern European women as valuable commodities within the sex industry. The Barbie doll helps market an ideal image of beauty and whiteness through her stereotypical characteristics, which are oftentimes compared to Eastern European women. Research demonstrates that ideal beauty and whiteness are also a part of the construction of pornographic images of Eastern European women on the Internet.

Rise of the Internet as a Space for the Sex Industry

The purpose of this section is to understand the rise of the Internet and its influence in the sex industry. This section analyzes the research literature on Internet

pornography and examines how women are sexually objectified and sexually constructed on the Internet.

Prior to the Internet, men that were interested in meeting women and engaging in sexual behavior met women in secrecy or/and in less fully public spaces (e.g., brothels, strip clubs, streets, etc.) (Hughes 2000b). Men didn't have easy access with a click of a button to engage in Internet sexuality like they do today. Jeffery Middleton is a consultant for Computer Focus and he states that "men used to remove themselves from their own communities by three levels in order to access pornography" (Middleton 2002, cited in Hughes 2002c, 139). Men had to hide their interest in pornography since it wasn't easily available to them as it is now. The three steps that men had to acquire in order to consume pornography consisted of "[going] somewhere physically, then know[ing] where to go, and then know[ing] how to find it" (Middleton 2002, cited in Hughes 2002c, 139). Middleton's explanation illustrates how difficult it used to be to access porn, but the Internet has helped make it easier.

The Internet has become a popular place for distribution of pornography and this is due to "large legal sex industry businesses have sophisticated web sites with subscription fees that bring in millions of dollars per year" (Hughes 2002c, 135). The Internet provides various pornographic images of Eastern European women and collects profit through objectifying their bodies. Sociologist Simon Hardy stresses that, "Pornography, in its many forms, has always claimed to reflect the truth of human sexuality, and has serviced a desire to see that truth represented" (Hardy 2009, 14). The Internet helps represent sexuality through pornographic images and offers consumers "choice and interactivity online" (Hardy 2009, 11). An Australian study conducted by Dr.

Gomathi Sitharthan at the University of Sydney's Graduate program in Sexual Health, states that "there are people that watch porn up to sixteen and eighteen hours a day on the Internet" (Lee 2010, 1). This study demonstrates that some people may experience Internet porn addiction and this is partly "due to its easy accessibility" (Lee 2010, 1).

Donna Hughes emphasizes that the Internet has had a very influential effect on the sex industry. In "The Demand for Victims of Sex Trafficking", Hughes argues that there "doesn't seem to be anything new in the content of pornography; predators have always raped and tortured women and children in the making of pornography" (Hughes 2002c, 140). However, what is new is the "volume of pornography produced and the fact that an average person with a computer, modem and search engine can find violent, degrading images within minutes, a search that could have taken a lifetime, just fifteen years ago" (Hughes 2002c, 140). The images online make the action and harm against women come alive (Hughes 2002c). Hughes also points out that the "production of pornography and Internet sex shows are markets which often rely on trafficked victims" (Hughes 2005, 26). She states that the "sex industry has aggressively adopted, and in a few cases invented, Internet technologies to increase men's sexual access to women and children" (Hughes 2002c, 129). Hughes also stresses how in many parts of the world, "Centers of trafficking are also centers for the production of pornography" (Hughes 2005, 26). For example, in St. Petersburg, Russia, "NGOs report that they have heard of many cases of women being forced to make pornography" (Hughes 2005, 26).

The Internet provides consumers of pornography the ability to access various pornographic images online. There are many modes of communication and forums online, such as: email, ftp (file transfer protocol), news-groups, the Web, chat, and peer-

to-peer servers (Hughes 2002c). These various modes of communication and forums indicate how easily accessible pornographic images are of women.

Hughes and Middleton argue that pornography is easily accessible online, but researcher Julia Wilkins argues the opposite. She argues that pornography isn't easily accessible and emphasizes that the media exaggerates the accessibility of Internet pornography (Wilkins 2002). Wilkins stresses that the media "repeat[s] inaccurate information, and use misleading pictures and sensationalized titles when reporting on the issue. Pornography on the Internet is not as widespread or accessible as the media make it out to be" (Wilkins 2002, 40). Wilkins' argument doesn't present concrete evidence against overstated accessibility of pornography on the Internet. However, "EroticaBitz: How Sex Shaped the Internet", by researcher Lewis Perdue argues that Internet sex domains prove the accessibility and abundant availability of pornography online. Perdue points out that "research from Datamonitor and Forrester Research put the total number of Internet porn sites at 50,000 to 60,000, while Adult Check, an age verification service for sex site, says it has more than 80,000 participating sites" (Perdue 2004, 261). Perdue's research demonstrates that sufficient amount of pornographic images exist on the Internet and make it easily accessible to consumers.

Perdue continues to stress that, "Research firm Media Metrix says that all the Internet users in the entire world in July 2001, 21 million of them logged on to an Internet sex site. This represents almost 35 percent of the world's Internet users, a number that has held fairly steady since 1998" (Perdue 2004, 260). This statistic demonstrates that many pornography sites exist online and make it easily accessible for consumers. Mark Laaser, a recovering sex addict and executive director and co-founder of the Christian

Alliance for Sexual Recovery stresses that the “Internet is now the primary source of pornography because it offers accessibility, affordability, and anonymity to consumers” (Laaser 2002, cited in Loftus 2002, 32). Perdue argues that pornography online generates high profitability and the “primary reason for the profitability of so many online sites is the lack of available outside investment capital” (Perdue 2004, 261).

The Internet generates a high profitability from pornography online. Perdue estimates based on his analysis that “\$32.2 billion is generated from Internet pornography” (Perdue 2004, 263). Perdue’s estimate indicates that pornography produces high revenue in the sex industry online. I argue that this revenue is constructed through demand for it online. If the demand didn’t exist, then pornographic images would be non-existent and profitability wouldn’t be as high. As Hughes argues, “Web sites are the most popular venue for the distribution of pornography online” (Hughes 2002c, 135). Many pornographic websites have subscription fees that “bring in millions of dollars per year. There are also tens of thousands of free pornography sites that are maintained by amateurs or someone making a relatively small amount of money from advertising banners for larger sites and businesses” (Hughes 2002c, 135). The Internet is widely used by pimps and traffickers that use the “Web to advertise the availability of women and children for use in making pornography” (Hughes 2002c, 135).

Pornographic images of women on the Internet associate these women with sex workers and label them as hypersexual. Budapest, Hungary has become the “pornography production capital of Europe. American and European pornography producers moved to Budapest because of the cheap, available victims” (Hughes 2005, 26). Hughes further argues that the Internet exposes violent images online and “filming violence and sex

crimes against women [turn] it into pornography” (Hughes 2002c, 135). Such images “can be distributed publicly on the Internet with no consequences to the perpetrators” (Hughes 2002c, 136). It is likely that at “least some of the women used in the production of these videos are victims of sex trafficking, yet few people think of production of pornography as a way that victims of trafficking are exploited. There have been reports of young children – usually homeless or neglected teenagers – being recruited for pornography with promises of glamorous careers in modeling” (Hughes 2005, 26). Hughes’ research demonstrates that some women may be unaware that their images are surfacing the Internet and presented as pornography.

Donna Hughes emphasizes how extreme competition on the Internet has led pornographers to attract buyers with more extreme images (Hughes 2000a). Hughes points out how images of “bondage, torture, bestiality and child pornography, leading to increased violence against women and children as degrading and violent images, videos, and life performances are made and marketed [online] ”(Hughes 2000a, 4). These images harm and market women as sexual objects to viewers and consumers worldwide. In 1999, an American in Phnom Penh, Cambodia “set up a live video chat site to broadcast the pay-per-view rape and torture of women” (Hughes 2000a, 4). This example demonstrates how the Internet reinforces violence against women and presents it as acceptable in society. In addition to the images that are provided online, the Internet also offers consumers the option to purchase women as commodities for sexual pleasure.

For example, Hanny Ben-Israel’s and Nomi Levenkron’s research on sex trafficked women in Israel examines how women are presented as prostitutes on the Internet. Their case study on a particular Israeli website (not disclosed in their research),

examines how women are advertised as call girls (women go to men's home and provide sexual pleasure). Ben-Israel and Levenkron argue that "when sex is perceived more as a marketed commodity than as expression of intimate relations, conditions are ripe for a flourishing sex industry" (Ben-Israel and Levenkron 2005, 22). In Israel, sex is perceived as a sexual good that is provided by women. Such a perception is not new and "it is interesting to see how the traditional patriarchal ideology, which viewed prostitution as a *natural* phenomenon, has morphed into a capitalist-consumer ideology. The popular label for this fusion of ideas is "McSex," as play on the name of classic symbol of consumer culture" (Ben-Israel and Levenkron 2005, 22). The women become sexual products that are sold into the Israeli culture and are compared to McDonald's fast food.

Researchers Julie Bindel and Liz Kelly compare how going to a prostitute is almost the same as going for a burger at McDonald's. They stress how "most people are looking for a quick, cheap meal. It's satisfying, it's greasy, and then you get the hell out of there" (Bindel and Kelly 2003, 10). The comparison between prostitution and McDonald's demonstrates how women's bodies are presented as cheap sexual objects that fulfill the demand in the sex industry. However, McDonald's thrives on selling burgers, but the sex industry thrives on selling bodies. In "We Pay – The Economic Manipulation of International and Domestic Laws to Sustain Sex Trafficking", attorney Hanh Diep emphasizes how the "sex industry and McDonald's are both driven by consumer consumption, subject to the economic principles of supply and demand" (Diep 2010, 309). The sex industry supplies the demand for such women and the Internet helps advertise women as sexually available.

The website advertises the women on the Internet as merchandise to be bought and sold. Ben-Israel and Levenkron emphasize how the site offers “potential clients a service agreement stating that they, like any client, will have the right to complain about the “services” rendered, since, after all, “the customer is always right” ” (Ben-Israel and Levenkron 2005, 23). This case study illustrates that women are marketed as merchandise and are guaranteed to do what is required by men that purchase them.

Donna Hughes also provides an example of how easily women are advertised as prostitutes on the Internet in Eastern Europe. In 1990, two Latvian pimps advertised pornographic images of women and adolescents as prostitutes to film producers and tourists. The pimps exploited “approximately 2,000 women, men, girls, and boys” (Hughes 2002c, 136). The Latvian prostitution agency was called Logo Center and was disguised as a modeling agency. The pimps persuaded women to become part of their modeling agencies in Latvia through solicitation. The women that agreed to model for the agency, were unaware that they would be prostituted through the Internet. Logo Center “provided the women and children to foreign prostitution tourists and foreign pornography producers” (Hughes 2002c, 136). The women were advertised on several “Web sites with pornography, information about minors, and photographs of their models in different sex acts” (Hughes 2002b, 136).

The Internet not only advertises women as sexual objects, but it “also publicizes brothels and escort services that are affiliated with the sex industry” (Hughes 2002c, 136). The websites use pornographic images of women in various parts of the world and market them as prostitutes to “attract foreign businessmen or tourists” (Hughes 2002c, 136). Hughes’ research suggests that the pornographic images that are on the Internet

aren't always consensual (Hughes 2002c). Women aren't always aware that their photographs are online and various non-consensual pornographic images "identify them to the public as prostitutes" (Hughes 2002c, 137). The websites on the Internet advertise sex through webcams and this promotes sex tourism in Eastern Europe.

Sex tourism is a problem in Russia and Ukraine. Numerous pornographic websites expose sexualized images of women on the Internet and advertise women as prostitutes or sexually available. Foreign men visit Russia and Ukraine assuming that women in these countries are prostitutes. Journalist Thomas Steinmetz exemplifies that websites such as www.kievtour.com, advertise sex with Ukraine women for "two nights from \$1,250 to \$1,600" (Steinmetz 2008, 1). This site and others demonstrate how the Internet attracts tourism to its country primarily for sex.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Eastern Europe bring critical awareness to sex tourism. For example, the Ukrainian organization FEMEN promotes awareness to sex tourism every year. Steinmetz emphasizes that this college female organization carries posters displaying "Ukraine is Not a Brothel" in various European languages drawing attention to this problem (Steinmetz 2009). Journalist David Stern stresses that FEMEN activists "parade the city in skimpy and provocative clothing to attract attention, and hand out flyers to expatriate men, informing them that prostitution is illegal in Ukraine" (Stern 2009, 3). The demonstration by FEMEN exemplifies how organizations are fighting sex tourism and arguing that women are not sexual objects.

Steinmetz emphasizes that a survey conducted in 2008 by FEMEN revealed an "astonishing 67.5 per cent of women in Kiev between 17 and 22 had received an offer from foreigners of money for sex" (Steinmetz 2009, 2). The survey indicates that

Ukrainian women are associated with prostitution and this perception of women maybe enforced through sexualized images on the Internet. The Internet reinforces negative stereotypes of Eastern European women by presenting sexualized images of women and attracting viewers to these women. I argue that pornographic images on the Internet attract foreign men to Eastern Europe to purchase women for sexual services.

In conclusion, this section analyzed how the Internet helps contribute to the sex industry and allows viewers to access pornography without having to leave their homes. The Internet provides a space for the objectification and commodification of Eastern European women. Pornographic images advertise Eastern European women as sexually available and suggest that these women are hypersexual.

IV. Research Question

This research analyzes pornographic images of Eastern European, specifically Russian and Ukrainian women on the Internet. The objective of the study is to examine how pornographic images sexually objectify and commodify these women. Based upon my review of literature – I developed the following overall research question:

How are Eastern European women constructed on pornographic websites on the Internet? What are the methods of objectification and commodification?

V. Research Methodology

Methods

The research was constructed as a qualitative analysis of the pornographic images on twenty websites. I viewed twenty websites that are free on the Internet. Each website consisted of over one hundred pornographic images. In order to decide which websites to analyze, I searched Google. I first searched *Russian Women* and 35,000,000 sites appeared, and I also searched *Ukrainian Women* and 27,800,000 sites appeared. The

majority of the websites on Google using these subject terms seemed to be dating and mail-order bride sites. While they included sexualized images of Eastern European women, I felt their purpose was slightly different though they were interconnected in their portrayal of Eastern European women. It was interesting to learn how many of these websites exist.

I decided to make the search more specific and so I entered *Sexy Russians* and 145,000,000 websites appeared. This time the search engine provided a mixture of pornographic and mail-order bride websites. I also searched *Sexy Ukrainians*, and 1,390,000 sites appeared. Like the Russian women websites, the first fifty sites of Ukrainian women provided a mixture of pornographic images and mail-order bride websites. I then decided to search even more specifically *Russian Porn* and *Ukrainian Porn*. The search yielded 1,350,000 websites under porn of Russian and 792,000 under Ukrainian porn. I viewed fifty of these websites and narrowed down my analysis to twenty that seemed most representative. The following twenty pornographic websites were viewed and analyzed:

Pornographic Websites of Eastern European Women

1. http://www.freeadultmedia.com/russian.shtml	11. http://www.europornstar.com
2. http://www.russianporn.biz	12. http://www.tnaflix.com/euro-porn
3. http://www.russianvirginz.info	13. http://www.europeanpornbabes.com
4. http://www.sexyrussianbabes.net	14. http://porn.naughtyfiles.net/European
5. http://pussy.org/russian	15. http://www.porn.ee
6. http://www.drunkrussianluts.com	16. http://www.european.pornadept.com
7. http://www.russianpornlolitasex.com	17. http://www.russiansexyladies.com
8. http://www.privatepassion.net	18. http://www.realrussianteens.com
9. http://www.ssteens.com	19. http://www.russa.com
10. http://www.tanyassecret.com	20. http://www.truerussianteens.com

Eleven of the twenty websites directly identify Russian within their web addresses. The web addresses that do not directly state if the images are of Russian or

Eastern European women, include pornographic images associated with Eastern European women on their websites. The images display headings stating that the women are portrayed on the websites are Russian and/or Ukrainian, but some websites also state that the images are of “Eastern European” women.

The research consisted of three steps. The first step was to develop an organized method to compile and store the data from the twenty websites. I decided to use a binder as an organized method to store the research data. The binder was divided into twenty sections that coincided with the twenty websites. Each section had a copy of the research question – *How are Eastern European women constructed on pornographic websites on the Internet? What are the methods of objectification and commodification?* This question was used as a structured guide to analyze the distinct data from each website.

The second step consisted of gathering the information to the research question from each website. I took notes on each website and notated additional information about the women in the images. I analyzed the language used to categorize and describe the images of the women provided. I also analyzed the presentation of the women’s bodily characteristics, facial expressions, positionality, clothing, and language. This step required viewing each pornographic website and their images on average of two hours. In addition to the information that was recorded, I printed out several representative pornographic images from each website. The information that was gathered from each website was used for my analysis.

The last step consisted of analyzing, synthesizing and interpreting the gathered data from all the websites. This step was the hardest out of the three. I found a number of key strategies for marketing the women as sexual commodities or for sexual

consumption. I used the key strategies from the websites to develop my answer to the research question. The following key strategies were identified: construction of “Russian” and “Ukrainian” women, objectification of Eastern European women, commodification of whiteness and Western ideals of beauty, sexualization of youth and virginity, making male dominance sexy, and the question of consent and coercion. These were key methods of sexual commodification and objectification of Eastern European women online.

Challenges Encountered

I encountered emotional and technological challenges while conducting the research. I honestly believe it was emotionally difficult conducting this research and oftentimes felt drained after viewing the images. The first challenge was viewing pornographic material. I never liked pornography and always believed that it sexually degraded women. However, I had to prepare myself mentally for the research. The second challenge was experiencing the emotional effect from viewing the pornographic images. I anticipated getting affected by the graphic images, but didn’t anticipate it affecting me so deeply and at times it made it very difficult to conduct my research. I found the images to be very disturbing and depressing. Sometimes I had to turn off my computer and walk away. Viewing pornographic images made me feel uncomfortable, but I had to continue my research despite how difficult it was.

I also experienced a technological challenge. I conducted all my research on my Sony laptop computer, that I purchased a year ago specifically for graduate school and thesis research. The laptop was brand new and I was unaware of the problems that these pornographic websites would cause it. The research required me to view a lot of

pornographic material, but my computer was incapable of processing all the information. While conducting research one evening, I left my laptop on and walked away. Upon my return, I noticed over a dozen pornographic windows opened and I was certain that they weren't part of the research. I realized that my computer encountered a virus. The virus caused several weeks of delay to the research and the laptop had to be repaired. I brought my laptop to a repair shop and a computer technician was able to save all the research data and store it on the hard drive and a separate folder on the computer. The computer technician installed AVG anti-virus software that protected the laptop from experiencing future problems.

Despite the various obstacles and emotional distress that I experienced while conducting the research, I realized that this research would contribute important information pertaining to the sex industry of Eastern European women on the Internet. The goal of this research is to not advocate against pornography, but to analyze how pornographic images of Eastern European women on the Internet contribute to the sex industry. The research draws attention to sexual objectification and commodification of Eastern European women and demonstrates the influence of the Internet in the sex industry.

VI. Description of the Websites

The twenty websites and the layouts are similarly constructed and present hundreds of full body images of Eastern European women. When a viewer opens the page to a website, they notice how the home screen usually consists of fifteen or more images of different women (e.g. <http://www.russianporn.biz>). The viewers have the option to click on any image and are often directed to longer versions of that image. The

majority of the images are not accompanied with text, however, some websites provide descriptions that accompany the images – such as: “Hot Russian Bitch”, “Russian Sexy Chicks”, and “Russian Teen Virgin” (e.g. <http://www.sexyrussianbabes.net>). These texts direct viewers to links that provide more images. On some websites, when viewers click on an image or a text, they will be directed to longer versions of the image, similar images of the same or different women, or to other pornographic sites.

Many of the women are either presented nude or semi-nude and are dressed in sexy clothing (e.g., laced bras, lingerie, underwear, thongs, fishnet stockings, mini skirts, stilettos, etc.). The clothing is used to signal their sexual availability. The websites stress that all of the women in the images are of the legal age of eighteen; however, the women often are made to look physically younger. In addition, many women convey similar facial expressions in the images. The majority of women are presented smiling, laughing and posing sexy in the images. However, there are several images that present women as shy, sad, and uncomfortable.

The websites present similar categories of women across the websites and the common categories include: virgins, amateurs, hotties, rape fantasy, doggy style, and threesome. The categories represent specific sexual constructions of these women. Many images present the women photographed in similar locations, such as: inside the home, in the kitchen, outside in the woods, on the couch, on the floor, on the bed, in the bathroom, and other places.

The websites are all free and viewers can look at hundreds of images. However, some websites require viewers to register and require a fee. For example, www.ssteen.com, costs \$5.95 for a three day trial or \$29.95 per one month to access.

Another example is www.russianporn.biz; this website provides a three day trial for \$1.95, one month access for \$29.95, or three months for \$59.95. The fees provide viewers with more options – more pornographic images, as well as videos, and live chats.

Some websites tracked my computer location in Chicago and while I viewed their images, small chat windows would open up on the bottom right of the screen. For example, one chat window stated, “Irina is also in Chicago and would love to talk with you” (<http://www.freeadultmedia.com/russian.shtml>). The small chat windows had a video clip of a woman waving at me and asking me to communicate with her. I clicked on the chat window and a new screen appeared with over a dozen images of different women. There weren’t any images of “Irina”, but I believe that the chat window was used as a method to attract consumers to other pornographic images and websites.

Many of the websites also provide the opportunity to watch pornographic videos of the Eastern European women for free. The videos often have no sound, other than moaning and groaning of the women and men in them. Some of the videos do have sound in them and you can hear the people communicating in Russian, but there are no English subtitles. Since I am fluent in Russian, I was able to understand what the people in the videos were saying to each other. For example, in “Anastasia Gets Fucked” (<http://www.truerussianteens.com>), the young woman in the video is filmed getting undressed by a male cameraman. The man filming her commands her in Russian to “unzip her pants and lay on the bed.” The woman responds to the man in Russian and tells him that “she is shy.” The man continues to command the woman and instructs her to “spread her legs a part and that he is going to fuck her.” The entire video consists of

the woman and the man communicating in Russian, however, the viewer never sees the man's face, only hears his voice.

The websites provide a mixture of pornographic images that demonstrate how Eastern European women are sexually commodified, objectified, and marketed on the Internet.

VII. Analysis of Pornographic Images on the Internet

This section analyzes pornographic websites that sexually market Eastern European women on the Internet. The analysis is divided into six sub-sections: *Construction of "Russian" and "Ukrainian" Women; Objectification of Eastern European Women; Commodification of Whiteness: Western Ideals of Beauty; Sexualization of Youth and Virginity; Making Male Dominance Sexy; and The Question of Consent and Coercion.* The sub-sections analyze how websites create a market for Eastern European women and examine how women are commodified and objectified.

Construction of "Russian" and "Ukrainian" Women

It is clear from my research on the Internet that a market has been created for the consumption of pornographic images of Eastern European women. There are many pornographic websites that advertise and construct women as "Russian" and "Ukrainian", in order to promote a particular type of commodity to consumers.

Many of the websites use the terms "Russian" and "Ukrainian" as headings for the images on their websites. For example, some titles advertise the women as: "Beautiful Russians", "Russian Pussy", "Russian Gets Fucked", "Russian Virgin", "Russian Amateur", "Russian Slut", "Russian Gets Fucked by Two Police Officers", "Russian Teens", "Ukrainian Hottie", "Ukrainian Virgin", "Teen from Ukrainian", "Ukrainian

Slut”, and others. These examples demonstrate that Eastern European women are sexually marketed by their country of origin and this makes these women distinguishable from other women being marketed online. By marketing women as “Russian” and “Ukrainian” helps contribute to the association of Eastern European women with the globalized sex industry (Hughes 2002c).

An interesting commonality of the headings is that the majority of them advertise the women as “Russian” or “Ukrainian” versus “a Russian” or “a Ukrainian”. By advertising these women without individualized markers, the headings strip the women of any individual form of identity. By referring to them as “Russian” or “Ukrainian” commodities reinforces that these women are anonymous and are simply products of specific nation states.

An interesting commonality between all the websites is that they all are displayed in English. This market strategy exemplifies that these women are marketed towards English speaking Western male consumers. The websites emphasize that the women are Eastern European women in English, but there is usually nothing else Russian or Ukrainian advertised on these websites. Some websites do display Russian flags in the background to indicate that the women are of Russian origin (e.g. <http://www.russianporn.biz>).

On some websites, the women are marked as Eastern European by the use of popular Eastern European names (e.g., Natasha, Alena, Svetlana, Oksana, Ksenia, Olga, Anna, Maria, Katerina, and Khrystyna). These same names are repeated across websites. For example, the websites advertise the women as: “Natasha in the Woods”, “Natasha Gets Fucked”, “Sexy Katya”, “Beautiful Lena on the Couch”, “Katerina Gets Fucked”,

“Hot Virgin Marina”, and others. The female names are associated with Eastern Europe and are used to reinforce that these women are indeed Eastern European. The usage of the names constructs an exotic image of the women and presents them as ethnically or nationally different from other women online.

Marketing Eastern European women on the Internet is a huge business enterprise. As noted previously, prior to the Soviet Union split in 1991, sex was perceived as non-existent. Soviet citizens were repressed about sex and were silenced on sexuality, sexual freedom, and sexual expression. The split of the Soviet Union presented an opportunity for more open-ness around sexuality. However, the split also created major economic, political and social changes. These changes caused many women to become financially vulnerable and many began to seek jobs abroad. These changes also created opportunities to build a sex industry based on Eastern European women (Hughes 2002c).

Marketing specifically of Eastern European women on the Internet is connected to the broader international sex industry of sex trafficking and mail-order brides or “marriage agencies”. The sex industry generates majority of its profits from sex trafficking and mail-order bride agencies worldwide (Hughes 2002c). The mail-order bride websites are known to advertise Eastern European women for dating and marriage to men abroad (Hughes 2002c). Hundreds of mail-order bride websites (e.g., <http://www.hotrussianbrides.com>, <http://www.anastasiadate.com>, <http://www.russianbrides.com>, <http://www.loversplanet.com>, <http://www.ukrainebride.net>, etc.) advertise Eastern European women as “foreign exotic” brides. These websites construct similar images to pornographic websites and reinforce how Eastern European women are sexualized as commodities online. In 1998, there were “an estimated 200-250 “marriage

agencies” operating in the United States and 80 of them offered women from Russia or Eastern Europe” (Sun 1998, cited in Hughes 2004, 2). In 2001, there were “62,000 Russian and 32,000 Ukrainian women” (Hughes 2004, 6) recruited for marriage by “marriage agencies”. Donna Hughes states that, “Some NGOs consider the “bride trade” to be a form of trafficking in women and of it self because its operation depends on an inequality of power between men and women” (Hughes 2004, 2).

The mail-order bride sites also use similar techniques as pornography websites in marketing these women as sexual objects online. One of the most common techniques is marketing the women by traditional Eastern European names. The similarity between the websites demonstrates how Eastern European women are constructed as sexual objects on the Internet and are part of the international sex industry. The pornography websites build the construction of sexual desire and demand for these women.

Objectification of Eastern European Women

Pornographic images advertise Eastern European women as sexualized objects that serve no purpose in life, other than for sexual pleasure. This section analyzes how these women are objectified through particular language and how it is used to sexualize them.

Andrea Dworkin previously defined objectification as “when a human being ... is made less than human, turned into a thing or commodity, bought or sold. When objectification occurs, a person is depersonalized” (Dworkin 1993, 30-31). Dworkin demonstrates that objectification reduces women to sexual objects that function without personhood. The pornographic images and text on these websites construct the women as sexual objects for the viewers and consumers. Andrea Dworkin and Catherine

MacKinnon also describe objectification as, “Treating a person as an object, a mere instrument for someone else’s purposes, in such a way that a person in question is reduced to the status of an object for use” (Dworkin and MacKinnon 1997, 138). The pornographic images on the Internet represent the Eastern European women as having no purpose in life other than for others sexual pleasure.

In *Men on Rape*, Timothy Beneke discusses how raping women demonstrates how women are perceived as objects for sexual pleasure. Beneke associates pornography with rape and introduces the term *pornographizing*, a term that is similar to objectification. Beneke defines *pornographizing* as a “process by which men relate to women, images of women, the visual presence of women, stories about women, women in any way as PORNEA, which is Greek for ‘low whore’” (Beneke 1982, 24).

Pornographizing is a process that constructs women as sexual property; it relies on images of objectification for sexual pleasure. Beneke states that in pornographizing, “One anonymises the woman and fails to acknowledge her moral, spiritual, or emotional being. One relates to her as a thing without a soul” (Beneke 1982, 24). The images present the women without identities and present them with no human value other than being sexually used. For example, “Marina” (<http://www.europornstar.com>), is marketed as a sexual object by providing viewers specific profile information about her. Her profile, and others like her, provides the following information: name(s) referred by, nationality, age, natural breasts vs. augmented breasts, hard core scene status, model status, and body measurements. This information markets women as sex objects that hold no human value. Marina’s profile states that she is referred by: Alexandra, Katryn, and Ketrin, that she is Ukrainian, twenty-nine years old, has natural breasts, performs hard core sex, is a model,

and her body measurements are 32A-25-36. This example demonstrates how this information is used to construct women as sexual objects and is used to only identify them with sex.

The websites also use sexist language repeatedly to advertise and objectify Eastern European women. The words classify Eastern European women as particular types of objects – a specialized product for consumer’s consumption. Some common words that are used to market these women are: virgins, amateurs, sluts, whore, bitch, pussy, and naïve. These words are used to define, degrade, and sexually objectify women. The terms exemplify how these women are sexually constructed within a male supremacist society. Terminology that is used to advertise these women also suggests that these women are sexually unequal to men. In *An Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Dirty Words*, Ruth Todasco emphasizes how sexism in language “skews women’s self perception. The facts that women are generally mentioned as second, their sexuality frequently deprecated, have the effect of convincing many that they are indeed secondary” (Todasco 1973, vii). These words are constructed to define and market women, and also convince viewers online that women are in fact secondary and inferior to men.

Pornographic images and phrases define Eastern European women as sluts. For example, some Eastern European women are advertised as, “Russian Pussy”, “Russian Whore”, “Ukrainian Slut”, and “Barley Legal Slut Will Do Anything”. The terms “pussy”, “whore” and “slut” are constructed as adjectives that sexually define women by sexualized body parts. Eastern European women are advertised as sexually promiscuous and this constructs the perception that these women are sexual objects.

Ruth Todasco defines “pussy”, “whore” and “slut” in her research. She defines “pussy” as “female genitals especially vulva – usually considered vulgar; sexual intercourse – usually considered vulgar” (Todasco 1973, 26). A “whore” is defined as, “A woman who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse, usually for money; prostitute; harlot; strumpet; corrupt; debauch” (Todasco 1973, 9). A “slut” is defined as, “A woman who is careless in her appearance; dirty; a woman of loose character” (Todasco 1973, 8). These definitions demonstrate how words convey to the audience that the women’s bodies only serve the purpose of sex and the women are reduced to sexual objects. In most societies and cultures, when people label women as sluts and whores, these words are used to devalue and dehumanize the women as sexually loose, hypersexual, and always willing to have sex. Dworkin argues that, “Words foster ignorance and encourage bigotry; to keep women invisible, misinformed, and silent; to threaten and bully; to ridicule and demean” (Dworkin 1993, 30). The phrases construct Eastern European women unequal to men and devalue them as individuals.

In *Only Words*, Catherine MacKinnon emphasizes that pornographic images and derogatory terminology are used to *rape* the women and that often the “words or images are *describing* or *depicting* nonconsensual sex” (MacKinnon 1993, 170). Timothy Beneke also suggests that “fuck” and “fucked” are considered to be “rape insults, which degrade and violate women through aggressive language” (Beneke 1982, 17). Beneke emphasizes that “fuck” and “fucked” are equated with sexual objectification and stresses that rape signs exist as a “way of expressing ideas and feelings about rape without acknowledging them to ourselves” (Beneke 1982, 7). Beneke adds that, “Rape signs manifest in jokes, images, verbal expressions, songs, stories, etc. Rape can be humorized,

eroticized, aestheticized, athleticized, and (usually) trivialized without anyone realizing that rape has been referred to” (Beneke 1982, 7). Beneke’s analysis helps demonstrate how the pornographic images of Eastern European women rape women’s bodies and reduce them to sexual objects, and that derogatory terms are used to devalue, insult, and dehumanize the women.

For example, <http://www.russianporn.biz> and <http://www.freeadultmedia.com/russians.shtml> use very offensive and sexually explicit words to advertise Eastern European women as sexual objects. These websites often use the terms “fuck” and “fucked” to dehumanize and objectify women through passive verbal construction. These terms demonstrate how women are constructed for violation. Many of the images use passive verbal construction to market the women as: “Adorable Teen Girl Gets Bend Over and Fucked Hard”, “Russian Pounded”, “Pretty Eighteen Year Old Russian Teen Getting Rammed With a Huge Cock”, “ Young Russian Tram Gets Fucked”, “Russian Teen Hard Doggy Fucked”, “ Brunette Getting Screwed”, “Hot Girl Get Getting Her Pussy Stuffed”, “Beefy Cunt Teen Sucking Cock and Getting Nailed”, “Cute Woman Gets Fucked by Her Boyfriend”, “Fine Ass Russian Chick Fucked Up and Creampied”, “Russian Slut Wet Pussy Slammed”, “Pigtail Teen Gets Fucked”, “Ass Fucked Teen Get Her Asshole Serviced”, and “Russian Gets Her Pink Pussy Fucked”. These words demonstrate how women are devalued, objectified, over powered, and dehumanized. The offensive terms of “fucked”, “nailed”, “rammed”, and “screwed” are used as adverbs that demonstrate how women are not sexually acting and have no sexual agency. The terms demonstrate how women are sexually acted upon rather than acting themselves. As a

result, these terms demonstrate how women are sexualized, raped, and violated in the pornography.

In conclusion, the pornographic words and images objectify women's bodies and the women are devalued and dehumanized as sexual objects. As Catherine MacKinnon adds, "Pornography is seen as a practice that contributes to the subordinate status of women and contributes significantly to the continuing subordinate position of women" (MacKinnon 1987, cited in Langton 2009, 139).

Commodification of Whiteness: Western Ideals of Beauty and Sexuality

Sexual commodification along with sexual objectification characterizes the way Eastern European women are marketed through Internet pornography. This section analyzes how race and beauty ideals are constructed to market these women as highly valued commodities in the sex industry.

In "Bodies for Sale – Whole or in Parts", Nancy Scheper-Hughes defines commodification as, "All capitalized economic relations between humans in which bodies are a token of economic exchanges" (Scheper-Hughes 2001, 2). Scheper-Hughes demonstrates how Eastern European women and their bodies are presented as sexual commodities that can be bought, sold and traded on the Internet. Robert Goldman stresses that the "commodity form detaches human characteristics from people and treats them as exchangeable entities" (Goldman 1992, 21). Pornographic images help commodify Eastern European women and their bodies. Helena Goscilo emphasizes how the Marxist view of porn is "intrinsic to the commodity culture of capitalism acknowledging that the capitalist system of supply and demand regulates the porn market. A desire for sexual stimulation prompts the purchase of porn, while the reward of financial profit drives its

production” (Goscilo 1995, 168). The Internet promotes Eastern European women as branded products and markets the women and their bodies as commodities that hold an economic value.

Commodification presents the idea that bodies can easily be purchased for money and constructs the demand for a particular kind of sexual consumption of images and stories around women’s sexuality. The production of sexualized images of Eastern European women demonstrate that “sex is powerful and one of the most prolific and all-encompassing forms of communication in the world” (Reichert 2003, 20). Sexualized images of Eastern European women on the Internet market them as sexually obtainable, and I would argue that race is a component used to market these women online. Many of the websites advertise physical characteristics of the women. The websites present images of women that are: white, blonde, brunette, have long hair, thin, tall, and light colored eyes. The physical characteristics convey that the women are “naturally beautiful” within a context of Western European standards and their beauty is equated with white supremacy. Even though sexualized images of Eastern European women aren’t advertising fashion brands, the images advertise these women’s bodies as particularized objects and commodities.

In addition to the physical characteristics that are used to market the women, many of the websites use certain adjectives to market the images. Some of the women are advertised as: pretty, cute, adorable, beautiful, sexy, and hot. These adjectives describe the women as sexually appealing and that is associated with beauty. For example, “Sexy Russian Blonde” and “Hot and Ukrainian Brunette” demonstrate how the women are constructed as beautiful through physical characteristics (hair) and adjectives. The

physical characteristics already suggest that the women are attractive in a particular aspect and the adjectives help reinforce the market value of the women. The images convey to consumers that the women are valued and hold an economic worth as commodities, even as they are devalued as individuals/humans.

Timothy Beneke stresses that for men, a woman's physical appearance is perceived as a weapon (Beneke 1982). Men regard a woman's body "as a valued visual property, which they can at times get to enjoy for free. In the conception of sex as a commodity, sex is something a man can buy, sell, get for free, or steal (rape). Similarly, a woman as visual property can be treated as a commodity to be bought, sold, gotten for free, or stolen" (Beneke 1982, 26). Pornographic images of Eastern European women demonstrate how women are essentially property and are presented as less than human. The pornographic images sexualize women and Beneke argues that men "become obsessed with images of women's bodies to feel sexual" (Beneke 1982, 24). Beneke furthers his argument by stressing that, "Sexual women are dirty and evil, they deserve to be brutalized" (Beneke 1982, 24). Images of sexual women lead men to believe that women are inhumane and powerless. As a result, men may feel justified in sexually violating and possessing women.

One of the signals of the value of the woman's body is whiteness. Eastern European women are culturally different from women from other parts of the world, but they appear racially similar to dominant Western ideals of beauty (Hughes 2002a). Eastern European women are constructed as white and their racial categorization is used as part of their commodification. Eastern European women's whiteness and their physical beauty are based on white supremacist hierarchies, such that whiteness is often correlated

with beauty (Levine-Rasky 2002). Advertising researcher Anthony Cortese argues that in advertising, white is the standard of beauty in white supremacist world. These standards consist of “light skin, straight or wavy hair, and blue or green eyes. In other words, one must be as white as possible” (Cortese 2008, 98). Pornographic images of Eastern European women on the Internet capitalize on these standards in the commodification process.

While the women are white and already constructed as beautiful in a white supremacist world, race is not the only component that presents these women as “naturally beautiful”. These women are also marketed as “naturally beautiful” based on the “naturalness: of their physical bodies. The websites present hundreds of images of these women’s bare breasts and vaginas. The striking feature is that the women’s bodies have not been modified through implants or waxing (e.g., <http://www.russianporn.biz>, <http://www.drunkrussiansluts.com>, <http://www.sexyrussianbabes.net>). The “natural” portrayal of these body parts suggest that these women are “naturally beautiful” without cosmetic enhancements. The construction of these women and their body parts markets them as a unique commodity and distinguishes them from other women online.

Debbie Nathan argues that Eastern European women in the images “keep their pubic and even their underarm hair. They tend to have natural breasts” (Nathan 2007, 124). These images distinguish Eastern European women from Western women in pornography. In the West, many pornographic images have women with “silicone implants that have pumped their size cup to DD or beyond, and women with bare pubic areas” (Nathan 2007, 124). A graphic contrast exists between the portrayal of Eastern European and Western women’s bodies in pornography. Images of Eastern European

women are constructed to convey these women as physically “natural” without physical adjustments.

Nathan also argues that physical adjustments on a woman present power over the body and she stresses that, “Enormous breasts and genital hairlessness may also be a way of showing mastery over the body” (Nathan 2007, 125-6). Pornographic images of Eastern European women don’t present these qualities and may suggest that these women are less powerful. Images of Eastern European women suggest that these women are sexually inferior and subordinate, which may make them more sexually desirable to the male consumers.

The websites present pornographic images of Eastern European women who resemble this Western ideal of beauty (e.g., white, thin, blonde, and young). The images construct the perception that all Eastern European women are “naturally beautiful” (based on Western ideal) and resemble the Barbie doll that is constructed to resemble idealized version of Western women (Grewal 2005). The majority of the women in the images have blonde hair, small waist, long legs, and full chests (e.g. <http://www.sexyrussianbabes.net>).

In conclusion, “natural beauty” based on white supremacist standards and race is a major component in advertising Eastern European women as sexual commodities on the Internet. The pornographic images suggest that the women’s racialized body characteristics are used to attract male consumers, but also to sexualize and subordinate them as individuals.

Sexualization of Youth and Virginity

Youthfulness is a consistent theme in many of the pornographic websites. This section analyzes how youthfulness is integral to marketing the women as sexual objects and commodities.

Many pornographic images of Eastern European women on the Internet market these women as the famous Lolita from the novel *Lolita* (Durham 2008). Gigi Durham discussed in her book, *The Lolita Effect: The Media Sexualization of Young Girls and What We Can Do About It*, the influence of the image of Lolita in pornography (Durham 2008). Durham argues that pornographic images of women construct images of young women dressed as adolescent girls as sexy (Durham 2008). Many of the websites advertise Eastern European as youthful. For example, some websites advertised Eastern European women as “Hot Blonde Teen Slut Sucking and Fucking Two Hard Cocks”, “Adorable Teen Girl Gets Bend Over and Fucked Hard”, “Elisa is Just Eighteen Years Old, But Already Turning into a Complete Whore”, “Teen Stasya Gets Fucked”, “Shy Russian Girl Lose Anal Virginity”, “Ukrainian Teen Fucked at the Pool”, “Teen Fucks Boyfriend”, and “Russian Teens Ass Fucked Hard”, and amongst others. The websites usage of words such as “teen”, “girl”, and “virgin” market Eastern European women as youthful and youthfulness suggests sexual availability as well as vulnerability.

For example, <http://www.russianporn.biz>, advertises hundreds of pornographic images of Eastern European women that are constructed to resemble youthfulness. The website has the following advertisement:

Just look at those innocent beauties doing things their moms would go crazy about! Real teen hotties just over 18 say goodbye to their virginity in plenty of ways: cum eating, butt penetrations, crazy home orgies, old guys and what not. (http://galleries.shocking-girls.com/28841231/index.php?account=RC_1104).

The advertisement uses specific language such as “innocence”, “teen” and “virgin” to suggest that these women are young, and that their youth is sexually appealing. The advertisement also demonstrates how young these women are by conveying that their “moms would go crazy.” The mention of the mothers indicates protection and this implies that they have been sheltered from sex, again communicating more sexual vulnerabilities.

The websites stress that the women in the images are of legal age (eighteen), but they are constructed to resemble girls who are much younger. The pornographic images “use markers such as clothing and hair styles to portray adult women as children” (Jensen and Dines 1998, 87). The women in the images often have small breasts and shaved vaginas and these physical qualities suggest youthfulness (Nathan 2007). Youth is often perceived as powerless and obedient to the adults, therefore, pornographic images of youth present sexual power over women by men. For example, Eastern European women are presented as youthful, as in their bodies aren’t physically developed (e.g., small chest, no pubic hair, etc.) (e.g. <http://www.russianvirginz.info>). These physical attributes may suggest that these women display child like qualities and may be naïve and vulnerable. These images present a fantasy for men and “sexualization of adult-child relationship” (Jensen 1998, 88). These desires essentially satisfy men’s sexual desire and enables men to feel powerful over women.

The clothing also suggests that these women are young. Many of the Eastern European women on these websites are presented wearing pigtails, ribbons and bows in their hair (e.g., <http://www.russianporn.biz>, <http://www.ssteens.com>, etc.). These garments are often associated with youth, innocence and purity of young women.

Youthful images are presented in order to replicate the youthfulness, innocence, and purity of such illicit sexual relations. For example, an image of a young Russian woman on <http://www.pussy.org/russian> has the following caption, “Just 18, Russian Hottie Gets Naked”. This particular image presents eight photographs of a young Russian woman who is photographed sitting in a short jean skirt and a green top, eating ice cream, and displaying her chest. This image exemplifies youthfulness of the woman with ice cream and this gives the woman childlike qualities. This image may also suggest that the ice cream was presented to her like a child and in return she displayed her chest for the purposes of providing “sexual stimulation for consumers” (Jensen and Dines 1998, 89).

The youthful images of Eastern European women may also suggest that looking young is connected to virginity (Dworkin 1993; Nathan 2007). In many cultures, virgin women are constructed as more valuable because of the connection with purity and innocence. Donna Hughes suggests that in some “regions of the world, there is a market for virgins and young girls. Virgins are an elite commodity sought by high ranking or wealthy individuals who can afford to buy a rare human commodity that is forever changed after the man is finished with her” (Hughes 2005, 25). For example, some women are advertised as “Russian Virgin”, “Russian Teen Virgin” and “Hot Blonde Ukrainian Virgin”. Virgins are marketed as valuable commodities within the sex industry and “being sold as a virgin is often a girl’s entry into prostitution” (Hughes 2005, 25).

In some cultures, “virgin” women are also perceived as sexually curable from HIV/AIDS (Earl-Taylor 2002). Donna Hughes argues that, “In some cultural beliefs that having sex with a young girl will cure men of sexually transmitted diseases or restore youth creates a demand for young women or girls” (Hughes 2005, 25). In some parts of

the world a cultural “virgin myth” exists that emphasizes that by “having sexual intercourse with virgins, cures HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, and other STDS” (Earl-Taylor 2002, 2). This myth constructs the idea that virgins are capable of curing diseases, but in reality the women may contract diseases from infected individuals seeking cure.

Many women that are advertised as virgins on the Internet are oftentimes sex trafficked (Kloer 2009). Sex trafficked women are more vulnerable to contracting HIV from clients since “trafficking victims cannot make free choices or control their situation, they cannot insist on safe sex practices, or condoms” (Kloer 2009, 1). HIV easily flourishes and spreads within the sex industry and I believe that “virgins” may be marketed in order to replace the infected women and satisfy the demand for sex. As a result, virgins are marketed as highly valued sexual commodities within the sex industry and pornography helps promote these women.

Making Male Dominance Sexy

While the majority of the pornographic images present Eastern European women photographed alone, there are numerous images of women engulfed in sexual relations with men. These images present the women as unequal, powerless and subordinate to men’s authority. This section analyzes pornographic images of Eastern European women that include men in the frames and how male authority is constructed as sexy.

Timothy Beneke theorizes that men consider sex as an achievement with women and the “achievement is gaining possession of valued commodity, and the valued commodity is a woman” (Beneke 1982, 15). Beneke stresses that there are four basic aspects that construct women as sexual commodities: status, hostility, control, and

dominance (Beneke 1982). Each aspect constructs women as sexual commodities that are possessed, controlled, devalued, and violated by men.

Many of the images on the websites are of youthful women with older men. The men physically look older than the women (e.g., gray hair, mature facial expressions, and bigger built) and are in the positions of power and authority (e.g., police officers, business executives, etc.). In these images, the men are presented as sexually controlling the women and their bodies (e.g., holding the women firmly, pulling women's hair while the women sexually penetrate the men, slapping women on the buttocks and other body parts, etc.). The images exemplify men's power over the women and their bodies, and sexual violence is used to construct male authority. The images of power and control imply that the "desire a man has for a woman is not directed towards her because she is a human being, but because she is a woman; that she is a human being is of no concern to the man; only her sex is the object of his desires. Human nature is thus subordinated" (Kant 1963, 163). Pornographic images of Eastern European women subject women to subordination and suggest the ideology of patriarchy. Andrea Dworkin stresses that a woman's body is "what is materially subordinated. Sex is the material means through which subordination is accomplished and pornography is the institution of male dominance that sexualizes hierarchy, objectification, submission, and violence" (Dworkin 1993, 267). Physical control and domination over the woman enables male authority to look sexy.

Male dominance positions women as subordinate to men and pornography helps reinforce this. For example, in "Russian Spanked and Fucked in Crazy Threesome" (<http://www.russianporn.biz>), a young Russian woman is sitting on the couch and is

approached by a man that takes off her clothes. The man turns the woman over on her stomach and hits the woman's buttocks with a leather belt. The man continues to hit the woman's buttocks until it turns red. The man then unzips his pants and has rough sex with the woman. The woman's facial expressions convey that she isn't enjoying the sexual penetration and that she may be in pain. However, the man continues to pound the woman's vagina with his penis.

The man then turns the woman around and the woman penetrates the man's penis until he ejaculates. After the man ejaculates, the woman is approached by another woman and this woman also hits the woman's buttocks with a leather belt. After hitting the woman with the leather belt, the man leaves and later returns, and continues to engage in sexual intercourse with the woman. These images demonstrate how men are entitled to sexually over power women and devalue them as individuals.

Another example of male authority as sexually appealing is in "Police Sex Tapes" (<http://www.russianporn.biz>). In the first few images the woman is presented fully dressed wearing jeans and a sweater, and socializing with two police officers in a secluded room. The woman is sitting on a lap of one of the police officers and seems very dazed because her eyes are closed and she doesn't seem very coherent. The images present the police officers sexually penetrating the woman (e.g. touching and caressing her body), but such penetration can suggest that this isn't done in order to make the woman feel good because "virtually every part of the woman's body [is] employed to produce male sexual pleasure" (Jensen and Dines 1998, 81). This image suggests that the man and others like him are controlling the woman because "guiding woman's actions provides male pleasure" (Jensen 1998, 145).

The last few images present the woman wearing less and less clothing, with sexualized lacy bra and underwear, and engaging in sexual behavior with one police officer, and then another, and in the end performing sexual pleasure to *both* police officers simultaneously. One of the police officers is shown filming with a camcorder. The use of the camcorder further suggests that the men are powerful and dominating over women. The men in pornographic images display their physical power and authority over Eastern European women and this power that “men hold in pornography comes from either their position in society or simply from being men” (Jensen and Dines 1998, 92). The image shows the men’s erect penises and suggests their sexual excitement. Pornographic images of men with Eastern European women emphasize the men’s erect penises and their capability to sexually overpower women. The penis in the pornographic images indicates that manhood, power and superiority over women are connected through the penis and it is sexualized.

Researchers Kindlon and Thompson argue that, “Boys [men] enjoy their own physical gadgetry. But the feeling isn’t always, ‘Look what I can do!’ The feeling is often, ‘Look what *it* can do!’ – again, a reflection of the way a boy views his instrument as just that: an object” (Kindlon and Thompson 2000, 205). The penis symbolizes masculinity and sexually objectifies women as inferior to men. The penis is characterized as a weapon in pornographic images and is presented as the sexual conqueror and possessor over women. Dworkin argues that the penis “distinguishes the male conqueror from the female conquered” (Dworkin 1993, 240-241). The perception of conquering women with the penis is derived from “men perceiving women as whores, sluts, and sexually degrading objects” (Dworkin 1993, 237). The penis, is regarded as the

masculine authority over women, and the cum shot is an authoritative and powerful instrument against women (Jensen and Dines 1998). The cum shot presents male authority over women by men ejaculating on women's bodies (e.g., breasts, buttocks, stomach, mouth, etc.).

The cum shot devalues women and pornography helps demonstrate how “ejaculating onto a woman is a method by which she is turned into a slut, something (not really someone) whose primary, if not only, purpose is to be sexual with men” (Jensen and Dines 1998, 79). For example, in “Sexy Lena Fucking and Sucking” (<http://pussy.org/russian>), Lena, is in an apartment with a man. The man is presented as a bit older than Lena and he is trying to undress her. She is wearing a sexy transparent lacey blouse and a tight skirt (her breasts are visible through the blouse). In some of the images, Lena looks shy and embarrassed to undress herself. The man takes off Lena's blouse, he takes her hands and makes her unzip his pants, and fondle with his penis. Lena fondles with the penis in a few images and then the man pushes Lena to perform oral sex to him, and then he ejaculates all over her face (cum shot). This image hints that the “cum shot in pornography, ejaculating onto a woman is a method by which she is turned into a slut, something (not really someone) whose primary, if not only, purpose is to be sexual with men” (Jensen and Dines 1998, 79). These particular images of Lena and others like her, who have men ejaculate all over their bodies, imply that humiliation and degradation of women by men is desirable and “men get off behind that, because they get even with women they can't have” (Stoller and Levine 1993, 22).

In conclusion, this section exemplifies how male dominance is produced in these pornographic stories. The images suggest that male authority is sexy and empowers male

consumers to engage in fantasies of sexual aggression and violence. The pornographic images of Eastern European women with men demonstrate violence, inequality and subordination of women. Catherine MacKinnon states that men “masturbate to women being exposed, humiliated, violated, degraded, mutilated, dismembered, bound, gagged, tortured, and killed” (MacKinnon 1993, 17). Pornographic images justify violence and inequality of women and promote it to the general society.

Questions of Consent and Coercion

The pornographic images of Eastern European women that I observed raised the question of consent and coercion in the making of the images. One reason why I questioned if it is possible for women to be forced into making such images is based on the global problem of sex trafficking. It is estimated that “between 600,000 to 800,000 people, the majority of which are women and children that are sex trafficked world wide each year” (Obokata 2006, 1). Sex trafficking consists of women being coerced or lured into prostitution and the sex industry under false pretenses (e.g. reliable jobs abroad). This section analyzes how the pornographic images on the websites suggest to consumers that choice isn’t always present in the making of the images to women.

It is very difficult to tell if the Eastern European women in the pornographic images are forced or coerced to produce pornographic images. Donna Hughes argues that “although, there is less information about women in pornography, it is likely that many women are coerced into making pornography just as they are coerced into prostitution” (Hughes 2002c, 139). Many pornographic images of Eastern European women present the women photographed in unusual locations, such as: railroad tracks, forests, and bathrooms. Such locations made me question if these women were photographed against

their will. Often the women in the images appeared sad, frightened, uncomfortable, shy, unhappy, humiliated, embarrassed, and scared. Such images suggest that force was used to make these women participate in the making of images. Maybe there are Eastern European women who *choose* to be in pornography, but honestly from the images themselves it is very hard to tell who chooses and who is forced. However, the images present sexual exploitation of such women and Donna Hughes argues that, “Sexual exploitation is more than an act; it is a systematic way to abuse and control women that socializes and coerces women until they comply, take ownership of their own subordinate status, and said, “I choose this” ” (Hughes 2000a, 5).

In many of the images, the women communicate uneasiness, discomfort; sadness and humiliation in their facial expressions. For example, in one image (<http://www.pussy.org/russian>) a woman is photographed lifting her bathrobe in a bathroom stall and exposing her vagina. The woman’s eyes look sad and her face is facing towards the floor. The woman’s facial expression suggests that she may be uncomfortable and embarrassed with the situation, and this may suggest that this wasn’t a choice. Similar to this image, another image (<http://www.sexyrussianbabes.net>) presents a woman in the forest semi-nude wearing lacy underwear and exposing her breasts. The woman has a handcuff on her left hand. This too may suggest that the image taken was against her will. Her facial expressions communicate sadness and discomfort.

In conclusion, the images that I viewed on the Internet, brought the question of whether some of these women were forced in the production of pornographic images, but it is difficult to prove this. Force may be constructed as part of sexual turn on and also constructed to be a representative of a real condition.

VIII. Conclusion

This research analyzed how Eastern European women are sexually marketed through Internet pornography and how pornographic images contribute to the growth of the \$7 billion annual sex industry (Hughes 2001). I believe it is very important to acknowledge how the sex industry isn't only thriving from inter-connected businesses such as sex trafficking and mail-order bride agencies, but that it is also fueled by the sex market online. All of these sex businesses help contribute to making the sex industry a lucrative business and the "third largest money maker for organized crime following the trade in drugs and arms" (Hughes 2005, 12). It is important to understand how the sex industry online sexually objectifies and commodifies Eastern European women.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe experienced major political, economic and social changes. Many women were left unemployed and became economically vulnerable. Therefore, many decided to migrate to Western countries for work. The women that chose to migrate were often deceived under false pretences and promised good paying jobs. The increased migration also "serves as a cover for traffickers in transporting women to destinations in the sex industry" (Hughes 2000b, 4). These women become part of the illegal sex trade and are prostituted all over the world. The Internet helps promote these women through pornographic websites.

The women that are part of the sex industry become associated with the "Natasha Trade" (Hughes 2001). These women become anonymous within the sex trade and are identified as "Natashas" and this associates them with the sex industry (Hughes 2000b). Donna Hughes argues that "Russia and Ukraine have become major suppliers of women to sex industries all over the world. In sex industries today, the most popular and

vulnerable women are Russian and Ukrainian” (Hughes 2000b, 9). The Internet constructs these women as sexual objects for consumers worldwide and markets them as valuable commodities.

The pornographic websites market Eastern European women in particular through their whiteness, “beauty” and youth. These characteristics are highly valued in the sex industry, but also devalue and subordinate women at the same time. Many pornographic images present the question of consent and coercion and leave viewers wondering if choice was given to women in the creation of the images. The pornographic images of Eastern European women suggest that these women are “naturally” promiscuous, sexually loose, and hypersexual. These images also sexually objectify women and make them demandable in other sectors of the sex industry (e.g., sex trafficking, prostitution, sex tourism, mail-order brides, brothels, and strip clubs). The sex market on the Internet markets the women as commodities and in the process, they are devalued as individuals.

Unfortunately, pornography is legal in Russia and Ukraine and no laws protect Eastern European women from sexual commodification on the Internet (Hughes 2002a). Though, Russia and Ukraine “are concerned about the abundant amount of child pornography circulating the Internet and hope to prevent it from growing” (Michel and Schulman 2009, 1). I believe that both women and children need to be protected from sexual exploitation and the growing sex market on the Internet. These women and their bodies shouldn’t be marketed as sexual commodities and objects for consumers worldwide. These women are not sex objects, but they are human beings with emotions and identities. The pornographic images violate, degrade, dehumanize, subordinate, and rape women of their purposeful existence in life. Eastern European women’s purpose in

life isn't to have their bodies marketed for sex, but to be valued and respected as all human beings.

I hope my research has contributed to the existing research on the sex industry in the context of Eastern Europe. I believe that the sex market of Eastern European women has to end. The women and their bodies are constructed to convey to consumers that such women are always sexually available. I believe that international legislation needs to be developed and implemented in order to help prevent the "Natasha Trade" from expanding.

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