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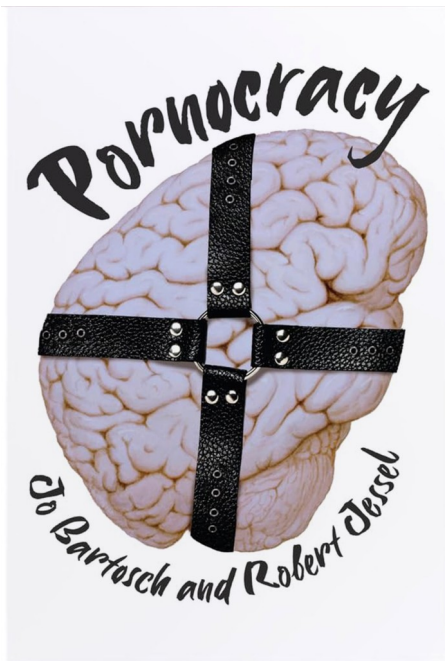
“Pornocracy” – The Ultimate Book Against the Pornography Dictatorship and Its Profiteers

A review and recommendation by Thomas Schirmacher, author of “Internet Pornography”. First published in “Christian Daily International”.

(Bonn, 13.05.2026) This is the best book against the dictatorship of pornography and those who profit from it. I write this as the author of a similar book on internet pornography (in German, Russian and Romanian, 2010), as well as other published researched articles 1985 till 2026, and as someone who has fought human trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual abuse and pornography on social media aimed at youngsters for four decades.

“Pornocracy” by Jo Bartosch and Robert Jessel (Polity: Cambridge, 2025, 192 pp) is a comprehensive critique of how the modern pornography industry has become a dominant force in Western culture, politics, and private life. The authors argue that we live in a “pornocracy”: a society in which political power, culture, relationships, and personal identity are shaped and increasingly controlled by the logic and visual language of pornography. Pornography is not presented here as an insignificant private matter, but as a multi-billion-dollar system that exploits women, distorts sexual norms, and radically alters notions of intimacy, consent, and gender roles.

Drawing on social research, case studies, and political debates, Bartosch and Jessel demonstrate that pornography literally reshapes the brain: it increases sensitivity to sexual stimuli while simultaneously dampening the response to real-life partners, thereby weakening relationships and marriages. The authors argue that heavy porn



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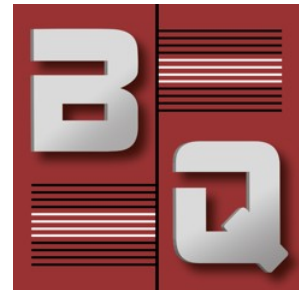
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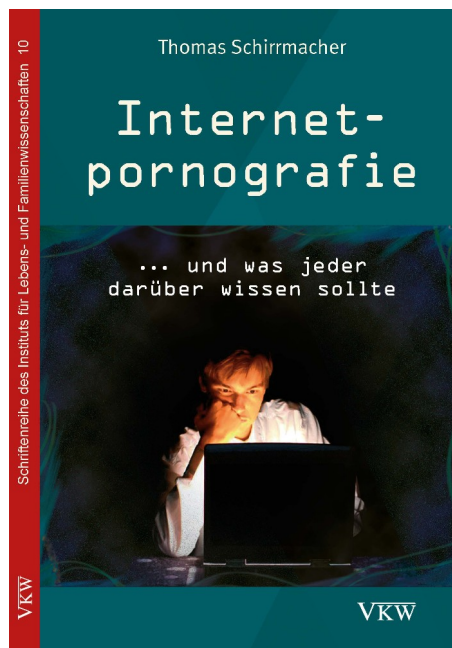
consumption correlates with more sexist attitudes among adolescents, an increase in sexual violence, and a normalization of aggression, choking, and humiliation in sexual relationships—even among people who do not consume pornography themselves but adopt its cultural patterns. The book also describes how the industry is protected by ideological narratives that portray pornography as “liberation” and male consumption as “natural,” and how weak regulation, as well as AI-based sextech products and algorithms, draw users into increasingly extreme content.

In the final chapters, “Pornocracy” turns to solutions and calls for a cultural and political reorientation centered on human dignity, relational sexuality, and women’s vulnerability. The authors advocate for stricter legal limits on pornography, more honest sex education and health campaigns, and a more vigorous engagement by churches, feminists, and policymakers with the interplay between pornography, patriarchy, digital capitalism, and postmodern concepts of sexuality. While some critics label the book as exaggerated and at times panic-driven, supporters see it as a provocative and urgent plea to highlight how profoundly pornography has transformed human interaction in the digital world.

The main arguments of “Pornocracy” can be summarized in four key points:

1. Pornography as “Pornocracy”

Bartosch and Jessel argue that pornography is no longer merely a “private matter,” but rather a powerful, globalized industry that shapes desire, relationships, and social norms—a “pornocracy” in which sexuality is controlled by commercialized images and algorithms. They emphasize that one does not even have to actively watch pornography to suffer its effects, because it has already permeated culture, gender relations, and the concept of love and intimacy.



2. Exploitation, Violence, and Health Hazards

The book focuses its critique on the systematic exploitation of women, including an increase in violence, choking, humiliation, and simulated scenes of abuse. Added to this is the argument that pornography reprograms users’ brains and sex lives, leading to relationship and marital problems, porn addiction, and rising sexual violence, because “Generation Porn” has consumed extreme scenes before their first real kiss.

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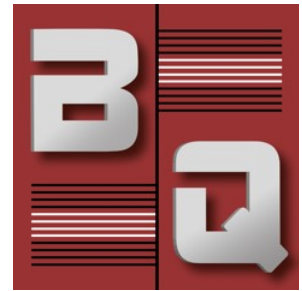
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3. Political and Cultural Actors as Accomplices

The authors demonstrate how the porn lobby influences politics, the media, and parts of the education system, for example through targeted lobbying, shielding advertisers from regulation, and promoting “sex-positive” education, which they argue trivializes the commercialization of sexuality. They particularly criticize certain currents of feminism and gender theory, which they label “zombie feminism” and a “sex-positive” agenda that cover up the pornification of sexuality while repressing the experiences of many women.

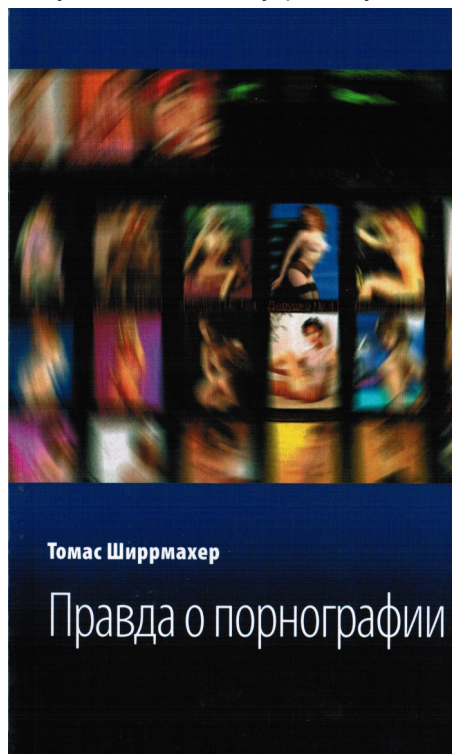
4. Pornography as an Existential Threat to Human Relationships

Finally, Bartosch and Jessel argue that pornography should be understood as a social and psychological crisis factor that undermines genuine human relationships, intimacy, and empathy; men are reduced to isolated “masturbation dolls” on an algorithmic conveyor belt, while women are reduced to objects. They call for clear boundaries, stronger regulation, education about the risks, and a renewal of sexuality based on relationship, dignity, and mutual respect—even if they themselves only partially elaborate on an alternative, positively formulated ethic.

What distinguishes this new book from previous books about or against the “pornography dictatorship,” including my own book “Internet Pornography”:

First, unlike purely economic or media-critical analyses, the authors are not primarily concerned with corporate power or media convergence, but with pornography as a moral and cultural order that reshapes desire, consent, and human dignity. They describe pornography as a “pornocracy”—a system in which social norms, politics, and relationships are shaped and controlled by the logic of pornography—and in doing so, they argue not from an explicitly religious perspective, but from a secular, humanistic ethic that strongly condemns violence, exploitation, and the sexualization of children.

Second, Pornocracy stands out for its strong emphasis on shocking examples, algorithmically amplified extremism, and the blurring of boundaries—such as those between legal pornography, simulated violence, and child pornography. Many other critiques,



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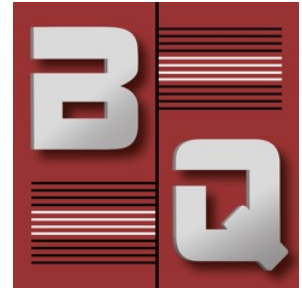
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particularly feminist or labor-law-oriented studies, make a greater effort to clearly distinguish consensual, adult sex work from abuse and trafficking, while Bartosch and Jessel deliberately construct a blurred, threatening visual landscape. At the same time, the book's thematic scope is very broad: it links pornography with AI, sex tech, free streaming platforms, and a critique of "zombie feminism" that allegedly defends commercialized sexuality.

Downloads and Links:

- The book on Internet pornography by Thomas Schirmacher: <https://thomasschirmacher.info/?p=10756>
- Guest lecture "Internet Pornography – Its Prevalence and Psychological Consequences": <https://thomasschirmacher.net/?p=2103>
- Christian Daily International: "Reviewing the shocking exposé into pornography dictators and profiteers": <https://christiandaily.com/news/reviewing-the-shocking-expose-into-pornography-dictators-and-profiteers>

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