

THE AMERICAN TREND OF FEMALE PUBIC HAIR REMOVAL: EXPLORING A  
POPULAR CULTURE BODY MODIFICATION

by

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(Under the Direction of José Blanco F.)

ABSTRACT

Various cultures have used constructed knowledge, social standards, and aesthetic preferences to determine how to manipulate and treat each type of hair on a person's body, including pubic hair. Depilation and/or trimming of pubic hair, increasingly being used by contemporary western cultures, could be considered a highly normative practice (Toerien, Wilkinson & Choi, 2005). The purpose of this study was to explore factors that influence the recent development of American women's decision to depilate and/or trim the pubic region. Twenty American women between the ages of 18 and 57 participated in an online survey. Data was analyzed using a grounded theory approach, which consisted of a two-step process involving coding and memo-writing. The study determined that depilation of pubic hair is a growing practice amongst American women. This change in pubic hair grooming practices is related with an increased presence of pubic hair discussion among individuals as well as in popular culture.

INDEX WORDS: Pubic hair, Depilation, Dress, Media

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B.S., The University of Georgia, 2007

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2009

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December 2009

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I feel very fortunate to have had family, friends, and mentors' support. It played a very important role in accomplishing this goal. Three years ago José encouraged my interest in a topic that, to us, seemed very obvious and under researched – he encouraged a very important step in my life, which was applying to graduate school. I'm very thankful that Dr. Blanco, Dr. Hunt-Hurst, and Dr. Medvedev were as enthusiastic about this study as I was and still am. I look forward to hopefully working with you in the future. I'm also very thankful for my academic freedom. It would be a sad world indeed without it.

I feel very lucky to have amazing, open-minded parents. I also feel lucky to have had Dr. Hunt-Hurst as a department head. She has made my college experience so enjoyable, I'm very sad to be leaving the third floor of Dawson Hall. I would also like to thank my sisters Maddie and Chloe, my brother Trevor, my cat Frank, Nico, Hayley, Pnut, Shannon, David, and Stephanie for being so great.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Hair holds an uncomfortable position in the spectrum of what is considered natural and what is considered unnatural (Barcan, 2004). It is viewed as natural because as humans we are born with it and associate it with particular growth periods throughout our lives, such as reproductive maturity and aging. Paradoxically, it can also be seen as a body supplement or garment, something used to decorate the body that can be removed or altered. These two opposing views lay the grounds for a wide variety of cultural perspectives on hair and how it should be understood. Different cultures throughout history have used constructed knowledge, social standards, and aesthetic preferences to determine how to manipulate and treat each type of hair on a person's body, including pubic hair. Understanding the complex reasoning for manipulations of pubic hair can contribute to the understanding of cultural perspectives regarding gender, media, history, sex, and dress. Researching the path of an individual's bodily experience within a particular culture can shed light on the complexities in which a culture defines ideals of what is masculine or feminine, or a fading line between the two. This understanding of gender is closely related to the historically changing observance of women as erotic stimuli, a topic that is built upon culture, more importantly, a culture's media and the messages they send. Today, these messages impel women to gain femininity and/or erotic appeal by accommodating the fashion of removing the pubic hair.

Depilation and/or trimming of pubic hair is a highly normative practice, which is increasingly being used by contemporary western cultures (Toerien, Wilkinson & Choi, 2005). With the advent of the Second Wave Feminist Movement and the growing trend of exhibitionism that became apparent in erotic performance and motion pictures beginning in the 1960s, sex has



become an element of popular western culture that had previously never been discussed with such frequency and ease (McNair, 1996). The openness to discuss sex, along with the popularity and visibility of the pubic area raises awareness in differences of pubic hair, creating a new platform for discussion of what society deems sexually, hygienically, and fashionably desirable. As particular media outlets have made it convenient to spot pubic grooming trends, pubic hair removal continues to take on more spotlights. Recognized today as a normative grooming practice, it has become a highly popularized topic in various popular culture outlets and can frequently be found in movies, television, advertisements, products, and magazines. Depilatory companies are advertising specialized products, pubic hair fashion books are published, and celebrities are coining new pubic fashion terms. Media has the power to influence an individual's perception of his/her body, causing the individual to use supplementations and modifications to achieve what is popularly "attractive" and "desirable" (Barcan, 2004). Reasons for grooming can be very complex as there can be a number of consequences and benefits that an individual considers, whether aware or unaware of what the media declares as preferred. Femininity, sexuality, time, and hygiene, might be considered for example, although the amount of influence that these considerations have on an individual's decision to depilate and/or trim the pubic hair is still unknown.

History proves that the pubic region is a versatile icon, representing sin, life, sexuality, fertility, and nature; and because of this an individual's perception of their pubic region/hair can become highly complicated (Hollander, 1978). Research efforts to explain this perception have been made and found that women currently view their body hair as unfeminine, unattractive, stubbly, and unclean (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2004). Pubic hair is no longer an exception to this, as opposed to the 1970s early 1980s, when women in media embraced a large amount of pubic

hair. For instance, to find a *Playboy* playmate in the early 1980s with an undepilated/untrimmed anal area would have posed no challenge, today it would be impossible. This obvious aesthetic difference lacks research efforts to understand how and why pubic hair removal has become a perceived grooming necessity. It is a grooming activity that is changing the way people individually and collectively view each other, making it a relevant and urgent research topic.

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore factors that influence the recent development of American women's decision to depilate and/or trim the pubic region.

### Objectives

The objectives for the study were as follows:

1. To determine if, and to what extent, American women depilate and/or trim the pubic region.
2. To understand American women's perception of benefits/negative consequences in regards to pubic hair depilation and/or trimming.
3. To determine the motivations of American women to depilate and/or trim their pubic hair.
4. To understand the bodily experience of pubic hair depilation and/or trimming amongst several age groups of American women.
5. To understand the influence of various media outlets on American women's decision to depilate and/or trim the pubic region.

6. To determine changes in pubic hair grooming rituals through the life span of women in the past fifty years.

### Justification

Although the topic of pubic hair depilation is fully integrated into popular culture, little research has been conducted to understand the process of how and why this has occurred. Cultural studies expert Ruth Barcan (2004) states, “I initially found this lacuna quite surprising; how could it be that a physical state shared by all human beings, and so saturated in customs, conventions and taboos, could have been all but ignored in academic literature?” (p. 4). In order to understand the culture that we live in it is imperative to understand the societal forces and cultural messages that shape it, telling us how to view our bodies and react to them, forming a basis for what is attractive versus unattractive. The way we treat our bodies and the amount of time spent keeping them groomed is direct evidence of our cultural history, modernization, and formation of individual aesthetic (Olivelle, 1998). By understanding motivating factors and what role they play in an individual’s decision-making process we gain insight into the cultural ideals and concepts that shape the world in which we live. Pubic hair seems no longer private in western culture, forcing men and women to consider and form an opinion of how they feel about their pubic hair. Like any other form of supplementing or modifying the body, this type of hair removal holds powerful cultural messages that are connected with a societal view of women as well as one’s self-image.

### Limitations of the Study

Women who participated in this study were required to have Internet access and fit into one of four age categories: 18-27, 28-37, 38-47, and 48-57. Asking participants their age was the only demographic question in the survey, creating a sample that could include women with endless combinations of demographic variations such as race, income, sexual orientation, disabilities, etc. The focus of data analysis for this study was to make correlations between participants' grooming decisions and participants' response, rather than correlations between participants' grooming decisions and their demographics. Therefore, the first limitation of the study was neglecting the relevance that demographics can play in an individual's bodily experience with their pubic hair. For instance, sub-cultural and sub-regional demographics could be considered if the sample only included women who have lived in or currently reside in one location of the United States. Considering this demographic would have enhanced the study because it would allow for the analysis of regional differences.

Although the sample includes participants with a wide range of demographic information, two limitations arise regarding the demographic range of participants. The first of these limitations was a result of requiring participants to complete the survey via the Internet versus other data collection methods such as interviews or focus groups. Individuals with greater Internet access and computer literacy have a higher income and education level than individuals who would not take the survey, due to a lack of Internet access or computer literacy (Coley, Cradler, & Engel, 1997). Therefore, by requiring participants to take the survey via the Internet, we are neglecting participants with a lower income and education level, who would have to take the survey via other methods. The second limitation was a result of limiting the range of ages of participants. Women in the oldest age category (48-57) were teenagers in the sexual revolution

of the 1960s, a decade with a very different zeitgeist compared to the 1950s. Expanding the age categories to include women above the age of 57 would further crystallize the history of this grooming trend in America.

Another limitation of this study was the forced selectivity regarding which media outlet to analyze and use as references for the study. Media outlets that discuss or show pubic hair are expansive, especially in recent years since the topic has become taboo. Unlike a content analysis, which would encapsulate and analyze as many examples possible, this study has selected only examples considered most relevant to the study. Furthermore, questions regarding the participants grooming decisions require the participants to conjure up an all-knowing attitude, and assume that participants are fully aware of their motives. This was a limitation to the study because it assumes participants have complete control over their actions, disregarding any external forces in which participants were not consciously aware. Further research can be conducted to analyze the male perspective regarding women's pubic grooming practices, proving or disproving the represented male opinions that are found in women's media.

The last limitation of the study is the small sample size. A larger number of women participating in the survey would have further crystallized the findings and strengthened the study. Understanding a greater number of women's bodily experiences would give a clearer picture of the trend as a whole. However, this is an exploratory study, therefore, a sample size of twenty participants was ideal. Findings of the study hopefully reflect similar trends that would be found on a larger scale. Further research would benefit by incorporating a larger number of participants who are from various areas and have varying demographics.

## Definition of Terms

**Bodily Experience:** “Perception and action through the medium of the body in the real world” (Ribeiro, 2005).

**Body Modification:** “The permanent or semi-permanent deliberate altering of the human body for non-medical reasons” (Eicher, Evenson, & Lutz, 2000, p. 7).

**Body Supplement:** “Items that are placed on the body, most often thought of as garments, by Euro-Americans, but can also include jewelry and accessories” (Eicher, Evenson, & Lutz, 2000, p. 15).

**Brazilian Wax:** A term that usually refers to depilation of hair from the entire pubic region.

**Depilation:** The act of removing hair through mechanical or chemical means, so that the hair follicle is no longer visible.

**Grooming:** Any form of modifying the pubic hair which can include trimming, depilation, dyeing, and/or shaping.

**Hygienic:** “Tending to preserve or promote health; sanitary” (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000).

**Pornography:** “Sexually explicit pictures, writing, or other material whose primary purpose is to cause sexual arousal” (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000)

**Prepubescent:** “A child at the stage of development just before puberty” (Encarta World English Dictionary, 2009).

**Pubic Hair:** “Hair in the pubic region; secondary sexual characteristic that develops during puberty” (Mosby's Dictionary of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 2005).

**Pubic Region:** “The lowest of the three median regions of the abdomen, which lies below the umbilical region and between the inguinal regions. Also called hypogastrium.” (Kleinedler, 2007, p. 682).

**Self-Image:** “The conception that one has of oneself, including an assessment of qualities and personal worth” (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000)

**Stubble:** “The short growth of hair that eventually protrudes from the skin after shaving” (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000).

**Trimming:** Cutting the ends or reducing the amount of pubic hair, in order to make it shorter and/or neat.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The way that humans attend to the body on a traditional, experimental, or comparative basis is direct symbolism of a culture at work (Bordo, 2003). Men and women throughout history have spent time, energy, and resources to manipulate their bodies with the hope of achieving a desired effect. Humans mentally and physically grow, their surroundings change, and the experiences they have with their bodies change as well. A person's grooming practices can play two opposing roles; they serve the purpose of portraying a sense-of-self, and yet they are also used to divide the individuals who follow societal conventions from the ones who do not, creating a platform of repressed self-expression. In other words, humans can bring themselves closer to a culture through a visual, unified identity but using the same visual effect can concurrently set themselves apart. Only in the past forty years has literature been devoted to the discussion of supplementations/modifications to the pubic region from a historical standpoint, recognizing different cultures use of it in daily life and art, as well as the modern trend and its influences.

#### Historical Evidence

Possibly the most in-depth historical evaluation of pubic hair depilation is found in Wendy Cooper's *Hair, Sex, and Symbolism* (1971). The author begins with the Egyptian civilization, stating that both men and women thought of body hair as "ugly" and "unhygienic," causing their daily grooming to include complete body hair removal (Cooper, 1971). Archeologists have unearthed a variety of Egyptian depilatory devices, which supports the idea that Egyptians regarded hair as impure and held a strong distaste for it. Historical evidence of



ancient civilizations practicing pubic hair depilation can be found in plays, cosmetic recipes and/or medical books. In *Lysistrata*, a Greek comedy by Aristophanes, the main female character Lysistrata states (Cooper, 1971, p. 84):

Our bodies burning naked through the folds  
Of shining Imorgos' silk, and meet the men  
With our dear Venus plats plucked trim and neat...

The females in this play plan to use pubic hair depilation as a way to further enhance their husbands' sexual appetites, with the goal of persuading them to end the Peloponnesian War. By verbalizing that a hairless pubic region might serve the purpose of a visual treat, it supports the idea that it was an aesthetic preference for Greek women to have completely smooth pubic areas (Cooper, 1971). It also supports the idea that Greek statues of women, who most often contain pubic areas that remain fluid with the rest of the body, might directly represent the model which they were portraying (Hollander, 1978). A completely depilated pubic area, however, did not seem to be the preference of young Greek men, who depilated their legs but let the pubic hair grow naturally (Cooper, 1971). Similarly, young women kept their pubic hair long and styled, using the hair as a mark of passage into puberty/womanhood, which was a visible signal to men that the newly matured woman could then be courted (Hollander, 1978).

The Romans also depilated the pubic region (Cooper, 1971), however, it is thought that this might have also been an ideal look for females only (Hollander, 1978). Roman emperor Domitian was known to spend hours depilating his mistress' pubic regions with his bare hands, and in the Holy Bible King Solomon said that he would not sleep with the Queen of Sheba until she removed "nature's veil" (Cooper, 1971). However, according to Roman writers Martial and Seneca, males who practiced depilation were seen as effeminate (Hollander, 1978). Returning Crusaders brought back the idea of pubic hair depilation in the Middle Ages and for years

aristocracy viewed a depilated pubic region as elegant (Cooper, 1971). According to Georges Valensin, author of *The French Art of Sex Manners* (1970), Catherine de Medici ended the fashion by insisting that it was practiced on insane women, to make the “suffocating humors of the brain flow to a place that was quick to receive them” (Cooper, 1971, p. 114). It is unclear whether she saw depilation as a true medical treatment, although it seems that she wanted to associate depilation with mental illness. In *I Costumi et I modi particolari de las vita de Turchi* (1545), Italian traveler Bassano de Zara, wrote that Ottoman women removed the pubic hair and applied henna to the area (Cooper, 1971). The main purpose for this grooming procedure is unclear. Either the women removed their pubic hair for aesthetic distaste and henna was applied to soothe the irritated skin, or the hair was removed in order to apply the henna. Very different from the newly discovered eastern practice, Cooper says that pubic hair might have reached a decorative peak around 1550, when noble women applied pomade to the pubic region with the goal of increased hair growth. Once the growth was achieved the pubic hair was curled, braided, embellished with bows, ribbons, and other trimmings, similar to the hair on the head (Cooper, 1971). Pubic fashions for French court ladies’ went from a completely depilated pubic region to a desire for abnormally long pubic hair, within a time span of twenty years (Cooper, 1971). Soon after stylized pubic hair became the fashion, the pubic hair wig, known as a “merkin,” became a popular body supplement with prostitutes, who had to remove their hair due to pubic lice or because medical solutions for other sexually transmitted diseases caused the hair to fall out (Blakemore & Jennett, 2001).

Anne Hollander, author of *Seeing Through Clothes* (1978), believes that making assumptions about actual grooming using art would be easy, although this should not and cannot be done based on the fact that artists have the power to accurately include/exclude the pubic hair

for a desired effect. Art, however, can be considered as a reference to the possibility of pubic hair grooming practices in history. Possibly the strongest example of this are two Medieval Sheela-na-Gig women, one sculpture which was found during the building of St. Mary's church in Egremont, England and the other in Milan, who are holding shears and are in the act of cutting their pubic hair (Bailey, 1983). After the rise of Christianity and before the end of the nineteenth century, artists sacrificed their integrity if they decided to include pubic hair, and the few who did, portrayed the model as erotic and sinful (Hollander, 1978). Hans Baldung Grien fully utilized the eroticism of pubic hair in *Death and the Maiden* (1518-1520), first by contrasting the maiden's dark, textured pubic hair with her blonde, smooth head hair and even more so by incorporating a sheer piece of gauze, not meant to obstruct any view but to "visually caress" her (Hollander, 1978, p. 145). Congruent with the period, the artist showed no remorse for the sinful, sexualized woman whose hair is being painfully tugged by death. In fact, painters saved their pornographic first drafts, which included the model's pubic hair, as a special treat for "private patrons" (Hollander, 1978). Pubic hair played a major role in censorship of art. Photography, introduced into public in 1839, brought the same modest approach to pubic hair that was prevalent in paintings and drawings in prior centuries, forcing "true" or professional photographers to blur out the model's pubic hair (Hollander, 1978.) It wasn't until the 1920s, when model Alice Irene gained popularity for her hairless pubic area, that a non-retouched, hairless pubic area took the spotlight (Slade, 2001). Then, in 1933 Americans had access to *The Nudist*, the first widely published magazine that contained photographs of completely bare bodies.

The 1920s also witnessed the fashion of shorter, sleeveless dresses which resulted in an emphasis that could now be placed on the legs and arms, and advertisements encouraged females to depilate arms, underarms, and legs (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2003). After World War II the American ideal of beauty could be seen in popular pinups, such as Vargas girls, who were always portrayed with hairless, porcelain skin. Despite this aesthetic, Betty Page, also known as the “first naked woman in America,” was known for her completely undepilated pubic region which “enhanced her mystery in an era when pubic hair seemed more frightening to Americans than communism” (Slade, 2001, p. 583). It is this idea, of pubic hair representing an erotic nakedness that was lost in the 1980s, when the definition of naked was no longer based on being natural but on the body being more public.

In the last fifty years, cultures around the world have continued to use pubic hair as a focal point of rituals, forbidden eroticism, and censorship laws. The Dodingo of Uganda, South American Indians, Trobriand Island peoples and several other cultures use pubic hair depilation as a rite of passage ritual, sometimes having the oldest family member remove the hair (Cooper, 1971). Sikh men, who are not supposed to groom a woman’s hair, are known to turn a blind eye to this ritual by removing their partner’s pubic hair in private, a practice that makes Sikh women feel more sexually appealing (Hershman, 1974). Still today, Japanese censorship laws rely heavily on Article #175, which forbids the visibility of pubic hair in media, a very controversial topic known as “the hair debate” (Allison, 1998, p. 208). Keeping this article enforced, while minimally censoring violence and nudity, has caused Japanese censorship to be seen as hypocritical (Allison, 1998).

### Catalysts for Today's Trend

Speculation and analysis regarding the catalysts for popular culture's recent fascination with pubic hair depilation can be found in a wide range of sources. Many of these sources discuss similar ideas and links can be found between them. It is difficult to determine an exact number of catalysts, adding to the complexity of the trend. According to previously published sources, 10 major catalysts have played a major role in the formation of pubic hair removal: Pornography, Accommodating the Silhouette, Fitness Craze, Socioeconomic Factors, Youth, Hygiene, Femininity, Reinforcement through Humiliation, Physical Pleasure and Comfort, and Pubic Hair as a Fashion Device.

#### Pornography

Dynamics of the pornography industry such as exposure, cinematography, and accessibility took major turns from 1970 to 2000. The onset of the First and Second Wave Feminist Movements, in the nineteenth century and in the 1960s respectively, inspired a push for social deviance as well as women's sexual freedom; consequently, these periods also witnessed an increase in the production of erotic movies, also known as stag films (Cokal, 2007). The sexual freedom of the 1960s, the association of pubic hair with sex and in turn sin, and an individuals association with nakedness as a form of "liberation" triggered the arrival of pubic hair into American pornography. Increased exposure of the body continued on its twentieth century path until the only barrier to complete "nakedness" was an exposed pubic region (Barcan, 2004). Susan Cokal (2007), author of *Clean Porn: The Visual Aesthetics of Hygiene, Hot Sex, and Hair Removal*, states this concept eloquently saying that we are, "a culture increasingly oriented toward the use of mass-produced images destined exclusively to arouse" (p. 144). Popular culture publications such as *Playboy* magazine had previously used bikini-clad

women with exposed breasts to fulfill society's hunger for sex and eventually teased viewers into an illusion of complete nakedness with semi-exposure devices such as placement of hand or sheer fabrics. Showing the pubic region became a pornographic necessity in the 1970s and the number of exposed pubic regions increased each year (Weigle, 2008). Women now had access to compare what was considered an ideal naked beauty with their own bodies, providing the grounds to achieve what porn culture considered an ideal pubic region and consequently what some women perceived as their partners' preference (Cokal, 2007). Cooper (1971) discusses an informal British survey taken in 1971 in which only twelve percent of women questioned in the survey admitted shaving or trimming their pubic hair, making a strong point of saying that "very few women" depilated any of their pubic hair. This parallels Susan Cokal's idea that porn stars of the 1970s and early 1980s "had full bushes that spoke to a different kind of femininity" (2007, p. 144).

The 1980s witnessed a change in pubic hair for porn stars and Susan Cokal is convinced that this change occurred when porn went from the big screen at movie theatres to the much smaller television screens at-home, made possible by VHS technology. Linda Williams (1999), author of *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"*, says that the "principle of maximum visibility" has historically guided our porn industry "to overlight easily obscured genitals; to select sexual positions that show the most of bodies and organs" (pp. 48-49). New camerawork and a depilated pubic region were now required to achieve pornography's new definition of fully exposed nudity (Cokal, 2007). Many feel that this shift in popularity to little or no pubic hair by porn stars has caused women to feel that they too must depilate in order to turn their partners on (Barcan, 2004). Particular media outlets send a very apparent message to viewers, generalizing the argument that men prefer their sexual partners to be shaved. For

example, *Glamour* magazine's April 2008 issue featured an article titled "Men's New Sexual Needs," in which the opening caption reads, "What We Need: A Little Grooming, Please," and was referring specifically to the pubic region (Rubin, 2008, p. 312). Ironically, the caption at the top of the page is a male quote in large, bold font reading, "Porn makes me want to experiment..." (Rubin, 2008). Another recent example, which highlights the idea that males desire hairless pubic areas on their partners, to achieve the porn star look, comes from an episode of *The Sarah Silverman Show*. In the episode Silverman's younger sister removes her pubic hair, knowing that her boyfriend wanted her to do so, despite the fact the pubic hair had sentimental value to her and reminded her of her mother's pubic hair (Schaar, 2008). The episode revolved around a comedic internal struggle- she wanted to please her partner, although she didn't want to let go of pubic hair that was close to her heart.

Women and society have more opportunity to view porn than ever before due to increased Internet saturation. The rise in Internet porn as well as the ability to easily navigate and search has allowed voyeurs to access sexual fetishes of every kind, including child pornography and hirsute women. Today analysts ponder whether porn stars' hairless pubic regions are a product of child porn or wanting to look like a Barbie doll. Susan Cokal feels that by depilating the pubic hair, women are trying to achieve "an abstracted, Barbie-like idea of sexiness" (2007, p. 147). Objectification of women in pornography is apparent, although it is not known if women depilate the pubic region to achieve the porn star look.

### Accommodating the Silhouette

Bodies modify garments and garments modify bodies. One type of garment that changed dramatically throughout the twentieth century was the bathing suit. The two-piece bathing suit, originated in the 1930s, included bottoms that were similar to shorts and/or skirts (Tortora &

Eubank, 2005). The popularity of this shorts/skirt construction prevailed with American women into the late 1950s when bikini bottoms started to take on more of an underwear silhouette. As the upper thigh area became more exposed, women were forced to take notice of their body hair and had to make the decision of either leaving the hair to public view or depilating it. By the end of the decade Rudi Gernreich was designing risqué bathing suits and America had finally adopted Jacques Heim's much smaller two-piece known as the bikini. This shift in popularity for a smaller bathing-suit silhouette further increased the possibility of exposed pubic hair. *Glamour* magazine's December 1975 issue declared "exposed body hair" the "most neglected problem of bikini wearers," pushing women to depilate the "upper inner thigh" region even further. Also in 1975, Gernreich introduced the thong, a silhouette that completely exposed the buttocks. Wearers of this style not only have to think about pubic hair exposure in the front of the bottom, but are forced to consider any anal hair that might be exposed in the back. The 1980s embraced a new bathing silhouette, the "high- thigh cut," which looks similar to an inverted V and exposes the hip area all the way to the waistline (Tortora & Eubank, 2005). Once again, as the sides of bathing suit bottoms narrowed, unexposed pubic hair also had to narrow (Morris, 2004). Inspired by this new and very different silhouette, designers created several other bathing suit types in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including the slingshot and g-string bikinis. Considered a very controversial bathing suit at the time was Gernreich's "pubikini," which came out in 1985 (Pubikini, n.d.). The fabric of the pubikini was purposefully see-through so that wearers could show off their pubic hair.

The silhouette of bathing suits and negligee changed, and with new technologies so did the fabric. Into the 1960s, it was typical for a bathing suit to be cotton and most often lined. The synthetic or artificial fibers, which began to appear in the 1960s, generally had properties that



allowed the fabric to hug the body, causing the texture of the pubic hair to become visible, adding yet another concern for bathing suit wearers.

### Fitness Craze

The late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed the onset of a fitness craze and a new obsession with bodybuilding. Preparation for bodybuilding competitions traditionally includes body hair removal, a procedure that ‘tightens up the body’s boundaries’ and increases visibility of muscles, according to Alison Smith, author of *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality, and Art* (1996). This idea is currently being used as a marketing device on the homepage of Pubic Hair Removal, a site dedicated to the removal of body hair, which states, “Well, what good is all that hard work in the gym if your definition is hidden under spools of hair?” (<http://www.pubichairremoval.com/>, ¶ 3). Ruth Barcan feels that this hairlessness has come to represent physical fitness. She feels that the “hairless aesthetic of gay male gym culture” and the idea that hairlessness is solely feminine are outdated, due to the fact that a large number of heterosexual men depilate their body hair (2004, p. 148). Barcan assumes the position that physical fitness is causing hairlessness to become more androgynous. This does seem to be the case, although androgyny is not a two-way street, because women do not often assume a position of being hairy and feminine. American popular culture holds a standard for women to be less hairy than men, and if men are becoming less hairy, one can only assume that this raises the bar for women as well.

### Youth

The onset of puberty marks the growth of pubic hair for women and men, establishing an association between physical maturity and pubic hair (Cooper, 1971). A number of researchers have voiced concern about the danger of women wanting to return to what appears to be a

prepubescent pubic region. In 1969, psychologists George D. Goldman and Donald S. Milman discussed an association between femininity and the obligation to surrender, mainly because female genitalia requires penetration and penetration is generally associated with violence. The desired body-image, studied by the authors and reported by informants involved “a fantasy of being a little girl, affectionately cuddled” (Goldman & Milman, 1969, p. 112). The authors found that participants voiced common concerns, such as needing to appear “hairless” and “skinny” (p. 107). Recognizing this as a potential problem in the social development of prepubescent girls, the authors were very clearly against media that showed “genital area [which] is usually blocked out and appropriately hairless” (1969, p. 107). Wendy Cooper considered that the sole purpose of pubic hair is to have an “outward badge of maturity and a visual marker to the genitals” (1971, p. 17). The goals of being older when you are youthful and youthful when you are older gained predominance toward the end of the twentieth century. Psychologists and gynecologists concern has mainly pertained to the self-development/self-image of young girls who are exposed to women with no pubic hair. In 1969, Goldman and Milman stated, “This becomes a serious problem as the social role of the female is increasingly blurred. The young girl frequently feels that she cannot fulfill certain standards of appearance, she is not accepted as a woman. The result is conflict and self-denial” (p. 107). This period of time in a female’s life, known as menarche, occurs right before puberty and “serves as the focus around which body image and genital function, including personal and sexual identity, are organized” (Swenson & Havens, 1987, p. 202). Concerns about the development of young women are even more evident today, especially with the popularity of a hairless pubic area. Rachel Johnson, author of a 2002 article in *The Spectator* entitled “Bush whacked,” voiced her concern about pubic hair depilation and age when she stated, “But I long for someone to explain to me why it is not OK for our

daughters to doll up like Madonna and Britney, but it is acceptable- almost compulsory, in fact – for grown women to pretend that down there nature’s clock stopped at around the age of nine?” (Johnson, 2002, p. 2). A 2008 article titled “Trend: pretty babies” by Carrie Denny, makes a parallel argument and almost proves Johnson’s concern, when she discusses the recent trend of mothers taking in their ten year old girls for bikini waxes. Denny declares that, “the transformation from little girl to prepubescent supermodel is complete,” although it “will probably screw the kids up down the road” (2008, p. 1). A similar but more pronounced situation is currently going on in Japan. According to Article 175, material which shows the genitals and more specifically pubic hair is considered obscene and pubic hair is often blocked out. Many are concerned with Japan’s censorship laws because they allow media intended for teenagers, comic books for instance, to include nude women with hairless pubic areas.

One cannot assume that women shave the pubic region to look prepubescent. It is, however, known that most women in the early twenty-first century view hairlessness as attractive and hygienic (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2004). Consumer media today push products and give tips to defy age and retain youth, and ways to do this include physical fitness, remaining healthy, and keeping up with fashion/trends. If a depilated pubic region is the pronounced fashion, and it represents staying active, being hygienic, and looking more attractive then it is easy to see how it could be used as a positive step toward maintaining youth.

A somewhat obvious reason that a person might depilate or dye the pubic hair is the association of gray hair and age. In an episode of *Sex and the City*, Samantha becomes mortified after finding a gray pubic hair and attempts to cover the gray hair by dyeing the whole pubic region (King, 2003). Ironically, a person’s pubic hair might become gray with age, but over time

the pubic hair will fall out, bringing the aged individual back to the hairlessness of a prepubescent child.

### Femininity

Recent research on body hair removal has found that Western women view body hair as unfeminine and unattractive (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2004). Ruth Barcan notes that historically, “a hairy male body has signified virility, power, and sometimes nobility,” and because of this women’s body hair is seen as masculine (2004, p. 144). This genderizing of hair that began with Greek civilization has stood the test of time, and is the reason why feminists from the Second Wave Movement retained their natural hair growth (Barcan, 2004). Third-wave feminist Amy Poehler rekindled the connection between feminists and pubic hair in a 2006 issue of *Bust* magazine when she said, “Right! I want female comedies to be like, full, giant '70s bushes right now, not tiny little pubic mustaches” (Soloway, 2006, p. 53). Similarly, Poehler made fun of Britney Spears’ exposed, hairless vagina on an episode of Saturday Night Live, announcing that “there was a time when a lady garden was as big as a slice of New York pizza” (Meyers, 2006). Unlike messages found in other popular media, Poehler is resurrecting the Second Wave Movement idea of strong women having natural, undepilated amounts of pubic hair. Even more so today, feminists recognize the feminine ideal of resembling a Barbie doll, complete with a tan, perky breasts, and a smooth, hairless body. Poehler’s satirical concerns are just a few examples of a backlash against the struggle for perfection.

Previous research on body hair removal has analyzed female and male body hair removal separately. Studies have used British, American, and Australian participants. Despite this research, some studies failed to include pubic hair as a category and many recent studies that have included it fail to portray the very important differences of the pubic area from other body

parts. A survey conducted in 2004 asked 678 British women of different age groups whether or not they had tried depilating various body parts in their lifetime, and found that 85.69% of them had tried depilating the pubic area (Toerien, Wilkinson, & Choi, 2005). The researchers found that younger participants were more likely to depilate their pubic hair and that significantly fewer women from the oldest age category (51 years and older) had ever tried removing it, therefore indicating the increasing popularity of female pubic hair removal. The authors stated that pubic hair removal should be considered normative and that the “results testify to the work of femininity” (2005, p. 405). This is contradictory, however, because the authors mention that less than one third of the participants had ever removed more than ‘bikini line’ hair, disproving the current fashion of the Brazilian wax. Believing “feminine hairiness” to be an oxymoron, the authors mistreat the fragile symbolism that pubic hair contains, by lumping it into a category with all other types of body hair. Women from Wendy Cooper’s 1971 study convey positive attitudes about their pubic hair, viewing it as “a powerful weapon in their sexual armory” (Cooper, 1971, p. 89). Furthermore, doctors who have been studying the effects of gynecological cancer on sexuality have found that patients experience a destruction of their femininity due to radiation and their loss of pubic hair (Gamel, Hengeveld, & Davis, 2000).

Another relevant topic that disproves female pubic hair removal as normative femininity is the momentum in popularity of pubic hair removal amongst males. Masculinity and femininity cannot be seen as two opposite ends in the pubic hair removal spectrum when both genders groom their pubic hair for the same effect. *Allure* magazine’s December 2008 issue featured an article about male pubic hair depilation and contained a statement from Sean “Puffy” Combs, a world renowned artist, saying that he indulges himself in a “brozilian wax.” Two thousand and eight’s November issue of *Glamour* magazine featured a section with a male,

saying that he is not opposed to “manscaping” if his girlfriend depilates her pubic hair. A recent study on gay and heterosexual men’s body hair removal, which includes the pubic hair, found that 82.1% of gay men and 66.4% of heterosexual men had tried removing their pubic hair and a majority in both groups did so to improve their appearance/attractiveness (Martins, Tiggemann, & Churchett, 2008). Despite the fact that male pubic hair depilation is gaining popularity, it is however, still catching up to the level of approval that female depilation has obtained. A *Cosmopolitan* article titled “What his down-there grooming says,” ridicules men who have natural pubic hair, categorizing them as either ‘alpha male’ or ‘lazy,’ but tells women that they’ve ‘hit the jackpot’ when finding a man who only trims his pubic hair (Eagleson, 2009). The author also warns women of the completely depilated male, stating that he is the type who watches a lot of pornography and might be difficult to settle down with (Eagleson, 2009).

Marika Tiggemann, one of the founding researchers on American female body hair removal, did not include pubic hair in her original 1998 study, however, Tiggemann and psychologist Suzanna Hodgson (2008) recently teamed up to conduct a study titled “The Hairlessness Norm Extended: Reasons for and Predictors of Women’s Body Hair Removal at Different Body Sites.” Contrary to previous studies on body hair removal, the authors found that participant motivations for removing their pubic hair were not the same as other body parts. Similar to Tiggemann’s previously discussed male study, the driving motivation for women’s pubic hair depilation was sexual attractiveness. The participants who removed all of their pubic hair ranked self-enhancement as a stronger motivation than femininity, therefore, further disproving normative femininity as the reason for pubic hair removal. The authors also found that participants who removed a greater amount of pubic hair were more frequently exposed to

fashion magazines and television shows that discuss pubic hair depilation, than participants who removed less hair, less frequently.

### Socioeconomic Factors

The 1990s witnessed the arrival of new depilatory technology, such as laser hair removal, as well as a drastic increase in the availability of waxing at spa/salons. Women in popular culture such as actresses, singers, and fictional socialites unabashedly proclaimed their love of depilating body hair, including the pubic hair. According to *NY Magazine's Beauty & Spa Guide*, the trend began in 1994 with J. Sisters International, and gained momentum when local celebrities such as Gwyneth Paltrow, Tyra Banks, Fergie, and Kimora Lee Simmons announced that they were very pleased with the results of their Brazilian bikini waxes (Reis, n.d.). The popular television show and movie, *Sex and the City*, featured several instances in which four New York socialites are disgusted by pubic hair and praise the depilated pubic region. Several researchers and authors, such as Susan Cokal (2007), have given the show credit for the popularity of depilation within the past ten years.

To be constantly hairless using the above procedures, men and women needed a disposable income that was higher than most on the economic ladder. *Vogue* magazine's July 2008 issue makes the connection between money and hair removal in its "Beauty, Health, and Fitness" section, saying that "Manhattan's bikini-loving elite" is no longer in favor of waxing, but prefers laser hair removal (p. 74). Historically, fashion often begins with the money and power of celebrities and trickles down to the masses. If one considers body modifications to have similar fashion ability, then it is easy to see the importance of socioeconomic factors on the increase of pubic hair depilation. The middle class can now achieve what was once a luxury of the elite, with affordable depilation procedures such as Judy Pfleger's "Hair Care Down There"

products. Pflieger's products are reusable and contain safety features as well as features which reduce the amount of pain/discomfort felt by consumers. Heather Wood, author of an article entitled "The Grooming Discussion," speaks frankly about the trend, "It's easier for us to assume that what's good for super-groomed starlets is good for us, a requirement even" (2006, ¶ 9).

### Reinforcement Through Humiliation

The first qualitative study on Western women's body hair removal was conducted by Merran Toerien and Sue Wilkinson in 2004. It is titled "Exploring the Depilation Norm: A Qualitative Questionnaire Study of Women's Body Hair Removal," and sought to understand the normative practice of depilation by asking participants to describe their bodily experience with their body hair. Trying to retain a position of neutrality, the researchers did not suggest any motivating factors/catalysts but used unbiased questions and asked participants only about their perceived hair removal influences (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2004). The researchers found that women view their body hair as negative and using the participants' words they found "as themes, various types of interactional sanctions against the hairy woman" (2004, p. 80). Everyday social interaction, along with messages found in popular culture media, reinforce the idea of hairiness as negative by using humiliation tactics and making fun of hairy women. Ruth Barcan (2004) feels that hair is increasingly being seen as dirty and that "a current shift in the embarrassment threshold" is causing a stronger standard for hairlessness (p. 146). The *Glamour* article titled "What's the most neglected problem of bikini wearers" from December 1975 refers to exposed pubic hair as a "problem" and depilatory advertisements in the same magazine and year refer to body hair as "embarrassing." In 1981 Alison Lurie, author of *The Language of Clothes*, says that by "checking the rest of their getup it is possible to classify them [women with undepilated pubic hair] as either (a) foreigners (b) serious feminists (c) supporters of the counterculture" (p. 238).



This example is a strong assumption which puts women who do not depilate their pubic region into a prescribed minority, creating the potential for feelings of humiliation and prejudice.

Recent media, commonly movies and television shows, are harsher and have used an undepilated pubic region to make the audience laugh. *Scary Movie* (2000) and *Scary Movie 2* (2001) both use female pubic hair as the core of jokes that are intended to gross out viewers. In the first movie, the writers intended to disgust viewers by showing an abundance of female pubic hair, a tuft of hair that pops out and looks similar to a shrub. The writers then up the ante in their second movie by showing a male choking on a female's pubic hair follicle after oral sex. In *The Heartbreak Kid* (2007), a comedy about the nightmares of an unsuitable marriage, the main character continually has horrifying realizations that he married a monster and one of his realizations involves his new bride's over-exaggerated pubic hair. Women may feel the pressure to have what popular culture considers a normal looking pubic area. In the "Body Issues" section of popular teen website [www.gurl.com](http://www.gurl.com), a girl writes, "I don't want to be laughed at if I ever decide to have sex and I have all this hair that I shouldn't have" (Body Issues: Help me Heather, ¶ 1).

### Hygiene

Throughout history and across cultures hair has played an important role in determining the savage human, or one who is possibly exiled and acquires an animalistic way of living, versus the civilized human who abides by societal norms and properly grooms oneself (Allison, 1998). As humans we have taken a position of superiority to animals, viewing ourselves as a more intelligent and clean species and because of this complex relationship along with societal stability, Barcan believes that hair has become interchangeable with dirtiness (2004). As noted earlier, medical books from the late nineteenth century encouraged Western females to remove

unusual body hair, very obviously making an association between superfluous hair and medical problems, problems which may include infections, virus, or bacteria. A similar and more recent association with hair being unsanitary involves pubic hair depilation as medical preparation before giving birth. Gynecologists felt that by depilating the patient's pubic region, they would prevent "obstruction of vision" and "the question of infection" (Barcan, 2004, p. 145). Robbie Davis-Floyd, an anthropologist who analyzes contemporary birthing rituals, thinks that this depilation is more ritual than clinical, and is used to further enhance the idea of the laboring woman as property of the hospital (Barcan, 2004). Hair is often seen as a dead substance, especially after the follicle detaches itself from the body and falls to the floor or an area where it must be swept up and cleaned. This being the case, many assume a position that hair carries/is dirt, and this assumption is causing body hair to play a larger role in what society deems as "clean" (Barcan, 2004). Jonathan D.K. Trager MD, author of a recent article in the *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology*, says "relatively little has been written in the medical literature about this trend and its associated health consequences" (Trager, 2006, p. 117). Ironically, men and women are shaving their pubic regions to be cleaner, although gynecologists are starting to feel that complete hair depilation via shaving, is causing problems such as folliculitis, which is the inflammation and/or infection of a hair follicle, as well as spreading infections that people are unaware (Trager, 2006). However, depilating all pubic hair does reduce and/or eliminate the possibility of obtaining crab/pubic lice infestation. Several STDs on the rise have visible consequences, such as Syphilis and HPV, and some may use their pubic hair in a similar manner as the merkin, to obstruct the visibility of the STD. Although STDs do not always show visible signs after contraction, sexually active partners who are unaware of each

other's sexual history would perhaps feel more at ease if the pubic area is exposed and has nothing to hide.

In 1969, two psychologists wrote that obtaining a culturally desired feminine body image required women to be “flawless, hairless, and odorless” (Goldman & Milman, 1969, p. 107). The association between being hairy and foul smelling comes from the fact that the pubic and axillary scent glands need exposure to air for the glands to excrete their full odor, ultimately fulfilling the role of attracting a future mate (Cooper, 1971). Many feel that pubic hair is meant to achieve this by serving as a scent trap. Unlike the Chinese, who refer endearingly to the pubic hair as “fragrant grass,” “black rose,” and “pure lily,” Americans often refer to the vagina as smelling foul and fishy (Blackledge, 2004, p. 80). Gynecologist Sharon Hillier, who gave a talk entitled “The Ecosystem of the Healthy Vagina,” discussed the previously mentioned topic of reinforcement through humiliation. She said sarcastically, “You’ve heard the jokes- my favorite is the one about the blind man who passes by the fish store and says ‘Good morning, ladies’” (Angier, 1999, p. 52). American women, who are aware of this popular culture humiliation as well as the association of pubic hair as a scent trap, might feel that by depilating the pubic hair, a foul smelling odor might be prevented.

### Physical Pleasure and Comfort

Hair acts as a barrier to the vagina, and many have expressed that depilating the pubic hair provides a smooth genital area and thus increases physical pleasure and comfort. One beautician that Ruth Barcan interviewed said, “I think a lot of guys like it cleaner. It [i.e. the penis?] doesn’t get caught up and things like that” (2004, p. 147). Depilation reduces friction and allows the penis and/or tongue direct contact to the skin, and some say that this skin contact feels more intimate and pleasurable. Former *Playboy* bunny Deborah Driggs published a book

that “explores in depth how the process itself can be eroticized, and how newly bared skin is, for some time afterward, subject to heightened pleasurable sensations” (Getting Down with Pubic Fashion, ¶ 13). Removing the hair also decreases the chances of getting hair in the mouth during oral sex (Trager, 2006). The previously discussed comedy, *Scary Movie 2* (2001), uses this situation to disgust the audience and further reinforces the idea that one can feel more relaxed if not worried about pubic hair getting caught in his/her partner’s throat. Dermatologist Mitchel P. Goldman said that a number of his male patients are mountain bikers, who want to eliminate pubic hair from “getting in the way of sports,” and that they achieve this by depilating “the hair around the scrotum, the testicles, and the peri-anal area” (Singer, 2005, p. ¶ 15). Pubic hairs project from the body and the bikers are trying to eliminate the possibility of their pubic hairs from being pulled, due to the friction/movement between their legs. Depilation and/or trimming can therefore eliminate this potential discomfort not only in sports events but also day-to-day activities. Along these same lines and feeling almost freed in a sense, one woman said of fully depilating her pubic hair, “Just walking down the street is fun because you glide” (Morris, 2004, p. 197).

The main character of a satirical British comedy series, *Da Ali G Show*, discusses another discomfort and uses complete pubic hair depilation as an example of something that he would never do. He says to a rabbi, “Like, me Julie once asked me to shave me gulies, but me said, you know, that me never would cause of the second-day stubble” (Cohen, 2003). The character is stating that follicle growth, two days after completely depilating the pubic region, can be incredibly uncomfortable, something only to avoid with continual depilation, waxing, or laser hair removal. When Merran Toerien and Sue Wilkinson asked women how they perceived their

body hair, they found that women view “stubble” as a negative trait of body hair, describing it as ‘prickly’, ‘spiky’, and ‘rough’ (2004, p. 76).

### Pubic Hair as a Fashion Device

Pubic hair is a natural covering that hides the genitals, similar to an undergarment, and like head hair it can be styled and/or manipulated for aesthetic preference (Barcan, 2004). Unlike clothing, body hair can be viewed as unnecessary, and past cultures have used pubic hair as a fashion device, by either removing it completely or creating a stylized tuft. Mentioned previously in this chapter, pubic hair became a canvas for decoration around 1550 and saw a greater amount of ornamentation which included bows, ribbons, braids, and curls (Cooper, 1971). English men and women also adopted the merkin, or pubic hair wig (Cooper, 1971). Wigs are a supplement to the body. They allow people to experiment with animal hair decoration, versus the hair on their own bodies.

Late twentieth century America witnessed not only the reappearance of merkins, but also the submergence of a cultural desire for pubic hair fashion more intense than previous civilizations (Cooper, 1971). C. Malaparte, author of *The Skin* (1952), claimed that high-price prostitutes bleached their pubic hair for soldiers around the Second World War (Cooper, 1971). The sexual revolution, affordable depilatory devices, and increased exposure of the body are thought to have influenced the trend of pubic hair fashion in the 1960’s (Morris, 2004). In the 1960’s designer Mary Quant stated, “We shall move towards exposure and body cosmetics, and certainly pubic hair- which we can now view in the cinema and on the stage- will become a fashion emphasis, although not necessarily blatant” (Cooper, 1971, p. 116). Quant also publicly announced that her husband shaved her pubic hair into the shape of a heart, giving her the title of “first modern leader in pubic hair fashion” (Cooper, 1971, p. 116).

Heading into the twenty-first century, designers, celebrities, and cosmetic companies again publicly recognize pubic hairstyles as fashion. Common names for popular pubic hairstyles include the Landing strip, the Brazilian, the European, the Sphinx, the Heart, the Playboy strip, and the Moustache (Morris, 2004). In 2003, Gucci created its own pubic style by putting out a controversial advertisement featuring a model pulling down her panties to reveal her pubic hair in the classic Gucci “G” emblem. Fashion designer Hussein Chalayan made a bold statement in 1998 when he featured a collection of simple tunics that resembled burkas. Each garments hem was proportionally raised until the last model simply wore a face covering and an obviously undepilated mound of pubic hair. The previous model is wearing a half-tunic but has pubic hair that is depilated on the top and sides, leading the audience to question whether or not the pubic hair has taken a similar, but opposite role as the burka. If this were the case then the model with the longest tunic would be fully depilated, and if pubic hair is seen as a garment, this would make her the most clothed/naked person in the group. Deborah Driggs, *Playboy’s* Miss March 1990, co-authored *Hot Pink: The Girls’ Guide to Primping, Passion, and Pubic Fashion*. A press release for the book declared pubic hair grooming as a fashion device and described pubic hair using characteristics such as style, color, texture, and shape, all of which that could be used to describe a garment. In 2006, Miss Geschick and Lady Lapsus came out with a pair of panties called Winterfell, which features a design that resembles thick, black pubic hair. *Women’s Wear Daily Beauty Biz*, a seasonal insert featuring new cosmetics, included in 2008 and 2009, two pubic fashion products. The first product, Bikinelle, is a device used to help modify the pubic hair to form a heart shape. The second product, Betty Beauty, is a pubic hair dye that comes in a variety of colors. American culture today speaks freely about experimenting creatively with pubic hair, allowing the possibility for trends to be set and others

to follow. Similar to the previously discussed practices of Ottoman women, Americans have the opportunity to purchase pubic tattoos and pubic jewels (Body Modification E-zine, n.d.). As fashion magazines continue to feature pubic fashion products and as celebrities continue to speak freely of their love for a good Brazilian wax, fashion followers and setters will continue to use pubic hair fashion similar to a way that clothing and hairstyles are used. As Heather Wood declared, “So I went out and got myself some designer pubic hair” (2006, ¶ 1).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

For this research, a survey containing one demographic question as well as open-ended questions was used to gather data, which was analyzed using a grounded theory approach. Anonymous, online surveys allow a certain level of privacy to be maintained due to the absence of direct one-on-one communication with the researcher, and open-ended questions allow the participant to answer freely using their own words to express their feelings. Using a survey format, participants were asked to reflect on their bodily experience with their pubic hair, considering perceived advantages/disadvantages of depilation and/or trimming as well as potential factors that encourage or discourage pubic hair removal, and give a brief history of past and present grooming rituals.

#### Objectives

This study seeks the following objectives:

1. To determine if, and to what extent, American women depilate and/or trim the pubic region.
2. To understand American women's perception of benefits/negative consequences in regards to pubic hair depilation and/or trimming.
3. To determine the motivations of American women to depilate and/or trim their pubic hair.
4. To understand the bodily experience of pubic hair depilation and/or trimming amongst several age groups of American women.



5. To understand the influence of various media outlets on American women's decision to depilate and/or trim the pubic region.
6. To determine changes in pubic hair grooming rituals through the life span of women in the past fifty years.

### Sample

Twenty American women who currently live in various areas of the United States participated in this survey. In order to fully understand historical changes in popular culture and maintain a balanced viewpoint, surveys of five women in each age bracket were analyzed. The brackets were as follows; 18-27 years of age, 28-37 years of age, 38-47 years of age, and 48-57 years of age. Using a snowball sampling method, participants were selected based on the recommendation of family, friends, and the researcher. This method is preferable because a certain level of comfort and ease is previously established between the participants, knowledge of the subject area, and the researcher. Participants selected in this method also tend to be highly motivated, finding the relevance of the study agreeable and extend their interest of the study to friends, family, and the researcher. This comfort, ease, and motivation hopefully encouraged data that is more open and detailed than participants from a random sample would offer.

### Data Analysis

Grounded theory is the preferred research method for this study because it uses qualitative data, reflections of participants' life stories, to construct an analysis generated by the ideas and observations of the researcher. Sociologist Kathy Charmaz, author of *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis* (2006), explains a clean, practical way of starting with particularities from a "range of individual cases" to form a more

general concept (Bryant & Charmaz, 2006, p. 188). Using this reference as a foundation, the data was analyzed first using coding, and secondly using memo-writing. Coding is giving different pieces of the data short names, in order to help the researcher see ideas embedded within the data and make comparisons between sets of data. The first type of coding used is initial coding, which involves three different methods; word by word, line by line, and incident by incident. Each of these methods allow the researcher to find themes within the data that might not have otherwise been found, therefore, it is to the study's advantage to use all methods. Charmaz notes that coding should be done spontaneously and quickly, using gerunds that reflect action. She also notes that it is important in early stages of coding for the researcher to remain open and try to void themselves of any preconceived notions. Focused coding, the next step of the coding process, involves the analysis and categorization of the initial codes, deciding the significance of each code and where it fits in the grand scheme of the data. Charmaz notes that this step is not linear and that the researcher must sort through data numerous times, in many directions for new perspectives to become apparent. At this point in comparing the data, themes become more refined and major categories are formed.

Memo-writing, the transition from categories/codes to an actual theory, relies on the researcher to take a fresh look at the now organized data and analyze it, writing down every thought that enters their mind. In other words, it is a way to make the analysis process tangible, turning ideas into a form that can be re-evaluated, moved around, and pulled apart. It is suggested that the researcher begins by first analyzing the categories and then comparing the categories to codes or other data. This step is only concerned with the researcher's individual analytic process, therefore, the length of memos is not a concern as long as the researcher gives the memo a title and does not leave out a thought. Like coding, memo-writing should be

repeated several times, and Charmaz divides memos into two types; early memos and advanced memos. Once the researcher feels they have explored all ideas and the categories are crystallized, a written summary of the results can be pursued.

### Interview Process

Participants were asked by family and friends of the researcher if they would like to participate in the study and then contacted by the researcher via telephone, email, or direct contact with their approval. Any questions that the participants had, pertaining to the objectives of the study, were answered at this time. Participants were asked again if they would still like to participate. Willing participants were mailed Institutional Review Board forms and were asked to send the forms back to the researcher via the U.S. Postal Service. Upon arrival of signed IRB forms, three URL domain names and directions were e-mailed/mailed to participants, allowing them access to complete the online survey (see Appendix A). Using an electronic format, as opposed to a hand-written hard copy, benefited the study by encouraging participants to type the answers to survey questions quickly and freely. In order to reduce biased responses, participants only had access to one question at a time in numeric order, and were not able to access questions already completed. Allowing participants to remain anonymous and have enough time to answer questions was a priority; therefore, the survey was split into three parts. The survey subcontractor required that anonymous surveys be completed in one sitting. Once each survey part was submitted and complete, the participant was sent a message confirming that data was received. Each participant's data was printed and put onto one USB drive. The data was locked, allowing only the researchers access to the data. One year after the data was collected the data will be destroyed.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

The results in this study were conceptualized using direct responses from twenty online surveys that contained answers to open-ended questions. Using a grounded theory approach, data was coded several times until it was broken into its most basic form. This form resulted in categories and themes that could be analyzed, the second step known as “memo making.” Conclusions were made from the analysis of memos.

#### Initial Coding

Using the previously mentioned coding methods suggested by Cathy Charmaz (2006), information given to me by the participants was first translated into very basic statements. Notes based directly from the participants’ response were hand written next to the data. Generally, these notes did not stray far from the direct response of the participant, but allowed me to remove words that were understood and deemed unnecessary, such as the word “I”, or articles such as “the” or “a”. Also during this step, I grouped words together, such as verbs and nouns, in order to paint a more complete picture of an incident. Words used in the same context can evoke/hold very different emotions, which is why I felt that during this step, it was important to include the exact terminology used by participants. During this time, notes were also made from implied data, or participant information that was not directly stated, but was very obviously implied either from words that were not used, or statements that indirectly implied a piece of information. Along with this, I added question marks next to data that was unclear.

In order to further organize the large amount of participant data and make sure that none of the data was overlooked, I decided that it was necessary to create another method of

coding. Each survey was again analyzed and every piece of information, sequentially stated by the participant, was typed up and given a code (see Appendix B). Data that was incomplete, not directly implied, or not obviously indirectly implied was still given a code, although a question mark was added to the end of the statement. Each participant within a particular age category was given a number (1 through 5). Pieces of data were categorized first by the age of the participant, then by their participant number, and lastly by the sequential number of the piece of data within each participant's data group. Below is an example of a piece of data from participant number two in the thirty eight to forty seven year old age category.

*(38-47).2.38 Will discuss pubic grooming with daughters early on*

Almost all pieces of data were written in first person, as if stated by the participant and similar to the notes discussed earlier, participant terminology was usually used in the next coding step. Using the previously mentioned notes, I reanalyzed each participant's survey, keeping in mind any misinterpretations that might be causing bias. Reevaluating the surveys a second time allowed me to tie up any loose ends regarding statements that were unclear and also confirmed that no data was left out. If any data was left out, a new piece of data was added to the participant's data list, inversely, if any of the participants' statements remained unclear then the piece of data was removed.

### Focused Coding

After codes were created for all participants' data I began the next step in Charmaz's suggested data interpretation process. Using the subject matter of several survey questions as categories, pieces of data were grouped together vertically, in order to make comparisons between each age category's responses. Listed below is an example of an initial focused

category that contains codes relating to participants' perceived benefits of pubic hair depilation/trimming. For all initially focused categories see Appendix B.

### Perceived Benefits of Pubic Hair Depilation/Trimming

- (18-27).1.10 Felt more clean after initial depilation
- (18-27).2.5 Benefit after initial experience: no visible bikini line hair
- (18-27).2.6 Benefit after initial experience: Easier on period
- (18-27).2.7 Benefit after initial experience: men like it
- (18-27).2.10 Taking off all hair is easier –leave?
- (18-27).3.6 Finds full depilation aesthetically pleasing
- (18-27).5.3 Visible pubic hair is an “eye sore” (in bathing suit)
- (18-27).5.4 Depilated pubic region feels clean
  
- (28-37).2.3 Depilating sides looked cleaner
- (28-37).3.5 After getting professionally waxed it looked better
- (28-37).3.6 After getting professionally waxed it felt better
- (28-37).5.8 I liked not worrying about unsightly hair
- (28-37).5.9 It felt cleaner (how much) (definitely after anal depilation)
- (28-37).5.10 Wasn't as much smell (hair traps “sex smell”)
  
- (38-47).1.3 Looked neater after trimming
- (38-47).2.5 Great that hair was no longer visible
- (38-47).2.30 Was more comfortable after laser treatments on bikini line
- (38-47).2.35 Sexual benefits from depilation are a bonus
- (38-47).2.36 Really liked not having all that hair (full depilation)
- (38-47).3.2 Is happy with less bulkiness
- (38-47).4.3 Liked that no hair showed
- (38-47).5.9 Later, also for hygienic reasons- easier without it there
- (38-47).5.11 Liked that hairs could not be seen
- (38-47).5.12 It felt better
- (38-47).5.13 It felt cleaner
- (38-47).5.28 People do what other people dictate, but I think it feels better
  
- (48-57).1.2 Liked going to pool and not be made fun of
- (48-57).2.2 Liked it not being visible
- (48-57).2.4 Trimming looked neater/less poofie
- (48-57).3.2 Liked the immediate aesthetic effect (after depilating sides)
- (48-57).4.6 After depilating looked neater
- (48-57).4.7 After depilating felt more comfortable with no visible bikini hair
- (48-57).4.8 Less hair felt more sexy with partner
- (48-57).5.3 Liked the way it looked (like a little peach)
- (48-57).5.4 Felt cleaner (landing strip)- more “well groomed”
- (48-57).5.10 Less hair is more attractive

After categories based on survey questions were created, I went through the participant data to find themes that were not used as questions in the survey. For instance, several of the participants mention sexual activity in relation to their grooming procedures, some referring to it as an activity to experience with their partners and others referring to the influence that it has on their grooming decisions. Listed below is the category and all relating data pieces.

### Sexual Activity

- (18-27).1.3 Progressed to taking off labia/anal hair because of sexual activity
- (28-37).5.5 With sexual activity I wanted to keep the area more well groomed/clean
- (28-37).5.7 Progressed from depilating top/sides to labia/back hair with sexual activity
- (28-37).5.18 Anal hair = self conscious- not good when intimate
- (28-37).5.39 Divorce/lack of intimacy has led to less grooming
- (38-47).2.32 Progressed to full depilation due to friends discussing that their husbands shaved theirs
- (38-47).4.19 Current partner offers to shave me in these areas (top/sides)
- (38-47).5.29 Men probably dictate- for oral sex purposes/ looks like young girl
- (38-47).5.23 I wanted very little hair when I became sexually active
- (38-47).2.35 Sexual benefits from depilation are a bonus
- (48-57).5.9 Progressed to landing strip (43) with sexual activity

Once all of the data was initially put into focused categories, I went through the categories that contained large amounts of data and performed a second round of focused coding, referred to as secondary focused coding. This secondary focused coding helped find themes within each subject category, and clarified trends within each age category. During this step, I made notes using familiar terminology and evaluated how much participants discussed each theme, within each age category and as a whole. Below is an example of a secondary focused category. To see all secondary focused codes see Appendix C.

### Current Pubic Hair

#### (18-27)

- 3/5 Depilate All Pubic Hair
- 1 No Depilation/ Trimming
- 1 Depilates all visible pubic hair periodically

#### (28-37)

- 1 Landing Strip/ 1 Bikini Line Landing Strip- no labia depilation with very narrow sides
- 1 Depilates All
- 1 Bikini Line
- 1 Depilates Sides/ Trims Center

#### (38-47)

- 1 Bikini Line
- 2 All Pubic Hair
- 1 No Depilation/ Trim
- 1 Trim Center

#### (48-57)

- 1 Depilates Sides/ Trims Center
- 1 Trims Side/Center
- 1 No Depilation
- 2 Landing Strip

### Memo-writing

The last step that I performed, which solidifies conclusions and clearly states the story within each focused category, is memo-writing. Using the initial and secondary focused codes, I concluded my observations in paragraph form, writing the major findings under each category.

Below are a few examples of memos. The first memo summarizes participants' discussion about pubic hair removal with friends/family, the second discusses participants feelings about male pubic grooming, and the third memo discusses participants perceived consequences of depilation and/or trimming. From these memos, answers fitting within several of the six objectives were found.

**Memo: The two oldest age categories contain participants who have never discussed with friends. All participants in the 28-37 age category discussed pubic grooming in either high school or college. The oldest age category contains the participant who first discussed with friends at the eldest age (46). All participants in the youngest two age categories had discussed pubic grooming by the time they were in their 20s.**



**Memo: Three participants in the two youngest age categories like male grooming. One participant in the 28-37 category had a partner that assumed she preferred grooming. A participant in the 38-47 category does not perceive pubic hair removal to be a common grooming ritual for men.**

**Memo: The greatest perceived consequence of trimming/depilating in the youngest age category is itchiness. The greatest perceived consequence in the oldest two age categories is razor burn/rash. 12/20 participants feel that razor/cream burning is a consequence. Two participants, in the oldest and youngest age categories, feel that the amount of time spent on depilating/trimming is a consequence. Five participants, in all age categories, mention stubble as a consequence. One participant, in the youngest age category, felt that a consequence of fully depilating the pubic region is “looking naked.” Other consequences mentioned are ingrown hair, safety issues, accidental cutting, and pain. The youngest age category is the only one to not use the word “pain” as a consequence. Participants who mention “pain” are referring to either waxing or electrolysis.**

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

Six objectives were set for this exploratory study.

#### Objective 1

The first objective was to determine if, and to what extent, American women depilate and/or trim the pubic region. Understanding approximately how much time participants spend removing their hair, as well as how much they remove, can indicate the degree to which a culture views the grooming procedure as a priority. The researchers found that 100% of the participants have, at some point in their lifetime, removed hair from their pubic region and that many of these participants continued to remove more of their pubic hair over time. Currently, 35% of the participants periodically remove all of their visible pubic hair, and the youngest age category comprised 57% of this group.

It seems that participants in the youngest age category (18-27) either completely support hairlessness or completely dislike pubic hair removal. None of the participants in this category depilate partially, meaning that they do not leave a landing strip/small tuft nor do they swimsuit groom. Eighty percent of these participants currently remove all of their visible pubic hair periodically, and one participant does not remove any pubic hair. Participants in the other three categories (28-57), however, generally wear their hair one of four ways: no depilation, swimsuit grooming, landing strip, or total depilation. The most commonly performed of these four methods, making up 40% of the women in these three age categories, is swimsuit grooming. The second most commonly practiced grooming method is the landing strip, which is worn by 27% of the women. Lastly, 20% of the 15 women in these categories remove all pubic hair, leaving only 13% that do not depilate at all.

It is important to note some grooming trends within these three categories. Participants in the oldest age category practice almost all of these grooming methods, although, it is the only age category that does not contain any participants who depilate all pubic hair. Similar but opposite of this are participants in the 28-37 age category, which does not include any women who let their pubic hair grow out naturally. Fittingly, no women in the 38-47 age category groom the landing strip.

### Objective 2

The second objective was to understand American women's perception of benefits and/or negative consequences in regards to pubic hair depilation and/or trimming. The benefit most frequently mentioned by participants in the two oldest age categories, is that depilating and/or trimming removes the visibility of pubic hair. Several participants expressed feelings of negativity towards visible pubic hair, calling it 'unsightly' (28-37).5.8 or an 'eye sore' (18-27).5.3. One participant and her girlfriends discussed visible pubic hair at the pool, concluding that women should depilate any visible pubic hair (38-47).4.10-12, while another participant stated that 'going to pool and not be made fun of [sic]' is advantageous (48-57).1.2.

The youngest two age categories, however, most frequently mention cleanliness as a benefit. This data confirms Ruth Barcan's (2004) idea of hair increasingly being regarded as dirt. A theme that arose within the data is the idea of pubic hair as a barrier, or something that can trap substances considered dirty by participants. Some substances that were mentioned include menstruation blood (18-27).2.6, fecal matter (28-37).5.9, and 'sex smell' (28-37).5.10. This concern of having a smelly pubic region is also discussed in the literature review by researchers Goldman, Milman, Blackledge, and Hillier.

Another common benefit, mentioned by participants in all age categories, is what several participants call ‘the aesthetic effect’ (48-57).3.2. Aesthetic in this case, means that grooming makes the region visually pleasing (48-57).5.3, as well as tactilely pleasing (38-47).5.12. Participants seem to be in agreement with Deborah Driggs (2005), who stated that women will feel increased physical pleasure and comfort from a depilated pubic area. Several participants in the oldest two age categories feel that a depilated and/or trimmed pubic region looks ‘neater’, a category that could fit somewhere between cleanliness and aesthetics. Although the benefits just discussed are the most frequent responses of participants, there are three other benefits mentioned. Two of the women who trim their pubic mounds say that a benefit of their grooming is ‘less bulkiness’ (48-57).2.4. One of these participants was concerned about her pubic mound being too bulky for her bathing suit, which is mentioned in the literature review section “Accommodating the Silhouette.” A less obvious response from one participant is that depilating produces ‘sexual benefits,’ while two other participants mention their partners’ response to their grooming as being a benefit. Although it is unclear, these participants might have been referring to some of the sexual benefits discussed in the “Physical Pleasure and Comfort” section of the literature review.

Overall, the most frequently mentioned negative consequence of depilating and/or trimming is the ‘burn’ caused by either a razor or cream depilatory. This is the most frequently mentioned consequence with the two oldest age categories, which some referred to as ‘razor burn’ and others referred to as ‘razor rash,’ each having effects that generally go hand in hand. Unlike the majority and two oldest age categories, the youngest age category most frequently mentioned ‘itchiness’ as a consequence. This might be the case due to the fact that the youngest age category is most likely to remove hair from the entire pubic area.

Another consequence, mentioned by participants from all age categories, are the aesthetic effects of newly grown hair coming in directly after depilation, referred to by some participants as ‘stubble.’ One participant was unhappy with the way stubble looks and the other participants say that uncomfortable stubble is the cause of their itchiness. Several participants stated that they have tried waxing/ electrolysis to alleviate the consequences of stubble/ razor burn/ ingrown hairs/ accidental cutting. Several of these participants, however, feel that these procedures have their own set of consequences. One participant stated that electrolysis is ‘too expensive’ (48-57).4.5, two participants feel uncomfortable exposing their entire pubic region to an esthetician, while several other participants mention ‘pain’ as a consequence of these procedures. Whether the youngest age category has a higher tolerance for pain or less disposable income for depilation procedures, it is the only category to not mention the word ‘pain’ as a consequence. Some other consequences of depilation that participants mention include the amount of time that depilating takes, thicker hair, and feeling naked [after depilating all hair].

### Objective 3

The third objective was to determine the motivations of American women to depilate and/or trim their pubic hair. This objective becomes more complex since several participants had motivations for removing specific areas of pubic hair at different periods throughout their lifetime. A majority of participants in the oldest three age categories initially removed their pubic hair to accommodate the silhouette of a bathing suit, and in this case most removed the hair closest to the bikini line. The oldest age category has the largest majority of participants who initially depilated to accommodate a silhouette. Unlike the oldest three age categories, the youngest age category is most likely to initially remove all visible pubic hair due to verbal discussion regarding pubic hair grooming. One participant in the youngest age category

perceived pubic hair removal as common and depilated all of her pubic hair out of curiosity (18-27).4.4. Another participant also became curious about pubic hair removal after her boyfriend asked her if she'd ever tried it (28-37).1.2. Two participants from the other categories had different reasons for initial hair removal. A participant from the 38-47 age category initially removed her pubic hair to avoid being humiliated, and a participant from the 48-57 age category initially removed pubic hair because her hair growth increased after childbirth.

Some other motivations for pubic hair removal were to achieve the benefits or alleviate the consequences of depilation/trimming that were previously discussed in objective two. Another motivation, discussed in objective five, is the influence of media on participants grooming decisions. One participant, in the 18-27 age category, said that she is encouraged by celebrities and models who depilate their pubic area. Participants do discuss, however, motivations that are less obvious. A participant in the 48-57 age category discussed how her grooming has changed based on her body's changes, and consequently her perception of her body based on those changes. She stated, "As I got older I felt the need to trim even more. As my body changed so did my idea of what looked good to me." Another change, that seemed to motivate several participants, was the popularity of the pubic hairstyle known as the landing strip. "It became fashionable to be groomed in this way and it was how the men liked it!" said one participant. From this comment we can see that pubic hair is both used and viewed as a fashion device by some women.

Over half of the participants' have considered how their partners feel about their pubic hair. The degree to which participants consider the opinion of their partner(s) differs. For instance, one participant said that her partner "would have liked if [she] took it all off, but [I] never have," while another participant said, "I currently trim my entire pubic area because that is

the preference of my boyfriend.” Even participants who do not depilate consider the preference of their partner(s), such as a participant who said that her boyfriend “liked that it was all there” and “thinks it’s sexy.”

#### Objective 4

The fourth objective was to understand the bodily experience of pubic hair depilation and/or trimming amongst several age groups of American women. The bodily experiences of participants in the youngest age category started on a different note than experiences of participants in the other three categories. Unlike other participants, most women in the youngest age category initially removed all of their visible hair. Only one other participant, in the 28-37 age category, initially removed all of her pubic hair. Participants in older age categories, who have removed all of their pubic hair, have either transitioned into it or have tried full removal at different periods in their life. The youngest age category has removed more hair at an earlier stage in their lives. In other words, they are the first group of women who have spent a majority of their adulthood without visible pubic hair. However, it is important to note that several of the women from the youngest age category, who did not initially remove all of their pubic hair, progressed to removing hair from other areas in the transition to full depilation. The labia/anal area was the second location of hair removal for four out of the ten participants in the two youngest age categories, making the area a new point of transition within the bodily experience of women and their pubic hair depilation. One participant in the youngest age category has had a bodily experience that is anachronistic from the experiences of several other participants in the study. In this case the participant depilated all of her pubic hair and progressed back to no depilation and/or trimming. Currently, she is the only participant in this category who does not depilate all of her pubic hair.

Most women in the other age categories (28-57) have had similar initial experiences with their pubic hair. Thirteen out of these fifteen participants began with “swimsuit grooming,” which is either depilating and/or trimming the top/side pubic hair, as well as the procedure of trimming the center of the pubic mound, grooming procedures that many participants considered beneficial for going to the swimming pool. Eleven of these participants began with depilating and/or trimming pubic hair from the sides/top. After their initial experiences with their hair removal, participants in these three age categories have varying experiences that fit into two categories. A minority (4) of these thirteen participants fit into a category that either continued with their initial grooming procedure and/or stopped depilating their pubic hair. Most participants (9), however, fit into the other category, which meant that the participant progressed to removing more hair from another area. Out of these nine participants, three then went on to remove hair until they were fully depilated. It is important to note that participants in the oldest three age categories have removed areas of their pubic hair at different points in their life, for a number of different reasons, therefore clarifying the relationship between women and their pubic hair as complex.

#### Objective 5

The fifth objective was to understand the influence of various media outlets on American women’s decision to depilate and/or trim the pubic region. The two youngest age categories (18-37) gave a significantly greater number of examples that refer to media discussing pubic hair removal, and unlike the other three age categories, no participants in the youngest category stated that they have not seen any media relating to this subject. Half of the participants in the two youngest categories, for instance, mention the television series *Sex and the City*, whereas only one participant in the oldest two age categories mentions the show. Younger



participants are more aware of media discussing pubic hair removal, however, only 20% of participants in all age categories claimed that they have not seen any discussion.

A significantly greater number of women, 45%, claimed that they have not seen depilated pubic regions in the media. The oldest age category contains a majority of participants who fall into this percentage, while the rest of the participants are evenly distributed between the other three categories. Six participants from all categories say that they have seen depilated pubic regions on models wearing swimsuits/underwear in media, and five participants from all age categories are aware of depilated porn stars. Women in the 38-47 age category, who are aware of depilated porn stars, are also the participants who remove a greater amount of pubic hair. Unlike the previously discussed questions, which were meant to gauge each participant's awareness of pubic hair media, the third question asked participants about media's encouragement/discouragement on their own pubic hair grooming. Seven participants feel that media has encouraged them to depilate their pubic area, while six participants feel that media has not encouraged their grooming decisions. The oldest age category is the only one that contains a majority of participants who feel no encouragement from media.

#### Objective 6

The sixth objective was to determine changes in pubic hair grooming rituals through the life span of women in the past fifty years. Based on the previous six objectives, it is easy to see that hair removal has gained momentum, especially within the last 15 years. One participant in the oldest age category, for example, first depilated all of her pubic hair (leaving a "small tuft" in the center) at the age of 35, or between the years 1996 and 2005. Another participant, in the 38-47 age category, first depilated all of her pubic hair in the last several years.

Popular culture's preference of the landing strip might have transitioned to a preference for total hair removal somewhere in the early 1990s. A majority of participants in the youngest age group, however, removed all of their visible pubic hair at the age of fourteen, or between the years 1996 and 2005. Participants may have initially depilated their pubic hair into a landing strip if it were still popular culture's most preferred grooming method. Further supporting this transition, is data from a participant in the 28-37 age category, who first got all of her pubic hair completely waxed at the age of 22, or between the years 1994 and 2003.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

From July 2009-August 2009, 20 American women between the ages of 18 and 57 participated in an online survey in order to obtain the necessary data required to further understand pubic hair removal. Using a two-step process that involves coding and memo-writing, the researchers discovered findings within all six of the previously mentioned objectives.

#### Results

- A majority of women between the ages 18 and 27 periodically remove all visible pubic hair.
- A majority of women between the ages 48 and 57 have not seen women in media with depilated pubic regions.
- Younger women are more aware of media discussing pubic grooming.
- A majority of American women, between the ages 18-57, are aware of some form of pubic hair removal discussion in media.
- Women between the ages of 48 and 57 are less likely to feel that media has encouraged their pubic grooming decisions.
- A majority of women between the ages 18 and 27 initially remove their pubic hair due to discussion with friends.
- A majority of participants between the ages 28 and 57 initially remove their pubic hair to accommodate a swimsuit.
- A majority of participants between the ages 18 and 27 consider discussion about pubic hair grooming to be normal everyday conversation.

- A majority of women between the ages 18 and 37 perceive cleanliness as the greatest benefit of depilation and/or trimming.

### Conclusion

According to the findings of the exploratory study American women's relationship with pubic hair has taken drastic turns in the last 15 years. The first very obvious change is how much pubic hair removal has penetrated the lives of women and men in today's culture. Participants in the 18-27 age category have had a very different experience with pubic hair than other participants, due to this changing role. Participants in this category have had more contact with media discussing pubic hair removal, have removed all visible pubic hair as a mundane grooming procedure for a majority of their lives, and view pubic hair discussion as normal everyday conversation. One participant in this category said, "It seems abnormal NOT to groom the area." Women between 28 and 57 have actually witnessed more of these changes. Several of these women progressed into depilating significantly more pubic hair in recent years and say that they have discussed pubic grooming with friends/family more as they have gotten older. For many, pubic hair removal has been a very conscious, meaningful experience with themselves and their relationship with others. Two mothers feel that pubic hair removal should be discussed with their daughters when giving them the "body changes and sex" talk, and one of these mothers said, "My mother would have never brought this subject up." Several women feel very strongly about their pubic hair changes. One participant said, "This [progressive hair removal] began as a functional journey for me but has evolved into much more." Another participant stated that, throughout her lifetime, she has "tried a plethora of ways [pubic hair styles]."

All of the participants mention catalysts previously discussed from chapter two, supporting previous literature on the topic. The only catalyst not discussed by any participant is the “Fitness Craze” category. A catalyst that was highly discussed by participants, in relation to the literature review, is “Pornography.” Although only 25% of participants noted that they are aware of depilated porn stars, two participants voice their feelings about porn stars influence on pubic hair depilation. One participant stated that, “the Internet has brought sex to a different arena” and that “some women feel the need to look just like the girls in pornos just to please their man.” Another participant discusses her experience with a man who “insisted it was normal to not have hair there,” stating “his proof was *Playboy* magazine.” Almost half of the participants initially removed their pubic hair to accommodate a swimsuit, and several others considered it a major benefit when going to the pool. Hygiene was the major benefit for the youngest age category, confirming the previously stated belief that hair is increasingly being seen as dirt. As stated previously, several of the participants discussed the idea of hair being less hygienic because it can trap unwanted substances. A theme mentioned frequently by participants was “Reinforcement Through Humiliation.” Not being made fun of/ feeling embarrassed was considered a major benefit of removing pubic hair by participants. Several participants also mention that they have seen this reinforcement in recent comedy movies/ sitcoms. One participant referred to pubic hair as a fashion device, stating she preferred the landing strip because “it became fashionable to be groomed in this way.” Another initial focused category was Sexual Activity, which is a branch of the catalyst “Physical Pleasure & Comfort”. Participants mentioned the “sexual benefits” of hair removal and one woman even discussed hesitation to perform oral sex due to non-grooming. In terms of comfort, several participants said that they like the way their pubic area feels after depilating. None of the participants mention

looking youthful as a benefit of hair removal, but a couple of participants do mention the consequence of looking “prepubescent,” one referring to her own feelings and another referring to a friends.

### Implications

American women’s bodies are no longer private. The last few inches that were acceptable to be untouched have transformed into an area of active involvement. This is an important turning point that women should recognize. We are now taught to pay attention and make considerations about every part of our body. Our society thrives on self-improvement and the pubic region has increasingly been seen and discussed for the last 30 years. It is no surprise that this area has become another candidate for objectification of the body. Data found that American media is now honing in on pubic hair depilation, sending the message that depilation is now a societal requirement. Data also found, however, that pubic hair removal is not yet a ‘mundane’ procedure. Many of the participants changed the way they groomed their pubic area at different periods in their lives for various reasons, such as accommodating a bathing suit or complying with the wishes of a partner.

This pubic hair depilation debate is arising in media outlets due to a generational, and therefore, cultural divide about pubic hair. The youngest age category has seen more media on pubic hair depilation than any previous generation in American history, and some were very aware of particular media that has influenced their grooming decisions. Several participants between the ages of 28 and 57 explained their perceptions of a cultural change regarding pubic hair. Participants between the ages of 48 and 57 had not tried full pubic hair removal and they were the most likely to feel no influence from media on their grooming decisions. Generation Y

views pubic hair as dirty and cleans up the body using total depilation. The Baby Boom Generation has not traditionally thought this to be the case. It is important to bring this type of discussion to the foreground in order to understand cultural changes; it is my hope that this study motivates further discussions and research on the topic.

Despite media's influence, it is important to remember that women's pubic hair grooming decisions are complex. From the data we see that women consider a number of factors; how their bodies look with their pubic hair groomed in different styles, how their pubic hair feels on and/or removed from their bodies, how their friends groom their pubic hair, the role that pubic hair plays in their sexual activity, personal hygiene, etc. Today women like to be in control of their pubic hair and are less timid to experiment with it. On one hand, this implies that we are adopting a more relaxed attitude toward our bodies. On the other hand, it implies that we are moving away from what is natural.

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## APPENDIX A

## Electronic Survey

## I. Demographic Information:

- 1) Age category (choose one):      18-27      28-37      38-47      48-57

## II. Information Relating to Grooming Practices

- 1) If you have ever depilated and/or trimmed your pubic area, how old were you when this was tried for the first time and what encouraged you to do so? If you have not, what discouraged you to do so?
- 2) Was the hair depilated and/or trimmed and what method of removal did you use?
- 3) What area(s) of the pubic region was the hair removed (for example: top- hair closest to the belly button, sides- hair closest to the legs, center- all hair on pubic mound including sides, bottom- labia hair, back- anal hair)?
- 4) What did you find beneficial after depilating and/or trimming?
- 5) What did you not like after depilating and/or trimming?
- 6) Did your grooming habits, in regards to depilation and/or trimming, change after your first time and if so how? Please include area descriptions – tops, sides, center, bottom, back.
- 7) What were your reasons for changing/not changing your grooming habits?
- 8) Was pubic hair grooming ever discussed with friends? If so, at what age was this discussed and how did your friends feel about it? If not, why do you believe this was never discussed?
- 9) Was pubic hair grooming ever discussed with partner(s)? If so, how did they feel about it?

- 10) Have you noticed any media (movies, television, music, magazines, etc) that discuss depilation and/or trimming to the pubic area, and if so, where?
- 11) Have you seen any depilated and/or trimmed pubic regions (women) in the media, and if so, where?
- 12) If you have noticed any media that discuss depilation and/or trimming to the pubic area or if you have seen any depilated pubic regions (women) in the media, have these media outlets encouraged/discouraged you from depilating and/or trimming your own pubic region?
- 13) Do you currently depilate and/or trim your pubic region and if so, how much?
- 14) What method do you use to remove the hair?
- 15) If applicable, how does your partner(s)/spouse feel about your grooming decisions?
- 16) At this time, if you have any reflections, thoughts, or data about this topic, that you find relevant or that we (the researchers) have not asked for, please share below.

## APPENDIX B

## INITIAL CODING

- (18-27).1.1 Initially shaved all visible hair
- (18-27).1.2 Initially took off all visible hair because of discussion with friends
- (18-27).1.3 Progressed to taking off labia/anal hair because of sexual activity
- (18-27).1.4 Discussion about grooming started with friends @ 12/13
- (18-27).1.5 Discussion about grooming is comfortable “normal”
- (18-27).1.6 Friends compare grooming methods
- (18-27).1.7 Discusses pubic grooming with close boyfriends
- (18-27).1.8 Partners don’t have a preference
- (18-27).1.9 Partners don’t want a “scary” amount of hair
- (18-27).1.10 Felt more clean after initial depilation
- (18-27).1.11 Did not like razor burn after initial depilation
- (18-27).1.12 Aware of pubic grooming specialized products
- (18-27).1.13 Aware of models getting completely waxed (tv)
- (18-27).1.14 No visible hair on women’s bikini line
- (18-27).1.15 Encouraged all the time, but not outright (to depilate hair)
- (18-27).1.16 Encouraged by models/celebrities doing it (depilating)
- (18-27).1.17 Currently depilates top/sides/sometimes center
- (18-27).1.18 Gets a seasonal wax (summer) then maintains it/ Does not get a wax in winter
  
- (18-27).2.1 Initially shaved top/sides because of discussion with friends (everyone talking about it) 18-20
- (18-27).2.2 Initially shaved top/sides
- (18-27).2.3 Progressed into depilating top/sides with cream depilatory
- (18-27).2.4 Currently depilates all pubic hair once every week or two
- (18-27).2.5 Benefit after initial experience: no visible bikini line hair
- (18-27).2.6 Benefit after initial experience: Easier on period
- (18-27).2.7 Benefit after initial experience: men like it
- (18-27).2.8 Did not like itching from second day stubble
- (18-27).2.9 Progressed into depilating all pubic hair
- (18-27).2.10 Taking off all hair is easier
- (18-27).2.11 Older partners prefer less hair (“older”- more mature)
- (18-27).2.12 Aware of advertisement for liquid depilatories
- (18-27).2.13 Aware of Britney Spears “crotch shot”
- (18-27).2.14 Has not seen depilated pubic regions in the media
- (18-27).2.15 Aware of Sex and the City/Las Vegas
- (18-27).2.16 If removing hair, take it all off
- (18-27).2.17 Current partner like full depilation
- (18-27).2.18 Aware of some tv shows having hair, other movies not
- (18-27).2.19 Discussed pubic grooming with friends in college
- (18-27).2.20 Tried Nair- burned too much

- (18-27).3.1 Initially depilated (shaved) sides
- (18-27).3.2 Initially depilated (shaved) sides to accommodate a bikini
- (18-27).3.3 Tried waxing to avoid razor burn (21)
- (18-27).3.4 Did not like waxing- felt uncomfortable due to modesty
- (18-27).3.5 Currently depilates entire pubic region
- (18-27).3.6 Finds full depilation aesthetically pleasing
- (18-27).3.7 Does not like razor burn
- (18-27).3.8 Does not like the amount of time given to depilation
- (18-27).3.9 Progressed to depilating all but center (17-19)
- (18-27).3.10 Currently depilates entire pubic region to please boyfriend
- (18-27).3.11 Currently depilates entire pubic region for her own aesthetic preference
- (18-27).3.12 Discussed pubic grooming with friends in high school (17)
- (18-27).3.13 Pubic grooming/preferences now highly discussed amongst friends
- (18-27).3.14 Initial conversation about hair was uncomfortable
- (18-27).3.15 Discussed pubic grooming with two men in college
- (18-27).3.16 Wants mutual caring (with pubic preferences) – male grooming?
- (18-27).3.17 Aware of advertisements for methods of pubic grooming
- (18-27).3.18 Aware of depilated porn stars
- (18-27).3.19 More aware of an undepilated pubic region
- (18-27).3.20 Doesn't pay much attention to pubic regions ( in media/on porn stars)?
- (18-27).3.21 Feels that media encourages depilation/trimming
- (18-27).3.22 Boyfriend prefers total depilation
- (18-27).3.23 Grooming is seasonal
- (18-27).3.24 Depilates every other day in summer
- (18-27).3.25 Depilates once a week in winter
  
- (18-27).4.1. Initially shaved off all hair (14)
- (18-27).4.2 Initially shaved off all hair due to curiosity
- (18-27).4.3 Initially shaved off all hair due to word of mouth
- (18-27).4.4 Initially shaved off all hair because perceived as common
- (18-27).4.5 Did not like the way full depilation felt
- (18-27).4.6 Does not like feeling naked
- (18-27).4.7 Does not like feeling itchy
- (18-27).4.8 Felt distracted by itching
- (18-27).4.9 Smooth the first day then misery (second day stubble)
- (18-27).4.10 Continued to try full depilation – always disappointed
- (18-27).4.11 Progressed to depilating sides/top
- (18-27).4.12 Skin became use to contact- no longer itchy
- (18-27).4.13 Progressed to/Currently no depilation/trimming
- (18-27).4.14 Not worth the effort
- (18-27).4.15 Not worth the discomfort
- (18-27).4.16 Current boyfriend think hair is sexy
- (18-27).4.17 Current boyfriend think hairless looks like little girl
- (18-27).4.18 Discussed with two best friends at 18
- (18-27).4.19 One friend now depilates for boyfriend
- (18-27).4.20 One friend has always done landing strip



- (18-27).4.21 Now discusses with less close friends
- (18-27).4.22 Discussing grooming with getting older
- (18-27).4.23 Discussing grooming because less taboo
- (18-27).4.24 Current boyfriends opinion of hair makes her feel more comfortable
- (18-27).4.25 Aware of discussion via Sex and the City (movie/series)
- (18-27).4.26 Aware of reinforcement through humiliation- in SATC
- (18-27).4.27 Assumes models depilate- no visible hair
- (18-27).4.28 No perceived encouragement/discouragement- already made up mind
- (18-27).4.29 Friends depilate for men, not themselves

- (18-27).5.1 Initially shaved all pubic hair
- (18-27).5.2 Initially shaved all hair due to no visible hair on girls at pool
- (18-27).5.3 Visible pubic hair is an “eye sore” (in bathing suit)
- (18-27).5.4 Depilated pubic region feels clean
- (18-27).5.5 Did not like itching
- (18-27).5.6 Continued/currently shaves all pubic hair every 3-4 days
- (18-27).5.7 No pubic hair is a personal preference
- (18-27).5.8 Discussed only with sister due to shyness
- (18-27).5.9 All previous partners have groomed
- (18-27).5.10 All previous partners find depilation normal
- (18-27).5.11 Not grooming your pubic hair is abnormal
- (18-27).5.12 Aware of television commercials advertising bikini wax
- (18-27).5.13 Has not seen any groomed pubic regions in the media
- (18-27).5.14 Partners prefer her to be groomed

- (28-37).1.1 Initially trimmed center of pubic mound
- (28-37).1.2 Initially groomed because boyfriend asked her if she’d tried it
- (28-37).1.3 Trimming did not feel beneficial
- (28-37).1.4 Hair felt thicker after trimming
- (28-37).1.5 Felt irritating
- (28-37).1.6 Never trimmed again
- (28-37).1.7 Did not have a problem with “too much hair”
- (28-37).1.8 Progressed to tweezing hair on bikini line (to accommodate a bikini)
- (28-37).1.9 Realized I did not have much hair
- (28-37).1.10 Waxing is not necessary for me
- (28-37).1.11 Aware of other girls getting waxed
- (28-37).1.12 First discussed with sister and friend (15/16)
- (28-37).1.13 Sister/friend shaved and complained about itch
- (28-37).1.14 I mentioned a Brazilian wax to my boyfriend
- (28-37).1.15 My boyfriend thought getting a Brazilian wax was strange
- (28-37).1.16 My boyfriend probably didn’t know what a Brazilian is
- (28-37).1.17 Aware of pube discussion in comedies
- (28-37).1.18 Aware of pube discussion in Sex and the City/Bruno
- (28-37).1.19 Aware of article discussing how to deal with waxing
- (28-37).1.20 Hasn’t seen any depilated pubic regions in media
- (28-37).1.21 Initially intrigued with the idea of depilation

- (28-37).1.22 Never tried waxing because of pain
- (28-37).1.23 Never tried waxing because partner is happy with pubic hair
- (28-37).1.24 Currently tweezes hairs around bikini line
- (28-37).1.25 Partner knows I get paranoid when swimming
- (28-37).1.26 Partner reassures me that I am not hairy
- (28-37).1.27 Old partner that groomed made me feel strange
- (28-37).1.28 Old partner was presumptuous to think that I wanted him to groom
  
- (28-37).2.1 Initially shaved bikini area closest to the legs (H.S)
- (28-37).2.2 Initially shaved bikini area for swimsuit season
- (28-37).2.3 Depilating sides looked cleaner
- (28-37).2.4 Did not like razor burn after initial depilation
- (28-37).2.5 Did not like stubble after initial depilation
- (28-37).2.6 Progressed to depilating all hair except landing strip
- (28-37).2.7 Tried chemical removal and waxing
- (28-37).2.8 Landing strip became fashionable
- (28-37).2.9 Men liked the landing strip
- (28-37).2.10 I first discussed pubic grooming in my 20s
- (28-37).2.11 I discussed it more the older I got
- (28-37).2.12 Discussion about it has become an open topic of conversation
- (28-37).2.13 Partners encouraged depilation
- (28-37).2.14 Partners encouragement to depilate is a recent trend
- (28-37).2.15 Discussion about pubic grooming in media is everywhere
- (28-37).2.16 Aware of discussion in magazines
- (28-37).2.17 Aware of discussion in Sex and the City
- (28-37).2.18 Aware of discussion at the spas
- (28-37).2.19 Aware of depilated Playboy models
- (28-37).2.20 This media has encouraged me to depilate
- (28-37).2.21 If I'm not feeling lazy, I groom monthly (still all except landing strip?)
- (28-37).2.22 If I groom now, I use Veet
  
- (28-37).3.1 Initially took off all hair? (center/anal via professional waxing) (22)
- (28-37).3.2 Initially got professionally waxed
- (28-37).3.3 Initially waxed because friends like it
- (28-37).3.4 Initially waxed because I do not like hair
- (28-37).3.5 After getting professionally waxed it looked better
- (28-37).3.6 After getting professionally waxed it felt better
- (28-37).3.7 Getting waxed was painful
- (28-37).3.8 Currently depilates all hair?
- (28-37).3.9 I liked full depilation and stuck with it
- (28-37).3.10 Started discussing with friends at 22
- (28-37).3.11 My friends were all doing it (waxing?)
- (28-37).3.12 Partners have always liked it
- (28-37).3.13 I have not noticed any media that discuss depilation
- (28-37).3.14 I have not noticed any depilated pubic regions in the media
- (28-37).3.15 Currently I trim/shave weekly

(28-37).3.16 My current partner likes my depilation

- (28-37).4.1 Initially shaved sides
  - (28-37).4.2 Initially shaved sides to accommodate bathing suit
  - (28-37).4.3 Initially depilated sides because friends were doing it
  - (28-37).4.4 Initially depilated sides because visible hair is embarrassing
  - (28-37).4.5 Progressed to also trimming top/center
  - (28-37).4.6 Progressed to shaving more off sides
  - (28-37).4.7 Currently shaves sides more narrow and trim top/center
  - (28-37).4.8 Current partner hasn't complained, so he must like it
  - (28-37).4.9 Pubic grooming was discussed with previous partners
  - (28-37).4.10 Doesn't remember previous partners neg./pos. feelings about it
  - (28-37).4.11 Started discussing with friends and sister (15/16)
  - (28-37).4.12 Everyone wanted to do what was socially expected
  - (28-37).4.13 Aware of movies/television/books with discussion on pubic grooming
  - (28-37).4.14 Aware of magazines with waxing stories and grooming trends
  - (28-37).4.15 Aware of women in bikinis with no visible hair
  - (28-37).4.16 Aware of Sex and the City
  - (28-37).4.17 Aware of discussion about Brazilian waxing
  - (28-37).4.18 Recent discussion has not convinced me to try a Brazilian wax
  - (28-37).4.19 Depilated more hair after hearing other people's habits- try new things
- 
- (28-37).5.1 Initially trimmed bikini line to accommodate bathing suit (m.s)
  - (28-37).5.2 Progressed to shaving/cream depilatories in h.s
  - (28-37).5.3 Discussed grooming with close girl friends in h.s- share stories/make suggestions
  - (28-37).5.4 Many friends in h.s trimmed most of the hair/shaved bikini line
  - (28-37).5.5 With sexual activity I wanted to keep the area more well groomed/clean
  - (28-37).5.6 Nair was fast, smooth, and easy but burned/ not sure how long to leave on
  - (28-37).5.7 Progressed from depilating top/sides to labia/back hair with sexual activity
  - (28-37).5.8 I liked not worrying about unsightly hair
  - (28-37).5.9 It felt cleaner (how much) (definitely after anal depilation)
  - (28-37).5.10 Wasn't as much smell (hair traps "sex smell")
  - (28-37).5.11 Progressed from shaving to cream depilatories
  - (28-37).5.12 Progressed back to shaving
  - (28-37).5.13 Do not like razor burn/ ingrown hair
  - (28-37).5.14 Progressed from trimming to depilating top/sides
  - (28-37).5.15 No problems with trimming
  - (28-37).5.16 I took off more hair with age
  - (28-37).5.17 Progressed to "landing strip"
  - (28-37).5.18 Anal hair = self conscious- not good when intimate
  - (28-37).5.19 "Major up keep" Hair grew back quicker, thicker after trimming/shaving- also widens
  - (28-37).5.20 Experimentation – Progressed to no hair
  - (28-37).5.21 Aware of depilated porn stars (they have electrolysis/no problems)
  - (28-37).5.22 Partners had different preferences – most prefer landing strip
  - (28-37).5.23 Some partners preferred\* it natural \*didn't care "full bush"

- (28-37).5.24 Some partners preferred\* bald \*loved - ex husband/her like this
- (28-37).5.25 Partners made suggestions
- (28-37).5.26 I'm open about sexuality – ease to discuss with friends
- (28-37).5.27 Discussion in college – stories (funny/freaky) about guys preferences
- (28-37).5.28 Partners in college offered their opinions
- (28-37).5.29 Wanted to please partner
- (28-37).5.30 Talked to partners about their grooming- likes male grooming
- (28-37).5.31 Females care more than males about grooming
- (28-37).5.32 Aware of summertime advertisements for cream/wax depilatories
- (28-37).5.33 Not aware of any media about trimming
- (28-37).5.34 Internet caused greater viewability of women having sex
- (28-37).5.35 Women groom to please their partners
- (28-37).5.36 Totally bald- new concept
- (28-37).5.37 70s/80s – women in porn had hair
- (28-37).5.38 Currently depilates sides/trims center once every week or two
- (28-37).5.39 Divorce/lack of intimacy has led to less grooming
- (28-37).5.40 Seasonal- more in summer
- (28-37).5.41 Uses new pubic grooming razor
- (28-37).5.42 Greater discussion comes with age and sexual experience
- (28-37).5.43 Women who only do what they want (don't do what men want) are close minded
- (28-37).5.44 Mom was a teen in the 60s and did not discuss
- (28-37).5.45 Friend went bald and felt prepubescent- didn't like it

- (38-47).1.1 Initially trimmed top/sides (12)
- (38-47).1.2 Initially trimmed top/sides due to curiosity
- (38-47).1.3 Looked neater after trimming
- (38-47).1.4 Felt funny after trimming
- (38-47).1.5 Never trimmed again - weird
- (38-47).1.6 Not aware of discussion in media
- (38-47).1.7 Was not discussed with previous partners
- (38-47).1.8 Not aware of depilated pubic regions in media
- (38-47).1.9 Was not discussed with friends
- (38-47).1.10 Currently does not depilate/trim
- (38-47).1.11 Current partner likes me hairy
- (38-47).1.12 Media has not encouraged to depilate

- (38-47).2.1 Initially shaved bikini line
- (38-47).2.2 Initially shaved bikini line to accommodate swimsuit
- (38-47).2.3 Initially shaved bikini line after discussing with a friend
- (38-47).2.4 Visible pubic hair outside of bathing suit was a huge concern
- (38-47).2.5 Great that hair was no longer visible
- (38-47).2.6 Did not like razor rash
- (38-47).2.7 Did not like ingrown hairs
- (38-47).2.8 Razor rash got worse if shaved two days in a row
- (38-47).2.9 Tried chemical depilatories on side
- (38-47).2.10 Progressed to waxing side hair to alleviate razor rash

- (38-47).2.11 Feels naïve for not considering further depilation
- (38-47).2.12 Catholic school girl- Brazilians not for people like me
- (38-47).2.13 I was not worldly
- (38-47).2.14 Got free laser hair removal and liked it
- (38-47).2.15 Asked husband for bikini line laser treatments
- (38-47).2.16 Friend mentioned trimming “poof” on mound to accommodate swimsuit
- (38-47).2.17 Progressed to trimming hair all over (had depilated sides)
- (38-47).2.18 Discussed only with best friend when young
- (38-47).2.19 Did not discuss for many years
- (38-47).2.20 Sorority sisters would have discussed if I wasn’t too shy
- (38-47).2.21 Discussed much later with friends
- (38-47).2.22 Discussed as an adult with mother- mentioned in relation to swimsuit
- (38-47).2.23 Aware of advertisement for body hair depilatories
- (38-47).2.24 Aware of completely depilated porn stars/models
- (38-47).2.25 Never thought much about it- not that kind of girl
- (38-47).2.26 Currently depilates entire pubic region- Brazilian
- (38-47).2.27 Currently depilates entire pubic region via waxing
- (38-47).2.28 Will depilate with laser treatments when affordable
- (38-47).2.29 Partner loves it (full depilation)
- (38-47).2.30 Was more comfortable after laser treatments on bikini line
- (38-47).2.31 Progressed to full depilation
- (38-47).2.32 Progressed to full depilation due to friends discussing that their husbands shaved theirs
- (38-47).2.33 Husband liked the idea
- (38-47).2.34 My partner and I liked the result
- (38-47).2.35 Sexual benefits from depilation are a bonus
- (38-47).2.36 Really liked not having all that hair
- (38-47).2.37 Began as functional- has evolved into much more
- (38-47).2.38 Will discuss pubic grooming with daughters early on
  
- (38-47).3.1 Initially trimmed center
- (38-47).3.2 Is happy with less bulkiness
- (38-47).3.3 Nothing that I did not like after trimming
- (38-47).3.4 Currently trims the center once a month
- (38-47).3.5 Happy with the way it is/was (trimmed)
- (38-47).3.6 I do not discuss with friends- they do not talk about it
- (38-47).3.7 Grooming was never discussed with partners
- (38-47).3.8 Not aware of media that discuss it
- (38-47).3.9 Have not seen depilated regions in media
- (38-47).3.10 Current partner does not know about my grooming decisions
- (38-47).3.11 Current partner does not care about grooming decisions
- (38-47).3.12 Has not tried waxing – heard it is painful
  
- (38-47).4.1 Initially shaved bikini line
- (38-47).4.2 Initially shaved bikini line because girls who didn’t got made fun of
- (38-47).4.3 Liked that no hair showed

- (38-47).4.4 Didn't like rash
  - (38-47).4.5 Uncomfortable when garment rubbed against it
  - (38-47).4.6 Didn't like accidentally cutting myself
  - (38-47).4.7 Grooming has not changed- still depilates swimsuit line (top/sides)
  - (38-47).4.8 No reason to shave any other areas
  - (38-47).4.9 Removing hair from other areas would be painful
  - (38-47).4.10 Discussed with friends at pool
  - (38-47).4.11 Obvious (at pool) who shaved and who did not
  - (38-47).4.12 My friends and I all felt that shaving the bikini line was necessary
  - (38-47).4.13 Partners have discussed it with me
  - (38-47).4.14 Partners feeling about grooming were usually sexual
  - (38-47).4.15 Aware of advertisements for body hair removal (tv/magazines)
  - (38-47).4.16 Aware of hairless pubic regions in magazines
  - (38-47).4.17 Encouraged to be depilated (sides/top) from ads
  - (38-47).4.18 Current partner likes it
  - (38-47).4.19 Current partner offers to shave me in these areas (top/sides)
- 
- (38-47).5.1 When my pubic hair appeared I didn't like it and thought it was embarrassing
  - (38-47).5.2 Initially trimmed the bikini line
  - (38-47).5.3 Initially trimmed the bikini line to accommodate bathing suit
  - (38-47).5.4 Progressed to shaving bikini line if I didn't have much time
  - (38-47).5.5 Progressed to cream depilatories to use on top/sides/center
  - (38-47).5.6 Older girl in college said she accidentally took too much off with cream depilatory
  - (38-47).5.7 College roommate had painful bikini wax
  - (38-47).5.8 Initially for cosmetic reasons- what's appropriate
  - (38-47).5.9 Later, also for hygienic reasons- easier without it there
  - (38-47).5.10 Used cream depilatory everywhere I could without it burning
  - (38-47).5.11 Liked that hairs could not be seen
  - (38-47).5.12 It felt better
  - (38-47).5.13 It felt cleaner
  - (38-47).5.14 I didn't like that cream depilatory is a messy process
  - (38-47).5.15 Cream depilatory stings
  - (38-47).5.16 The hair would grow back within a week
  - (38-47).5.17 Red bumps on your skin
  - (38-47).5.18 Older I became, the more I thought it was inappropriate to have hair there
  - (38-47).5.19 As an adult, progressed to bikini waxes
  - (38-47).5.20 Progressed to bikini waxes so it would last longer
  - (38-47).5.21 Bikini waxes were painful and embarrassing
  - (38-47).5.22 I could never have as much waxed as I wanted to (sides/top) too embarrassing (no back/bottom)
  - (38-47).5.23 I wanted very little hair when I became sexually active
  - (38-47).5.24 When people could see that area I was more concerned with what was normal
  - (38-47).5.25 It's become a societal thing as I've been an adult
  - (38-47).5.26 Guys thought girls were not supposed to have hair because of Playboy
  - (38-47).5.27 No pubic hair became popular when the ideal for women was boyish
  - (38-47).5.28 People do what other people dictate, but I think it feels better

- (38-47).5.29 Men probably dictate- for oral sex purposes/ looks like young girl
- (38-47).5.30 Double standard- men don't do it commonly
- (38-47).5.31 Girl across hall (college/80s) had too much pubic hair
- (38-47).5.32 Never sat around and discussed, just funny stories about bad results
- (38-47).5.33 Aware of movies/magazines that imply little to no pubic hair is norm
- (38-47).5.34 Aware of women on Howard Stern show being asked if they were natural or shaved
- (38-47).5.35 Aware of depilated women in adult movies/magazines
- (38-47).5.36 Past 25 years- every message received encourages pubic hair removal
- (38-47).5.37 Media (in last 25 years) says pubic hair is not acceptable, pretty, hygienic, feminine, or conducive to sex or fashion
- (38-47).5.38 Currently depilates all areas every couple weeks
- (38-47).5.39 Last partner never mentioned it, must have thought what I do was acceptable
- (38-47).5.40 70s or earlier- Playboy women had hair

- (48-57).1.1 Initially shaved bikini line to accommodate swimsuit
- (48-57).1.2 Liked going to pool and not be made fun of
- (48-57).1.3 Did not like razor rash
- (48-57).1.4 Progressed to depilating even more with age
- (48-57).1.5 Body changed- so did idea of what looks good
- (48-57).1.6 Did not discuss with anyone due to way I was raised
- (48-57).1.7 Partners have not discussed, but would have said something if hair got out of control
- (48-57).1.8 Aware of new pubic hair depilatory razor
- (48-57).1.9 Aware of models in advertisements who wax
- (48-57).1.10 Aware of television programs discussion about waxing
- (48-57).1.11 Would not get waxed due to safety issues/ personal privacy
- (48-57).1.12 Currently depilates sides/ trims center daily
- (48-57).1.13 Depilates more in summertime (seasonal)
- (48-57).1.14 Does not discuss with current partner
- (48-57).1.15 Current partner does not complain
- (48-57).1.16 Has discussed with children- doesn't want them to be embarrassed in swimsuit

- (48-57).2.1 Initially trimmed sides to accommodate ballet leotard
- (48-57).2.2 Liked it not being visible
- (48-57).2.3 Progressed to trimming sides and center
- (48-57).2.4 Trimming looked neater/less poofie
- (48-57).2.5 Discussed with friends (46)
- (48-57).2.6 Most of my friends trim
- (48-57).2.7 Partners were okay with it (trimming sides/center), except with electric trimmer- too spiky
- (48-57).2.8 Has not noticed media that discuss depilation to pubic region
- (48-57).2.9 Has not seen any depilated pubic regions in media
- (48-57).2.10 Currently trims once a month (side/center?)
- (48-57).2.11 Current partner is okay with my grooming decisions

- (48-57).3.1 Initially shaved sides due to increased hair growth after baby

- (48-57).3.2 Liked the immediate aesthetic effect (after depilating sides)
- (48-57).3.3 Did not like bumps/ skin irritation (razor burn)
- (48-57).3.4 Progressed to no depilation/ currently does not depilate
- (48-57).3.5 Discussed with friends in 20s/30s – before people waxed
- (48-57).3.6 Most of friends in 20s/30s shaved sides
- (48-57).3.7 Partner has been fine with whatever (hasn't ever been discussed in 30 years)
- (48-57).3.8 Aware of Sex and the City (reinforcement through humiliation)
- (48-57).3.9 Has not seen depilated pubic regions in media
- (48-57).3.10 Not encouraged from media to depilate/trim
- (48-57).3.11 Does not currently depilate/trim
- (48-57).3.12 Current partner is just happy to see anything
  
- (48-57).4.1 Initially shaved top/sides to accommodate swimsuit
- (48-57).4.2 Did not like razor burn
- (48-57).4.3 Progressed to waxing (21)
- (48-57).4.4 Progressed to electrolysis
- (48-57).4.5 Electrolysis too expensive/ painful
- (48-57).4.6 After depilating looked neater
- (48-57).4.7 After depilating felt more comfortable with no visible bikini hair
- (48-57).4.8 Less hair felt more sexy with partner
- (48-57).4.9 Progressed to depilating more from all sides and more frequently
- (48-57).4.10 Less is better
- (48-57).4.11 Has discussed with girl friends – girls/women talk about this stuff
- (48-57).4.12 Went to bar with girlfriend for first waxing experience
- (48-57).4.13 Has discussed with current partner
- (48-57).4.14 Current partner thinks less is better (wants me to take it all off)
- (48-57).4.15 Has never tried full depilation, even though partner wants her to
- (48-57).4.16 Aware of advertisements for body waxing
- (48-57).4.17 Aware of salon for Brazilian waxing
- (48-57).4.18 Not aware of any depilated pubic regions in media
- (48-57).4.19 No media has encouraged/discouraged
- (48-57).4.20 Currently waxes every 8-10 weeks leaving small amount of hair (landing strip?)
- (48-57).4.21 Current partner likes it (landing strip)
- (48-57).4.22 Progressed to waxing to avoid razor burn
  
- (48-57).5.1 Initially shaved all hair except land strip to accommodate tiny bikini
- (48-57).5.2 Lucky to have no anal hair
- (48-57).5.3 Liked the way it looked (like a little peach)
- (48-57).5.4 Felt cleaner (landing strip)- more “well groomed”
- (48-57).5.5 Did not like frequency of shaving
- (48-57).5.6 Did not like visible stubble
- (48-57).5.7 Did not like itchiness
- (48-57).5.8 Progressed to depilating only sides
- (48-57).5.9 Progressed to landing strip (43) with sexual activity
- (48-57).5.10 Less hair is more attractive
- (48-57).5.11 Discussed with friend as a teen about grooming for bathing suit purposes



- (48-57).5.12 Did not have side hair as a teen
- (48-57).5.13 Friends shaved bikini lines
- (48-57).5.14 Partner thought it was sexy (landing strip)
- (48-57).5.15 Aware of novel that contained discussion of depilation during WW2
- (48-57).5.16 Aware of advertisements/magazines with advice for waxing
- (48-57).5.17 Aware of depilated models in Playboy
- (48-57).5.18 They (media) has encouraged – thinks it's pretty
- (48-57).5.19 Occasionally uses fresh razor/shaving cream to do landing strip
- (48-57).5.20 Partner doesn't notice depilation as much as he used to
- (48-57).5.21 Now does it (depilates) for herself- because it makes me feel good
- (48-57).5.22 Used to consider partner more
- (48-57).5.23 Finds it interesting that people today go to salons to have their pubic area groomed
- (48-57).5.24 Thinks wealthier civilizations do this or the ones with "wherewithal to be discerning in their grooming"

## APPENDIX C

## FOCUSED CODING

**Initial Focused Categories**Initial- Amount depilated

- (18-27).1.1 Initially shaved all visible hair
- (18-27).2.2 Initially shaved top/sides
- (18-27).3.1 Initially depilated (shaved) sides
- (18-27).4.1. Initially shaved off all hair (14)
- (18-27).5.1 Initially shaved all pubic hair
  
- (28-37).1.1 Initially trimmed center of pubic mound
- (28-37).2.1 Initially shaved bikini area closest to the legs (H.S)
- (28-37).3.1 Initially took off all hair? (center/anal via professional waxing) (22)
- (28-37).4.1 Initially shaved sides
- (28-37).5.1 Initially trimmed bikini line (m.s)
  
- (38-47).1.1 Initially trimmed top/sides (12)
- (38-47).2.1 Initially shaved bikini line
- (38-47).3.1 Initially trimmed center
- (38-47).4.1 Initially shaved bikini line
- (38-47).5.2 Initially trimmed the bikini line
  
- (48-57).1.1 Initially shaved bikini line
- (48-57).2.1 Initially trimmed sides
- (48-57).3.1 Initially depilated sides
- (48-57).4.1 Initially shaved top/sides
- (48-57).5.1 Initially depilated all hair except land strip

Reason/s for Initial Depilation

- (18-27).1.2 Initially took off all visible hair because of discussion with friends
- (18-27).2.1 Initially shaved top/sides because of discussion with friends (everyone talking about it) 18-20
- (18-27).3.2 Initially depilated (shaved) sides to accommodate a bikini
- (18-27).4.2 Initially shaved off all hair due to curiosity
- (18-27).4.3 Initially shaved off all hair due to word of mouth
- (18-27).4.4 Initially shaved off all hair because perceived as common
- (18-27).5.2 Initially shaved all hair due to no visible hair on girls at pool
  
- (28-37).1.2 Initially groomed because boyfriend asked her if she'd tried it
- (28-37).2.2 Initially shaved bikini area for swimsuit season

- (28-37).3.3 Initially waxed because friends like it
- (28-37).3.4 Initially waxed because I do not like hair
- (28-37).4.2 Initially shaved sides to accommodate bathing suit
- (28-37).5.1 Initially trimmed bikini line to accommodate bathing suit (m.s)
  
- (38-47).1.2 Initially trimmed top/sides due to curiosity
- (38-47).2.2 Initially shaved bikini line to accommodate swimsuit
- (38-47).2.3 Initially shaved bikini line after discussing with a friend
- (38-47).4.2 Initially shaved bikini line because girls who didn't got made fun of
- (38-47).5.3 Initially trimmed the bikini line to accommodate bathing suit
  
- (48-57).1.1 Initially shaved bikini line to accommodate swimsuit
- (48-57).2.1 Initially trimmed sides to accommodate ballet leotard
- (48-57).3.1 Initially depilated sides due to increased hair growth after baby
- (48-57).4.1 Initially shaved top/sides to accommodate swimsuit
- (48-57).5.1 Initially depilated all hair except land strip to accommodate tiny bikini

#### Discussion with Friends

- (18-27).1.4 Discussion about grooming started with friends @ 12/13
- (18-27).1.5 Discussion about grooming is comfortable "normal"
- (18-27).2.1 Initially shaved top/sides because of discussion with friends (everyone talking about it) 18-20
- (18-27).2.19 Discussed pubic grooming with friends in college
- (18-27).3.12 Discussed pubic grooming with friends in high school (17)
- (18-27).3.13. Pubic grooming/preferences now highly discussed amongst friends
- (18-27).3.14 Initial conversation about hair was uncomfortable
- (18-27).4.18 Discussed with two best friends at 18
- (18-27).4.21 Now discusses with less close friends
- (18-27).4.22 Discussing grooming with getting older
- (18-27).4.23 Discussing grooming because less taboo
- (18-27).5.8 Discussed only with sister due to shyness
  
- (28-37).1.12 First discussed with sister and friend (15/16)
- (28-37).2.10 I first discussed pubic grooming in my 20s
- (28-37).2.11 I discussed it more the older I got
- (28-37).2.12 Discussion about it has become an open topic of conversation
- (28-37).3.10 Started discussing with friends at 22
- (28-37).4.11 Started discussing with friends and sister (15/16)
- (28-37).5.3 Discussed grooming with close girl friends in h.s- share stories/make suggestions
- (28-37).5.26 I'm open about sexuality – ease to discuss with friends
- (28-37).5.27 Discussion in college – stories (funny/freaky) about guys preferences
- (28-37).5.42 Greater discussion comes with age and sexual experience
  
- (38-47).1.9 Was not discussed with friends
- (38-47).2.18 Discussed only with best friend when young

- (38-47).2.19 Did not discuss for many years
- (38-47).2.20 Sorority sisters would have discussed if I wasn't too shy
- (38-47).2.21 Discussed much later with friends
- (38-47).2.22 Discussed as an adult with mother- mentioned in relation to swimsuit
- (38-47).2.32 Progressed to full depilation due to friends discussing that their husbands shaved theirs
- (38-47).2.38 Will discuss pubic grooming with daughters early on
- (38-47).3.6 I do not discuss with friends- they do not talk about it
- (38-47).4.10 Discussed with friends at pool
- (38-47).5.7 College roommate had painful bikini wax – discussed in college
- (38-47).5.32 Never sat around and discussed, just funny stories about bad results
  
- (48-57).1.6 Did not discuss with anyone due to way I was raised
- (48-57).1.16 Has discussed with children- doesn't want them to be embarrassed in swimsuit
- (48-57).2.5 Discussed with friends (46)
- (48-57).3.5 Discussed with friends in 20s/30s – before people waxed
- (48-57).4.11 Has discussed with girl friends – girls/women talk about this stuff
- (48-57).5.11 Discussed with friend as a teen about grooming for bathing suit purposes

#### Discussion with Friends- Content

- (18-27).1.6 Friends compare grooming methods
- (18-27).2.1 Initially shaved top/sides because of discussion with friends (everyone talking about it) 18-20
- (18-27).3.14 Initial conversation about hair was uncomfortable
- (18-27).3.13 Pubic grooming/preferences now highly discussed amongst friends
- (18-27).4.19 One friend now depilates for boyfriend
- (18-27).4.20 One friend has always done landing strip
  
- (28-37).1.13 Sister/friend shaved and complained about itch
- (28-37).3.11 My friends were all doing it (waxing?)
- (28-37).4.12 Everyone wanted to do what was socially expected
- (28-37).5.4 Many friends in h.s trimmed most of the hair/shaved bikini line
- (28-37).5.27 Discussion in college – stories (funny/freaky) about guys preferences
- (28-37).5.45 Friend went bald and felt prepubescent- didn't like it
  
- (38-47).2.32 Progressed to full depilation due to friends discussing that their husbands shaved theirs
- (38-47).2.38 Will discuss pubic grooming with daughters early on
- (38-47).4.11 Obvious (at pool) who shaved and who did not
- (38-47).4.12 My friends and I all felt that shaving the bikini line was necessary
- (38-47).5.6 Older girl in college said she accidentally took too much off with cream depilatory
- (38-47).5.7 College roommate had painful bikini wax
- (38-47).5.32 Never sat around and discussed, just funny stories about bad results
  
- (48-57).1.16 Has discussed with children- doesn't want them to be embarrassed in swimsuit

- (48-57).2.6 Most of my friends trim (sides/center?)
- (48-57).3.6 Most of friends in 20s/30s shaved sides
- (48-57).5.11 Discussed with friend as a teen about grooming for bathing suit purposes
- (48-57).5.13 Friends shaved bikini lines

### Perceived Benefits of Pubic Hair Depilation/Trimming

- (18-27).1.10 Felt more clean after initial depilation
- (18-27).2.5 Benefit after initial experience: no visible bikini line hair
- (18-27).2.6 Benefit after initial experience: Easier on period
- (18-27).2.7 Benefit after initial experience: men like it
- (18-27).2.10 Taking off all hair is easier –leave?
- (18-27).3.6 Finds full depilation aesthetically pleasing
- (18-27).5.3 Visible pubic hair is an “eye sore” (in bathing suit)
- (18-27).5.4 Depilated pubic region feels clean
  
- (28-37).2.3 Depilating sides looked cleaner
- (28-37).3.5 After getting professionally waxed it looked better
- (28-37).3.6 After getting professionally waxed it felt better
- (28-37).5.8 I liked not worrying about unsightly hair
- (28-37).5.9 It felt cleaner (how much) (definitely after anal depilation)
- (28-37).5.10 Wasn’t as much smell (hair traps “sex smell”)
  
- (38-47).1.3 Looked neater after trimming
- (38-47).2.5 Great that hair was no longer visible
- (38-47).2.30 Was more comfortable after laser treatments on bikini line
- (38-47).2.35 Sexual benefits from depilation are a bonus
- (38-47).2.36 Really liked not having all that hair (full depilation)
- (38-47).3.2 Is happy with less bulkiness
- (38-47).4.3 Liked that no hair showed
- (38-47).5.9 Later, also for hygienic reasons- easier without it there
- (38-47).5.11 Liked that hairs could not be seen
- (38-47).5.12 It felt better
- (38-47).5.13 It felt cleaner
- (38-47).5.28 People do what other people dictate, but I think it feels better
  
- (48-57).1.2 Liked going to pool and not be made fun of
- (48-57).2.2 Liked it not being visible
- (48-57).2.4 Trimming looked neater/less poofie
- (48-57).3.2 Liked the immediate aesthetic effect (after depilating sides)
- (48-57).4.6 After depilating looked neater
- (48-57).4.7 After depilating felt more comfortable with no visible bikini hair
- (48-57).4.8 Less hair felt more sexy with partner
- (48-57).5.3 Liked the way it looked (like a little peach)
- (48-57).5.4 Felt cleaner (landing strip)- more “well groomed”
- (48-57).5.10 Less hair is more attractive

### Perceived Consequences of Depilation and/or Trimming

- (18-27).1.11 Did not like razor burn after initial depilation
- (18-27).2.8 Did not like itching from second day stubble
- (18-27).2.20 Tried Nair- burned too much
- (18-27).3.4 Did not like waxing- felt uncomfortable due to modesty
- (18-27).3.7 Does not like razor burn
- (18-27).3.8 Does not like the amount of time given to depilation
- (18-27).4.5 Did not like the way full depilation felt
- (18-27).4.6 Does not like feeling naked
- (18-27).4.7 Does not like feeling itchy
- (18-27).4.8 Felt distracted by itching
- (18-27).4.9 Smooth the first day then misery (second day stubble)
- (18-27).4.14 Not worth the effort
- (18-27).4.15 Not worth the discomfort
- (18-27).5.5 Did not like itching
  
- (28-37).1.3 Trimming did not feel beneficial
- (28-37).1.4 Hair felt thicker after trimming
- (28-37).1.5 Felt irritating
- (28-37).1.22 Never tried waxing because of pain
- (28-37).2.4 Did not like razor burn after initial depilation
- (28-37).2.5 Did not like stubble after initial depilation
- (28-37).3.7 Getting waxed was painful
- (28-37).5.6 Nair was fast, smooth, and easy but burned/ not sure how long to leave on
- (28-37).5.13 Do not like razor burn/ ingrown hair
- (28-37).5.19 “Major up keep” Hair grew back quicker, thicker after trimming/shaving- also widens
  
- (38-47).1.4 Felt funny after trimming
- (38-47).1.5 Never trimmed again - weird
- (38-47).2.6 Did not like razor rash
- (38-47).2.7 Did not like ingrown hairs
- (38-47).2.8 Razor rash got worse if shaved two days in a row
- (38-47).2.10 Progressed to waxing side hair to alleviate razor rash
- (38-47).3.3 Nothing that I did not like after trimming
- (38-47).3.12 Has not tried waxing – heard it is painful
- (38-47).4.4 Didn’t like rash
- (38-47).4.5 Uncomfortable when garment rubbed against it
- (38-47).4.6 Didn’t like accidentally cutting myself
- (38-47).4.9 Removing hair from other areas would be painful
- (38-47).5.10 Used cream depilatory everywhere I could without it burning
- (38-47).5.14 I didn’t like that cream depilatory is a messy process
- (38-47).5.15 Cream depilatory stings
- (38-47).5.16 The hair would grow back within a week

- (38-47).5.17 Red bumps on your skin
- (38-47).5.21 Bikini waxes were painful and embarrassing
- (38-47).5.22 I could never have as much waxed as I wanted to (sides/top) too embarrassing (no back/bottom)

- (48-57).1.3 Did not like razor rash
- (48-57).1.11 Would not get waxed due to safety issues/ personal privacy
- (48-57).3.3 Did not like bumps/ skin irritation (razor burn)
- (48-57).4.2 Did not like razor burn
- (48-57).4.5 Electrolysis too expensive/ painful
- (48-57).5.5 Did not like frequency of shaving
- (48-57).5.6 Did not like visible stubble
- (48-57).5.7 Did not like itchiness

### Partners

- (18-27).1.7 Discusses pubic grooming with close boyfriends
  - (18-27).1.8 Partners don't have a preference
  - (18-27).1.9 Partners don't want a "scary" amount of hair
  - (18-27).2.11 Older partners prefer less hair ("older"- more mature)
  - (18-27).3.10 Currently depilates entire pubic region to please boyfriend
  - (18-27).3.15 Discussed pubic grooming with two men in college
  - (18-27).3.16 Wants mutual caring (with pubic preferences) – male grooming?
  - (18-27).4.16 Current boyfriend think hair is sexy
  - (18-27).4.17 Current boyfriend think hairless looks like little girl
  - (18-27).4.24 Current boyfriends opinion of hair makes her feel more comfortable
  - (18-27).4.29 Friends depilate for men, not themselves
  - (18-27).5.9 All previous partners have groomed
  - (18-27).5.10 All previous partners find depilation normal
  - (18-27).5.14 Partners prefer her to be groomed
- 
- (28-37).1.14 I mentioned a Brazilian wax to my boyfriend
  - (28-37).1.15 My boyfriend thought getting a Brazilian wax was strange
  - (28-37).1.16 My boyfriend probably didn't know what a Brazilian is
  - (28-37).1.23 Never tried waxing because partner is happy with pubic hair
  - (28-37).1.25 Partner knows I get paranoid when swimming
  - (28-37).1.26 Partner reassures me that I am not hairy
  - (28-37).1.27 Old partner that groomed made me feel strange
  - (28-37).1.28 Old partner was presumptuous to think that I wanted him to groom
  - (28-37).2.9 Men liked the landing strip
  - (28-37).2.13 Partners encouraged depilation
  - (28-37).2.14 Partners encouragement to depilate is a recent trend
  - (28-37).3.12 Partners have always liked it
  - (28-37).3.16 My current partner likes my depilation
  - (28-37).4.8 Current partner hasn't complained, so he must like it
  - (28-37).4.9 Pubic grooming was discussed with previous partners

- (28-37).4.10 Doesn't remember previous partners neg./pos. feelings about it
- (28-37).5.22 Partners had different preferences – most prefer landing strip
- (28-37).5.23 Some partners preferred\* it natural \*didn't care “full bush”
- (28-37).5.24 Some partners preferred\* bald \*loved - ex husband/her like this
- (28-37).5.25 Partners made suggestions
- (28-37).5.28 Partners in college offered their opinions
- (28-37).5.29 Wanted to please partner
- (28-37).5.30 Talked to partners about their grooming- likes male grooming
- (28-37).5.35 Women groom to please their partners
- (28-37).5.39 Divorce/lack of intimacy has led to less grooming
- (28-37).5.43 Women who only do what they want (don't do what men want) are close minded

- (38-47).1.7 Was not discussed with previous partners
- (38-47).1.11 Current partner likes me hairy
- (38-47).2.29 Partner loves it (full depilation)
- (38-47).2.32 Progressed to full depilation due to friends discussing that their husbands shaved theirs
- (38-47).2.33 Husband liked the idea
- (38-47).2.34 My partner and I liked the result
- (38-47).3.7 Grooming was never discussed with partners
- (38-47).3.10 Current partner does not know about my grooming decisions
- (38-47).3.11 Current partner does not care about grooming decisions
- (38-47).4.13 Partners have discussed it with me
- (38-47).4.14 Partners feeling about grooming were usually sexual
- (38-47).4.18 Current partner likes it
- (38-47).4.19 Current partner offers to shave me in these areas (top/sides)
- (38-47).5.26 Guys thought girls were not supposed to have hair because of Playboy
- (38-47).5.29 Men probably dictate- for oral sex purposes/ looks like young girl
- (38-47).5.30 Double standard- men don't do it commonly
- (38-47).5.39 Last partner never mentioned it, must have thought what I do was acceptable

- (48-57).1.7 Partners have not discussed, but would have said something if hair got out of control
- (48-57).1.14 Does not discuss with current partner
- (48-57).1.15 Current partner does not complain
- (48-57).2.7 Partners were okay with it (trimming sides/center), except with electric trimmer- too spiky
- (48-57).2.11 Current partner is okay with my grooming decisions
- (48-57).3.7 Partner has been fine with whatever (hasn't ever been discussed in 30 years)
- (48-57).3.12 Current partner is just happy to see anything
- (48-57).4.8 Less hair felt more sexy with partner
- (48-57).4.13 Has discussed with current partner
- (48-57).4.14 Current partner thinks less is better (wants me to take it all off)
- (48-57).4.15 Has never tried full depilation, even though partner wants her to
- (48-57).4.21 Current partner likes it (landing strip)
- (48-57).5.14 Partner thought it was sexy (landing strip)
- (48-57).5.20 Partner doesn't notice depilation as much as he used to



(48-57).5.22 Used to consider partner more

### Current Pubic Hair

(18-27).1.17 Currently depilates top/sides/sometimes center  
 (18-27).1.18 Gets a seasonal wax (summer) then maintains it/ Does not get a wax in winter  
 (18-27).2.4 Currently depilates all pubic hair once every week or two  
 (18-27).3.5 Currently depilates entire pubic region  
 (18-27).3.24 Depilates every other day in summer  
 (18-27).3.25 Depilates once a week in winter  
 (18-27).4.13 Progressed to/Currently no depilation/trimming  
 (18-27).5.6 Continued/currently shaves all pubic hair every 3-4 days

(28-37).1.24 Currently tweezes hairs around bikini line  
 (28-37).2.21 If I'm not feeling lazy, I groom monthly (still all except landing strip?)  
 (28-37).3.8 Currently depilates all hair?  
 (28-37).3.15 Currently I trim/shave weekly  
 (28-37).4.7 Currently shaves sides more narrow and trim top/center  
 (28-37).5.38 Currently depilates sides/trims center once every week or two  
 (28-37).5.40 Seasonal- more in summer

(38-47).1.10 Currently does not depilate/trim  
 (38-47).2.26 Currently depilates entire pubic region- Brazilian wax  
 (38-47).3.4 Currently trims the center once a month  
 (38-47).4.7 Grooming has not changed- still depilates swimsuit line (top/sides)  
 (38-47).5.38 Currently depilates all areas every couple weeks

(48-57).1.12 Currently depilates sides/ trims center daily  
 (48-57).2.10 Currently trims once a month (side/center?)  
 (48-57).3.11 Does not currently depilate/trim  
 (48-57).4.20 Currently waxes every 8-10 weeks leaving small amount of hair (landing strip?)  
 (48-57).5.19 Occasionally uses fresh razor/shaving cream to do landing strip

### Pubic Hair Grooming Discussion in Media

(18-27).1.12 Aware of pubic grooming specialized products  
 (18-27).1.13 Aware of models getting completely waxed (tv)  
 (18-27).2.12 Aware of advertisement for liquid depilatories  
 (18-27).2.13 Aware of Britney Spears "crotch shot"  
 (18-27).2.15 Aware of Sex and the City/Las Vegas  
 (18-27).3.17 Aware of advertisements for methods of pubic grooming  
 (18-27).4.25 Aware of discussion via Sex and the City (movie/series)  
 (18-27).4.26 Aware of reinforcement through humiliation- in SATC  
 (18-27).5.12 Aware of television commercials advertising bikini wax

(28-37).1.17 Aware of pube discussion in comedies

- (28-37).1.18 Aware of pube discussion in Sex and the City/Bruno
- (28-37).1.19 Aware of article discussing how to deal with waxing
- (28-37).2.16 Aware of discussion in magazines
- (28-37).2.17 Aware of discussion in Sex and the City
- (28-37).2.18 Aware of discussion at the spas
- (28-37).3.13 I have not noticed any media that discuss depilation
- (28-37).4.13 Aware of movies/television/books with discussion on pubic grooming
- (28-37).4.14 Aware of magazines with waxing stories and grooming trends
- (28-37).4.16 Aware of Sex and the City
- (28-37).4.17 Aware of discussion about Brazilian waxing
- (28-37).5.32 Aware of summertime advertisements for cream/wax depilatories
- (28-37).5.33 Not aware of any media about trimming
  
- (38-47).1.6 Not aware of discussion in media
- (38-47).2.23 Aware of advertisement for body hair depilatories
- (38-47).3.8 Not aware of media that discuss it
- (38-47).4.15 Aware of advertisements for body hair removal (tv/magazines)
- (38-47).5.33 Aware of movies/magazines that imply little to no pubic hair is norm
- (38-47).5.34 Aware of women on Howard Stern show being asked if they were natural or shaved
  
- (48-57).1.8 Aware of new pubic hair depilatory razor
- (48-57).1.10 Aware of television programs discussion about waxing
- (48-57).2.8 Has not noticed media that discuss depilation to pubic region
- (48-57).3.8 Aware of Sex and the City (reinforcement through humiliation)
- (48-57).4.16 Aware of advertisements for body waxing
- (48-57).4.17 Aware of salon for Brazilian waxing
- (48-57).5.15 Aware of novel that contained discussion of depilation during WW2
- (48-57).5.16 Aware of advertisements/magazines with advice for waxing

#### Seeing Depilated and/or Trimmed Pubic Region in Media

- (18-27).1.14 No visible hair on women's bikini line
- (18-27).2.14 Has not seen depilated pubic regions in the media
- (18-27).3.18 Aware of depilated porn stars
- (18-27).3.19 More aware of an undepilated pubic region
- (18-27).4.27 Assumes models depilate- no visible hair
- (18-27).5.13 Has not seen any groomed pubic regions in the media
  
- (28-37).1.20 Hasn't seen any depilated pubic regions in media
- (28-37).2.19 Aware of depilated Playboy models
- (28-37).3.14 I have not noticed any depilated pubic regions in the media
- (28-37).4.15 Aware of women in bikinis with no visible hair
- (28-37).5.21 Aware of depilated porn stars (they have electrolysis/no problems)
  
- (38-47).1.8 Not aware of depilated pubic regions in media

- (38-47).2.24 Aware of completely depilated porn stars/models
- (38-47).3.9 Have not seen depilated regions in media
- (38-47).4.16 Aware of hairless pubic regions in magazines
- (38-47).5.35 Aware of depilated women in adult movies/magazines

- (48-57).1.9 Aware of models in advertisements who wax
- (48-57).2.9 Has not seen any depilated pubic regions in media
- (48-57).3.9 Has not seen depilated pubic regions in media
- (48-57).4.18 Not aware of any depilated pubic regions in media
- (48-57).5.17 Aware of depilated models in Playboy

### Perceived Encouragement/Discouragement from Media

- (18-27).1.15 Encouraged all the time, but not outright (to depilate hair)
- (18-27).1.16 Encouraged by models/celebrities doing it (depilating)
- (18-27).2 Did not respond correctly
- (18-27).3.21 Feels that media encourages depilation/trimming
- (18-27).4.28 No perceived encouragement/discouragement- already made up mind
- (18-27).5 Did not respond correctly

- (28-37).1.21 Initially intrigued with the idea of depilation – so yes?
- (28-37).2.20 This media has encouraged me to depilate
- (28-37).3 Did not answer- because they didn't notice any media
- (28-37).4.18 Recent discussion has not convinced me to try a Brazilian wax
- (28-37).5 Did not respond

- (38-47).1.12 Media has not encouraged to depilate
- (38-47).2.25 Never thought much about it- not that kind of girl
- (38-47).3 Did not answer- has not noticed media
- (38-47).4.17 Encouraged to be depilated (sides/top) from ads
- (38-47).5.37 Media (in last 25 years) says pubic hair is not acceptable, pretty, hygienic, feminine, or conducive to sex or fashion

- (48-57).1.11 Would not get waxed due to safety issues (discouraged by tv show on staff infections)
- (48-57).2. Did not answer- has not seen any media
- (48-57).3.10 Not encouraged from media to depilate/trim
- (48-57).4.19 No media has encouraged/discouraged
- (48-57).5.18 They (media) has encouraged – thinks it's pretty

### Progression

- (18-27).1.2 Initially took off all visible hair because of discussion with friends
- (18-27).1.3 Progressed to taking off labia/anal hair because of sexual activity
- (18-27).2.2 Initially shaved top/sides
- (18-27).2.3 Progressed into depilating top/sides with cream depilatory

- (18-27).2.9 Progressed into depilating all pubic hair
- (18-27).3.1 Initially depilated (shaved) sides
- (18-27).3.9 Progressed to depilating all but center (17-19)
- (18-27).3.3 Tried waxing to avoid razor burn (21)
- (18-27).3.5 Currently depilates entire pubic region
- (18-27).4.1. Initially shaved off all hair (14)
- (18-27).4.10 Continued to try full depilation – always disappointed
- (18-27).4.11 Progressed to depilating sides/top
- (18-27).4.12 Skin became use to contact- no longer itchy
- (18-27).4.13 Progressed to/Currently no depilation/trimming
- (18-27).5.1 Initially shaved all pubic hair
- (18-27).5.6 Continued/currently shaves all pubic hair every 3-4 days
  
- (28-37).1.1 Initially trimmed center of pubic mound
- (28-37).1.8 Progressed to tweezing hair on bikini line (to accommodate a bikini)
- (28-37).2.1 Initially shaved bikini area closest to the legs (H.S)
- (28-37).2.6 Progressed to depilating all hair except landing strip
- (28-37).2.7 Tried chemical removal and waxing
- (28-37).2.8 Landing strip became fashionable
- (28-37).2.9 Men liked the landing strip
- (28-37).3.1 Initially took off all hair? (center/anal via professional waxing) (22)
- (28-37).3.9 I liked full depilation and stuck with it
- (28-37).4.1 Initially shaved sides
- (28-37).4.5 Progressed to also trimming top/center
- (28-37).4.6 Progressed to shaving more off sides
- (28-37).4.7 Currently shaves sides more narrow and trim top/center
- (28-37).5.1 Initially trimmed bikini line to accommodate bathing suit (m.s)
- (28-37).5.14 Progressed from trimming to depilating top/sides
- (28-37).5.7 Progressed from depilating top/sides to labia/back hair with sexual activity
- (28-37).5.11 Progressed from shaving to cream depilatories
- (28-37).5.12 Progressed back to shaving
- (28-37).5.16 I took off more hair with age
- (28-37).5.17 Progressed to “landing strip”
- (28-37).5.20 Experimentation – Progressed to no hair
  
- (38-47).1.1 Initially trimmed top/sides (12)
- (38-47).1.5 Never trimmed again - weird
- (38-47).1.10 Currently does not depilate/trim
- (38-47).2.1 Initially shaved bikini line
- (38-47).2.9 Tried chemical depilatories on side
- (38-47).2.10 Progressed to waxing side hair to alleviate razor rash
- (38-47).2.17 Progressed to trimming hair all over (had depilated sides)
- (38-47).2.31 Progressed to full depilation
- (38-47).3.1 Initially trimmed center
- (38-47).3.4 Currently trims the center once a month
- (38-47).4.1 Initially shaved bikini line

- (38-47).4.7 Grooming has not changed- still depilates swimsuit line (top/sides)
- (38-47).5.2 Initially trimmed the bikini line
- (38-47).5.4 Progressed to shaving bikini line if I didn't have much time
- (38-47).5.5 Progressed to cream depilatories to use on top/sides/center
- (38-47).5.19 As an adult, progressed to bikini waxes
- (38-47).5.20 Progressed to bikini waxes so it would last longer (felt uncomfortable with back/bottom)
- (38-47).5.38 Currently depilates all areas every couple weeks

- (48-57).1.1 Initially shaved bikini line to accommodate swimsuit
- (48-57).1.4 Progressed to depilating even more with age
- (48-57).1.12 Currently depilates sides/ trims center daily
- (48-57).2.1 Initially trimmed sides to accommodate ballet leotard
- (48-57).2.3 Progressed to trimming sides and center
- (48-57).2.10 Currently trims once a month (side/center?)
- (48-57).3.1 Initially depilated sides due to increased hair growth after baby
- (48-57).3.4 Progressed to no depilation/ currently does not depilate
- (48-57).4.1 Initially shaved top/sides to accommodate swimsuit
- (48-57).4.3 Progressed to waxing (21)
- (48-57).4.4 Progressed to electrolysis
- (48-57).4.9 Progressed to depilating more from all sides and more frequently
- (48-57).4.20 Currently waxes every 8-10 weeks leaving small amount of hair (landing strip?)
- (48-57).5.1 Initially depilated all hair except land strip to accommodate tiny bikini
- (48-57).5.8 Progressed to depilating only sides
- (48-57).5.9 Progressed to landing strip (43) with sexual activity

### Sexual Activity

- (18-27).1.3 Progressed to taking off labia/anal hair because of sexual activity
- (28-37).5.5 With sexual activity I wanted to keep the area more well groomed/clean
- (28-37).5.7 Progressed from depilating top/sides to labia/back hair with sexual activity
- (28-37).5.18 Anal hair = self conscious- not good when intimate
- (28-37).5.39 Divorce/lack of intimacy has led to less grooming
- (38-47).2.32 Progressed to full depilation due to friends discussing that their husbands shaved theirs
- (38-47).4.19 Current partner offers to shave me in these areas (top/sides)
- (38-47).5.29 Men probably dictate- for oral sex purposes/ looks like young girl
- (38-47).5.23 I wanted very little hair when I became sexually active
- (38-47).2.35 Sexual benefits from depilation are a bonus
- (48-57).5.9 Progressed to landing strip (43) with sexual activity

**Memo: Four participants progressed to removing labia and anal hair due to sexual activity. Each of these participants are from one of the four age categories. Two of the participants in the 38-47 age category use pubic grooming as a sexual activity, which is facilitated by their partners. One participant suggested that men prefer pubic hair removal for oral sex purposes- not getting a hair in the mouth? More direct access to the vagina? One participant was less self-conscious after removing her anal hair. One participant stated that depilation produces sexual benefits- same reasons stated above?**

### Modesty

(18-27).3.4 Did not like waxing- felt uncomfortable due to modesty

### Seasonal

(18-27).1.18 Gets a seasonal wax (summer) then maintains it/ Does not get a wax in winter

(18-27).3.23 Grooming is seasonal

(28-37).5.40 Seasonal- more in summer

### Depilate Bikini line (top/sides) Progressed to Trimming Center

(28-37).4.1 / (28-37).4.5

(38-47).2.10 / (38-47).2.17

(48-57).1.1 / (48-57).1.12

(48-57).2.1 / (48-57).2.3

### Trimming Center Progressed to Depilate Bikini Line (top/sides)

(28-37).1.1 / (28-37).1.8

### Male Grooming

(18-27).3.16 Wants mutual caring (with pubic preferences) – male grooming?

(18-27).5.9 All previous partners have groomed

(28-37).1.27 Old partner that groomed made me feel strange

(28-37).1.28 Old partner was presumptuous to think that I wanted him to groom

(28-37).5.30 Talked to partners about their grooming- likes male grooming

(38-47).5.30 Double standard- men don't do it commonly

**Memo: Three participants in the two youngest age categories like male grooming. One participant in the 28-37 category had a partner that assumed she preferred grooming. A participant in the 38-47 category does not perceive pubic hair removal to be a common grooming ritual for men.**

Waxing to Avoid Razor Burn/Rash

- (18-27).3.3 Tried waxing to avoid razor burn (21)
- (38-47).2.10 Progressed to waxing side hair to alleviate razor rash
- (48-57).4.22 Progressed to waxing to avoid razor burn

Less Hair Feels More Sexy

- (48-57).4.8 Less hair felt more sexy with partner
- (48-57).5.14 Partner thought it was sexy (landing strip)

Depilating More With Age

- (28-37).5.16 I took off more hair with age
- (28-37).5.36 Totally bald- new concept
- (38-47).5.18 Older I became, the more I thought it was inappropriate to have hair there
- (48-57).1.4 Progressed to depilating even more with age

**Memo: One participant in each of the three oldest age categories stated that they've taken more hair off, as they've gotten older.**

Taking More Off Sides

- (28-37).4.6 Progressed to shaving more off sides
- (48-57).4.9 Progressed to depilating more from all sides and more frequently

Trimming to Decrease Bulkiness

- (38-47).3.2 Is happy with less bulkiness
- (38-47).2.16 Friend mentioned trimming "poof" on mound to accommodate swimsuit
- (48-57).2.4 Trimming looked neater/less poofie

Major Up Keep

- (28-37).5.19 "Major up keep" Hair grew back quicker, thicker after trimming/shaving- also widens
- (28-37).1.4 Hair felt thicker after trimming

Hair is an Eye Sore

- (28-37).5.8 I liked not worrying about unsightly hair
- (18-27).5.3 Visible pubic hair is an "eye sore" (in bathing suit)

### Reinforcement Through Humiliation

- (18-27).1.9 Partners don't want a "scary" amount of hair  
 (18-27).4.26 Aware of reinforcement through humiliation- in SATC
- (28-37).1.17 Aware of pube discussion in comedies  
 (28-37).1.7 Did not have a problem with "too much hair"  
 (28-37).1.25 Partner knows I get paranoid when swimming  
 (28-37).1.26 Partner reassures me that I am not hairy  
 (28-37).4.4 Initially depilated sides because visible hair is embarrassing
- (38-47).2.4 Visible pubic hair outside of bathing suit was a huge concern  
 (38-47).4.2 Initially shaved bikini line because girls who didn't got made fun of  
 (38-47).5.1 When my pubic hair appeared I didn't like it and though it was embarrassing
- (48-57).1.2 Liked going to pool and not be made fun of  
 (48-57).1.16 Has discussed with children- doesn't want them to be embarrassed in swimsuit

**Memo: Two participants in the youngest two age categories are aware of pubic hair jokes in comedies. One participant in the youngest age category describes too much hair as "scary". Six participants in the three oldest age categories voiced concern about visible pubic hair being seen. Three of them describe visible pubic hair as embarrassing and two participants began depilating to prevent "being made fun of".**

### Greater Discussion with Age

- (18-27).3.13. Pubic grooming/preferences now highly discussed amongst friends  
 (18-27).4.21 Now discusses with less close friends  
 (18-27).4.22 Discussing grooming with getting older  
 (28-37).2.11 I discussed it more the older I got  
 (28-37).2.12 Discussion about it has become an open topic of conversation  
 (28-37).5.42 Greater discussion comes with age and sexual experience  
 (38-47).2.19 Did not discuss for many years  
 (38-47).2.21 Discussed much later with friends  
 (48-57).1.6 Did not discuss with anyone due to way I was raised  
 (48-57).1.16 Has discussed with children- doesn't want them to be embarrassed in swimsuit  
 (48-57).2.5 Discussed with friends (46)

**Memo: Seven participants in various age categories have discussed pubic grooming more with age. Three of the participants, all participants in the oldest two age categories, did not discuss previously to recent years. Open discussion about pubic grooming is a recent development.**



### Normal, Everyday Discussion

- (18-27).1.5 Discussion about grooming is comfortable “normal”  
 (18-27).2.1 Initially shaved top/sides because of discussion with friends (everyone talking about it) 18-20  
 (18-27).3.13 Pubic grooming/preferences now highly discussed amongst friends  
 (18-27).4.21 Now discusses with less close friends  
 (18-27).4.22 Discussing grooming with getting older  
 (18-27).4.23 Discussing grooming because less taboo
- (28-37).2.12 Discussion about it has become an open topic of conversation
- (38-47).2.22 Discussed as an adult with mother- mentioned in relation to swimsuit  
 (38-47).2.38 Will discuss pubic grooming with daughters early on
- (48-57).1.16 Has discussed with children- doesn't want them to be embarrassed in swimsuit  
 (48-57).4.11 Has discussed with girl friends – girls/women talk about this stuff

**Memo: 4/5 participants in the youngest age category refer to pubic hair removal discussion as normal, everyday conversation. Three participants stated that they now feel comfortable discussing pubic grooming with their parents/children.**

### Not Normal, Everyday Discussion

- (38-47).3.6 I do not discuss with friends- they do not talk about it  
 (38-47).5.32 Never sat around and discussed, just funny stories about bad results

### Hair as a Trap

- (18-27).2.6 Benefit after initial experience: Easier on period  
 (28-37).5.9 It felt cleaner (how much) (definitely after anal depilation)  
 (28-37).5.10 Wasn't as much smell (hair traps “sex smell”)  
 (38-47).5.9 Later, also for hygienic reasons- easier without it there

### **Secondary Focused Categories**

#### Initial Amount Depilated

##### **(18-27)**

- 3/5 Initially took off all visible hair \*Majority
- 2/5 Shaved sides

##### **(27-38)**

- 1 Trim side
- 2/5 Shaved sides
- 1/5 All? Almost all?
- 1 Trim Center

**(37-48)**

- 2 Trimmed Sides
- 2 Shaved Sides
- 1 Trim Center

**(48-57)**

- 1 Landing strip (35)
- 1 Trim sides
- 3 Shaved Bikini lines (1 also top)

**Memo: A majority of the youngest age category initially takes off all visible hair. It is the only category in which a participant did not initially trim their pubic hair. Young women no longer trim initially? A majority of participants in the other three ages categories initially removed hair from the side of the pubic region. No participants in the oldest age category initially trimmed the center. 13/20 participants initially removed hair from the side of the pubic region.**

Reason/s for Initial Depilation**(18-27)**

- 1 Bikini- shaved
- 1 Girls @ Pool- all hair
- 2 Discussion with Friends – 1 all hair/ 1 top/sides
- 1 Word of Mouth- all hair

**(28-37)**

- 2 Bathing suits- 1 trim/1 shave
- 1 Swimsuit season- 1 shave
- 1 Boyfriend
- 1 Discussion with Friends (wax)

**(38-47)**

- 1 Avoid Humiliation
- 1 Discussion with Friends
- 1 Curiosity
- 2 Bathing suits – 1 trim/1 shave

**(48-57)**

- 3 Bathing Suits (3 shaves)
- 1 Accommodate Silhouette
- 1 Increased Hair Growth After Baby

**Memo: A majority of participants in the youngest age category initially remove pubic hair due to verbal discussion. A majority of participants in the other three age categories initially depilate to accommodate swimsuits. The oldest age category has the strongest majority of participants who initially depilated to accommodate a silhouette. Reasons for initial depilation include: accommodating a silhouette (particularly a swimsuit), verbal discussion, increased hair growth, reinforcement through humiliation, curiosity, partner request, and visual comparison.**

### Discussion with Friends

#### (18-27)

- 1 M.S
- 2 H.S
- 1 College
- 1 (?) - talked with sister/shy

#### (28-37)

- 3 H.S
- 1 20s (college and up)
- 1 end of College

#### (37-48)

- 1 Friends at Pool
- 1 Young (best friend) stopped for a long time
- 1 College
- 2 Does not discuss with Friends

#### (48-57)

- 1 (46)
- 1 20s/30s
- 1 Has Discussed
- 1 Teen (13-19)
- 1 Did not Discuss

**Memo: The two oldest age categories contain participants who have never discussed with friends. All participants in the 28-37 age category discussed pubic grooming in either high school or college. The oldest age category contains the participant who first discussed with friends at the eldest age (46). All participants in the youngest two age categories had discussed pubic grooming by the time they were in their 20s.**

### Perceived Benefits of Pubic Hair Depilation/Trimming

#### (18-27)

- 2 Clean
- 2 No Visible Hair
- 1 Period
- 1 Men
- 1 Aesthetic

#### (28-37)

- 2 Clean
- 1 Looked/Felt better (aesthetic?)
- 1 No Visible Hair
- 1 No Smell

#### (38-47)

- 3 No Visible Hair
- 1 Clean

- 1 Feels Better
- 1 Less Bulky
- 1 Neater
- 1 Sexual Benefits

(48-57)

- 2 Neater
- 3 No Visible Hair (1 rein. through humiliation)
- 1 Cleaner
- 1 Less Bulky
- 1 Sexy with Partner
- 1 Aesthetic Effect
- 1 Way It Looked/ more attractive

**Memo: Six participants mention cleanliness as a benefit of depilating/trimming their pubic hair. The greatest perceived benefit of participants in the oldest two age categories is no visible hair showing. Whereas, participants in the youngest age categories put more of an emphasis on cleanliness. Three participants in the oldest two age categories feel that depilating/trimming the pubic region causes the region to look/feel “neater”. Five participants find a depilated/trimmed pubic region aesthetically (looking/feeling) pleasing. Two participants, in the youngest/oldest age categories, mention their partners.**

#### Perceived Consequences of Depilation and/or Trimming

(18-27)

- 3 Burn (2 razor/ 1 cream)
- 3 Itching
- 2 Second Day Stubble
- 1 Felt Naked
- 1 Time
- 1 Uncomfortable with Waxing

(28-37)

- 2 Thicker Hair After Depilating
- 1 Waxing is Painful
- 1 Won't wax because of pain
- 1 Stubble
- 2 Burn
- 1 Ingrown Hair

(38-47)

- 1 Won't depilate further b/c of pain
- 2 Won't wax because of pain
- 1 Won't wax b/c of embarrassment
- 3 Razor Rash
- 1 Ingrown Hair
- 1 Second Day Stubble

- 1 Felt Funny
- 1 Accidental Cutting
- 1 Burn- cream dep.

**(48-57)**

- 3 Razor Burn
- 1 Time
- 1 Visible Stubble
- 1 Itchiness
- 1 No wax b/c of embarrassment/safety issues
- 1 Electrolysis too expensive/ too painful

**Memo: The greatest perceived consequence of trimming/depilating in the youngest age category is itchiness. The greatest perceived consequence in the oldest two age categories is razor burn/rash. 12/20 participants feel that razor/cream burning is a consequence. Two participants, in the oldest and youngest age categories, feels that the amount of time spent on depilating/trimming is a consequence. Five participants, in all age categories, mention stubble as a consequence. One participant, in the youngest age category, felt that a consequence of fully depilating the pubic region is “looking naked.” Other consequences mentioned are ingrown hair, safety issues, accidental cutting, and pain. The youngest age category is the only one to not use the word “pain” as a consequence. Participants who mention “pain” are referring to either waxing or electrolysis.**

Partners**(18-27)**

- Partners Prefer Grooming (1.9, 2.11, 3.10, 5.14)
- 2 Obvious that partners prefer
- 2 wishy washy that partners prefer
- 1 Obvious – partner does not prefer

**(28-37)**

- 1 Partner is Happy with Pubic Hair
- 2 Men like/liked Landing Strip
- 2 Partners like Depilation
- 1 Has not complained, so he must like

**(38-47)**

- 1 Partner likes Hairy
- 1 Partners likes Full Depilation
- 1 Partner Doesn't Care
- 1 Partner Likes to Depilate her (top/sides)
- 1 Perceives Men Like It
- 1 Partner Never Mentioned/ Must have liked it

**(48-57)**

- 1 Partner Does Not Complain, Can't Get Out of Control
- 1 Partner Is Okay with Trimming
- 1 Partner Does Not Care, Has Not Been Discussed

- 1 Partner Wants Full Depilation, Won't Do It
- 1 Partner Doesn't Notice As Much/ Does Not Consider Him As Much
- 2 Partners Like Landing Strip
- 2 Does not Discuss

**Memo: 4/5 participants in the youngest age category express that their partners prefer depilation. The other participants partner prefers hair.**

#### Current Pubic Hair

##### **(18-27)**

- 3/5 Depilate All Pubic Hair
- 1 No Depilation/ Trimming
- 1 Depilates all visible pubic hair periodically

##### **(28-37)**

- 1 Landing Strip/ 1 Bikini Line Landing Strip- no labia depilation with very narrow sides
- 1 Depilates All
- 1 Bikini Line
- 1 Depilates Sides/ Trims Center

##### **(38-47)**

- 1 Bikini Line
- 2 All Pubic Hair
- 1 No Depilation/ Trim
- 1 Trim Center

##### **(48-57)**

- 1 Depilates Sides/ Trims Center
- 1 Trims Side/Center
- 1 No Depilation
- 2 Landing Strip

**Memo: A majority of the youngest age category removes all visible pubic hair periodically. Participants in this category are either totally in or totally out- no landing strips or swimsuit grooming (depilate/trim sides and/or top and/or trim center). Participants in the other categories go one of four ways: 1) All Natural 2) Swimsuit Grooming 3) Landing Strip 4) Full Depilation. Two women in the oldest age categories do not depilate/trim any pubic hair. Six participants in the oldest three categories "swimsuit groom". Four participants in these categories prefer the "landing strip". And three participants in these categories depilate all pubic hair. The oldest category does not have any participants who remove all pubic hair. The 38-47 category does not have any participants who prefer the landing strip. No participants from the 28-37 category let their pubic hair go completely natural.**

### Pubic Hair Grooming Discussion in Media

#### (18-27)

- 1 Models on TV Getting Waxed
- 2 SATC
- 1 Reinforcement Through Humiliation
- 1 Ad for Pubic Grooming Methods
- 1 Ad for Bikini Waxes
- 1 Ad for Liquid Depilatories
- 1 Specialized Products
- 1 Britney Spears

#### (28-37)

- 3 SATC
- 1 No Discussion
- 1 Ad for Depilatories
- 1 Spa
- 3 Discussion in Magazines (2 Waxing Related)

#### (38-47)

- 2 No Discussion
- 2 Ads for Body Hair Depilatories
- 1 Movies/Mags that say “No Pubes”

#### (48-57)

- 1 No Discussion
- 1 SATC
- 1 TV Discussing Waxing
- 2 Ads for Waxing
- 1 Salon for Waxing
- 1 Pube Razor

**Memo: Twenty percent of the participants, none of which are in the youngest age category, claimed that they have not noticed any discussion about pubic grooming in media. Participants in the youngest two age categories mentioned a significantly greater number of examples that involve pubic hair discussion in media. Half of the participants in the two youngest age categories and one participant from the oldest age category refer to Sex and the City.**

### Seeing Depilated and/or Trimmed Pubic Regions in Media

#### (18-27)

- 2 Has Not Seen in Media
- 2 No Visible Bikini Hair on Models
- 1 Depilated Porn Stars

#### (28-37)

- 2 Has Not Seen in Media







