



# **GENDER CONSTRUCTION THROUGH ADOLESCENT SEXTING**

**Scholarship & Creativity Day 2014**

**Elizabeth A. Severson, Courtney C. Chesness, Natalie M.  
Woggon, Jeremy L. Welters, Emily M. Gould**

# THESIS:

Sexting is a behavior that is a result of male and female adolescents trying to adopt masculine and feminine characteristics, which are created by our cultural definitions of gender.



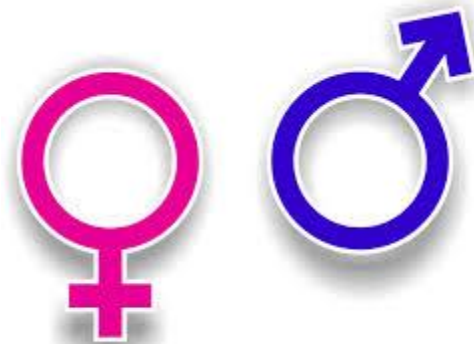
# WHAT IS “SEXTING”?

- “Sex” + “Texting” = Sexting
  - Sending & Receiving (Comartin, Kernsmith, & Kernsmith, 2013)
  - Focus on adolescents (ages 12–17)
- Harmful effects
  - Cyberbullying etc. (Dir, Coskunpinar, Steiner, & Cyders, 2013)
  - Child pornography (Hasinoff, 2013)
- Frequency (Angelides, 2013; Dir et. al., 2013; Temple et. al., 2012)



# SOCIALIZED INTO A GENDERED SOCIETY

- Women: appearance & relationships
- Men: accomplishment & entertainment
- Women as passive – men as active (Wood, 2013)
  - Boys request & initiate (Walter, Sanci, & Temple-Smith, 2012)
  - Girls experience pressure to respond



# GIRLS FEELING PRESSURE

- Faced with tough decision
  - Sexual double standard (Walker et al., 2012)
  - Virgin/whore paradox (Wood, 2013)
- Cultural pressures to please male peers, yet uphold idea of “good girl.”



# BOYS FEELING PRESSURE

- From girls (Sex and tech, 2008)
- From other males
  - Be masculine
  - Be sexual
  - E.g., pornography (Hasinoff, 2013)



# BIOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

## Biological

- Biological factors have greater influence on adolescents' sexting decisions
- The adolescent brain

## Gender Roles

- Culturally constructed gender roles have a greater influence (Wood, 2013)
- “Sexting is not a gender-neutral activity, but is in fact influenced by gender dynamics” (Walker et al., 2012, p. 700)



# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parent-child communication (Teens and Sexting, 2012)
- Gender education





# REFERENCES

- Angelides, S. (2013). 'Technology, hormones, and stupidity': The affective politics of teenage sexting. *Sexualities*, vol.16(5/6), 665-689. doi:10.1177/1363460713487289
- Comartin, E., Kernsmith, R., & Kernsmith, P. (2013). "Sexting" and Sex Offender Registration: Do Age, Gender, and Sexual Orientation Matter? *Deviant Behavior*, vol.34(1), 38-52. doi:10.1080/01639625.2012.707534
- Dir, A. L., Coskunpinar, A., Steiner, J. L., & Cyders, M. A. (2013). Understanding Differences in Sexting Behaviors Across Gender, Relationship Status, and Sexual Identity, and the Role of Expectancies in Sexting. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior & Social Networking*, vol.16(8), 568-574. doi:10.1089/cyber.2012.0545
- Hasinoff, A.A. (2013). Sexting as media production: Rethinking social media and sexuality. *New Media and Society*, (15), 449-460.
- Judge, A. M. (2011). 'Sexting' Among U.S. Adolescents: Psychological and Legal Perspectives. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=d00c32a6fd87-443a958d-531a9db1bd06%40sessionmgr111&vid=2&hid=127>
- Pasco, C.J. (2011). Resource and risk: Youth sexuality and new media use. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, vol.8(1), 5-17.

## REFERENCES CONTINUED

- Pinel, J. P. J. (2011). Chapter 17: Biopsychology of Emotion, Stress, and Health. *Biopsychology* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, Mass: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sex and tech: Results from a survey of teens and young adults. (2008). *The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy*, 1-17. Retrieved from [http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech/PDF/SexTech\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech/PDF/SexTech_Summary.pdf)
- Teens and sexting: What is it and what can parents do? (2012). *The Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter*, vol.28(4), I-II. doi: 10.1002/cbl.20090
- Temple, J. R., Paul, J. A., Berg, P., Donna Le, V., McElhany, A., & Temple, B. W. (2012). Teen Sexting and Its Association With Sexual Behaviors. *JAMA Network*. Retrieved from <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1212181>
- Walker, S., Sanci, L., & Temple-Smith, M. (2012). Sexting: Young Women's and Men's Views on Its Nature and Origins. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol.52(6), 697701.
- Wood, J. T. (2013). *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, & Culture* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, Mass: Uhl & Eckman.