

# EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA DEPICTIONS OF ADOLESCENT **SEXTING** ON PARENTAL PRACTICES: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY



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## INTRODUCTION

**Sexting** = the electronic sending of self-made explicit sexual or intimate content (Walrave et al., 2018)

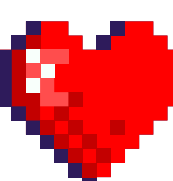
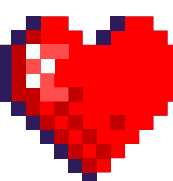
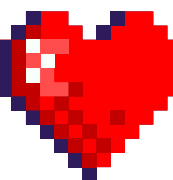
- ↗ prevalence : 1 in 7 adolescents sends sexts & 1 in 4 receives them (Madigan et al., 2018)
- Developmental aspects : Sexual exploration ? Risky behavior ? (e.g., Eleuteri et al., 2017)

### Sexting & parents' perceptions

- **Negative attitudes** → links with pornography // "non-genuine" intimacy (Lamprianidou et al., 2024)
- **Balance** between respecting adolescents' privacy VS protecting them from risks
- Parental **gender attitudes** → patriarchal society // gender of the adolescent ?

**Medias discourse** = focus on the negative consequences // often gendered ! (McGovern & Lee, 2018)

→ can "push" some parents to adopt **different practices** (more controlling-overprotective)



## METHOD

- **Experimental study** → 3 conditions
- **Questionnaires** → parents of adolescents (16-18)

Before the manipulation, we will measure :

### Parents'

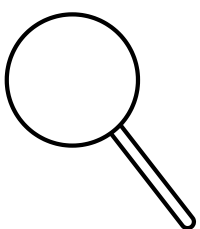
- **Perceived societal pressure** (adapted from Wuyts et al., 2015)  
→ 7 items, e.g., "The media have very high expectations regarding the way to raise a child"
- **Gender ideology** (Davis et al., 2020)  
→ 7 items, e.g., "A woman's most important task is to look after her children"
- **Gender essentialism** (Liss et al., 2013)  
→ 6 items, e.g., "Although fathers are important, children ultimately need mothers more than fathers"
- **Religiosity** (King & Schafer, 1992)  
→ 1 item, e.g., "Religion is an important part of my life"
- **Traditionalism** (Schwartz et al., 2012)  
→ 3 items, e.g., "I think it's important to maintain traditional values or beliefs"

### 3 vignettes :

- ★ **Deviant** → sexting as a risk/danger for adolescents' development
- ★ **Normative** → sexting as part of sexual exploration of teenagers, with advantages and some risks
- ★ **Control** → article on the doors of Brussels

### RESEARCH GOALS :

How do medias depictions of sexting influence parents' representation, and elicit more positive or negative practices ?



After the manipulation, we will measure :

### Parents'

- **Positive and negative attitudes toward sexting**  
(positive items adapted from Weisskirch et al., 2011)  
(negative items adapted from Sex and Tech survey instrument (National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2008)  
→ 13 items, e.g., "Sexting is just a part of flirting"
- **Trust** (adapted from Kerr et al., 1999)  
→ 6 items, e.g., "I trust that my child not to send unsolicited sexts (unwanted or unrequested) to others"
- **Mediation** (adapted from Valkenburg et al., 2013)  
→ 17 items, e.g., "If I wanted to discuss about sexting with my child, I would want to know how my child thinks"
- **Overprotection** (adapted from Chevrier et al., 2022)  
→ 7 items, e.g., "If I learned that my child wanted to engage in sexting, I would immediately see danger"
- **Internet control scale** (adapted from Law et al., 2010)  
→ 4 items, e.g., "My way of dealing with my child's sexting would be to control the content of his/her messages"

## HYPOTHESES

- **Deviant vignette** = ↗ negative attitude toward sexting ↗ overprotection ↗ internet control ↗ controlling mediation

- Adolescents' gender, parental gender attitudes and endorsement of gender essentialism as moderators
- Parental religiosity and traditionalism as moderators

