Homosocial positionings and ambivalent participation: A qualitative analysis of young adults’ non-consensual sharing and viewing of privately produced sexual images

Engl. transl.: Homosocial positionings and ambivalent participation: A qualitative analysis of young adults’ non-consensual sharing and viewing of privately produced sexual images

# Keywords

* sexting
* non-consensual
* young adults
* qualitative
* nudes
* authenticity

# Details

## Year

2020

## DOI

https://doi.org/10.7146/mediekultur.v36i67.113976

## Issued

2020

## Language

English

## Volume

36

## Issue

67

## Start Page

## End Page

## Editors

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## Type

Journal article

## Book title

INTIMACY AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

## Journal

MedieKultur: Journal of media and communication research

## Publisher

SMID. Society of Media researchers In Denmark

## Place

Copenhagen

## Topics

* Wellbeing
* Risks and harms
* Access, inequalities and vulnerabilities

## Sample

"The study draws on data from focus group interviews with Danish students from two upper secondary schools conducted in the spring of 2018. The participants were recruited with the help of teachers from the schools. Twenty-nine young adults (20 females, 9 males), aged 17–20, volunteered to participate and fi lled out consent forms describing the purpose of the study and the use of empirical data. Participants under the legal age were asked to obtain written parental consent. As an acknowledgement of their contribution, participants were given a 100 DKK (approx. 15 USD) gift card to a popular Danish chain store"
" the participants were divided into seven same-sex focus groups with peers with whom they were friends or at least well acquainted. All interviews were conducted at the two schools, moderated by the author and had an average duration of 80 minutes."
"The interviews used the vignette method (Kandemir Budd, 2018), in which participants are given a short case story (a “vignette”) that they are asked to consider and discuss"
" All interviews were digitally recorded, before being transcribed using NVivo. Th e transcriptions were also checked against the audio recording to ensure accuracy. In this process, participants’ names were replaced with pseudonyms and all identifying information was removed from the data"

# Abstract

Although quantitative studies have found gender differences in the non-consensual sharing of privately produced sexual images, few studies have explored how these sharing practices are shaped by the gendered social interactions in which they take place. Drawing on qualitative data from seven same-sex focus group interviews, this study examines the non-consensual sharing and viewing of sexual images among young adults. The investigation shows how the non-consensual sharing and view- ing of sexting images is shaped by homosocial interactions and functions in gen- dered patterns of positioning, characterized by status enhancement among boys and visual gossiping among girls. However, the study also finds that young adults’ participation in these sharing practices is ambivalent, as they experience being both drawn to sexual images due to their private and authentic character, and repelled by them owing to the wrongfulness and illegality of sharing them. These findings are discussed in relation to research on youth sexting.

# Outcome

"With the exception of one case, which is described in the section presenting the second theme (ambivalent participation), all of the instances in which the focus group partici-pants had viewed sexual images without consent took place in the company of same-sex peers."
"The present study thus shows how the non-consensual sharing of sexual images is both shaped by homosocial interactions and the use of particular digital technologies."
"Th is study has also shown that while the sharing of sexual images proved to be a way of proving one’s sexual experiences in order to position oneself higher in a masculine hierarchy, it was associated with diff erent forms of homosocial interaction in the female groups. Here, digital evidence of sexual attention (i.e. “dick pics”) could not be traded for status within the homosocial order. Instead, the viewing of sexual images shared with-out consent functioned as a form of “visual gossiping” (Johansen et al., 2019, p. 1031), in which female participants positioned the girls depicted in these pictures as belonging to a “lower” category of femininity while positioning themselves as belonging to a morally superior, gendered category."
"this study has also found that several participants refrained from participating in non-consensual sharing practices, thus manifesting signs of resistance to objectifying and sexist forms of homo-social bonding. In sum, these findings are relevant for understanding what leads young adults to either engage in or refrain from the non-consensual sharing of sexual images."