

International Conference

GENDERED CULTURES IN PLATFORM ECONOMIES: ENTERTAINMENT, EXPERTISE AND ONLINE SELFHOOD

ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa Avenida das Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisbon, Portugal



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The EUMEPLAT project aims at analyzing the role of media platforms in fostering or dismantling European identity. Drawing on the assumption that European dimension has rarely been dominant in media history and focusing on the "platformization" process and its positive and negative externalities, the main research question is whether or not new platforms are making European culture more European or not.

EUMEPLAT is carried out by 12 institutions from 10 countries:

- 1. Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione (IULM), Italy // coordinator
- 2. Leibniz-Institut für Medienforschung | Hans-Bredow Institut (HBI), Germany
- 3. New Bulgarian University (NBU), Bulgaria
- 4. UNIMED Unione delle Università del Mediterraneo (UNIMED), Italy
- 5. Fundacio per a la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), Spain
- 6. Universiteit Gent (UGent), Belgium
- 7. Bilkent Universitesi Vakif (BILKENT), Turkey
- 8. Ethniko Kai Kapodistriako Panepistimio Athinon (NKUA), Greece
- 9. Iscte Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), Portugal
- 10. Universita Ca' Foscari Venezia (UNIVE), Italy
- 11. Foreningen IKED (IKED), Sweden
- 12. Univerzita Karlova (CU), Czech Republic

The principal investigator is Prof. Andrea Miconi from the Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione – IULM (Italy).

The project is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme and spans over 3 years (March 2021-February 2024).

PROGRAMME

VENUE

ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Avenida das Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisbon, Portugal

ROOM: Auditório Ferreira de Almeida (B2.03),

Edifício II, bloco B, piso 2

Wi-Fi access for onsite participants

Network: eduroam

User: <u>guest_eventos@iscte-iul.pt</u>

Pass: GYU12345!

Zoom link for online participants

https://videoconf-colibri.zoom.us/j/94022967918

≥ 20 NOV DAY 1

- **8.30-9.30** Registration of the participants
- **9.30-10.00** Welcome speeches

Andrea Miconi, EUMEPLAT Principal Investigator, IULM University (Italy)

Gustavo Cardoso, ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal)

Cláudia Álvares, ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal)

■ 10.00-11.15 Keynote speech | 'Europe' from a cultural citizenship perspective. On context, experience and media wisdom

Key note speaker: **Joke Hermes**, Inholland University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands)

Chair: Cláudia Álvares, ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal)

45 minutes speech + 30 minutes Q&A

- **11.15-11.30** Coffee break
- 11.30-13.00 Panel session 1 | #wellbeing: gender, self-help and ideologies on social media platforms

Chair: Panos Kompatsiaris, IULM University (Italy)

Exploring #wellness on Instagram: how is gender represented?

By Rita Sepúlveda (ICNOVA – NOVA University Lisbon; ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal), Ana Marta M. Flores (ICNOVA – NOVA University Lisbon; University of Coimbra, Portugal) and António Vasconcelos (ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal)

Gender and Anti-Work Ideology on TikTok

By Jacquelyn Arcy (University of Wisconsin – Parkside, USA) and Allison Page (Rutgers University – Camden, USA)

Coaching digital minimalism

By Ana Jorge (CICANT/Lusófona University, Portugal)

On life coaches, self-improvement, and gender

By Bert Verhulst (Ghent University, Belgium)

- **13.00-14.00** Lunch Break
- 14.00-15.30 Panel session 2 | The feminist turn: on feminist discourses, platforms and empowerment

Chair: **Sofie Van Bauwel**, Ghent University (Belgium)

Finance, But Make it Fun (and Feminist?): A Discourse Analysis of @MrsDowJones

By Rachel O'Neill (LSE – London School of Economics and Political Science, UK) and Simidele Dosekun (LSE – London School of Economics and Political Science, UK)

Gender rhetoric for sale. Chiara Ferragni and the platformization of woman body that crushes ideologies

By Maria Angela Polesana (IULM University, Italy) and Elisabetta Risi (IULM University, Italy)

Feminist Instatoons in South Korea

By Sarah Molisso (City University of London, UK)

Click here for feminism! Exploring tensions on Instagram feminisms self-promotion practices

By Sofia Caldeira (CICANT/Lusófona University, Portugal)

"Today I've been a super cheating #ThatGirl": self-improvement performances on TikTok and YouTube

By Ana Margarida Coelho (Portuguese Catholic University; Lusófona University, Portugal) and Maria Castellví (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain)

15.30-15.45 Break

15.45-17.15 Panel session 3 | On Body and love: embodiment, love and

sexuality online

Chair: Babette Lagrange, Ghent University (Belgium)

Transnormativity and the Biopolitics of Eating on Instagram

By Loki Klister (Central European University, Austria)

Naked or dressed? The effect of (female) pop-stars' self-representations on InstagramBy Alessandra Micalizzi (Università Telematica Pegaso, Italy)

The School of Cruel Optimism: Influential Gatekeepers of Desire and Self-Optimisation

By Andrew Porter (University of Strathclyde, UK)

The Hooker, the Hacker, and the Instagrammer: Eros at the Intersection of Sex, Identity, and Class

By Andrea Barcaro (University of Lisbon, Portugal)

Coping with scrutiny across platforms: Chinese female transnational romance content creators' daily production

By Qian Huang (University of Groningen, The Netherlands)

■ 17.15-18.35 Panel Session 4 | Creating change: the online economy as a platform for activism and change

Chair: Cláudia Álvares, ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal)

Exploring the Role of Digital Content Creation in Shaping Offline Status: A Study of Female YouTube Content Creators in Nagaland, India

By Ashonshok Kachui (IIT - Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur, India)

Historicizing Gendered Engagement: How Early-2000s Convergent Platforms for Women Introduced Users to the Internet

By Jacquelyn Arcy (University of Wisconsin – Parkside, USA)

The logic of virtual influencers: social platformization, LGBTQ movement and brand activism

By Nello Barile (IULM University, Italy)

Emergence of the Transgender Woman in Bangladesh – the Gendered, Employable, Neoliberal Subject

By Maliha Mohsin (Central European University, Austria)

21 NOV DAY 2 DAY 2

■ 10.00-11.15 Keynote speech | Platforms and Intimacies: Everyday engagements with digital media

Keynote speaker: Sander De Ridder, University of Antwerp (Belgium)

Chair: **Sofie Van Bauwel**, Ghent University (Belgium)

45 minutes speech + 30 minutes Q&A

- **11.15-11.30** Coffee break
- 11.30-13.00 Panel session 5 | Gendered Violence, emotions and platforms

Chair: **Sofie Van Bauwel**, Ghent University (Belgium)

Sexual harassment in Portuguese academia: Discourses of women victims and bystanders on #Metoo

By Júlia Garraio (University of Coimbra, Portugal), Maria Helena Santos (ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal) and Carla Cerqueira (CICANT/Lusófona University, Portugal)

Embodied Misogyny and Homosociality: A Psychoanalytic Exploration of Online Male Embodiment in Contemporary Gym Culture

By Nahiyan Rashid (St Mary's University, UK)

Online Emotions as Catalysts for Change

By Babette Lagrange (Ghent University, Belgium)

Femicide frames on Facebook and twitter platforms in Greece: Their role in public awareness of addressing violence against women

By Achilleas Karadimitriou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece), Stylianos Papathanassopoulos (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece), Iliana Giannouli (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece), Ioanna Archontaki, (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece)

Media Sensationalism and Unveiling the Dark Realities of Feminicide in Brazil and Its Ramifications

By Dália Costa (ISCSP, Portugal) and Jaqueline da Costa Bueno (ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal)

- **13.00-14.00** Lunch Break
- 14.00-15.30 Panel session 6 | Representing gendered identities on social media platforms

Chair: Cláudia Álvares, ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal)

Labors of (Trans)Masculinity: A Discourse Analysis of FtM Influencers' Instagram Accounts

By Tristan Venturi (University of Bologna, Italy)

Gender and the entertainification of historical cultures through YouTube videos

By Sheenagh Pietrobruno (Saint Paul University/University of Ottawa, Canada)

Gender identity definition in the Metaverse: from avatars to NFTs

By Valeria Volponi (IULM University, Italy)

New Selves Old Identities: A Content Analysis of Top 100 Instagram Accounts in Turkiye
By Lutz Peschke (Bilkent University, Turkey), Yasemin Gümüş Ağca (Bilkent University,
Turkey) and Irmak Dündar (Bilkent University, Turkey)

BEING IMPALUME: The Construction of Life-Giving Masculinity in Bemba Matrilineal Society of Northern Zambia

By Upendo Mwakasenga (University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

- **15.30-15.45** Break
- 15.45-16.55 Panel session 7 On Body and love: embodiment, love and sexuality online

Chair: Panos Kompatsiaris, IULM University (Italy)

The glamour of the Muhteşem Yuzyil: the fashionable Ottoman court in the 21 century

By Nilay Ulosoy (Bahçeşehir University, Turkey) and Deniz Gürgen Atalay (Bahçeşehir University, Turkey)

360 Degrees of Feminine Competence: Surface Aesthetics, Expertise and Authority Among Drip Cake Baker-Influencers

By Vanessa Brown (Nottingham Trent University, UK) and Steve Jones (Nottingham Trent University, UK)

Gendered Zootopia on Instagram: Pet Instagram Accounts and Gender Representation

By Irina Dushakova (HSE University, Russia) and Natalia Vereshchagina (HSE University, Russia)

■ 16.55-18.25 Panel Session 8 | Family ties: on social media platforms and the construction of family

Chair: **Sofie Van Bauwel**, Ghent University (Belgium)

Momfluencers' Instagram Stories as Entertainment: Daily-Soaps visualizing care from 9 to 5

By Friederike Jage-D'Aprile (Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Germany)

Sharenting for Profit: From amateur to professional parent content creators

By Alexandra Ruiz-Gomez (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain), Ana Jorge (CICANT/Lusófona University, Portugal) and Emma Beuckels (Ghent University, Belgium)

Family, fulfillment and 'successful ageing': Online representations of elderly Thai women

By Kullanit Nitiwarangkul (City University of London, UK)

"Good mothers" and "involved fathers": influencers sharenting on Instagram

By Francisca Porfírio (CICANT/Lusófona University, Portugal), Patrícia Dias (CECC/Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal) and Ana Jorge (CICANT/Lusófona University, Portugal)

18.25-18.40 Closing by **Panos Kompatsiaris**, IULM University (Italy)



Joke Hermes

Inholland University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands)

Joke Hermes is Professor of Inclusion and the Creative Industries at the Creative Business research group of Inholland University of Applied Sciences since 2004. In addition to her appointment as professor, Hermes is affiliated with the Media Studies department of the University of Amsterdam and is also founding editor of the academic journal European Journal of Cultural Studies. Joke Hermes studied Political Science at the University of Amsterdam, where she also earned her PhD doctorate.

Through her research, she investigates how the creative industry can contribute to addressing social issues and problems. Other focusses of her research are diversity and the ever-changing dividing line between creators and users of creative products and services, how stakeholders can be involved and participative design (a method in which the end users of the design are involved in the design process). The results of Hermes' research are published in trade journals and academic journals. Outside Inholland, Hermes maintains contacts with governmental and non-governmental organizations that deal with communication, media and young people. She currently works with Movisie, Diversity Media and Textgain.

Joke Hermes is also a member of EUMEPLAT Scientific Board.



Sander De Ridder

University of Antwerp (Belgium)

Sander De Ridder is an assistant professor in the field of Media Studies at the University of Antwerp.

His research investigates the role of media and digital culture in society with a focus on intimacy, identity, and communication.

He published in leading journals and is co-editor (together with Lisa Parks and Julia Velkova) of Media Backends: Digital Infrastructures and Sociotechnical Relations (forthcoming 2023, University of Illinois Press).

He is a member of the Antwerp Media in Society Centre (AMSoC) and fellow of the Young Academy, which is a part of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for the Sciences & the Arts.



Exploring #wellness on Instagram: how is gender represented?

Rita Sepúlveda, ICNOVA - NOVA University Lisbon (Portugal);
ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal)

Ana Marta M. Flores, ICNOVA - NOVA University Lisbon
(Portugal); University of Coimbra (Portugal)

António Vasconcelos, ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal)

Users have appropriated Instagram as a stage where the physical dimension of wellness - caring for the body to stay healthy now and in the future (Stoewen, 2017) - is part of everyday posts. Following De Lauretis (1987) contribution to technologies of gender, we question how the physical dimension of wellness is visually portrayed on Instagram from a gender perspective. Considering gender as something one is not inherently born with but rather a social and cultural construct (Butler, 1990), we interrogate how users represent it. This study combines extractions of public Instagram posts from March, April and May 2023 associated with the #wellness hashtag. All image posts were downloaded (N=750), a codebook was created in order to classify the posts, and a content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was performed. Results suggest that physical wellness is mainly represented through photos and videos of exercise and nutrition. Posts reinforce binary constructions of masculinity and femininity, limiting the range of gender identities. Posts related to exercise centred around the male body usually focus on improving strength and muscles, while posts on the female body tend to focus on weight loss. Regarding nutrition, we notice that while a part of the posts is produced in a gender-neutral tone, they are more often directed at women. It is possible to imply, through this clipping, that the collective narrative associated with #wellness reinforces a logic of the man as stronger and more muscular and, of the woman, in search of thinness.

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Gender and Anti-Work Ideology on TikTok

Jacquelyn Arcy, University of Wisconsin - Parkside (USA) **Allison Page**, Rutgers University - Camden (USA)

In this paper, we examine the gendered dimensions of anti-work sentiment circulating among young millennials and Generation Z on TikTok. From the phenomenon known as "QuitTok," where users post confessional videos describing quitting their jobs, to the proliferation of "tradwives" (a portmanteau for traditional housewives), a term for influencers who document their domestic lives after leaving careers, young women from across the ideological spectrum are increasingly expressing disillusion with corporate work culture.

To explore the gendered dimensions of labor in the context of precarity and collapse, we situate QuitTok and TradWives within several cultural and economic shifts: first, the so-called Great Resignation in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, where workers left jobs en masse and an anti-work critique began garnering mainstream attention. Women, particularly women of color, were disproportionately affected by changes in work wrought by the pandemic, as they took on increasing childcare duties and were laid off at a higher rate. (More than 20 million women left the workforce at the beginning of the pandemic.) Second, these trends have arisen within an iteration of internet culture wherein influencers have ballooned and lifestyle videos have flourished. We explore the various ways young women are engaging with anti-work discourse on TikTok, and in many cases leveraging it to develop influencer platforms (though influencing itself often involves full time and poorly compensated work). We consider how anti-work critiques are captured in the capitalist structure of platform economies, and at the same time, may meaningfully contribute to feminist anti-work organizing.

Coaching digital minimalism

Ana Jorge, CICANT/Lusófona University (Portugal)

The management of digital connectivity appears as a critical aspect of contemporary lives to be mastered by the self (Syvertsen & Enli, 2020; Moe & Madsen, 2021). This paper analyses gendered politics of digital minimalism and focuses on the role of coaches of digital minimalism. Particularly, the paper asks: why is digital minimalism so attractive for, or marketed as attractable to, female subjects? What are the critical consequences of posing labour of dealing with digital media as an imperative?

We concentrate on two influencers-turned-coaches in Portugal, with different positionings (Cláudia Ganhão - productivity - and Ana Milhazes - ecology). We performed discourse analysis on a collection of materials from their courses and authored books, social media content, press material and interview. We analyse their presentation, pedagogies (from awareness to habit formation and sustenance), and the rewards of the learning and change (personal benefits of productivity and wellness; and ecological gains in the case of Milhazes). These coaches draw on international gurus (Baker & Rojek, 2020) as Cal Newport on digital minimalism, and Marie Kondō on minimalism (Ouellette, 2019), and on popular, positive psychology about habit transformation. Coaches position themselves as entrepreneurs of the self, and facilitate processes of individual transformation through the implementation of micro and incremental changes. In doing so, they enforce digital minimalism as a form of gendered labour (Fast, 2021; Lai, 2021) whereby women are expected to be in control of the use of digital media, by them and their families.

On life coaches, self-improvement, and gender

Bert Verhulst, Ghent University (Belgium)

Life coaching is a growing profession in Western societies, rooted in the idea of self-improvement and often performed and promoted on platforms like Instagram. Life coaches typically specialize in working with individuals of their own gender, offering personalized support within that specific demographic. However, the field has faced criticism for its lack of evidence-based practices and expertise, leading some coaches to employ tactics to enhance their credibility. Previous studies have shown how life coaches can use the affordances of Instagram to increase their legitimacy and credibility. Building on this, we focus on whether and how gender profiling plays part in this, including ideas of "power" prior used by Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau and "identity" based on ideas by Erving Goffman. In doing so, we distinguish between legitimate empowerment and support for both men and women, and potentially harmful practices that perpetuate gender stereotypes or reinforce power inequality. This study seeks to promote gender equality and empower both men and women by addressing unique obstacles they may face. We believe it is crucial to study the ways in which life coaches demonstrate "selfimprovement" because this opens up the possibility of reinforcing stereotypes or perpetuating unequal power dynamics. To analyze this phenomenon, we apply a multi-method approach, observing a total of 20 Instagram profiles of life coaches (10 identifying as male, 10 as female). These observations are followed by in-depth interviews in which we discuss, compare and reinforce our findings with the life coaches whose Instagram profiles we previously observed.

Finance, But Make it Fun (and Feminist?): A Discourse Analysis of @MrsDowJones

Simidele Dosekun, London School of Economics (UK) **Rachel O'Neill**, London School of Economics (UK)

This paper examines the operations of an emergent category of influencer specialising in financial education and advice, dubbed 'finfluencers'. We focus specifically on @MrsDowJones (Haley Sacks), a New York City based financial influencer with nearly half a million followers on Instagram, associated podcast, and educational platform. Billing herself as the 'Zillenial Finance Expert', @MrsDowJones covers topics such as how to build a pension fund, save for a child's future education, and reduce medical bills, all delivered in a decidedly over-the-top style tax avoidance tips and stock market insights wrapped up in memes and celebrity gossip. Honing in on the expressly gendered and avowedly feminist terms through which @MrsDowJones addresses her audience - who are enjoined to 'become [their] own trust fund' – we argue that the rise of Sacks and others like her is part of a new development within and extension on neoliberal and popular feminisms (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Rottenberg, 2018). Herein, women are invited to become financially savvy and to invest in themselves as the most assured route to financial security and indeed prosperity. That is, women are exhorted not to entrust their financial well-being to a partner, employer, or the state, but to instead rely on themselves alone. Locating this development within the context of economic crises both new and longstanding, we consider how the 'gimmick' (Ngai, 2020) @MrsDowJones elaborates can illuminate the shifting 'reproductive bargain' (Pearson, 1997) between the state and its citizenry, the fallout of which is being met by new kinds of self-styled experts in platform economies.

Gender rhetoric for sale. Chiara Ferragni and the platformization of woman body that crushes ideologies

Maria Angela Polesana, IULM University (Italy)
Elisabetta Risi, IULM University (Italy)

Women's identification with their body fosters sexual objectification and selfobjectification processes (Fredrickson, Roberts, 2007). Capturing the body in thousands of pictures posted on social media appears to be the only way to protect it from the decay, the only way to work on it: "the only body that today appears to be accepted is the body subjected to your control" (Marzano 2010, p. 20). A control that depends only apparently on the individual: actually, it is affected by media narrations that promote ideal and perfect bodies, bodies as simulacra. Bodies that show the power of the capital that wants them to be beautiful, young, slender and sensual. Women's objectification through social platforms reduce their identities to mere sexual objects, ignoring the complexity of their individuality and reducing their value to a surface appearance. Our contribution explores the implications and potential challenges deriving from the instrumental use of feminism for the purpose of self-promotion, with the consequent trivialization of social movements and the dilution of the meaning of feminism in the superficiality used in dealing with relevant issues related to gender equality. The instrumental use of feminism can lead to cultural appropriation and to the reduction of activism to a mere personal marketing tool, thus increasing the risk of damaging the feminist movement in favour of a merely expressive and emotional participation (Andreassen et al, 2017).

This contributes to the persistence of gender inequalities and to the limitation of opportunities for women in spheres other than the one of appearance. The body becomes obscene, pornographic, due to the transparency, and showcasing required and imposed by platforms (Codeluppi, 2007). A clear example of this phenomenon is represented by Chiara Ferragni, an Italian influencer followed by 29 million of followers. Her commitment to the fight against gender discriminations and against violence on women is expressed through a pornographic (Baudrillard 1970) display of the body that doesn't help the cause. That is to say that Chiara Ferragni expresses, through her media exhibition, the irreversible confusion between women and their body. Women and their body were subject to slavery in the past, as well as their emancipation show that women and their body are still irreversibly bound today (ibidem).

Ferragni's protest, her social commitment is inspired by marketing logics, by advertising. We would like to investigate how she has become a socio-political influencer (Duffy & Pierce, 2007) exploiting the user base, achieved through social media, in order "to sell" political contents. The aim of her narration is to please/be liked and to catch the attention (Lipovetsky 2017) of consumers-followers. Chiara Ferragni's commitment, as well as that of million other bodies displayed on digital platforms, is the manifestation of the capital that turned values, promoted by advertising narrations, into habitus: exploiting gender rhetoric, women's image is reduced to the capacity of body spectacularizing their body thus emptying ideologies.

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Feminist Instatoons in South Korea

Sarah Molisso, City University of London (UK)

This presentation will look at South Korean instatoons as a creative practice that disseminates feminism. Online spaces can serve as a medium to challenge normative gender roles and identities. Instatoons (webtoons that are published on Instagram) provide a radical space in which user created content can be made to challenge stereotypes and provide a counter-narrative to hegemonic discourses. The presentation will build on Molisso's 2023 article, Palatable Political Passion Projects? Feminist Instatoons in South Korea, and will incorporate emerging findings from her PhD research. Molisso has used a mixed methods approach to

findings from her PhD research. Molisso has used a mixed methods approach to her research, conducting both a survey during October 2021-April 2022 (521 respondents), and fieldwork in Korea where she interviewed 13 instatoon and webtoon readers in April 2023.

To understand the political nature of feminist instatoons, this presentation will first contextualise the feminist discourse in South Korea starting from the mid-2000s, looking at how it exists in conflict online. This has spawned different feminist factions, including raet-pem, self-identified radical feminists, although this presentation will not support nor promote any anti-trans ideology. The presentation will conclude with a variety of examples of feminist insta/webtoons which the audience will be able to understand within the political climate of Korea today.

Molisso argues that South Korean instatoons are political acts, as they allow for public discussions on feminism, emerging as a 'palatable' interpretation of feminism, one that can subtly critique gender norms, and one that can reach a wider audience in a society in which 'feminism' is a dirty word.

Click here for feminism! Exploring tensions on Instagram feminisms self-promotion practices

Sofia Caldeira, CICANT/Lusófona University (Portugal)

Digital technologies have often been framed as central to fourth-wave feminist action (Munro, 2013). Yet, these techno-utopian discourses can be complexified (van Zoonen, 2011), particularly when concerning platforms like Instagram which foreground aesthetic, entertainment, and commercial practices (Leaver et al., 2020). On Instagram, everyday feminist practices (Pruchniewska, 2019) co-exist with these entertainment-oriented uses, embedded in an attention economy that follows a social media logic of popularity (Hutchinson, 2021; van Dijck & Poell, 2013). Practices of algorithmic activism (e.g. Treré, 2018; Tufekci, 2013) are adopted to attract and sustain visibility for feminist messages on Instagram, yet these can mirror attention-seeking strategies commonly used by influencers, in an example of influencer creep (Bishop, 2022).

This paper explores tensions between feminist and self-promotional practices, focusing on Instagram and particularly its Stories feature – a multi-modal, short, and ephemeral format. This study builds on previous research on feminist cultures on Portuguese Instagram (Caldeira, 2023), analysing 2282 Instagram Stories, produced by 52 users, collected between October and December 2022. The analysis combines qualitative textual analysis and close readings with the use of digital methods to explore overarching patterns.

This paper explores Instagram as a contested space for everyday feminisms, where the openness to participation of 'ordinary' people clashes with the unequal way in which visibility is afforded, privileging public-facing accounts with large numbers of followers. It reflects on how self-amplification strategies intersect with feminist community through social practices such as re-sharing Stories. And how feminist content becomes enmeshed with commercial content.

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"Today I've been a super cheating #ThatGirl": self-improvement performances on TikTok and YouTube

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TikTok is widely known for the proliferation of very heterogeneous subcultures (Abidin, 2021; Boffone, 2022). Recently, a tag labeled #ThatGirl has emerged as a prominent aesthetic trend related to lifestyle, beauty and wellness culture (Sweeney-Romero, 2022). These contents result on a "step-by-step template", appealing viewers to engage and "start their respective wellness journey" (Sweeney-Romero, 2022, p. 108), namely through daily activities, i.e., waking up early, working-out, eating healthy or journaling, in a constant process of selfimprovement that resonates with the postfeminist framework (Gill, 2007, 2020). Users commonly apply a carefully curated audiovisual aesthetic and share their more or less successful attempts of embracing this lifestyle in their social media accounts. This paper analyses YouTube vlogs inspired by this TikTok trend, shared by Portuguese content creators.

It aims to answer the following questions: a) Which aesthetic and narrative values build the #ThatGirl trend? b) What role does gender play in this construction? c) How do lifestyle youtubers reproduce, appropriate and relate to these imaginaries? We have analysed a purposive sample of 50 TikTok videos linked to the hashtag #ThatGirl and 4 YouTube vlogs from lifestyle influencers. Our study shows how the latter experience a constant tension between embracing the trend's self-improvement rules and, simultaneously, making an effort to stay true and authentic to themselves. By closely looking at their failures and successes when following "that girl"s guidelines", our research contributes to better understand the tensions at play in contemporary girl culture under a platformized environment.

Transnormativity and the Biopolitics of Eating on Instagram

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In my paper, I want to follow recent findings in psychological and psychiatric studies that are concerned with the proximity between gender variance and eating disorders (Jones et al. 2018; Coelho et al. 2019; Hartman-Munick et al. 2021; Gorrell et al. 2021; Uniacke et al. 2021; Cusack, lampieri, and Galupo 2022; Muratore et al. 2022; Nagata, Compte, et al. 2022; Nagata, McGuire, et al. 2022; Romano and Lipson 2022). I want to know how the notion of "eating disorder" is constituting a possible normative imagination of trans*bodies. To conceptualize such an imagination, I suggest focusing on (non-)eating related practices that are understood as enabling the body to self-transition according to normative gendered body ideals in Instagram representations of trans and non-binary bodies. The aim of my paper is to critically look at the connection between eating and visually gendered body ideals. Therefore, I will conceptualize the self-transitioning eating practices as a racialized (trans)figuration of the trans*body. With the help of Jasbir Puar's chapter "Bodies with New Organs: Becoming Trans, Becoming Disabled" of her book The Right to Maim - Debility, Capacity, Disability (2017), I argue that the notion of self-transitioning eating (trans)figures what Puar calls a "transnormative subject" (Puar 2017, 34). According to Puar, this subject not only qualifies as "trans" but is also biopolitically controllable through screenings, diagnosis, therapies, and medical treatments. I will expand Puar's concept of the "exceptional trans body" (45) to the exceptionalization of a self-transitioning body through eating in the context of Instagram self-presentations.

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Naked or dressed? The effect of (female) pop-stars' self-representations on Instagram

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Socio-technological contexts (Boccia Artieri, 2013), are responsible for changes affecting the construction and circulation of social representations, including gender representations (among others Poggio, 2021).

Self-representations become cultural products, determining the establishment of expressive trends and new cultural models; at the same time, they are the result of the sedimentation of shared images previously circulated also - and not only - inside social media (Tiggermann, Anderberg 2020).

Gender, placed within these communicative circuits and the resulted by shared processes of social construction (Connell 2002, Poggio 2006, Poggio 2021), finds in the body one of its main 'evidences,' understood as the visible and objectified part of the representation itself. Paraphrasing the expression used by West and Zimmerman (1987) to identify the role of social action in the definition of gender - doing gender - we could extend it to the body, doing body, to identify the importance of the uses and ways of "making oneself a body" in relationships and more generally in social space.

The paper aims to share some of the findings of an empirical research whose main objective is to investigate the role of female artists' self-representations in music on the gendered representation of femininity and its related imaginaries. More specifically, the empirical work aims to ascertain a) what and how many models of body icons (Pozzi, 1994) are present in social communication by images, by female music artists occupying the Italian scene b) the repercussions on the perceived and acted of young girls and boys (18-25), users of the same platforms.

The School of Cruel Optimism: Influential Gatekeepers of Desire and Self-Optimisation

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Prominent among the discourses within online seduction and anti-masturbation communities are ideas of self-curation (Wallace 2017) and self-optimisation (Johanssen 2022). The growing popularity of these communities can be attributed, among other affects, to desires borne of virtual intimacies (McGlotten 2013) and a "network experience" which is itself inherently sexual and/or pornographic (Holt 2021). Lauren Berlant's "cruel optimism" (2011) describes our fixation to attain an imagined "good life" within ongoing everyday crises; in the context of these communities, the conceptual "good life" may be relative to the form of selfoptimisation required to achieve unattainable goals, bodies and/or selves. Influencers in these spaces create content advocating for knowledge and practices of self-optimisation, creating further false crises in harvesting the negativity of their audience's desires; specific techniques include addressing the audience in negative terms and acts of self-branding (Marwick 2013) which extend beyond social media to the conceptual 'private school', which locks perceived 'expert' knowledge behind paywalls. In effect, these influencers can be read to perpetuate cruel optimisms through capitalistic self-brand management and use of desire-laden network logics to place the unattainable optimised self behind a paywall. This paper will further analyse the specific techniques and types of content used by influencers within these spaces to instil cruel optimisms within their audience via both form and content. Analyses of these techniques reveal new understandings of the popularity of such communities, which are often prone to ideologies of gender-based hate and abuse, and of the self-branding techniques which both leverage and employ cruel optimisms to extract capital from their audiences.

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The Hooker, the Hacker, and the Instagrammer: Eros at the Intersection of Sex, Identity, and Class

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Recent developments in technology and digital communication require us to rethink the ways we perceive and communicate ourselves, leading to the emergence of what I describe as posthuman forms of identity - materially embedded and dialogically embodied narratives of the self.[1] Within this context, I pose the question of whether interaction with new forms of self-mediation and selfmonetisation brought by techno-capitalism poses a threat to the ontological stability of emerging posthuman identities. Inspired by McKenzie Wark's Capital is Dead: Is This Something Worse?[2] I analyse three characters who eventually become one: the hooker, the hacker, and the Instagrammer. Starting from Wark's reconfiguration of post-capitalist society to include the new vectoralist and hacker classes, I examine how content creators – prominent members of the hacker class – negotiate between identity and profit. Engaging with influencer culture and its relation to new forms of sex work, I analyse the personal trajectories and selfmediations of three well-known Italian heterosexual male influencers who produce explicit content for gay audiences on OnlyFans[3]. I interrogate the extent to which they blur the line between influencer and sex worker, and how content creators are gentrifying sex work, posing an existential threat to traditional sex workers with lower levels of internet literacy or access to technology. In my analysis, I aim to highlight the complexities that lie at the intersection of sex, identity, and class. Is Eros a liberating force in the sense once described by Herbert Marcuse?[4] Or are we witnessing Byung-Chul Han's hypothesis of The Agony of Eros?[5] Ultimately, what will be the effects of the treachery of techno-capitalism on emerging forms of posthuman identity?

^[1] This approach to the study of identity is being developed as part of my dissertation Emerging Posthuman Identities: From Ontology to Praxis, due to be completed in December 2023.

^[2] Wark, McKenzie, 2019. Capital is Dead: Is This Something Worse? Verso, New York.

^[3] OnlyFans (https://onlyfans.com/about) is a subscription-based internet service that provides adult content presented in social media format. Content creators create profiles on the platform where they share explicit photos and videos, chat and interact with users in exchange for paid monthly subscriptions and payment on extra items of content.

^[4] Marcuse, Herbert, 1956. Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Enquiry into Freud. Routledge, London.

^[5] Han, Byung-Chul, 2017. The Agony of Eros. MIT Press, USA.

Coping with scrutiny across platforms: Chinese female transnational romance content creators' daily production

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In recent years, there is a rising genre of female content creators on Chinese social media platforms, who produce content focusing on their transnational romantic relationships. They and their content are often subject to scrutiny, shaming, and vitriol triggered by nationalism and misogyny. By conducting semi-structured indepth interviews with 20 female influencers of this genre, this research presents their struggles and strategies in coping with scrutiny and vitriols in their daily self-presentation.

Participants perceive significant gender and platform differences regarding the negative comments they receive. Men usually post explicit racial slurs towards the foreign boyfriends/husbands/partners, assume a weak sexual morality of the female content creators, and express economic and relationship grievances in the comments. The negative comments from women, however, focus more on criticising specific qualities of both individuals and their relationships or questioning the motif of their posts (e.g., to show off). As a result, participants adopt different strategies to manage their self-representation and online visibility. For example, they need to carefully change their account, strategically produce certain types of content, and strategically reply to the negative comments and DMs.

These transnational romance content creators constantly conduct cautious labour. I conceptualise such cautious labour as a combination of emotional and affective labour. They have to accept negative interactions as "trade-off" and shoulder the responsibility of "cross-cultural communication". They also try to modify the emotional experiences of their imagined audience by picking the "appropriate" self-representation, managing the comment section, and reaching out to the "right audience".

Exploring the Role of Digital Content Creation in Shaping Offline Status: A Study of Female YouTube Content Creators in Nagaland, India

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Over the years, digital platforms have transformed the way information and media contents are produced, distributed, and consumed. This shift has facilitated the 'flow' of globalisation, empowering users to generate social capital and economic benefits through platforms like YouTube, which act as intermediaries between content creators and advertisers.

The study highlights the increasing number of women influencers from a remote state in India, aiming to investigate the comparative process of status creation through content generation on digital platforms. While previous studies have examined the link between online content creation and offline status, there is limited understanding of how people from diverse sociocultural backgrounds in the offline world enter into digital platforms and how their content (through digital labour) contributes to their offline status.

By interviewing female YouTube personalities from Nagaland, employing ethnographic research methods and drawing on Dallas-Smyth's concept of 'attention capital' and Henry Jenkins' notion of 'participatory culture', the research aims to draw the dynamics of status formation and the influence of digital platforms in shaping offline social and economic standing among Naga women. Through this paper, we seek to contribute to our understanding of the transformative power of digital content creation and its implications for individuals in marginalised regions.

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Historicizing Gendered Engagement: How Early-2000s Convergent Platforms for Women Introduced Users to the Internet

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In 2000 Oxygen launched as a women-targeted converged cable TV network that integrated online interactions into traditional television broadcast. To acclimate TV viewers to the Internet, Oxygen premiered Oprah Goes Online (OGO) (2000-2001), a limited series hosted by Oprah Winfrey that walked viewers through the steps of accessing and navigating the web.

The premiere of OGO coincided with new reports that women made up half of all computer users in the U.S., challenging the prevailing industry logic that women were not active online. By converging TV and online platforms, women-targeted networks attempted to boost their digital engagement and entice advertisers with a tech-savvy female audience.

Initially, feminist media scholars across the US and Europe were intrigued by Oxygen's empowering potential, and conducted a years-long research study that concluded it was "the single most promising effort to democratize the mass media landscape" by increasing women's "technoliteracy." In my platform analysis, I show that while female-targeted cable TV networks did bring large swaths of women online, they did so through the socially-constructed skills of femininity. On OGO, for instance, Oprah used traditionally feminine topics like family, relationships, wellness, and style to motivate digital interactions. Women-targeted networks including Oxygen, Bravo, Lifetime, and WE, promoted digital interactions around industry assumptions that women are emotionally driven, "natural" caretakers, and deeply invested in fashion and beauty commodities. As many women's first foray online, the digital platforms first created by women-targeted networks have had a lasting impact on Internet praxis by forging and maintaining preordained gender roles.

The logic of virtual influencers: social platformization, LGBTQ movement and brand activism

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The paper will anyalise virtual influencers as a recent trend aiming to disrupt or integrate the "immaterial labour" (Rocamora 2016) of real influencers. The phenomenon comes directly from the Nineties, like the Metaverse itself, and also in this case it has been recounted by the Cyberpunk literature, in the famous book by W. Gibson, Idoru (1996). The passage from classic celebrities to Aidoru, up to today's virtual influencers, represents the fulfillment of the simulacrum logic developed by J. Baudrillard (1981) and more recently taken up by P. Hodkinson (2016) to examine the transformation of the contemporary star system. The phenomenon concerns various social media platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok where virtual influencers play on the substantial ambiguity between being a real character who dresses in an extravagant but plausible way, who frequents ordinary places of everyday life, but who at the same time reproduces in the observer an effect of great estrangement, typical of the so-called "uncanny valley," theorized by scholars of robotics, as the simultaneous effect of familiarity and disorientation suggested by these figures (Berryman et al. 2021). Miquela Sousa, known as Lil Miquela, published her first content on Instagram on April 23, 2016, which then appeared on YouTube, Snapchat, and TikTok. She is not just a nineteen-year-old girl who lives in the cool circles of Los Angeles but also an activist politically involved in various movements to advocate for minority rights, from BlackLivesMatter to DACA to LGBTQ+. A new controversial example of the contemporary marketing trend called "brand activism" (Sarkar & Kotler 2018).

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Emergence of the Transgender Woman in Bangladesh – the Gendered, Employable, Neoliberal Subject

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This paper studies the emergence of the transgender woman as a skilled, employable, neoliberal subject in Bangladesh, during a period when transgender people are in negotiations with the state apparatus for recognition as rightsbearing citizens of the state. Building upon the declaration of Hijra people as a third gender category in 2014, recent years have seen the emergence of transgender women as a distinct gender identity that distinguishes itself from the cultures, traditions and profession of Hijragiri in Bangladesh. This is most notable in the wave of the exemplary first accomplishments of transgender women in Bangladesh that local and international news media have celebrated alike. I use discourse analysis to study several local news reports, secondary ethnographic literature and testimonies from community experts to demonstrate the emergence of the transgender woman as a new subject that is skilled, employable and able to exist in traditional family units, as opposed to the Hijra that exists in the public imagination as disabled, unemployable and dispossessed of family and social support. With decolonial theories of Quijano and Lugones, I engage with theoretical frameworks of the coloniality of gender and intersubjectivities at the colonial difference, so as to discuss how some subjectivities of gender emerge as better approximations of modernity than others in neoliberalism, via a corrosion of alternative gendered subjectivities embedded in care and spirituality.

Sexual harassment in Portuguese academia: Discourses of women victims and bystanders on #Metoo

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There was substantial media coverage of #MeToo in Portuguese media, but the significant sharing of experiences of sexual abuse, violence and harassment on social media only took place in 2021, when the hashtag #eutambém was created. Sexual harassment was articulated in the context of #eutambém also as a labour issue, including in academia. This initiative was, however, ephemeral. More recently, sexual harassment in the academia gained wide media coverage following complaints and allegations at the Faculty of Law of the University of Lisbon in 2022 and at the Centre of Social Studies of the University of Coimbra in 2023.

This paper presents the main results of an exploratory qualitative study carried out in 2022, which examined the realities of sexual harassment in Portuguese academia. It explores to what extent #MeToo contributed (or not) for a greater awareness of the problem and promoted (or not) initiatives and strategies in academia to prevent and combat it. For this, semi-structured individual interviews and sociodemographic profile questionnaires were carried out with 18 women from different generations and scientific areas from several Portuguese universities. All women had stable professional positions in Portuguese academia, which provided them with in-depth knowledge of its functioning and its internal dynamics. The study analysed the role of women in academia not only as potential victims, but also as bystanders, i.e., as witnesses of situations of sexual harassment and/or holders of decision-making positions that had to deal eventually with complaints of sexual harassment.

Embodied Misogyny and Homosociality: A Psychoanalytic Exploration of Online Male Embodiment in Contemporary Gym Culture

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The cyberspace has overseen fierce articulations of digital misogyny. At the core of this anti-feminism lies the manosphere, a locus for toxic assemblages of interconnected male identities with diverse expressions of masculinity. In isolating the Gymrat, the current study explores a community of muscular men engaging in embodied practices to sustain a 'male fantasy of the impermeable body' (Johanssen, 2022) where women are ridiculed and reviled. Kept from infiltrating the online space, these women represent a threat to their fragile egos. By branching out of existing subcultures like the MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way), the Gymrat adopts ideologies of feminine exclusion and male comradery.

Through intensive corporeal labour, the Gymrat retains traditional attributes of male machismo. Concurrently, however, their attempts to 'efface queerness' is counterproductive, as these muscular bodies are arranged in 'porno-homoerotic' ways by 'staging sameness through being sartorially nude together' (Semerene, 2021, p.168). This male kinship assembles a homosocial community that rests on a contradiction by playing with and simultaneously, disavowing same-sex erotic identification.

The Gymrat's embodied practices perpetuates toxic masculinity and reveals homosocial relations. By observing masculinity, collective identity and male embodiment through a psychoanalytical lens, the study seeks to understand their subjectivities, contradictions and fantasies. This approach includes models of identity construction and unconscious motivation that allows a psychological depth that is not readily available from other theoretical methodologies. Situated in this converging field of digital culture and psychoanalysis, the study examines the ways in which online gym culture articulates misogyny and masks queerness.

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Online Emotions as Catalysts for Change

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To this day people still face gender discrimination and have to battle with gender injustices (Perez, 2019). In order to change this we not only need to know about these injustices, we also have to strive for active change. In this paper we will talk about how social media and the space it creates for communicating emotions, can be a tool to strive for action. In short, when looking at affect theory, we can identify a stream of scholars focusing on the motivational power emotions hold (Berlant, 2011; Cvetkovich, 2012; Sedgwick, 2003). Speaking about one's emotions can not only be a way of showing one's agency, it can also generate new knowledge (Cvetkovich, 2012, pp. 1-3). By talking about emotions, people can realize how these are not always individual but rather public experiences. The collectivity of emotions holds a certain truth and can drive people to take part in political action. In this way, emotions are necessary for active change (Cvetkovich, 2012, pp. 1-2). However, sharing one's emotions with the public is not necessarily self-evident. Nevertheless, social media can be a place for this. After all, with social media enabling people to produce their own content (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2022, p. 10), people have the freedom to share their emotions concerning different topics. Recognizing one's emotions in other people their posts can then result in creating collectives, in reassuring the knowledge held in one's own emotions, and in driving people to participate in political action.

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Femicide frames on Facebook and twitter platforms in Greece: Their role in public awareness of addressing violence against women

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During the pandemic crisis (2020-2021), Greece showed the highest annual increase in femicides among 20 European countries, with an increase of 187.5% in just one year (from the 8 incidents officially recorded in 2020, Greece reached 23 in 2021 in a context of serious indications that the relevant incidents are being misreported by the police authorities, Louloudi, Morfonios, & Zafeiropoulos, 2023). The portrayal of femicide in mainstream media worldwide has been investigated in many respects, emphasizing the media representations with regard to femicide victims from a feminist perspective and revealing the tendency of the news media to employ (direct or indirect) victim-blaming language in femicide cases (Meyers, 1994; Richards et al., 2011; Taylor, 2009). Other studies focusing on media coverage of violence against women have revealed several misrepresentations related to the realities of women's experiencing violence (Sutherland et al., 2016). Moreover, in terms of media frames with regard to femicide, the relevant studies have shown the predominance of episodic (events-based) frames over the thematic ones (Balica et al., 2022; Fairbairn & Dawson 2013; Gillespie et al. 2013; Richards, Gillespie, & Dwayne Smith 2013), followed by only few media paradigms characterised by more critical and thematic reporting (Morgan & Simons, 2018). On the other hand, digital space is argued to play a considerable role in assisting vulnerable social groups, such as women living in authoritarian regimes, in preventing femicide and defending their rights (Cayli Messina, 2022). In this regard, research investigating the role of mainstream news media and social media platforms in creating public awareness of the femicide issue indicates a heightened awareness instigated mainly by the social media users as opposed to the low quality of coverage displayed by the traditional media (Bas et al., 2022).

Aiming at enhancing the limited knowledge concerning social media portrayal of femicide in Greece, the proposed study analyses posts drawn from Facebook and twitter accounts of political players, media organisations and activists groups in Greece over the crucial timeframe October-December 2021. The overall investigation is based on the assumption that in contemporary era of platformisation of communication collective action has considerably transformed with the internet turning into an influential space of interactive thoughts (Postmes & Brunsting, 2002).

Particularly, the study is dictated by the following research questions:

- Do Facebook and twitter frames with regard to femicide issue differ between political actors', media organisations' and activists' accounts?
- Does Facebook and twitter content appearing on posts portray femicide phenomenon as isolated or within the context of broader social transformations starting from the Greek version of the MeToo movement?
- Does Facebook and twitter content on femicide issue avoid victim-blaming language in the context of Me Too movement predominance?
- To what extent does thematic framing, incorporating critical discourse, appear in political actors, media organisations' and activists' Facebook and twitter accounts?
- Do the femicide frames appearing on Facebook and twitter platforms entail a mobilizing force that kept the collective awareness on the topic alive?

The proposed research argues that as opposed to the femicide media frames of the past (isolated incidence frame, victim-blaming frame, downgrading femicide by focusing on a personal life crisis context, Gillespie et al., 2013: 237) the social media platforms have given prominence to new types of frames, portraying femicide and violence against women as a broader social pathogen that needs to be addressed urgently. This trend may entail a new contextualization of the femicide case disseminating the message of denormalisation of criminal behaviour towards women and contributing to a spike in public awareness concerning the femicide issue.

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Media Sensationalism and Unveiling the Dark Realities of Feminicide in Brazil and Its Ramifications

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This article aims to investigate the sensationalism surrounding femicide in Brazil, analyzing the various forms of gender-based violence resulting in the murder of women and the subsequent media sensationalism and its effects. The critical examination incorporates the insights of Dália Costa, a prominent researcher in the field of gender studies and feminism.

Costa (2021) asserts that the media's depiction and treatment of femicide cases can have significant implications on public perception, awareness, and the development of policies to combat gender-based violence. The study delves into the consequences of media sensationalism, drawing on Serra's perspective (2007), which highlights the influential role of the media in shaping reality and disseminating instances of violence, often sensationalizing femicide. The qualitative analysis draws from the works of authors such as Bastos et al. (2018), who emphasize the lack of female representation in positions of power, including the political sphere, and how this influences the media's coverage of femicide and sensationalism, as well as aspects related to the cultural industry and the society of the spectacle. Barbosa (2001-2002) underscores how sensationalist television news capitalizes on society's desire to eradicate violence by offering easily consumable solutions. The critical analysis also considers Debord's (1997) assumptions about the society of spectacle and the media's role in constructing reality.

Through this critical analysis, it seeks to deepen understanding of the interplay between sensationalism, media, and gender-based violence, thereby contributing to broader discussions within the fields of gender studies and communication.

Labors of (Trans)Masculinity: A Discourse Analysis of FtM Influencers' Instagram Accounts

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The past decade has witnessed unprecedented levels of transgender visibility within Western popular culture, with online domains (i.e., mailing lists, forums) providing an essential site for direct dialogue and comparison, dissemination of transition-related medical knowledge, and overall creation of a transnational community of trans-identifying folks. More recently, following the advent of social media - particularly image-driven ones such as Instagram - the large-scale sharing of visual representations of embodied transness (i.e., before-and-after photos, timeline videos, images and footage documenting the effects of hormones and surgeries) has flourished accordingly, further contributing to the self-affirmation journeys of countless transgender individuals.

Among these are also folks who have obtained remarkable amounts of followers (i.e., in the order of tens of thousands), effectively rising to influencer status. While transness remains central to such accounts, it often manifests itself through the display of an alleged expertise on 'non-toxic', healthy manhood (in the case of Female-to-Male individuals). In so doing, many trans influencers base their Instagram activity upon the (re)production of a set of gendered practices that problematically resemble typically neoliberal paradigms and mantras; namely, self-help, self-love, and confidence-building regimes; empowerment rhetorics; fitness, beauty, and the hyper-individualization of the body as supreme temple/vessel. In my presentation, I seek to carry out a discourse analysis of a number of FtM influencers' accounts and identify the ways in which their promotion of a 'better' masculinity ultimately relies on capitalistic, entrepreneurial imperatives that have historically worked to contain and disempower counter-hegemonic identities such as transgender subjectivities.

Gender and the entertainification of historical cultures through YouTube videos

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This paper addresses individualized gendered practices versus their institutional collective mobilisations in the context of the entertainification of historical cultures online, through the case study of the Viking exhibitions at the Swedish History Museum (SHM). The past and current SHM exhibitions counter through archaeological evidence the prevailing depiction of the Viking Age (793-1066) centered on White male violent warriors. This portrayal often highlighted in global entertainment media is also currently deployed by White supremacist to promote their ideologies. Archaeological evidence shows that the majority of Viking society lived a peaceful agrarian life and women could also attain a warrior status. The Swedish History Museum uploads entertaining videos on YouTube to promote its Viking exhibitions, which defy the predominant stereotypes. This paper argues that YouTube's platform economy can counter the efforts put forward by the Swedish History Museum to resist stereotypes through the narratives of their promotional YouTube videos. This is because the promotional SHM videos circulate on YouTube search engine result pages (SERPs) via keyword searches and with this dissemination, the SHM videos are outnumbered by the many other entertaining Viking videos uploaded by individual users, which often instead perpetuate gendered stereotypes. These videos range from "fun" historical videos uploaded by individual users to those produced by White supremacists. This circulation of contrasting gender content between videos uploaded by individual channels and the national museum's channel is examined through a digital method grounded in YouTube's platform economy facilitated by multifaceted SERPs. SERPs combine metadata including keywords, thumbnails, video content and their stories, personalization algorithms, ranking, scrolling technology and business models. The analysis of the contrasting gendered narratives of Viking videos, investigated in conjunction with the SERPs in which they are embedded, is informed by fieldwork conducted at the SHM as well as scholarly research on digital technologies; YouTube, entertainment and museums; and gender and the Viking Age.

Gender identity definition in the Metaverse: from avatars to NFTs

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The aim of this paper is to analyze the mechanism of gender identity definition in the Metaverse and the impact that the possibilities offered by an advanced use of immersive technologies will have on the definition of one's self.

This everchanging system of interoperable, hybrid and immersive universes, is determining the emergence of a discussion about individuals and their identities in the virtual context. A great potential for more inclusive approaches which is, however, accompanied by risks, challenges, and an inevitable rethinking of the rules of communication and content creation. Especially when it comes to transforming the gendered self as a project and work of art, as in avatars, meta products and NFTs.

Through ample recourse to successful case histories, this contribution will identify and share guidelines that independent content creators and companies may follow to understand the principles of the metaverse-economy. Content producers can offer the LGBTQ+ community the opportunity to overcome the limits imposed by the physical dimension in order to face, resiliently but proactively, every day's challenges in terms of customization, identity consolidation, age progression and the possibility to "live forever". On the other side, as the definition of ethical and moral guidelines of the Metaverse is still an ongoing process and Artificial Intelligence is becoming more and more pervasive, in a world perpetually on the lookout for reference models a major debate on what is true, what is plausible and what is false is about to begin.

New Selves Old Identities: A Content Analysis of Top 100 Instagram Accounts in Turkiye

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The construction of contemporary femininities and masculinities especially on social media platforms is an insistent topic of debate. At the same time, the nature of this constant construction has become a controversial issue in media and gender studies since it requires both a reconsideration of the concept of gender and a rejection of binary oppositions regarding the term. This presentation explores the shifting conceptions of gender through a research which covers the top 100 followed Instagram accounts in Turkiye between November 1, 2021 and February 28, 2022. The data used for the research of this presentation is studied in the context of H2020 project EUMEPLAT and is carefully extracted from HypeAuditor for a deep analysis of leading social media platforms in Turkiye during the aforementioned time scope. Accordingly, the data of this research is studied through divisions showing content categories and general audience characteristics. The results demonstrate that 78% of the overall content shared by the top 100 Instagram accounts is about self and private lives. This remarkable percentage implies that majority of the content shared on Instagram has relevance since "selfhood" and "privacy" are direct components of "identity," thus must have a strong gender dimension. In this sense, the authors of this presentation argue that although dynamics of content sharing promise a more liberal and creative platform regarding gender issues, the shared content still circulates through marketing of womanhood and manhood. It is argued that individual free time is regarded as commercialized free time, thus posits several responsibilities and requirements regarding one's family, partner, children, and work place. This situation reveals a contradictory situation since platformization of media is understood as a rapid change and a significant promise in the construction of identity politics. Furthermore, the research of this presentation emphasizes that there is a significant amount of gender issues implied or surpassed in the content studied here, yet a reconsideration of gendered identities is constantly delayed for the sake of marketing feminized and masculinized selves.

BEING IMPALUME: The Construction of Life-Giving Masculinity in Bemba Matrilineal Society of Northern Zambia

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The contemporary construction of masculinity through social media platforms like TikTalk, Facebook, You Tube, Instagram and WhatsApp groups has an impact on the Bemba traditional cultural construction of masculinity in Zambia. Young men who are the majority users of media platforms have become vulnerable on how the media portrays the real man (Impalume). The contemporary construction of masculinity emphasizes the importance of individual success, power, dominance and competition.

In contrast, Being Impalume in Bemba matrilineal society in Zambia is based on cooperation, communalism, and responsibilities towards the family and the community. The way the contemporary world construct masculinities have created tension between traditional cultural values of Being Impalume and contemporary values of being an ideal man. This has created a sense of confusion and conflict for men who are trying to balance these two different expectations of masculinity. In addition, the contemporary construction of masculinity may be influenced by external factors such as globalization which have an effect on Bemba traditional cultural practices. This brings worries especially for elders that their cultural construction of masculinity can be eroded in Bemba matrilineal society.

Hence, this study wants to interrogate the Bemba cultural construction of masculinity and how it benefits women against poverty, land ownership and gender based violence contrary to contemporary construction of masculinity. The paper will use qualitative methods such as group discussions to collect data from Bemba married men in northern Zambia.

The glamour of the Muhteşem Yuzyil: the fashionable Ottoman court in the 21 century

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The Magnificent Century series narrating the top period of the Ottoman Empire [16th Century] broadcasted in Turkey between 2011 and 2014 became one of the most popular contemporary Turkish television TV series. The TV show's popularity reached global heights following its screening in 70 countries and eventually, its inclusion on the Netflix Streaming Platform by growing to 500 million audience in total. The relevance of the passionate love and betrayal tales that have been long echoed behind the palace walls led to the gross popularity of the series of immersive narratives. The series' global success significantly rose following the Netflix streaming incarnated into a global fashion trend called "Hürrem Fashion". Fashion designers have embraced Ottoman fashion and have begun producing collections inspired by the design of clothes and jewelry in the series that portrays the look of the 16th Century Ottoman Court in the Magnificent Century. The emergence of Hürrem Fashion gains significance by indicating the convergence of time and space, in which the female characters' costumes, hair, and make-up designs reflect contemporary fashion trends. The study aims to interpret the emergence of the Hurrem fashion trend through the historiographical performance of the fictional narrative in the wider context of consumer culture.

360 Degrees of Feminine Competence: Surface Aesthetics, Expertise and Authority Among Drip Cake Baker-Influencers

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This paper examines gendered online expertise in relation to the 'drip cake'. Characterised by its sharply cylindrical form and seemingly haphazard glaze cascading down its sides, drip cakes are now a staple baking hashtag, further popularized through dedicated supermarket home-baking products. Making a drip cake is difficult, hence multiple tips and tutorials offer followers a seductive guarantee of achieving on-trend competence.

Baking and bakers have attracted scant academic attention within food-cultural and fashion studies. Drawing on aesthetics of cake and food porn (Dejmanee, 2016) and discussion of 'aspiration, sociality and mastery' in food imagery (Taylor and Keating, 2018), we focus on the cake-image and its intensively laboured surfaces reminiscent of the flat, uniform, machine-like products of 20th century European modernist design.

Consideration of modernist surfaces raises further questions about the sources of expert knowledge baker-influencers engage. We examine how standards of a traditionally masculine culinary public sphere are democratized within a feminized domestic sphere. Classic, male-dominated French patisserie has cultivated uniformity in edible surfaces which has been popularised through television (e.g. Bake-off - The Professionals (UK, C4, 2016- present) and Top Chef: Just Desserts (US, Bravo, 2010-11), simultaneously educating audiences about technique and raising expectations of home baking. These aesthetic traditions are absent from baker-influencer discourse, which instead presents their feminine entrepreneurship as a new form of authority.

Analysing expert gendered performances and their product affords insight into homologies between the inviolable-yet-edible surfaces of the cake and those "cool" qualities and dispositions to which women might aspire.

Gendered Zootopia on Instagram: Pet Instagram Accounts and Gender Representation

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Social networks are not neutral conduits of online interactions, but sociotechnical and political-economic apparatuses that are part of larger platform societies (Van Dijk 2021: 324- 325). From this angle, social media are an infrastructure through which people perform and live their social identities, relations, and personhood (de Ridder 2017a, de Ridder 2017b).

This presentation looks at Instagram, where images of pets – selfies, rescue stories, funny moments – are hugely popular (Leaver et al., 2020), is becoming a tool for the commercialization (Krotz, F., 2009), largely according to communicative ecosystem of the platform. The inclusion of a companion animal in a public self-presentation is a symbolic statement of self-identity and an assertion of a social image (Veevers, J., 1985). Pets may serve as a symbolic extension of the "self", act as an intermediary in communication or replace certain human interactions (Veevers, J., 1985), e.g., performing the function of a "fur baby". Cute images from pet Instagram accounts also fall into the "cute economy" sector (Maddox, J., 2021), for which "cuteness" generates income following the platform economy (Lukács, G., 2020). A pet's account, as part of an expanded virtual self, can be a tool for constructing the hybrid gender performances. This construction process is driven by the platform economies and by platforms' affordances (Evans, Pearce, Vitak, Treem, 2017).

We discuss examples from Instagram pet cultures to show the different gendered dimensions that animals perform.

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Momfluencers' Instagram Stories as Entertainment: Daily-Soaps visualizing care from 9 to 5

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So-called "Instamoms" routinely visualize aspirational labour of care on Instagram to gain both attention and economic advantages as creative entrepreneurs monetizing everyday motherly moments. The type of care-content - like family meal prep, kinder garden pickups or bedtime routines - varies both visually and with regard to its narrative form. Visualization strategies, in particular, can provide information about producers' identity construction and the socio-communicative dynamics of the platform. On the one hand, these dynamics constitute the interplay of the momfluencers' professional and private practices. On the other hand, they explain community-building mechanisms through engagement. In my presentation, I will exemplify visualization strategies, focusing on Instamoms' Instagram Stories as a communicative tool for telling everyday stories of care. These semi-professional narratives about care work also show the industrialized and normalized ways of telling everyday stories about motherhood with highly gendered traditional motifs (cf. Knauf & Mierau, 2021). Following Khamis, any self-branding on social media requires narrative consistency (Khamis et al., 2017): Recurring moments in the selfstaging are essential to operate successfully on Instagram. I argue that these strategies are a kind of constant, daily, never-ending story – much like the narrative of daily soaps. I am particularly interested in illustrating how a daily soap narrative structure can help to understand how follower engagement is constituted through the entertaining elements of a daily soap narrative such as seriality, real-time orientation, seeming intimacy, and the special characteristics of soap storytelling (Wittebols, 2004, p.3).

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Sharenting for Profit: From amateur to professional parent content creators

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Although sharenting (sharing content of children on digital platforms) is not limited to women, gender dynamics underpin new forms of digital content production where women turn to social media with aspirations to become influencers (Duffy, 2015, 2017). Mothers often use parenting experiences and their children as content to try to attract audiences and generate income through paid content (Jorge et al., 2022). Children appear as models promoting products, turning them into involuntary products measured by market value (Archer, 2019), whereby their parents become important stakeholders who benefit financially from this digital child labor (van der Hof et al., 2020). This paper sheds light on the practices of wannabe influencers, notably women, who aspire to turn sharenting into a source of income. A mixed-method approach combines a longitudinal study of Instagram accounts created by parents for profit with statistical data collected in two waves (2019 and 2022) and an in-depth ethnographic content analysis of a purposeful selection of accounts identified through sharenting hashtags to analyze key differences in amateur and professional labor practices. Girls appeared three times more often than boys in sharenting for-profit accounts that were mostly managed by mothers (N=93.02%). The pressure to monetize quickly often drives creators to falsely inflate follower counts and engagement indicators to obtain brand collaborations. This short-term approach, characterized by sharing overtly promotional content, decreases the likelihood of becoming digital entrepreneurs. Only creators who professionalize content production and cultivate emotional bonds to engage a strong network of followers progress to sustainable influencer status.

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Family, fulfillment and 'successful ageing': Online representations of elderly Thai women

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Women become increasingly marginalised from the media as they age, especially in Thai culture, where youthfulness is often valued and centralised (Chaipraditkul, 2013). However, there has been a gradual increase in the visibility of older women due to the growth in the ageing population and enhanced use of online media. Nevertheless, their representations are often linked to certain "stereotypical roles" within the family and domesticities, as well as to neoliberal imperatives of self-care (Dolan and Tincknell, 2013). My presentation will specifically discuss how emergent discourses of "successful" ageing for elderly Thai women are often juxtaposed with maintenance of family life and relationships, which are traditionally perceived as central to women's 'life fulfillment' in Thai culture (Arpanantikul, 2004). It will do so by focusing on the classed, gendered, and heteronormative discourses around motherhood, filial piety, care, domestic responsibilities, and intergenerational relations in an influencer marketing Youtube channel, Kasien Samran ('Happy Retirement') featuring early old age mothers of four Thai celebrities. It will propose that such discourses need to be understood in relations to the unique life prospects and experiences of Thai older women and how they have shifted and been (re) constructed overtime due to contemporary cultural values and recent socioeconomic change. The findings presented will contribute to furthering knowledge in gender and media studies, which with some notable exceptions (e.g. Marshall, Shimoni, and Clarke, etc.), rarely given sustained attention to the representations of elderly female population, and even less so outside the Global North.

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"Good mothers" and "involved fathers": influencers sharenting on Instagram

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Children and family routines are increasingly depicted on social media. Sharenting (Marasli et al., 2016; Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017) was adopted by "ordinary" parents as well as influencers, who engage in partnership with brands and promote their own digital brands (Cunningham and Craig, 2017). It is especially mothers who have found ways to monetize and become professionals around sharenting (Jorge et al., 2022; Duffy, 2016). To captivate audiences, influencer strategies often include storytelling, product placement, and "calibrated amauterism" (Abidin, 2015), e.g. convincing their audience that they prioritize the care, well-being and entertainment of their children over commercial issues (Abidin, 2015).

This paper explores sharenting strategies performed by Portuguese influencer mothers and fathers as part of their digital work (Abidin, 2015) on Instagram (Dobson & Jay, 2020). We sought to identify gender similarities and differences in marketing strategies and content promotion in images and videos where children appear. To such end, we performed a content analysis of 4 Instagram accounts of lifestyle influencers who practice sharing (2 mothers and 2 fathers) between October and December 2022, comprising a total of 200 posts, instastories and reels.

Our analysis reveals that mothers performed "good mother ideal" through care practices and daily routine of children. They promote childcare products, but also clothing brands (including their own brands). In turn, fathers capitalize on their performances of "involved parenthood", more associated to outdoor, fun or material activities with children.



To which extent recent innovation in media sector is making European culture more European?

WHAT

EUMEPLAT explores the role of media platforms in fostering or dismantling European identity

HOW

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WHY

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