

DIGITAL LIFE ON INSTAGRAM

New Social Communication
of Photography

DIGITAL ACTIVISM AND SOCIETY: POLITICS, ECONOMY AND CULTURE IN NETWORK COMMUNICATION

The *Digital Activism and Society: Politics, Economy and Culture in Network Communication* series focuses on the political use of digital everyday-networked media by corporations, governments, international organisations (Digital Politics) as well as civil society actors, NGOs, activists, social movements and dissidents (Digital Activism), attempting to recruit, organise and fund their operations, through information communication technologies.

The series publishes books on theories and empirical case studies of digital politics and activism in the specific context of communication networks. Topics covered by the series include, but are not limited to:

- the different theoretical and analytical approaches of political communication in digital networks;
- studies of socio-political media movements and activism (and ‘hacktivism’);
- transformations of older topics such as inequality, gender, class, power, identity and group belonging; and
- strengths and vulnerabilities of social networks.

Series Editor

Dr Athina Karatzogianni

About the Series Editor

Dr Athina Karatzogianni is an Associate Professor at the University of Leicester, UK. Her research focuses on the intersections between digital media theory and political economy in order to study the use of digital technologies by new socio-political formations.

DIGITAL LIFE ON INSTAGRAM

New Social Communication
of Photography

BY

ELISA SERAFINELLI

University of Sheffield, UK



United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2018

Copyright © 2018 Elisa Serafinelli. Published under exclusive licence

Reprints and permissions service
Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78756-498-5 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-78756-495-4 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-78756-497-8 (Epub)



ISOQAR certified
Management System,
awarded to Emerald
for adherence to
Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*I dedicate this book to my dear friend Andrea.
He is always in my heart.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Dr Athina Karatzogianni for her constant support and understanding, and for making this possible.

I wish to thank my mentor Prof Francesco Solitario, who pushed me to undertake the hard but rewarding path of doctoral study. Without his motivating and beautiful words, I would have never pursued an academic career.

*The camera is an instrument that teaches people
how to see without a camera.*

Dorothea Lange

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	xv
<i>About the Author</i>	xvii
1. New Approaches to Digital Photography and Online Photosharing	1
1.1. Media Theories towards New Visual Practices	9
1.2. Semiotics and Theories of the Image	16
1.3. New Research Methods in Internet Research	29
1.3.1. A Netnographic Approach for Qualitative Research	31
1.3.2. (Embedded) Multiple-case Study	33
1.3.3. Computer-mediated Interviewing Technique	36
1.3.4. Visual Data Collection	38
1.3.5. Qualitative Content Analysis	39
1.3.6. Ethical Considerations	41
1.4. Theorising New Mobile Visualities	42
2. The Practice of Online Photosharing	47
2.1. The Evolution of Photosharing	48
2.2. Photosharing on Instagram: Motivations, Organisation and New Practices	55
2.2.1. Motivations: Why Users Share How They Share	58
2.2.2. Organisation: InstaSharing Is Not That Instant	62
2.2.3. New Practices: How Instagram Transformed Photosharing	67

3.	Visual Social Relationships	73
3.1.	Social Relationships Online	74
3.2.	The Mediation of Photosharing in Social Relationships	82
3.3.	Instagram Communities Online and Offline	85
3.3.1.	Social Life in Instagram Online Communities	86
3.3.2.	Instagram Communities' Offline Encounters	93
4.	Visual Media Marketing	99
4.1.	Political Economy of Media and Online Marketing Strategies	102
4.2.	Visual Media Marketing on Instagram: New Techniques	109
4.2.1.	Branding and Users' Engagement	110
4.2.2.	Instagram Communities: Photo Contests and Visual Promotion	113
4.2.3.	Popular Users and Influencers	120
4.2.4.	Private Advertising and Communication Agencies	121
5.	Privacy and Surveillance	125
5.1.	The Paradox of Privacy on Social Media Platforms	126
5.2.	Panopticon and Surveillance Theories in Digital Sociality	131
5.3.	The Pleasure of Watching and Being Watched Within Everyday Life	134
5.4.	Sharing and Protecting Visual Content on Instagram	139
5.4.1.	Routinised Voyeurism	145
6.	Identity: A Visual Representation	151
6.1.	Representations of the Self: A Theoretical Approach	155
6.2.	Fragmented Online Identities	160

6.3.	Representation and Objectification of the Self on Instagram	162
6.3.1.	The Visual Representation of the Self	163
6.3.2.	Selfies and the Other Self	169
6.3.3.	Branding Identities	173
	Afterword	179
	<i>References</i>	185
	<i>Index</i>	207

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 2

- Figure 2.1 Nature and Positivity: The Word of God on Instagram. 61
- Figure 2.2 #fucknormality: A Photo for Instagram. . . 63
- Figure 2.3 Chinese Door Street. 65
- Figure 2.4 #Puglia #Ostuni and Territory Promotion 67
- Figure 2.5 Goran Bregovic in the Time of Instagram. 70

Chapter 3

- Figure 3.1 Three Men of God Seeing Their Dreams Come True. 89
- Figure 3.2 Instagram and New Encounters. 91
- Figure 3.3 The Vague Igers. 92
- Figure 3.4 Exploring Babelsberg with @jn and @thomas_k. Instagram and the 'Happy Family'. 96

Chapter 4

- Figure 4.1 Rosso Antico #vintagecontemporaneo . . . 118
- Figure 4.2 With #FordDSFL Was Born a Wonderful Reality 122

Chapter 5

Figure 5.1 Sisters Decorating the Christmas Tree. . . . 142

Figure 5.2 Leaves 143

Figure 5.3 Coffee Morning. 146

Chapter 6

Figure 6.1. Sganapino, Marionettes Again 166

Figure 6.2 Crossing Out Cafes 167

Figure 6.3 This Is for My Journey. 168

Figure 6.4 Hostess Mood #fashionoftheday. 170

Figure 6.5 #aboutme, This Is My Passion 171

Figure 6.6 We Are Beautiful. 173

Figure 6.7 Games of Starts. #PanDiStelle Photo
Campaign. 174

Figure 6.8 Instagram Stream and Photographic
Style 2 175

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elisa Serafinelli works as Research Associate in the School of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield. She specialises in Media, Communication and Society with six years of experience in research and teaching. She has co-edited the book titled *The Digital Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and published a recent study related to visual communication in the journal article 'Mobile Mediated Visualities: An Empirical Study of Visual Practices on Instagram' (*Digital Culture & Society*, 2017, 3(2), pp. 165–182). Her current research explores mobile media practices and the social behaviours that arise from it with particular focus on privacy and surveillance issues related to the growing use of drone technologies.