



Postgraduate Programme of Studies

Language Education for Refugees and Migrants (L.R.M.)

**Self-representation through TikTok for migrant and refugee
women living in Greece**

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Dedication

To my husband, who championed this wild ride of a dissertation from the very beginning. Your relentless encouragement kept me going when deadlines loomed and self-doubt threatened to derail me. Thanks for reminding me that even crazy ideas can become reality!

To my son Lucas, whose boundless energy, even when it meant the occasional laptop shutdown, served as a constant reminder of the joy in life outside these pages. His laughter and playful spirit kept me company through long nights of research.

Additionally, I dedicate this work to the six remarkable women whose voices, captured on video, offered invaluable insights and perspectives. Their courage in the face of challenges serves as a constant inspiration.



I stand as a woman against anything that oppresses me since the day I was born.

I am a woman that was stoned in Pakistan

I am the woman that you paid to prostitute

I am the woman that was raped and committed suicide.

I stand as a woman against anything that oppresses me since the day I was born.

I am a woman and now I hold the stone in my hand.

I am the woman that does not forgive anymore

I am a menace for every oppressor.

Sara ft. Ηρώ-ίνη

Abstract

Social media are becoming more and more a dominant force in the modern world, both mirroring and shaping the physical societies and norms they follow. Identity construction and self-representation are objects of great interest to feminist and social research and social media are offering fertile ground for such research targets. This is due to the fact that social media give voice to their users, allowing them to reach an audience and represent themselves and their own opinions. The present work is analyzing videos posted on the platform of Tik-Tok by a set of migrant women in Greece. The analysis aims to identify key characteristics of how they choose to represent themselves, navigating through their complex intersected identities and often a hostile social environment that marginalizes, excludes and judges these very identities. These intersected identities consist of multiple facets such as gender, ethnicity, religion and more, which all play some role on how their own representations are constructed and how the public views them. Some of the key findings of the research reveal that there are a plethora of ways that social media users choose their topics and their representation. Some of the women under analysis take the role of cultural disruptors that challenge the societal norms that try to suppress and assimilate their unique identities, challenging all who cannot accept them. Some other women are trying to avoid that and focus on the positive experiences, taking the role of explorers that are trying to enjoy this journey and experience all positive things that it has to offer. In both cases, the comment section of the videos paint a clear picture of the public opinions that support and antagonize these women, their experiences, their views of the world and their identities.

Keywords

social media - migration - women - TikTok - identity - construction

“Αναπαραστάσεις μέσω TikTok γυναικών μεταναστριών και προσφυγισσών που ζουν στην Ελλάδα.”

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Περίληψη

Τα μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης μετατρέπονται σε μια κυρίαρχη δύναμη στον σύγχρονο κόσμο καθρεφτίζοντας και ταυτόχρονα διαμορφώνοντας τις φυσικές κοινωνίες και τους κανόνες που ακολουθούν. Η κατασκευή της ατομικής ταυτότητας αποτελεί αντικείμενο μεγάλου ενδιαφέροντος για τη φεμινιστική και κοινωνική έρευνα ειδικά με χρήση μέσων κοινωνικής δικτύωσης (ΜΚΔ). Αυτό οφείλεται στο γεγονός ότι τα ΜΚΔ δίνουν φωνή στους χρήστες τους, επιτρέποντάς τους να προσεγγίσουν ένα κοινό και να αναπαραστήσουν τον εαυτό τους. Η παρούσα εργασία αναλύει βίντεο που αναρτήθηκαν στην πλατφόρμα του Tik-Tok από ένα σύνολο μεταναστριών και προσφυγισσών στην Ελλάδα. Η ανάλυση στοχεύει στον εντοπισμό των βασικών χαρακτηριστικών του τρόπου με τον οποίο επιλέγουν να αναπαραστήσουν τον εαυτό τους και τις σύνθετες ταυτότητές τους, συχνά σε ένα εχθρικό προς αυτές κοινωνικό περιβάλλον. Αυτές οι ταυτότητες αποτελούνται από πολλαπλές όψεις όπως το φύλο, η εθνικότητα, η θρησκεία και άλλα, τα οποία παίζουν κάποιο ρόλο στο πώς κατασκευάζονται οι αναπαραστάσεις αλλά και στο πώς τις βλέπουν οι θεατές τους. Μερικά από τα βασικά ευρήματα της έρευνας αποκαλύπτουν ότι υπάρχει πληθώρα τρόπων με τους οποίους οι χρήστες των ΜΚΔ επιλέγουν τα θέματά και την αναπαράστασή τους. Μερικές από τις υπό ανάλυση γυναίκες αμφισβητούν τα κοινωνικά πρότυπα και τους υποστηρικτές τους που προσπαθούν να καταστείλουν και να αφομοιώσουν τις μοναδικές ταυτότητές τους. Κάποιες άλλες γυναίκες προσπαθούν να το αποφύγουν και επικεντρώνονται στις θετικές εμπειρίες, παίρνοντας το ρόλο των εξερευνητών που προσπαθούν να απολαύσουν αυτό το ταξίδι. Και στις δύο περιπτώσεις, η ενότητα των σχολίων κάτω από τα βίντεο δίνει μια σαφή εικόνα των απόψεων του κοινού που υποστηρίζουν αλλά και ανταγωνίζονται ή απορρίπτουν αυτές τις γυναίκες, τις εμπειρίες τους, τις απόψεις τους για τον κόσμο και τις ίδιες τις ταυτότητές τους.

Λέξεις-Κλειδιά

social media - TikTok - μετανάστριες - προσφύγισες - κατασκευή - ταυτότητα

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Research

In the dynamic field of social media, TikTok, a platform where short-form videos are published, has become a web space where young people can express themselves (Xiong & Ji, 2019). Social media platforms offer a chance for self-representation, empowering users to paint a picture of who they are. The rise of information technology allows us to craft distinct online identities, separate from our real-world selves, through selective presentation and digital tools (Kim et al., 2011). Social media has also become a game-changer for migrants, shaping their decisions to move, integration journeys, and political participation (Siapera & Veikou, 2013). Additionally, social media platforms have become a powerful tool for marginalized identities, like LGBTQ individuals, Black individuals, and disabled people, to build and express themselves online (Karizat et al., 2021).

This research explores a specific corner of the web space, focusing on how migrant and refugee women in Greece utilize TikTok to construct and share their multifaceted identities. Understanding how these women, navigating the complexities of multiple roles and identities, utilize this platform can illuminate their experiences and shed light on their cultural backgrounds and the realities of their new environment.

While social media empowers young women to connect with like-minded individuals and potentially participate in activism, concerns regarding representation linger (Turley & Fisher, 2018). Algorithms can restrict visibility for marginalized voices, potentially hindering open discussions about gender, sexuality, immigration, and related topics (Bozdog, 2013). Additionally, these algorithms can create echo chambers, reinforcing pre-existing beliefs and hindering exposure to diverse perspectives.

This research will take a close-up look at how migrant women use TikTok by examining specific profiles and videos in detail using the case study approach. This in-depth analysis that a case-study offers can reveal the strategies these women use to show themselves to the world and participate in public discourse (Priya, 2021). This study may offer valuable knowledge, that can be used as a starting point. The themes and strategies discovered may pave the way for

more research into the many layers of experiences that migrant and refugee women have on social media platforms like TikTok.

To understand how migrant women craft their identities on TikTok, this study utilizes a multi-faceted theoretical approach. Goffman's "Presentation of Self" helps us analyze how they curate their online image (Goffman, 2023), while Foucault's "Technologies of Self" explores how societal norms influence their self-presentation (Foucault, 1987). Butler's "Performativity Theory" sheds light on how they actively construct identities through their online actions (Butler, 2002). Furthermore, the study incorporates existing research on social media's role in identity formation, how migrants utilize these platforms, and the specific communication style of TikTok. This combined approach aims to reveal the general tactics migrant women employ to build their identities within the unique space of TikTok.

This research project seeks to illuminate these crucial aspects:

- Identity Construction and Expression: We aim to understand how migrant and refugee women in Greece utilize TikTok to construct and share their multifaceted identities.
- Viewer Reception and Public Discourse: We will analyze how viewers respond to the content created by these women, exploring the potential connections between these online portrayals and broader public discourse on gender, sexuality, immigration, and related topics in Greece.

The research questions that we will try to answer are the following:

- How do migrant and refugee women in Greece use TikTok to construct and share their identities?
- How do viewers respond to the content created by migrant and refugee women in Greece on TikTok?
- Is there a connection between these online portrayals and public discourse on gender, sexuality, immigration, religion, race, and ethnicity in Greece?
- How do migrant and refugee women in Greece perceive the impact of language and education on their lives during their migratory journey?

To delve deeper into the multi-layered meanings embedded within these TikTok videos, we will employ Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis. This approach goes beyond the surface,

examining the interplay of visuals, sounds, and captions to unlock the rich narratives these women weave. Public profiles will be identified through a multi-pronged search strategy, utilizing hashtags like #migrantlife and keywords related to identity (#women, #muslimwomen).

By analyzing migrant and refugee women's self-representation on TikTok, this research aspires to offer invaluable insights into:

- **Navigating Intersected Identities:** How these women navigate and portray their multifaceted identities within the context of their experiences in Greece.
- **Public Perceptions:** Public perceptions of these women's identities as reflected in viewer comments and engagement.
- **The Role of TikTok:** The role of TikTok in shaping self-representation, fostering community building, and potentially challenging dominant narratives about migration and identity.

This research ultimately sheds light on the digital experiences of migrant and refugee women in Greece. By amplifying their voices and exploring the intricacies of their online identities, the study offers a deeper look at how these women construct their sense of self in this new environment. It reveals the negotiation process of their identities, both for themselves and for viewers. This paves the way for further research into the connection between their online and offline identities, and how these aspects influence their acculturation process. This knowledge can be used as a source of information by policy makers, allowing them to enact policies and practices that aid the integration of women like the ones the present work is analyzing, empowering them to fully participate in the social fabric of Greek society.

1.2 Outline

The present work is structured as follows. The next chapter, Chapter 2, begins by examining the role of social media in contemporary life. This analysis explores various theoretical perspectives, including social capital (Bourdieu), self-presentation (Goffman), existential project (Sartre), and social world (Heidegger). Additionally, this chapter presents the existing research methods used to analyze online interaction, the specific relationship between social media and migration, and the intersection of feminism and social media. The chapter continues by exploring the multifaceted nature of online identity construction. We discuss theories of

identity formation, deconstruction, and the revolutionary concept of intersectionality, which acknowledges the interconnectedness of various aspects of identity within individuals.

Chapter 3 is presenting the methodology followed in the present work. It starts by presenting the main research questions and aims of the study followed by a short description of the participants and the research instrument used to conduct the research. The chapter closes with an in-depth presentation of the case study research methodology, presenting the methodology itself, its weaknesses and limitations and common uses that employ it.

The following chapter, Chapter 4, is delving into the findings of the presented study. It begins by analyzing the by providing the basic information and themes, clearly establishing the context, the environment and the assumptions of the research, a necessary step for the reader to be able to understand and decode the findings that are presented later in the chapter. After this basic information has been established, the chapter moves on to the description of the videos and the public response to them, which are the two main points of the research. The chapter follows by presenting the main discourses located in the videos and the public response and giving a more in-depth analysis of each profile.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, presents the discussion and conclusion of the research. The discussion section is providing answers to the research questions, based on the literature presented and the use cases analyzed. The conclusions section on the other hand, is providing a summary of the information extracted through this research, the key takeaways and some concluding remarks.

2 Literature Review

The present study is revolving around two main axes; a) social media and b) self-identity construction. These two axes are also the sub-chapters of the literature review chapter. The first axis deals with the phenomenon of social media, analyzing their strengths, weaknesses, benefits and dangers. Special attention is given to TikTok since this specific social medium is the medium chosen as the use case analysis target for the present research. The second axis is the self-construction of identity, which is analyzed both from a social study and from a philosophical point of view. The main theories concerning the identity construction are presented and explored, always in regards to self-representation and social media.

2.1 Social Media

Social media has become a dominant force in our lives, fundamentally changing how we communicate and share information. All major institutions and companies now have social media editors, celebrities and politicians are actively using platforms like Twitter. Social media's influence is undeniable, as even the smallest brands now encourage consumers to follow them online.

The roots of social media go as far as the last decade of the 20th century. Social networking sites like Sixdegrees, launched in 1997, laid the foundation for today's diverse social media field (boyd & Ellison, 2007). These platforms range from general-purpose sites like Facebook to professional networks like LinkedIn, and media-sharing sites like YouTube. Social media empowers users to create, share, and discuss content, fundamentally altering traditional communication models. News and information is now curated and shared by users, creating a powerful force that can influence public opinion.

This rise of social media has democratized communication (KhosraviNik, 2018). Marketing messages are no longer solely controlled by companies or major institutions. People either as citizens or as consumers are now actively discussing politics, brands and experiences online. A negative experience can quickly snowball into a public relations crisis.

We can try to comprehend the basic elements of social media through the honeycomb framework, a graphical representation of which can be seen in Figure 2.1. The foundational elements outlined in the honeycomb framework are not exclusive to each other, nor are they

all mandatory components of every social media interaction. Instead, they serve as constructs that aid in understanding the various levels of functionality within social media platforms (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

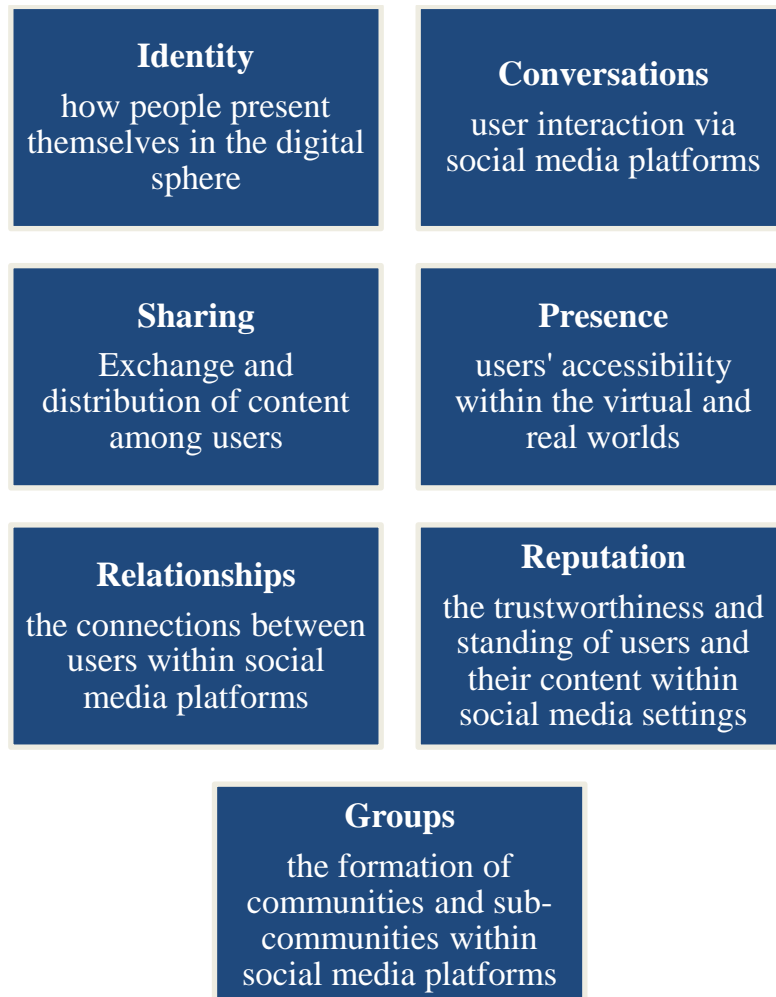


Figure 2.1: Simple representation of the honeycomb framework for social media.

2.1.1 Philosophical Foundations

Numerous theories have been proposed regarding the utilization of Information Systems (IS). Among these theories, Goffman's presentation of self is the most widely used to analyze IS within social media. Goffman's seminal work, "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life," introduces the concept of the "way to present," emphasizing that individuals, regardless of their specific intentions, often engage in actions to convey a certain impression to others, aligning with their own interests (Goffman, 2023). This presentation of self revolves around the outward projection of one's actions, shaping how individuals are perceived by others through perceptual

rationality. Goffman underscores the distinction between oneself and others, highlighting that others are perceived based on their external attributes and actions, separate from one's own subjective experience.

Bourdieu's theory of practice stands out for its analysis of power at both organizational and individual levels, incorporating the concept of habitus to explain how individual behavior reproduces social structure (Qi et al., 2018). Social capital encompasses a collection of resources tied to the possession of enduring networks of mutual relationships and recognition within a group. This collective capital provides each member with a form of endorsement or "credential" that grants them credit.

The lifeworld articulated by Bourdieu finds resonance with innerworldliness through habitus, emphasizing the social influences on all human actions, including judgments of taste. Social structures significantly shape individual perceptions and behaviors, blurring the boundaries between subjective and collective experiences (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Even seemingly personal preferences, such as aesthetic tastes, are deeply intertwined with one's social background. Bourdieu illustrates this in "Distinction," where he argues that what individuals perceive as beautiful or tasteful is heavily influenced by their social class and cultural milieu (Bourdieu, 2018).

In the realm of social media, empirical studies highlight the strategic nature of online interactions, particularly on platforms like micro-blogging. Users strategically decide what content to share and with whom, aiming to enhance their social capital within the online network. The instrumental use of social media platforms, driven by strategic objectives, underscores the pursuit of social capital in the digital sphere. Academics, for instance, strategically leverage social media to bolster their professional image among their peers, exemplifying the instrumental nature of online interactions.

Sartre's existentialism offers a theory of "being-with" through the concept of existential projects, which encompass our relations with others. Sartre's existentialism, suggested as a sociological paradigm by Burrell and Morgan, introduces an existential dimension to human experience (Burrell & Morgan, 2019). Yoo emphasizes the significance of experience in shaping identity, ideals, and worldview. Within the realm of social media (Yoo, 2010), Sartre's existential project emerges as a potential archetype, prompting examination of its assumptions regarding the lifeworld and the status of others.

Heidegger's phenomenology provides a framework for understanding shared experiences, combining innerworldliness with "being-with." Yoo has highlighted Heidegger as a key figure in understanding experiential computing, emphasizing his departure from Descartes' rationality and his focus on "being-in-the-world" (Yoo, 2010). Heidegger's critique of instrumentalism aligns his theory with "being-with." But what exactly does Heidegger's concept of the "shared-world" entail, and how does it relate to social media use?

(1) Others: Heidegger posits that our existence is defined by care and concern for others, even in their absence or after they've passed away. Everything we do is imbued with meaning derived from our connections to others—whether it's our parents, friends, or loved ones. This care extends to future generations, reflecting a shared humanity constructed through our actions. Heidegger terms this interconnectedness the "shared-world," moving away from instrumentalism toward genuine "being-with."

(2) Lifeworld: In the "shared-world," objects don't exist objectively as in Descartes' rationality; rather, they're perceived through relationality and interconnectedness. Our understanding of others is intertwined with our own existence, forming a basis for innerworldliness. This relational aspect underscores the essence of "being-with," facilitating mutual understanding and self-awareness. Thus, the "shared-world" transcends rationality, embracing a deeper connection to inner experience. How might such a normative perspective inform our interpretation of social media research findings?

2.1.2 Social Media Research

There's a growing number of studies focusing on several aspects of social media. This suggests social media research is becoming a recognized field of study. Most studies used established methods like interviews, surveys, focus groups, and content analysis (Briones et al., 2011; Brubaker et al., 2013; Cohen & Duchan, 2012; Marchi, 2012). These methods helped researchers understand people's experiences with social media, the content people post, or both. When studies looked at specific social media content like Facebook posts or tweets, content analysis was the most common way to analyze it. Some studies are using new research designs, such as network analysis (Bail, 2016; Kang et al., 2017). However, these designs are still uncommon. Many studies used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods) (Casselmann & Heinrich, 2011; Shifman, 2012).

Advancing digitization necessitates a fundamental reevaluation of empirical methodologies (Savage & Burrows, 2007). In today's digital era, traditional research methods like surveys, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews are being complemented by different strategies leveraging internet-based approaches – be it sourcing existing data, utilizing tools for analysis, or recruiting participants. Murthy (2008) initiated a survey of digital research by employing online questionnaires and email interviews (Murthy, 2008). He highlighted the myriad opportunities presented by social networking sites: from participant recruitment to data analysis and social interaction observation. Additionally, he discusses the utilization of digital videos and blogs as data sources. While acknowledging digital inequality's influence on technology engagement, Murthy's exploration of ethical considerations remains limited. The guidance for analyzing social media data remains vague, with professional organizations like the British Sociological Association still developing ethical guidelines. Williams et al. (2017) underline users' apprehensions regarding Twitter data usage, especially among marginalized communities, advocating for risk assessment and informed consent procedures (Williams et al., 2017).

Halford et al. (2013) discuss the emergent Semantic Web, emphasizing open data's role in fostering connectivity and enabling novel applications like interactive maps (Halford et al., 2018). However, they caution that understanding and constructing the Semantic Web require interdisciplinary efforts to grasp its underlying protocols and social implications. Tinati et al. (2014) challenge the efficacy of traditional Twitter analysis methods, advocating for computational approaches to visualize dynamic information flows and social networks (Tinati et al., 2014). These approaches, as demonstrated by Tinati et al. (2014), offer insights into real-world events like protests and their online manifestations (Tinati et al., 2014).

Addressing technology adoption and inequality, Lee (2008) challenges the notion of digital technology as an equalizer, revealing persistent class-based disparities in internet use (Lee, 2008). Burrows and Gane (2006) critique software-based spatial classifications, highlighting how digital categorizations perpetuate social inequalities and limit access to opportunities (Burrows & Gane, 2006). Frade (2016) discusses "knowing capitalism," underscoring the commodification of personal data in digital transactions and its implications for privacy and social justice (Frade, 2016).

Examining mobilization and migration, Mercea et al. (2018) explore Twitter's role in sustaining engagement with activist movements like Occupy Gezi, emphasizing the platform's amplificatory function rather than its transformative potential (Mercea et al., 2018). Davis (2010) conducts cyberethnography to understand migrants' digitally mediated experiences, drawing on theoretical frameworks like heterotopia and cultural hybridity (Davis, 2010).

In conclusion, digital sociology has evolved significantly, offering valuable insights into various aspects of contemporary society. From redefining research methodologies to examining the societal implications of digital technologies, scholars have made significant strides in understanding the complex interplay between technology and society. As digital innovations continue to shape our lives, interdisciplinary collaborations and theoretical advancements will remain crucial in navigating the complexities of the digital age.

2.1.3 Public Discourse on social media: Anti-immigrant sentiment

The landscape of public discourse has undergone a significant shift, with social media platforms becoming a powerful forum for everyday people to engage in discussions on social and political issues. This democratization of communication empowers individuals who were previously excluded from traditional avenues of influence, allowing their voices to be heard and potentially shaping public opinion.

Traditional news organizations are struggling to adapt to the online world. They've moved beyond simply putting news on websites and are looking to create a more interactive experience by allowing user comments, discussions, and feedback. This shift presents new challenges and opportunities. News organizations now host unfiltered discussions, with users potentially posting unprofessional or offensive content. Journalists may worry about the quality of user contributions compared to their own work (Braun & Gillespie, 2011).

Social media platforms face challenges in balancing user freedom with content moderation. They must consider legal issues, brand image, and fostering a healthy online space. Social media platforms are becoming spaces for citizen journalism, blurring the lines between traditional news and user-generated content. Both news organizations and social media platforms face similar challenges in moderating this content. News organizations are partnering with social media platforms to distribute content and leverage their established communities. This convergence suggests a future where the distinction between traditional news and social media becomes less clear to users.

Public discourse will take place across various platforms, with news organizations, social media, and individual users contributing. This online environment will host a mix of expert analysis, user opinions, and competing viewpoints. In conclusion, the online world is forcing news organizations to adapt. While user interaction presents challenges, it also offers opportunities for engagement and a more dynamic public discourse. As news and social media converge, the way we consume and participate in news will continue to evolve.

While social media offers opportunities for connection and entertainment, it has also emerged as a platform for political discourse and identity formation. Notably, these platforms play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards immigrants and refugees. Social media platforms, with their unique technical features, empower racist and far-right actors to create online communities (Dean, 2010).

Following the 2015 refugee crisis, Europe and other developed nations have witnessed a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment. This trend is mirrored by the growing popularity of far-right and populist political movements. Additionally, stricter immigration policies reflect these public anxieties.

One key strategy employed by these actors is the reframing of mainstream news articles on immigration. News stories highlighting crime or cultural clashes are recontextualized to promote an anti-immigrant agenda. This often involves selective extraction of information and the use of specific language to frame immigrants in a negative light. Furthermore, the constant circulation of such "bad news" on platforms like Facebook and Twitter helps maintain a sense of fear and resentment towards immigrants. Anti-immigrant actors capitalize on distrust in mainstream media to further their agenda (Ekman, 2019).

Beyond analyzing explicit forms of racism, we can also find "ambient racism." This refers to the subtle expressions of racial prejudice prevalent in everyday user comments and interactions on social media (Sharma, 2018). Open online communities like Facebook groups facilitate the interaction between "ordinary" users and racist actors. Through continuous communication, mundane expressions of racism and far-right content become normalized. Social media platforms foster a seamless flow of information, where affective responses to events and shared experiences circulate rapidly. The very architecture of social media platforms contributes to

the production of racism. Vague user policies, limited moderation, and algorithmic content clustering all benefit anti-immigrant actors.

Social media thrives on the circulation of "affect," a term used to describe the emotions that flow between users in a communicative space. Affect shapes meaning, attention, and a sense of belonging. It also fuels user engagement and drives the circuits of communication (Papacharissi, 2015). While social media fosters feelings of belonging and connection, it can also lead to exclusion. Anti-immigrant online communities thrive on the circulation of negative emotions like fear, resentment, and hatred. These emotions serve to solidify group identity and define "others" (immigrants/refugees) as threats. The construction of a national identity often relies on the exclusion of "others" based on anxieties and insecurities (Ahmed, 2004). Anti-immigrant networks create a sense of in-group solidarity by continuously depicting immigrants as threats. They achieve this through narratives that portray immigrants, particularly male refugees, as violent, sexist, and culturally inferior.

Social media's emphasis on affect can amplify racist expressions and sentiments. As ideas circulate among users, they gain traction and become more widely accepted. This "cumulative racism" normalizes fringe views and pushes the boundaries of acceptable public discourse.

2.1.4 Social Media and Migration

The explosion of social media has revolutionized the way we study migration and the lives of migrants. There have been identified three key lenses for understanding social media and migration, the macro-sociological, that examines the broader impact of social media on human migration patterns and movement (flows), the micro-sociological, which focuses on how migrants integrate social media into their daily lives and the political, which explores the relationship between social media, migration, and political processes (Siapera & Veikou, 2013).

Studies like Dekker & Engbersen's (2014) highlight how social media facilitates migration through four key factors: allowing migrants to stay connected with family and friends back home, allowing migrants to connect with acquaintances and friends-of-friends who can offer support during the migration process, facilitating connections that haven't yet been activated but hold potential for future support, allowing potential migrants to access valuable information about their future destination (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

Research by Madianou & Miller (2015) studied Filipino and Trinidadian migrants and found that social media became an integral part of their daily routines, helping them manage complex emotional relationships, including long-distance parenting (Madianou, 2015). This ability to maintain connections despite physical distance eases the decision to migrate. However, Komito's (2011) research presents a different perspective (Komito, 2011). He found that while social media strengthens bonds within migrant communities (diasporas), it may hinder integration into the host society. This is because migrants primarily use it to interact with existing social groups.

Nedelcu (2012) theorizes that social media fosters the development of a "transnational habitus." This refers to the ability to socialize across borders, form inter-cultural bonds, and develop new cosmopolitan perspectives (Nedelcu, 2012).

Brinkerhoff (2009) argues that online participation leads some migrant communities in the US to adopt the liberal values of their host country (Brinkerhoff, 2009). She demonstrates how migrants leverage these values to justify arguments and support political positions, challenging the notion that online media fosters radicalization.

Finally, Nagel & Staeheli (2010) discuss how online activists in Arab American and British Arab communities use social media to connect with like-minded individuals in their host countries and across borders (Nagel & Staeheli, 2010). They emphasize the complex geographical nature of online migrant activism, arguing for a transnational lens when analyzing these phenomena.

An article by Greene (2020) explores the experiences of refugee women waiting in a camp in Greece (Greene, 2020). It argues that waiting for these women is not a passive state, but an "affective and embodied experience" shaped by their emotions and bodies, and mediated by technology like smartphones. The article argues that refugee women employ various strategies and tactics (referred to as "making do") in their daily lives to cope with the emotional challenges of waiting. These tactics involve using smartphones for:

- Consuming non-mainstream news for emotional well-being (self-care).
- Connecting with family to maintain hope.
- Engaging in nature photography for creative expression.

Despite the difficult circumstances, these tactics are seen as demonstrations of agency, allowing women to find ways to live within the uncertainty and emotional challenges of displacement.

Finally, an article by Merisalo (2021) explores the role of social media in the lives of asylum seekers and refugees (asylum-related migrants) (Merisalo & Jauhiainen, 2021). It highlights the increasing importance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) like smartphones and social media in the context of migration. This research takes into consideration how factors like gender, age, education, social background, and views on the future might influence social media use, mobility decisions, and resilience.

These studies show that social media has become an indispensable tool for migrants, influencing their decision to migrate, how they integrate into new societies, and their political engagement.

2.1.5 Migrants negotiating identity

For transient migrants, individuals living temporarily in another country, social media presents a complex landscape for navigating their identity during acculturation, the process of adapting to a new culture. On the one hand, social media platforms act as bridges. Migrants can use them to connect with their home culture, sharing familiar traditions and staying in touch with loved ones (Aricat, 2015). At the same time, social media facilitates integration into the host culture. Migrants can build new relationships, engage with local trends, and learn about the host society through social media (Alam & Imran, 2015). This ability to connect with both cultures simultaneously fosters a sense of belonging in both places.

However, social media also introduces challenges. The very nature of these platforms, with their potential for broad visibility, creates anxieties for migrants. They have audiences from both their home and host cultures who can scrutinize their online activity (Yau et al., 2019). This can lead to a constant negotiation of how they present themselves. Migrants might worry about disapproval from their home culture if they embrace elements of the host culture too readily. Conversely, they might fear being ostracized in their new environment if they appear too attached to their heritage.

To manage these complexities, transient migrants develop various identity management strategies. They might use privacy settings to control who sees what content. They might carefully curate their posts and online interactions, ensuring they align with the expectations of both audiences. In some cases, they might even create separate profiles for different social circles. These strategies empower migrants to navigate the online world while protecting their sense of self and fostering a smooth acculturation process.

2.1.6 Feminism and social media

Every day, people encounter prejudice in their lives, and social networking sites have become a prominent platform for feminists to address experiences of sexism and misogyny. Guillard (2016) suggests that digital spaces play a crucial role in defining what he calls 'a fourth wave of feminist practice', providing a global platform for engagement (Guillard, 2016). However, the use of digital media can sometimes be seen as superficial, and it's insufficient to mark the advent of a new wave of feminist activism (Kristofferson et al., 2014).

Social media platforms offer feminists a valuable tool for raising awareness and promoting feminist ideas. They facilitate broadening feminist spaces, allowing for wider reach and engagement (Crossley, 2015). Additionally, social media connects people beyond geographical boundaries, enabling participation from individuals who may not have access to face-to-face interactions (Schuster, 2013).

However, digital spaces are not without their drawbacks. Women are often targeted with online harassment and abuse when they voice their opinions on inequality and sexism (Boynton, 2012). Misogynistic narratives proliferate online, reinforcing power imbalances in the offline world. Digital platforms can also perpetuate exclusion based on gender, ethnicity, or social class (Hutton et al., 2016).

Despite these challenges, social media remains a vital tool for feminist activism. It allows for rapid dissemination of feminist information and encourages collective support (Bowles Eagle, 2015). One notable example is the #heforshe campaign initiated by actor Emma Watson, which garnered widespread attention and mainstream media coverage.

Another aspect of offline interpersonal networks in social movements focuses on the development of solidarity among mobilized participants. These networks not only provide social ties but also contribute to the construction of politicized collective identities.

Consciousness raising in non-hierarchical, face-to-face settings has been found critical in motivating participants, teaching movement ideology, and fostering solidarity.

2.1.7 TikTok

The application

TikTok, born out of the acquisition of musical.ly by Beijing Bytedance Technology in November 2017, swiftly emerged as a global sensation under the stewardship of founder Zhang Yiming. Within a remarkably short span, it became one of the most widely used applications of Chinese origin, boasting a staggering 800 million monthly users as of November 2020 (Xiong & Ji, 2019). Notably, the app caters predominantly to a younger demographic, with a significant portion of its user base under the age of 35. Despite its meteoric rise, TikTok has not been devoid of criticism, particularly concerning data privacy, hate speech, and cyberbullying concerns.

TikTok's allure lies in its unique proposition of enabling users to create and share short-form videos, often accompanied by popular music tracks. This feature, commonly known as "LipSync-Videos," has captivated millions of users worldwide. Moreover, TikTok's interactive nature encourages users to participate in challenges, where they replicate or respond to existing content, fostering a sense of community and engagement (Montag et al., 2021).

However, amidst its popularity, TikTok has faced scrutiny over various issues, including data privacy concerns and the potential for fostering negative behaviors such as cyberbullying (Neyaz et al., 2020). Given its significant youth user base, understanding the motivations behind TikTok usage and its impact on users is paramount. Recent studies have explored the multifaceted motivations driving TikTok usage, drawing from theories such as social impact theory and self-determination theory.

Uses and gratification theory provides valuable insights into the diverse needs fulfilled by TikTok, ranging from entertainment and social interaction to self-expression and fame-seeking. Notably, studies have highlighted the role of TikTok in shaping identity formation and peer interactions among young users (Shao, 2018). Additionally, personality traits such as openness to experience and extraversion have been linked to various TikTok behaviors, underscoring the interplay between individual characteristics and platform usage.

Furthermore, TikTok's immersive design, characterized by personalized content feeds and interactive features, enhances user engagement but also raises concerns about addictive usage patterns. Social impact theory offers a framework for understanding how TikTok influences users' attitudes and behaviors, particularly in the context of social interactions and information dissemination.

The self-determination theory emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in motivating TikTok usage. Platform design elements, such as push notifications and content algorithms, play a crucial role in shaping users' psychological states and usage patterns.

Demographically, TikTok users skew young and predominantly female, reflecting broader trends observed across social media platforms. However, the relationship between socio-demographic factors, personality traits, and TikTok usage warrants further investigation.

The manner in which users engage with TikTok, whether through passive content consumption or active participation, has implications for their well-being. Psychological processes such as upward social comparison and fear of missing out may contribute to negative affect and usage experiences among TikTok users (Best et al., 2014).

Ultimately, while TikTok offers unique opportunities for creativity and social interaction, its impact on users' mental health and behavior requires careful consideration. Future research endeavors should focus on elucidating the nuanced dynamics of TikTok usage, addressing concerns related to addictive behaviors, privacy infringement, and the platform's influence on identity formation and social relationships. By comprehensively understanding the motivations and consequences of TikTok usage, we can develop strategies to promote responsible and positive engagement with this influential social media platform.

Communication through social media

The rise of digital media has fundamentally changed how we communicate. Unlike traditional media, digital platforms allow for a two-way exchange of information, with users creating and sharing content. This "social media" aspect fosters real-time connections across vast distances. Understanding communication in this digital space requires examining how messages are constructed and interpreted. Social semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, is crucial here.

On social media, communication often combines verbal and non-verbal elements like emojis, images, and videos. This "multimodality" adds layers of meaning beyond plain text.

This digital age has blurred the lines between producers and consumers of information. Anyone can now share and access vast amounts of knowledge instantly. Educational resources are readily available online, from simple dictionaries to complex academic articles. The impact extends beyond academics, with digital media influencing storytelling, news consumption, and even shopping habits.

Studies highlight the growing influence of social media. Billions of people worldwide use these platforms, creating a global online community that transcends geographical boundaries. This "cyber society" allows for continuous interaction and information exchange.

This digital revolution has had a significant impact on language itself. The way we communicate online, particularly on social media, integrates both spoken and unspoken elements (Gee & Gee, 2011). Emojis have become a prominent feature, conveying emotions and opinions beyond words. This phenomenon highlights the concept of "social semiotic multimodality" – the simultaneous use of verbal and non-verbal cues in digital communication.

Understanding how users employ these semiotic resources is key to deciphering messages in the digital age. Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, provides a framework for analyzing how meaning is constructed and conveyed in digital media. This analysis examines the creation, dissemination, and interpretation of texts by users, focusing on the interplay between literal meaning (denotation), implied meaning (connotation), and deeper cultural references (Heath & others, 1977).

In essence, the digital age presents a unique landscape for communication, demanding new approaches to understanding how meaning is constructed and interpreted within online spaces.

2.2 Self-identity Construction

Identity is a concept that embodies both similarity and distinction, categorizing individuals based on commonalities while also acknowledging their unique attributes (Taylor, 2015). While a conventional understanding distinguishes between social and personal identities, delineating social identities as collective and externally assigned, and personal identities as individually experienced, recent theories propose that all identities are fundamentally social constructs. This perspective suggests that the sense of personal uniqueness is cultivated through

the contemporary imperative to engage in identity construction as a personal endeavor, aligning oneself with ideals that ultimately serve the broader agendas of neoliberalism. Thus, identity construction becomes intertwined with processes of subjectification and governmentality.

Theories of construction posit that identities are shaped and transformed by various factors, including interactions, situational contexts, sociohistorical conditions, and cultural influences. This implies that identities are inherently multiple or fluid, adapting to diverse contexts, and undergoing personalization processes that are often not fully explored. This challenges universal accounts of fixed or essential identities and underscores the connections between identity, inequality, and power dynamics in society.

While traditional identity categories like gender, age, class, nationality, race, and ethnicity are still used and studied, their bounded nature is increasingly questioned. Instead, researchers explore how these categories intersect and interact within specific contexts.

The construction of identities is deeply intertwined with language, raising questions about the researcher's role and the nature of language data as either objective truth or subjective interpretation (Taylor, 2015). To investigate identity construction, researchers often explore three main avenues: resources, sites, and practices.

Resources encompass the meanings, associations, and logics embedded in discourses, narratives, and interpretative repertoires. For instance, constructions of national identity draw upon shared histories, geographical associations, and cultural narratives, shaping both individual and collective identities.

Sites of identity construction include institutional, legal, and technological frameworks where power operates. These sites influence language conventions and communication practices, affecting how identities are constructed and contested within society.

Practices refer to micro-level language behaviors and broader social actions that contribute to identity construction. For example, linguistic choices in news reports can subtly shape perceptions of identity, reinforcing existing inequalities. Practices associated with larger frameworks, such as political speeches or treaty ratifications, also play a role in identity formation.

Overall, language use is recognized as a crucial aspect of identity construction, reflecting broader societal norms and power dynamics. However, identity construction extends beyond

language to encompass various social practices that contribute to the shaping and contestation of identities within diverse contexts.

2.2.1 Goffman: Presentation of Self

Erving Goffman revolutionized the understanding of identity construction in human interaction by drawing on dramaturgical metaphors. In his seminal work "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life," Goffman explores interpersonal interactions, likening individuals to actors who perform to project a desired image (Goffman, 2023). He introduces the concept of front stage and back stage behavior, where individuals are conscious of being observed by an audience in the former and behave differently in private settings.

Brown refers to this performance as "self-presentation," suggesting that it allows individuals to form new identities and enhance their self-image (Brown, 2014). Goffman emphasizes that individuals not only give intentional expressions but also unintentionally convey impressions to their audience. He also discusses the use of metaphors like the mask as a means of deception in face-to-face interactions, where individuals can selectively reveal certain aspects of themselves while hiding others. Goffman acknowledges the role of technology in facilitating face-to-face interactions but views telephone conversations as a departure from the norm, providing an inferior version of the real thing due to the lack of visible cues.

With the emergence of computer-mediated communication (CMC), non-physical online environments have become prevalent, raising questions about the applicability of Goffman's interaction order to these environments. While some argue that Goffman's work is outdated and needs remodeling to incorporate technological progress, others contend that electronic interaction is a natural extension of his theories.

The exploration of online environments reveals their capacity to enable users to adopt and project various identities. This phenomenon, characterized by a detachment between performer and audience, allows individuals to conceal certain aspects of their offline selves while enhancing their online personas (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). Goffman's concept of the self as "splitting" during interaction suggests that the online self is but one facet of a broader identity, as proposed by Baptista. Conversely, Vaast highlights the emergence of entirely new identities online.

2.2.2 Foucault: Technologies of self

In his later work, Foucault delved into a topic that diverged from his renowned theorization. Initially focused on practices and systems of coercion, his attention shifted towards what he termed "practices of the self." These practices, he believed, were integral to ancient Greek and Roman citizens but later became institutionalized. Foucault described them as exercises in self-transformation and attainment of a certain mode of being, emphasizing their ethical significance in ancient societies (Foucault, 1987).

He termed these practices "technologies of the self," which enable individuals to transform themselves to achieve states of happiness, wisdom, or perfection (Bakardjieva & Gaden, 2012). These technologies, Foucault argued, are intertwined with broader social developments and other forms of technologies like those of production and power.

Foucault traced the historical evolution of these technologies, from the Socratic tradition in ancient Greece to early Christianity and beyond. In ancient Greece, self-care involved dialogue with mentors and the use of writing to intensify self-awareness. Early Christian practices focused on purging and purifying the self through rituals of penitence and confession. The notion of technologies of the self, Foucault contended, reflects a dialectical tension between conformity to dominant social rationality and individual agency. While these technologies can perpetuate dominant norms, they also allow for individual reflexivity and subversion.

Additionally, Foucault highlighted the role of these technologies in mediating the interaction between the self and various audiences, ranging from mentors to imagined readers. This interaction, he argued, is central to the constitution of the self, echoing principles of symbolic interactionism but with a focus on historical context, materiality, and power dynamics.

In contrast to Goffman's dramaturgical model, which emphasizes the performance of self in social interactions, Foucault's concept of technologies of the self-grounds these practices in specific historical contexts and individual intentions.

2.2.3 Butler: The Performativity Theory

Judith Butler's theory of gender as performatively constructed serves as a guiding framework for the examination of identity formation and resistance. Butler argues against the existence of a pre-discursive subject, instead defining gender as an ongoing process rather than a fixed category. This challenges the traditional binary understanding of sex as biological and gender

as socially assigned. She posits that both gender and sex are produced within what she terms the heterosexual matrix, a framework that dictates ideal relationships between sex, gender, and desire through cultural norms and practices (Butler, 2002).

Resistance to dominant gender constructions is viewed as resistance to the heteronormative relationship established within the heterosexual matrix. Butler highlights the potential for resistance within this matrix, given its inherent instability, which requires constant repetition of norms to maintain. This repetition opens up opportunities for subversion, with Butler identifying "parodic styles" as a means of throwing the perceived naturalness of heterosexuality into question.

The aim of Butler's subversive politics is to create a space where non-normative genders, sexualities, and sexes can achieve legitimacy. This subversion occurs through challenging and denaturalizing the norms that solidify the heterosexual matrix, revealing them as performative constructions.

Angela McRobbie extends Butler's concept of "double entanglement" to contemporary feminism, exploring how women navigate hegemonic masculinity without jeopardizing their sexual identity through what she terms the "post-feminist masquerade." This concept aids in understanding the discourses that construct subjects' identities, particularly within online spaces (McRobbie, 2008).

Since the late 1990s, social network sites have provided platforms for the construction and performance of gendered identities. Early studies of gender differences in online communication suggested that asynchronous environments mirrored offline gender presentations, while synchronous environments challenged this binary understanding. This highlights the potential of computer-mediated communication (CMC) to reflect and reinforce gender relations observed in face-to-face interactions (Cook & Hasmath, 2014).

Scholarship exploring the subversive potential of CMC, drawing on Butler's concept of the heterosexual matrix, has expanded in recent years. Studies have focused on individual acts of resistance within online spaces, examining how subjects navigate and subvert dominant constructions of gender. However, such studies are limited to online contexts, prompting a need to consider the impact of online spaces on identity construction without essentializing them.

2.2.4 Construction and Reconstruction

Online identity encompasses the defining characteristics of individuals in the digital realm, distinct from their offline personas (Kim et al., 2011). The evolution of information technology has empowered individuals to craft their online identities, often diverging from their offline selves. Unlike offline identity, which is bound by physical attributes and circumstances beyond one's control, online identity allows for selective construction and presentation (Marwick, 2013). Individuals can leverage digital tools to shape their virtual personas according to their desired expression.

The phenomenon of online identity reconstruction occurs when individuals intentionally alter or conceal certain aspects of their real identities, presenting a version of themselves that differs from reality. Notably, identity is fluid and socially constructed, varying across contexts and interactions. While identity construction involves self-definition and is linked to personal attributes and social roles, identity reconstruction entails deliberate modifications or falsifications.

Research on online identity construction focuses on how individuals shape their self-image online, utilizing various digital platforms and resources to curate their online personas. Conversely, studies on online identity reconstruction explore the factors contributing to the divergence between individuals' online and offline identities. These factors include strategic self-presentation, deceptive self-presentation, or the exploration of alternative identities.

Social network platforms offer individuals opportunities for structured and personalized self-presentation, allowing for the flexible construction of identity. Users can selectively disclose information and manipulate their online personas to align with their desired image. Consequently, their online identities may differ significantly from their offline selves (Hu et al., 2015).

Strategic self-presentation involves the deliberate accentuation of positive attributes or the omission of negative ones to control the impression one makes online. Similarly, online identity experimentation entails the exploration of different personas in virtual environments (Spies Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). However, online identity reconstruction goes beyond strategic self-presentation and experimentation, involving the intentional distortion or concealment of truth for various motives.

Motivations for online identity reconstruction range from the pursuit of positive outcomes, such as social validation or access to new networks, to the avoidance of negative consequences, such as privacy concerns. While strategic self-presentation and online identity experimentation may involve truth embellishment, online identity reconstruction often entails outright deception or manipulation of personal information.

In conclusion, online identity reconstruction is a complex phenomenon driven by various motivations and strategies. Understanding the intricacies of this phenomenon requires a comprehensive review of existing literature, which can shed light on its underlying mechanisms and effects. By analyzing motivations, strategies, predictors, and effects of online identity reconstruction, researchers can identify gaps in current knowledge and guide future research in this area.

2.2.5 Intersectionality

Intersectionality emerges from the lived realities of individuals, acknowledging that no single identity category fully captures how people interact with their social environment or are perceived by others. Identity categories are both fluid, capable of changing over time, and stable, providing a sense of continuity across contexts. Different components of intersectionality come to the forefront depending on the level of analysis, as illustrated by Crenshaw's distinction between structural and political intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2013). Structural intersectionality focuses on how individuals' legal status or social needs are marginalized due to the convergence of identity statuses, while political intersectionality highlights the conflicting needs and goals of different identity groups. Another perspective views intersecting identities as creating unique hybrid identities, influenced by cultural contact and colonization. This view suggests stability in newly formed intersectional categories, as seen in the transformation of first-generation Indian immigrants into the category of "people of color" within American society.

The intersectionality framework emerged in response to second-wave academic feminism's focus on women's experiences in the early 1970s, prompting questions about the diversity of women's experiences. Feminist scholars of color highlighted the oversight of most feminist scholarship, which predominantly centered on middle-class, educated, white women. These scholars advocated for an inclusive approach that recognizes the intersection of gender with other significant social identities, particularly race. This critique led to the development of a

model of layered oppressions, emphasizing the additive effects of marginalized identities on oppression.

The theoretical foundation of intersectionality evolved from the study of inequalities, dominance, and oppression, particularly within Black feminist scholarship. Intersectionality theorists rejected the simplistic accumulated disadvantage model and emphasized the relational nature of intersectional identities (Shields, 2008). They argued that identities are not discrete categories but are defined in relation to one another, shaping individuals' experiences and perspectives.

Intersectionality has become a central concept in gender studies, offering a more accurate way to understand gender in relation to other social identities such as race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. It addresses the complexity of social identities and challenges essentialist views of gender and identity categories.

Social media platforms serve as conduits for deeper intersections. Understanding how historically marginalized voices and narratives spread on social media presents a challenge for scholars due to the opaque nature of platform algorithms. These algorithms wield considerable power over representation, akin to the influence of legacy media in shaping discourse. However, unlike legacy media, social media platforms operate with proprietary algorithms that obscure their processes and decision-making criteria (Christian et al., 2020).

In response to the complexity of platform power, scholars advocate for employing intersectionality as a critical framework for analyzing and critiquing platform dynamics. Intersectionality, pioneered by Black feminist scholars, acknowledges the intertwined nature of multiple identities and the unique forms of discrimination experienced by individuals embodying intersecting identities.

3 Methodology

The methodology chapter presents a summary of the methodology used throughout the present study. It starts by analyzing the research aims and questions, thus solidifying the context of the research. Then it presents a short overview of the participants selected as part of this study and their respective characteristics which make them unique and of great value to the use case research. Following, the research instrument is presented and described in detail in order to understand why it was selected as the instrument of the study and how it is going to help us answer the research questions posed. The chapter goes on presenting the data collection and data analysis process, allowing us to set a clear basis for understanding and decoding the findings that are described in the next chapter. As a final consideration, the chapter tackles the validity of the research conducted, settling possible issues like ethical consideration and other limitations.

3.1 Research Aims and Questions

This research project delves into the multifaceted experiences of migrant and refugee women in Greece through the lens of TikTok. The central focus lies in understanding:

- **Identity Construction and Expression:** How these women navigate the platform to create and share their complex identities. We aim to explore how they utilize the unique features of TikTok (e.g., music, visuals, captions) to express their backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations.
- **Viewer Reception and the Public Sphere:** We will investigate how viewers engage with the content these women create. This analysis will explore potential connections between these online portrayals and broader public discourse surrounding gender, sexuality, immigration, and related topics within Greece.

Research Questions:

- **Identity Construction:** How do migrant and refugee women in Greece utilize TikTok to construct and present their multifaceted identities?
- **Viewer Reception:** How do viewers respond to the content created by these women on TikTok?

- Public Discourse Connections: Is there a demonstrable link between these online portrayals and public discourse on gender, sexuality, immigration, religion, race, and ethnicity in Greece?
- How do migrant and refugee women in Greece perceive the impact of language and education on their lives during their migratory journey?

To uncover the rich, multi-layered narratives embedded within these TikTok videos, we will employ Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). This approach goes beyond the surface, meticulously examining the interplay of visuals, sounds, and captions. MCDA allows us to unpack the complex meanings these women construct through the full extent of their content, going beyond traditional linguistic analysis.

Public profiles will be strategically identified through a multi-pronged search strategy. This will include utilizing relevant hashtags such as #migrantlife, along with keywords related to identity exploration (#women, #muslimwomen). The hashtags used were selected by our experience in social media and a review of relevant communities and the hashtags they commonly use.

By combining in-depth analysis with the focus on the broader social context, this research seeks to shed light on the powerful and nuanced ways migrant and refugee women utilize social media to navigate their identities and engage with the public sphere in Greece.

3.2 The Participants

As it was already stated, this study explores the experiences of migrant and refugee women in Greece through their public TikTok profiles. To prioritize participant anonymity, the research focuses on data gleaned from six publicly available accounts. The research team has taken several steps to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Real names, usernames, and any other potentially identifying information have been excluded. Additionally, screenshots or videos from the profiles are not included in this report.

While the sample size is limited to six participants, they represent a wide range of ethnicities, religious backgrounds, and sexual orientations. While the specific age range is not disclosed to protect anonymity, it is acknowledged that TikTok users tend to skew younger.

The presented study explores the identities of the participants as constructed and presented through their TikTok videos. By analyzing the content, they create, we can gain valuable insights into their experiences, perspectives, and narratives. This approach allows us to explore the richness and complexity of their lives without compromising their anonymity.

Table 3.1 details various aspects of the identities of the participants, drawing information from their video content. It presents a short summary of the attributes that each of these participants has and affects their content.

Ethnicity	Migrant- Refugee status	Years in Greece	Age	Religion	Sexual Orientatio n	Occupation
Jordani- Iraqi- Palestinian girl	not stated	not stated	Young adulthood	Muslim	lesbian	student
Russian woman	immigrant	8	not stated	Christian	not stated	student and entrepreneur
Ukrainian woman	refugee	1	not stated	not stated	not stated	not stated
Syrian girl	not stated	not stated	Possibly in her twenties	Muslim	not stated	not stated
Filipina woman	not stated	not stated	34	not stated	straight	working
Greek- Turkish woman	not stated	not stated	not stated	Muslim	not stated	working

Table 3.1: Attribute summary of selected profiles.

3.3 Research Instrument

3.4 Case Study

This study employs a case study approach, specifically an explanatory case study. As defined by Yin (2014), this method allows for an in-depth examination of a phenomenon within its real-world context (Yin, 2017). In this case, the phenomenon of interest is how migrant refugee women construct their identities online.

The case study approach aligns well with this research for two key reasons:

- 1 This study aims to understand not only what migrant refugee women present online but also how they create their identities through video content and why they choose specific strategies for self-representation.
- 2 Analyzing video profiles allows for an examination of identity construction within the natural environment of online platforms, offering a richer understanding than more controlled methods.

Following the definition provided, this case study comprises two key elements:

- 1 The "practical, historical unity" are the six individual migrant refugee women. Their online video profiles represent specific instances within the broader group of migrant refugee women.
- 2 The "analytical or theoretical frame" is identity construction. This theoretical concept acts as the lens through which the researcher will analyze the video profiles.

By analyzing these video profiles (the subject), the study aims to understand a broader concept; how migrant refugee women construct their identities online (the object). This approach allows the exploration of a complex phenomenon with a focus on the "how" and "why" of identity formation in this specific context.

3.4.1 Multimodal Discourse Analysis

To delve into the rich narratives embedded within these TikTok videos, we will employ Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). This approach transcends a singular focus on text or language analysis, instead examining the interplay of various communication modes like visuals, sounds, captions, and even color. MCDA goes beyond analyzing how each element functions individually; it explores how they work together to construct meaning,

interconnecting with one another and transforming or enhancing the individual meanings and functions of each element. Figure 3.1 presents the various modes of communication that a video employs.

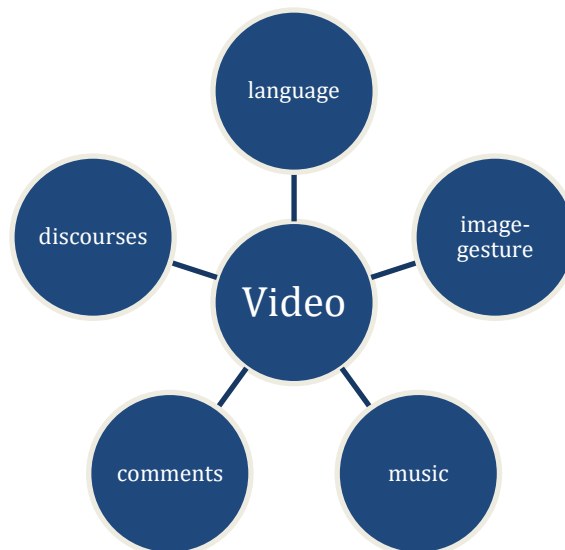


Figure 3.1: Different modes of communication that a video employs.

MCDA is a composite form of analysis, applying the theory of multimodality on the traditional critical discourse analysis. Drawing on Kress (1998), we recognize the power of multimodality (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1998). He argues that "using three modes in one sign... has real benefits" (p. 1). Each mode contributes uniquely: visuals showcase what might be lengthy to read in text, while text clarifies what visuals might struggle to convey. Color, too, plays a role by emphasizing specific aspects of the overall message. By examining these elements together, particularly within the dynamic online environment, we can achieve a more nuanced and intricate analysis.

Multimodality can be considered, a phenomenon rather than a specific theory or method. It highlights that communication almost always combines various modes of meaning-making, like language and image (Van Leeuwen, 2015). Spoken discourse, for example, blends language with intonation, body language, and even aspects of appearance. As such, multimodal analysis has become a powerful tool for dissecting media messages beyond just their surface meaning. Scholars like Bednarek & Caple (2012), Kress & van Leeuwen (1998), and Knox (2007) have used it to critically analyze media discourse (Bednarek & Caple, 2012; Knox, 2007; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1998).

The second component of MCDA is the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which gained popularity during the late 1980s. Pioneered by researchers like Fairclough, Wodak, and van Dijk, CDA goes beyond just analyzing how language works (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). It looks at how language is used to reflect and reinforce social structures like power and inequality. It examines how social structures influence the way we use language. It looks at the hidden biases and power dynamics present in everyday communication, political discourse, advertisements, and even educational materials. The goal is to expose these hidden aspects and empower people to challenge them.

CDA researchers use a variety of methods to analyze discourse. They might look at vocabulary choices, grammar patterns, and how ideas are connected in a text (Kress, 1990). They also consider how these elements are shaped by the social context in which the communication happens. CDA is particularly interested in areas where language and social power intersect. This includes political discourse, racism, gender representation in media, and how language is used in institutions like schools and hospitals. In practice, it highlights the power dynamics embedded in language and how language can be used to both reflect and challenge social structures. By focusing on the social context, CDA helps us understand language not just as a system of rules, but as a force that shapes our world.

This study leverages the power of MCDA, employing the benefits of both the multimodality and CDA, to understand how migrant women navigate identity construction on TikTok and how the public responds to that effort. MCDA, through its multimodal analysis, delves beyond the literal, examining both language and visual elements (images, videos) to uncover the nuanced and potentially hidden messages embedded within them. Social media posts often combine text and visuals, and MCDA provides the framework to analyze how these elements work together to construct meaning. MCDA, through its CDA core, sheds light on the complex relationship between language choices and social structures. By examining how migrant women use language and visuals on TikTok, we can gain valuable insights into how they navigate power dynamics and societal expectations. MCDA also moves beyond the assumption that online content is simply neutral. It reveals how seemingly ordinary language and visuals can be used to promote specific viewpoints and shape how people are perceived (Atalay, 2015). By applying this lens, we can see how these portrayals potentially influence broader societal narratives.

MCDA offers a structured approach to analyzing online profiles and videos. This process involves three key stages:

- Identifying overall themes and messages across the entire profile.
- Breaking down individual linguistic and visual elements (detailed analysis provided in the appendix).
- Examining how each video interacts with and potentially challenges or reinforces existing societal narratives (discourses).

3.5 Data Collection

The digital landscape offers a unique window into the lives and experiences of migrant and refugee women in Greece. This research project delves into this virtual realm, exploring how these women construct their identities online.

The study utilizes a strategic approach to gather a tapestry of voices. Hashtags like #migrantwomen, #refugeewomen, and #migrantlife act as threads, drawing in profiles from a variety of ethnicities, religions, and sexual orientations. Table 3.2 is presenting the most used hashtags for each of the selected profiles. To ensure a rich and vibrant sample, profiles with a minimum of 3,000 followers are chosen. These profiles suggest a higher level of online engagement, potentially offering a wealth of content for analysis. Six profiles are ultimately selected, forming a robust foundation for identifying patterns in online identity construction. Given the vast amount of data, the research strategically focuses on three carefully selected videos from each profile.

Most used hashtags	
Profile 1	#arabtiktok #muslimtiktok #browntiktok #arab #queer #lgbtmuslim
Profile 2	#greece #lifeabroad #immigrant #trip #russiagirl
Profile 3	#greece #livinginGreece #lifeinAthens #expatlife #foreigninGreece
Profile 4	#middleeastern #arab #muslimgirl #greetiktok
Profile 5	#tiktokgreece #filipina #tiktokphilipinnes #filipinaingreece #singlemom

Profile 6	#greettiktok #turkishtiktok #muslimtiktok #arabtiktok
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Table 3.2: A presentation of the most used hashtags for each of the selected profiles participating in the presented analysis.

Not all online content is created equal. The research prioritizes videos directly related to identity work. Generic vlogs or videos lacking sound are excluded, as they offer little insight into how these women curate their online personas. Recognizing the importance of audiovisual elements, the study focuses on content where both visuals and sound are present, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of identity formation strategies.

The complexities of language are acknowledged. To maintain the integrity of the analysis and avoid misinterpretations, videos and comments in languages other than English and Greek are excluded. This pragmatic decision ensures the accuracy of data interpretation and allows for a deeper dive into the chosen languages.

While the sample size of six profiles may seem limiting, the focus is on the quality of the data. Each profile represents a unique voice, offering valuable insights into the nuances of online identity construction for migrant and refugee women. The study acknowledges the limitations of generalizability but lays a strong foundation for further exploration. Future research could incorporate multilingual analysis tools or expand the sample size while maintaining the focus on relevant content.

This research design serves as a stepping stone, paving the way for a more comprehensive understanding of how migrant and refugee women navigate the digital world and shape their identities online.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis consists of several steps that are taken for each individual profile. Figure 3.2 presents a high-level workflow representation of the analysis process. The research begins by establishing a foundational understanding of each woman's background. Demographic details such as ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and refugee/migrant status provide valuable context for interpreting their online presence. Information about previous residency, current occupation, family dynamics, and the circumstances surrounding their arrival in Greece further enriches the understanding of their journeys.



Figure 3.2: High level presentation of the data analysis workflow.

Hashtags act as keywords and conversations starters in the online world. An analysis of the most frequently used hashtags by each woman was conducted. This shed light on the overarching themes and topics they consider most significant, offering valuable insights into their online priorities and the narratives they wish to share. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of all videos on the selected profiles, we were able to identify the core themes associated with each one.

The videos selected underwent Critical Discourse Analysis as part of the MCDA methodology. CDA involves dissecting the content through several layers presented in Figure 3.3 (Mogashoa, 2014).

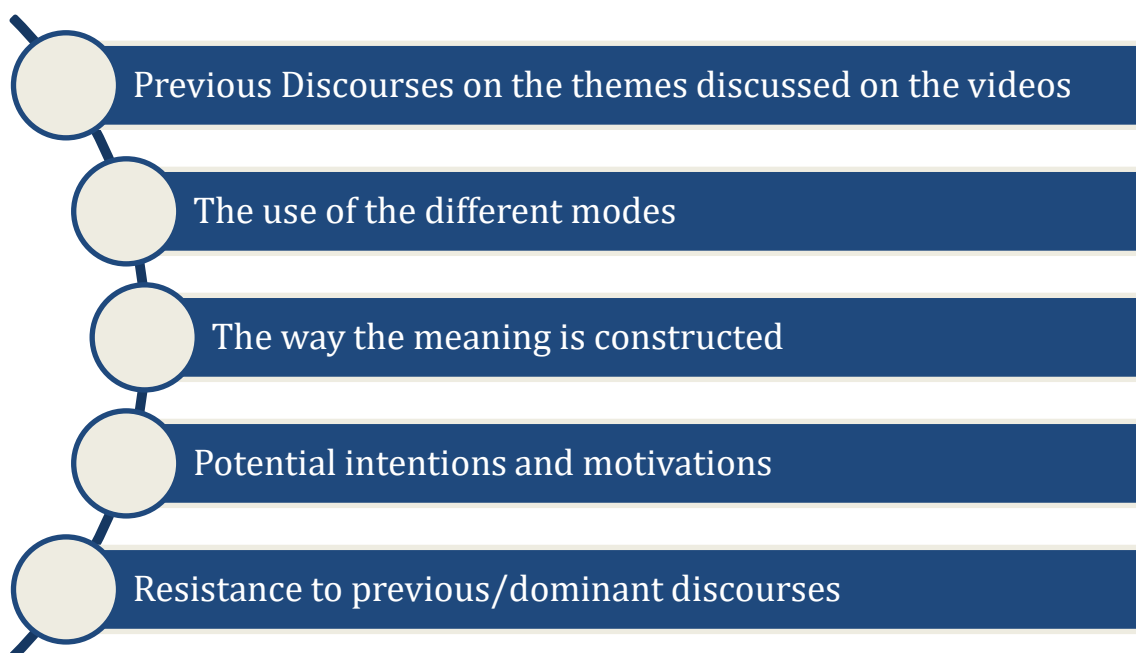


Figure 3.3: Overview of the Critical Discourse Analysis layers.

More specifically:

- **Historical Context:** The analysis considers previous discourses surrounding the themes addressed in the videos. This helps to understand how existing narratives might influence or challenge the women's self-representation.
- **The Power of Language:** Linguistic elements like word choice, phrases, and the use of music, sound, movement, and imagery will be examined. These elements all contribute to the overall message and emotional tone of the videos.
- **Deconstructing the Text:** The analysis delves into how meaning is constructed within the video itself. This involves examining how the visuals and audio work together to create a specific message.
- **The Creation Process:** The research will explore the potential intentions and motivations behind the videos. Understanding why these specific videos were chosen and created can offer valuable insights into the women's self-presentation strategies.
- **Resisting the Narrative:** The analysis will also identify instances where the content departs from prevailing discourses. Highlighting instances of resistance or alternative perspectives allows for a more nuanced understanding of how these women navigate online spaces.

Following the in-depth video analysis, a comprehensive evaluation will be conducted. This will piece together the various elements – background information, hashtag usage, and video content – to create a holistic understanding of how each woman constructs her identity online. This multifaceted approach aims to illuminate the complex tapestry of self-representation and expression within the digital realm for migrant and refugee women in Greece.

3.7 Validity

The initial design of this research identified both limitations and potential ethical issues. As limitations we define the issues that are limiting the capacity of our research to draw clear conclusions, answer the research questions fully, achieve the research aims and possibly generalize the conclusions drawn. As ethical issues we define the issues that regard the ethics of gathering and analyzing user generated data that are direct products of personal opinions, identities and personal data.

3.7.1 Limitations

One of the first limitations identified regards the usage of hashtags. A dependence on hashtags for profile identification may overlook infrequent users or those employing non-standard terminology, potentially resulting in an underrepresentation of specific subgroups within the population. Furthermore, by solely considering profiles with a minimum follower threshold, the research excludes women who cultivate smaller, yet potentially more engaged, online communities. Moreover, limiting the data to content in English and Greek further restricts the study's scope, neglecting a significant portion of migrant and refugee women. Additionally, with only six profiles analyzed, the findings cannot be automatically generalized to the entire population.

The research process was refined throughout the data collection phase. In recognition of the limitations identified with the initial approach, the research methodology underwent several key revisions. Firstly, the focus shifted from follower count to selecting profiles that represented a broader spectrum of backgrounds and experiences within the migrant and refugee women population in Greece. This ensured a more nuanced understanding of their realities. Secondly, the research objectives were refined to explore the lived experiences of these women, acknowledging the limitations of generalizing the findings to the entire population. By enacting these changes, the research team significantly mitigated most of the initial limitations.

3.7.2 Ethical Considerations

Beyond the methodological limitations mentioned, the process of scraping data from social media profiles raises ethical concerns regarding informed consent. Were the women whose profiles were analyzed aware of their participation in the study? Moreover, the selection of profiles based on specific criteria could introduce bias and lead to an unrepresentative sample, potentially overlooking the diverse experiences of migrant and refugee women in Greece. Finally, although not explicitly mentioned in the study, it is crucial to ensure the complete anonymization of the women's identities throughout the research process.

In order to tackle and mitigate some of these concerns a set of actions were taken. Firstly, data collection was meticulously restricted to publicly available information on the selected TikTok profiles. To enhance the study's inclusivity, a diverse range of profiles was incorporated, encompassing individuals from various geographic origins, with experiences of both forced

and voluntary migration, and representing different religious backgrounds. Finally, robust anonymization techniques were implemented throughout the research process. This included replacing names, excluding videos or photos from the report, and ensuring no personally identifiable information was shared. These steps achieve the mitigation of all ethical concerns identified.

4 Findings

The present chapter is detailing the main findings of the analysis, providing insight into the process of the MCDA and its results. We start by providing some basic information about the selected profiles, setting the context of both the creation and the analysis of the videos. Then, we are providing a high-level analysis of the videos by identifying their main themes, the topics that they are trying to tackle. After these basic information and high-level analysis step we are moving on to the detailed analysis of each profile, providing a detailed analysis of each selected video. The chapter then presents the public response to the analyzed videos, providing insight into the opinions and reactions of the viewers, an important aspect to understand how the community reacts to the opinions and identities expressed. The final section of the chapter is the correlation of the analyzed content to a number of public discourse topics that trouble the Greek community. Even more information about the analysis and the findings can be found in the relevant appendix chapter titled “Analysis of the videos”.

4.1 Basic information

This study explores six female TikTok profiles, offering a comparative analysis of identity construction and audience engagement within the Greek social media landscape. Before venturing into the details of the profile analysis we should present some basic information about the profiles, setting the context for the analysis. In this introductory sub-section we are presenting some linguistic and cultural insights into the selected profiles. Figure 4.1 presents an overview of these characteristics for each of the selected profiles.

The first profile exemplifies the intersection of cultural heritage. A young woman of Jordanian, Palestinian, and Iraqi descent utilizes the platform to navigate the complexities of her Muslim and lesbian identity. Her content, primarily in English with Arabic influences, delves into potentially sensitive topics, fostering discussion amongst her audience. In contrast, the second profile highlights the process of cultural integration. A Russian Christian woman, residing in Greece for eight years as a student, employs her multilingualism (Greek, English, Russian) aiming to connect with a diverse audience while showcasing her academic pursuits.

The third profile underscores the power of social media as a refuge. A Ukrainian woman, displaced by war, utilizes English-language content to connect with a global audience and share

her resilience in the face of displacement. The fourth profile presents a more enigmatic narrative. A Syrian woman in her twenties utilizes Greek and English sporadically, offering glimpses into her life without divulging details regarding her arrival, family, or occupation. Despite the lack of personal disclosure, she has cultivated a loyal following exceeding 8,000 individuals.

The fifth profile sheds light on the challenges and triumphs of single motherhood within a multicultural context. A 34-year-old Filipina woman, raising a 7-year-old son in Greece, utilizes Filipino, Greek, and English to document her experiences. Hints suggest the possibility of remote work, while the relatively low comment engagement indicates a primarily observational audience despite the substantial volume of videos.

The final profile deconstructs stereotypes and celebrates multifaceted identities. A Greek-Turkish woman, defying expectations through her hijab-wearing attire, embraces the roles of psychotherapist, counselor, feminist, and makeup artist. Her content, delivered in Greek, Arabic, and English, tackles mental health, women's empowerment, and beauty, fostering a highly engaged audience exceeding 7,500 followers.

By examining these diverse profiles, we gain valuable insights into the evolving landscape of female identity on Greek TikTok. These women utilize the platform to navigate complexities of heritage, religion, and cultural integration, while simultaneously fostering connections and building communities that transcend geographical, racial, religious, linguistic and cultural boundaries.

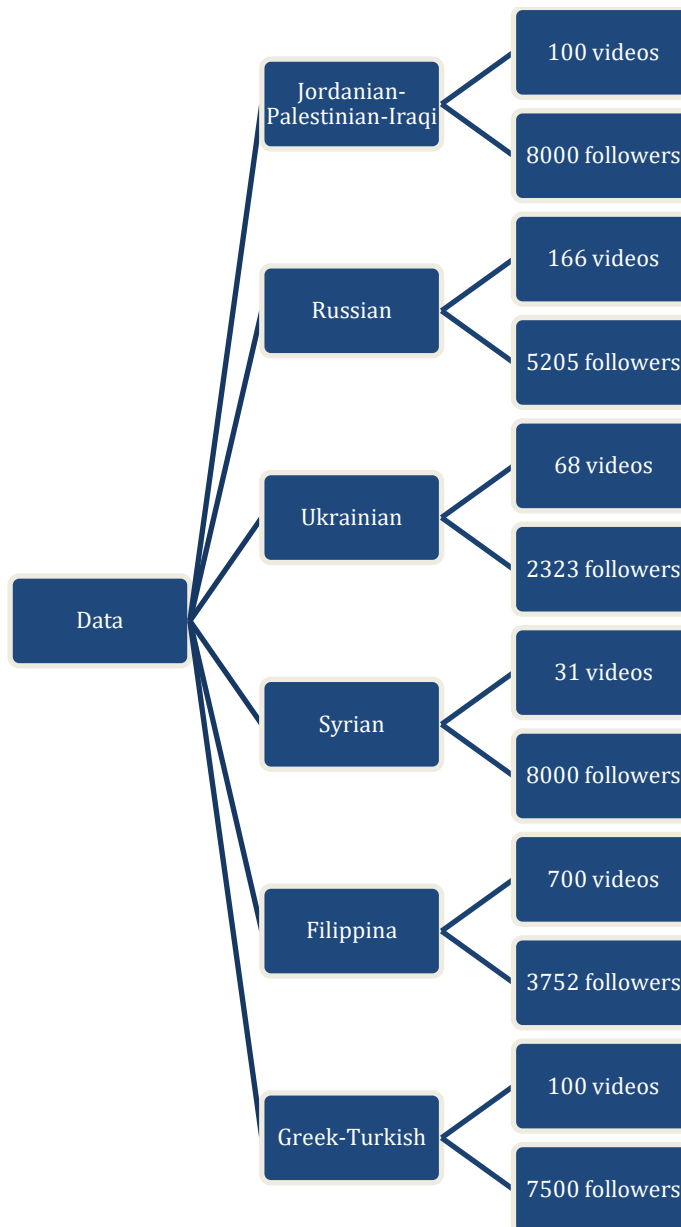


Figure 4.1: Graphical overview of the selected profiles that are the subjects of the present analysis.

4.2 Basic Themes

Each of the analyzed profiles contains a set of basic themes that are guiding the content they are producing. The present section tries to identify these basic themes and explain how and why they are dominant in each profile.

The first profile's theme can be identified as "Activism and Identity Politics", centering on a young Muslim lesbian who actively confronts societal norms and prejudices. Her content highlights the intersection of her Arab, multicultural, and lesbian identity, while courageously

addressing criticism and hate speech. She champions Palestinian rights in response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, providing unfiltered perspectives on protests and advocating for her homeland. This profile exemplifies the use of social media for activism and fostering public discourse on critical issues.

The second profile has two dominant themes that can be identified and described as a) “Bridging Cultures” and b) “Navigating Immigration”. It presents a rich tapestry of an immigrant navigating life in Greece. The user showcases travels across Greece and beyond, capturing the beauty of diverse landscapes. She delves into the realities of being an immigrant, offering valuable insights and advice on overcoming bureaucratic hurdles. Furthermore, she bridges cultural divides by teaching Russian language and comparing cultural nuances with Greek friends. This profile highlights the complexities of immigrant experiences and the platform's potential to foster intercultural understanding.

The third profile deals with the experience of forced migration so its main theme can be described as “Resilience in Displacement”. It portrays the life of a Ukrainian woman in Greece. We see glimpses of her adventures, leisure activities, and coffee breaks, but also honest portrayals of the challenges of adjusting to a new home as a refugee. Through her content, the user shares the emotional complexities of displacement and adaptation, offering a window into the realities of forced migration.

The fourth profile offers an intimate portrayal of a Syrian girl exploring themes of love, relationships, and cultural identity, being driven by a theme that can be labeled as “Love, Culture, and Challenging Stereotypes”. She delves into Arabic music, translating lyrics that explore love themes, while addressing Islamophobia and challenging stereotypes about Muslim identity. By showcasing traditional views on marriage, love, and family, she provides insights into a culture shaped by specific norms and values. This profile highlights the importance of social media in fostering dialogue about love, cultural identity, and overcoming prejudice.

The fifth profile is providing insights into the everyday hardships of a single mother with the dominant theme being “Single Motherhood and Daily Life”. It offers a vibrant portrayal of a Filipina single mother's life in Greece. Her initial videos showcased daily activities, singing, and dancing, primarily in Filipino. Later videos captured beach scenes and summer adventures with friends. She delves into the joys and challenges of single motherhood, reflecting on her bond with her son and the difficulties of a past relationship. The profile highlights the

importance of social media for single mothers, offering a space to share experiences, find strength in friendships, and celebrate the resilience of motherhood.

The final profile centers on a Muslim woman who explores her faith and feminist views with depth and authenticity, so the most fitting label for its theme is “Faith, Feminism, and Social Commentary”. Through various video formats, she shares personal experiences, explores the intersection of feminism and Islam, and promotes social dialogue. She uses the platform to educate and empower her audience on important social issues, while also offering practical advice, cooking tutorials, and discussions on mental health. Additionally, she raises awareness about Palestinian issues and cultural traditions. This profile exemplifies the potential of social media to be a platform for self-expression, social commentary, and fostering a sense of community.

4.3 Description of the videos

Each profile is analyzed using the MCDA methodology and the first results of this analysis are presented here. For each of the 6 selected profiles we chose to analyze three videos that were deemed as more representative, as already mentioned. The videos are analyzed according to their subject, their messages and the interplay of the media used in them. The rest of this section contains the detailed analysis of the profiles.

4.3.1 Profile 1

This analysis explores three videos by a young migrant navigating stereotypes and identity in a new country. Figure 4.2 presents a graphical representation of the main themes that are present in the videos analyzed for Profile 1.

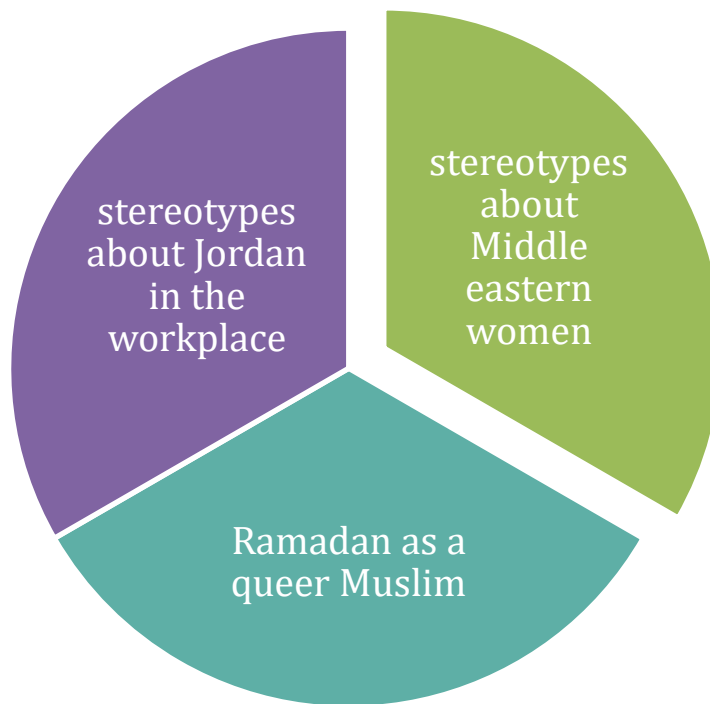


Figure 4.2: Main themes of the three videos analyzed in Profile 1.

The first video tackles workplace misconceptions. Though not garnering widespread attention it humorously dismantles a stereotype about Jordan, a Middle eastern country. The video depicts a story of a Greek person mistakenly believing Jordanians only use camels for travel. The humor escalates with dubbed audio from rapper Tyler, the Creator, sarcastically thanking white people for "such stupidity." Dim lighting and the woman's confident gestures set the tone for her message. Background music enhances the atmosphere, while comments reveal solidarity with migrants facing similar prejudices. Despite lacking a description, the video effectively conveys its message through humor and visuals.

The second video, in stark contrast, has garnered a massive response. It delves into the complexities of Ramadan for a lesbian Muslim migrant. The description warmly welcomes fellow Muslims with "Ramadan Kareem," emphasizing inclusivity and acceptance. The video explores the isolation experienced by the speaker, caught between a Muslim community that may ostracize her sexuality and LGBTQ+ communities harboring Islamophobia. A brightly lit home setting contrasts with the woman's subdued expression and delicate gestures, effectively conveying her inner struggle. The melancholic theme of the "first love" song reinforces her

feelings of loneliness. Reactions are diverse, with hateful and dismissive comments, even from Muslims, and Islamophobic remarks. However, a wave of support emerges, particularly from LGBTQ+ individuals of Middle Eastern descent, offering solidarity and a sense of belonging. The final video addresses the stereotype that "all Middle Eastern women want is to be naked," a claim often made by Middle Eastern men. While not her most popular, it sparks conversation. In the description, the creator expresses her anger towards this generalization. This entry uses contrasting messages to deconstruct the stereotype. A dubbed conversation from Bojack Horseman emphasizes sacrifice, juxtaposed with offensive statements by Middle Eastern men about women. The speaker counters with facts about honor killings and limitations women face. The video criticizes the portrayal of Middle Eastern women as hyper-sexual or privileged, highlighting the injustices they endure.

Overall, these videos showcase this young woman's powerful voice and her creative approach to challenging stereotypes and advocating for a more nuanced understanding of Middle Eastern women and LGBTQ+ identities within Islam.

4.3.2 Profile 2

This analysis explores three videos by a profile that delves into cultural differences, migrant experiences, and online negativity. Figure 4.3 presents a graphical representation of the main themes that are present in the videos analyzed for Profile 2.

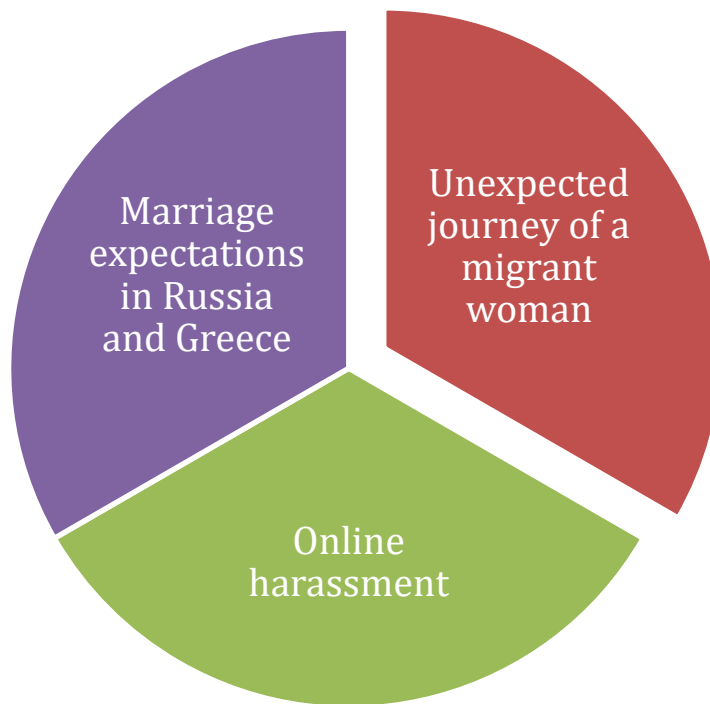


Figure 4.3: Main themes of the three videos analyzed in Profile 2.

The first video, a clear outlier in terms of engagement, tackles the sensitive topic of marriage expectations across cultures. The description highlights the contrasting mentalities of Greek and Russian women on marriage. The video humorously uses one woman to portray both a 27-year-old Russian and a 37-year-old Greek woman. The Russian character anxiously awaits a proposal, highlighting traditional expectations. In contrast, the Greek character prioritizes open communication and enjoys a collaborative relationship with her partner. Visually, the Russian woman appears timid, while the Greek woman exudes confidence. Interestingly, the comments reinforce stereotypes, with some Greeks criticizing the Greek woman's modern views and others portraying Russian women as materialistic. This video cleverly exposes cultural biases and assumptions about women from different backgrounds.

The second video focuses on the gap between migrant expectations and reality. Despite capturing the migrant experience, it has received less engagement. The description expresses surprise at her life's trajectory, questioning how she ended up in Greece. The video showcases her unexpected journey, from her initial hope of becoming a housewife to pursuing a university degree, a career in real estate, and even entrepreneurship. The text, combined with the woman's

emotional expression, conveys a sense of accomplishment despite the shift from her original plan. The background music amplifies the emotional weight of her transformation. Interestingly, the comments anticipate negativity, hinting at cultural tensions regarding marriage expectations.

The final video, with lower viewership, tackles online harassment. The description reads, "If haters voiced over my videos," hinting at the content. Here, the woman impersonates her online trolls, listing cruel comments that mock her ethnicity, language skills, career choice, appearance, relationship status, and online presence. By recreating these attacks, the video aims to expose their negativity and impact on mental health. It highlights the hurtful nature of these comments that target personal aspects and cultural heritage. Potentially reclaiming power and promoting self-acceptance, the woman encourages viewers to challenge negativity and celebrate their identities. Supportive comments reinforce this message, praising her for speaking out and offering solidarity.

These videos showcase the profile owner's willingness to address sensitive topics and challenge stereotypes around cultural differences, migrant experiences, and online harassment.

4.3.3 Profile 3

This analysis explores three videos from a Ukrainian woman's profile, documenting her experiences as a displaced person finding a new home in Greece. Figure 4.4 presents a graphical representation of the main themes that are present in the videos analyzed for Profile 3.

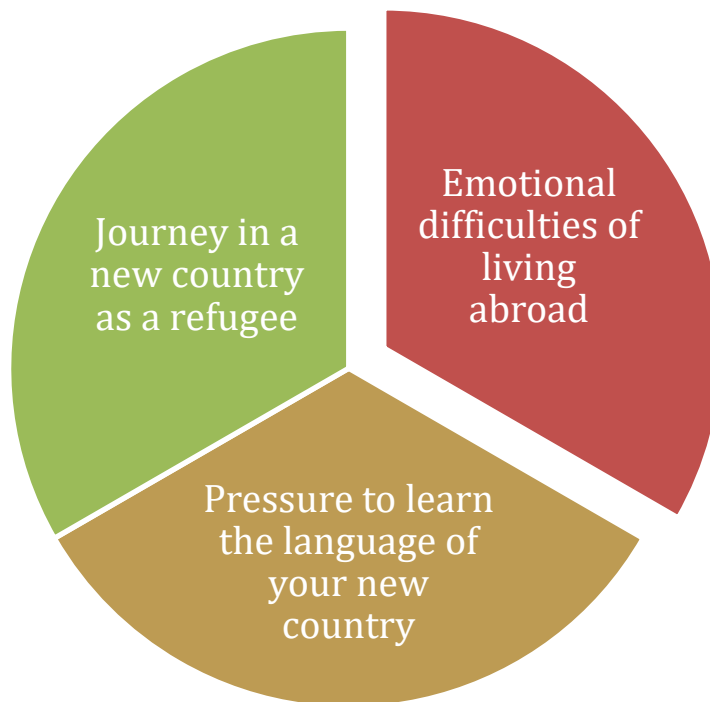


Figure 4.4: Main themes of the three videos analyzed in Profile 3.

The first video marks the beginning of her journey in Greece. Fleeing the war in Ukraine, the description, "Join me on my journey to explore beautiful Greece," reflects a hopeful spirit. The video captures the emotional rollercoaster of displacement. Text overlays narrate her initial sadness and uncertainty upon leaving home a year ago. However, Greece offers a heartwarming turnaround. Breathtaking visuals depict the country's beauty, mirroring her shift in emotions. The video concludes with a hopeful yet hesitant question: "Could I feel Greece like home someday?" Melancholic music complements the mixed emotions. Supportive comments like "Welcome, and we hope you'll feel at home soon" showcase her search for belonging.

The second video explores the emotional complexities of living abroad. Here, the creator offers no description. While receiving more likes than the first video, it remains curiously devoid of comments. This video portrays the unspoken hardships of cultural adjustment. Text reveals feelings of isolation, missing family, and the difficulty of making friends, especially as an introvert in her 30s. These challenges contribute to a core feeling of "in-betweeness," not fully belonging anywhere. The peaceful scene of water reflecting the sky contrasts with a

melancholic melody, amplifying the emotional weight of the message. The lack of comments so far highlights the often-unvoiced struggles of immigrants adapting to a new life.

The final video tackles the challenges of language proficiency from a local's perspective. The description, "Share this with someone who can relate!" suggests a desire for connection. The short video uses humor to address this sensitive topic. Text on screen describes a neighbor's pressure to learn Greek, using a sarcastic question and sassy retort to highlight the frustration of language barriers and the pressure to assimilate. The woman's body language conveys agitation and amusement. The absence of background music keeps the focus on the dialogue, and the lack of comments again underscores the often-unheard struggles of navigating cultural expectations.

These videos offer a glimpse into the complex emotions, hopes, and challenges faced by a displaced person forging a new life in a foreign land.

4.3.4 Profile 4

This analysis explores three videos by a Syrian woman who uses humor and personal experiences to challenge stereotypes about Islam, Syrian culture, and women from the Middle East. Figure 4.5 presents a graphical representation of the main themes that are present in the videos analyzed for Profile 4.

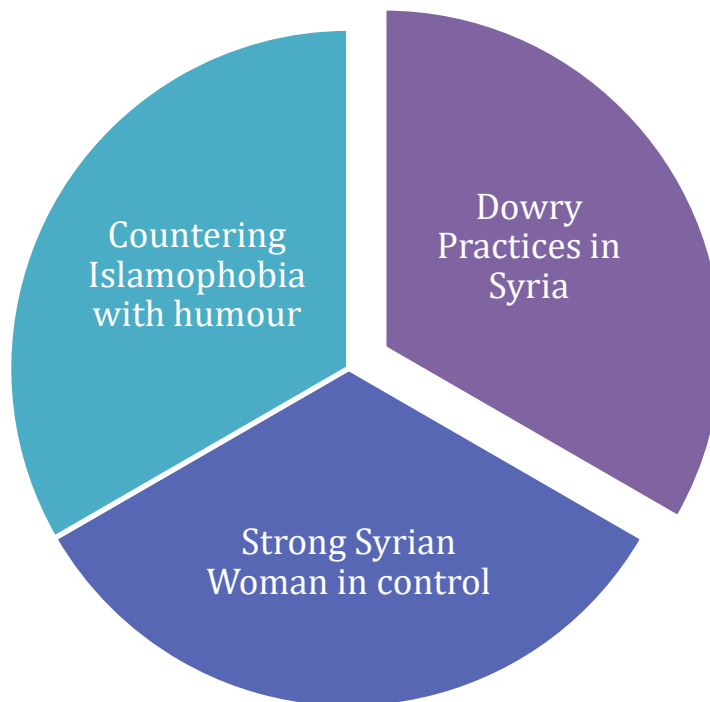


Figure 4.5: Main themes of the three videos analyzed in Profile 4.

The most popular video tackles Islamophobia. The Greeklish description, "min pesete na me fate" ("don't judge me wrong"), hints at the video's controversial theme.

The video employs humor and personal experience. Text on screen reads, "Me living in Greece trying to explain to my non-Muslim friends," followed by a funny voiceover challenging the stereotype of Muslims as terrorists. Her hand gestures and facial expressions portray contrasting views: sharp and angry when depicting the stereotype, soft and endearing when portraying Muslims as peaceful and devout. The comments section reflects mixed reactions. While some viewers, including Muslims, share her experience, others perpetuate Islamophobic stereotypes. This video showcases the complexities of Muslim identity and the ongoing struggle against prejudice.

The second video explores dowry practices in Syria and Greece, sparking debate about marriage customs across cultures. The English description, "habibi halarwse ligo" ("baby, relax"), playfully addresses a potential love interest.

The video uses humor to challenge stereotypes about Middle Eastern women and marriage. Text in Greek reads, "I grew up in a culture where men give dowry camels and he still believes

he can win me over," implying a suitor doesn't understand her background. Upbeat Arabic music complements her playful demeanor. The message suggests Syrian men might be more generous than Greek men, contrasting with the idea of pampered Middle Eastern women. The comments expose sexist views, with some criticizing dowry practices and others highlighting potential exploitation in Greek marriages. This video tackles cultural differences in marriage expectations while raising questions about sexism and financial dynamics within relationships.

The final video also targets a potential love interest. The description includes a line from a popular Arabic song, "I will make you walk straight like a ruler," suggesting the woman's assertive personality and a dominant role in the relationship.

This playful video challenges stereotypes about submissive Middle Eastern women. Text in Greek reads, "When he thinks he might have the upper hand but forgets you're from Syria," implying a non-Syrian partner underestimates her strength. Arabic song lyrics like "Dominant, I will make you walk straight" and the woman's confident gestures create a humorous tone, portraying a woman in control. The lack of comments leaves viewers pondering the message and cultural assumptions about power dynamics in relationships.

These videos showcase this creator's unique voice and her use of humor to challenge stereotypes and promote a more nuanced understanding of Syrian culture, Islam, and Middle Eastern women.

4.3.5 Profile 5

This analysis explores three videos by a woman who uses the platform to explore societal expectations, self-worth, and the strength of women, particularly single mothers. Despite her content not always receiving widespread attention, her message resonates with some viewers. Figure 4.6 presents a graphical representation of the main themes that are present in the videos analyzed for Profile 5.

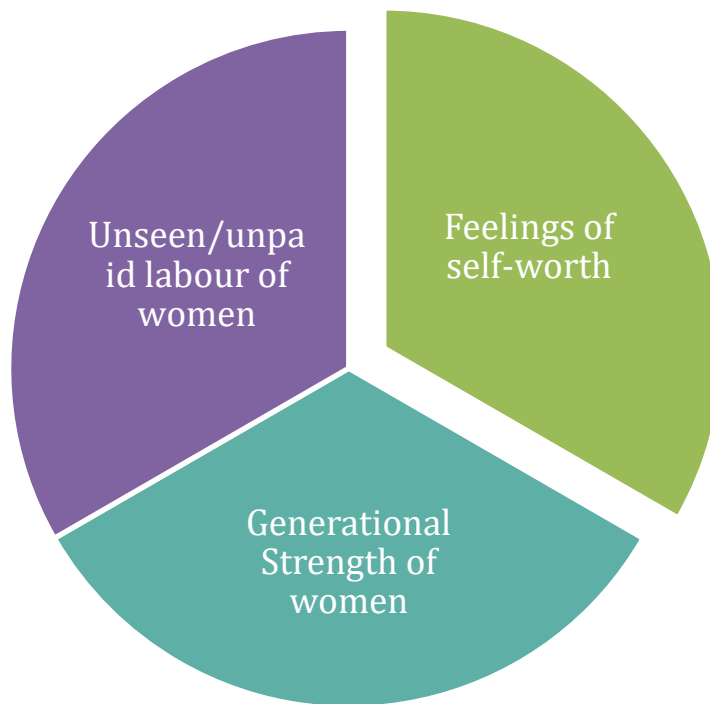


Figure 4.6: Main themes of the three videos analyzed in Profile 5.

The first video tackles the unspoken expectations placed on women. The description asks viewers who can relate to the video's content. Text on screen reads: "Being a woman is not easy," followed by a list of domestic chores women are expected to handle. The woman silently performs these tasks, with upbeat music creating a contrasting backdrop. This highlights the disconnect between societal expectations and the effort women invest in maintaining a household. While the video doesn't garner a large number of comments, it raises awareness about the unseen labor women perform.

The second video focuses on self-esteem and self-worth. This video utilizes a motivational audio clip emphasizing positive affirmations like "I'm a good woman" and "I'm worth it." The message is repeated alongside various clips from her life. This suggests a recurring need for self-assurance, perhaps due to past criticism. Despite the lack of description, the comments section is overwhelmingly supportive.

The final video celebrates the strength of women, particularly single mothers. The description highlights how strong mothers raise even stronger daughters. The video showcases a heartwarming exchange between a single mom and her mother. Text messages reveal a

mother's concern, and the daughter's playful response reassures her of her strength and resilience. The rap song further amplifies the theme of overcoming challenges as a single parent. While comments haven't gained traction yet, the video portrays a message of family support and resilience.

Overall, these videos offer a glimpse into a woman's perspective on societal expectations, her own journey with self-worth, and the strength inherent in women, particularly single mothers.

4.3.6 Profile 6

This analysis examines three videos by a Greek-Turkish woman who uses her platform to raise awareness about human rights violations, challenge Islamophobic stereotypes, and advocate for women's empowerment. Figure 4.7 presents a graphical representation of the main themes that are present in the videos analyzed for Profile 6.

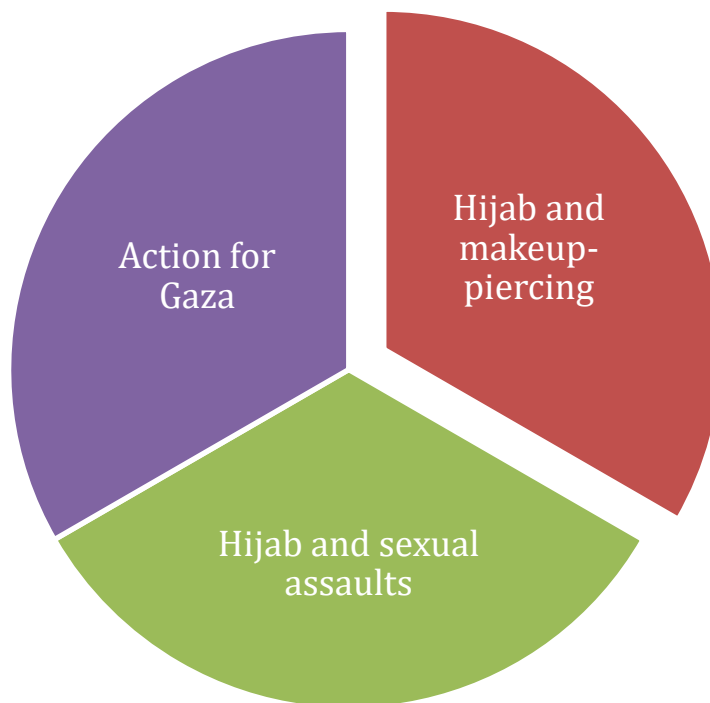


Figure 4.7: Main themes of the three videos analyzed in Profile 6.

The first video tackles the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The description, "Do not stop shouting" with a Palestinian flag, emphasizes the importance of keeping the issue in the public eye. The video opens with a powerful call for basic human rights and equality. Harrowing accounts of

sexual violence against Palestinian women highlight the weaponization of their bodies. Visually, the woman, adorned in a Palestinian keffiyeh and makeup reflecting the flag's colors, embodies strength and determination. As she speaks, her grief is evident in her tears and red tape symbolizing silenced voices. Her resolve emerges as she removes the tape, urging viewers to take action. The soundtrack, "Labour" by Paris Paloma, adds a poignant layer about gender inequality. Supportive comments express solidarity with Gaza and hope for its liberation.

The second video addresses a critical comment about her appearance. The intriguing description, "I hope I was understood" with a heart emoji, hints at frustration with recurring negativity. The video directly refutes criticism of her choice to wear both a hijab and makeup. She asserts her right to express her faith and embrace beauty without seeking male approval. This powerful statement challenges patriarchal norms that misinterpret women's choices. Set against a nighttime walk, the video captures the raw reality of her experience. Supportive comments, especially from Muslim women, showcase solidarity.

The final video tackles another Islamophobic comment. The seemingly innocuous description, "To start with, good evening," may mask a deeper frustration. This video confronts the notion that abuse is linked to attire or religion. She powerfully questions why abuse against women in Greece persists despite their different clothing. Through personal experiences of assault while wearing various outfits, she dismantles victim-blaming and emphasizes that abuse stems from gender inequality, not clothing. Set on a busy street, the video captures her emotions amidst everyday life. Strong comments support her message, humor, and the discussion about violence against women; a problem that transcends borders and religions.

These videos showcase this woman's courage in using social media to advocate for social justice, challenge discriminatory views, and empower women to reclaim their narratives.

4.4 Response

This section is dedicated to the analysis of the public response to the videos generated by the selected profiles. The public response is analyzed through the total number of views and the user engagement. The engagement in social media can be anything that allows the creator of the content to get feedback from the people that consume this content. In the case of TikTok, engagement is limited to likes and comments by the viewers. Figures Figure 4.8 - Figure 4.13

present a summary of the viewer engagement actions for each one of the analyzed videos for each selected profile.

4.4.1 Profile 1

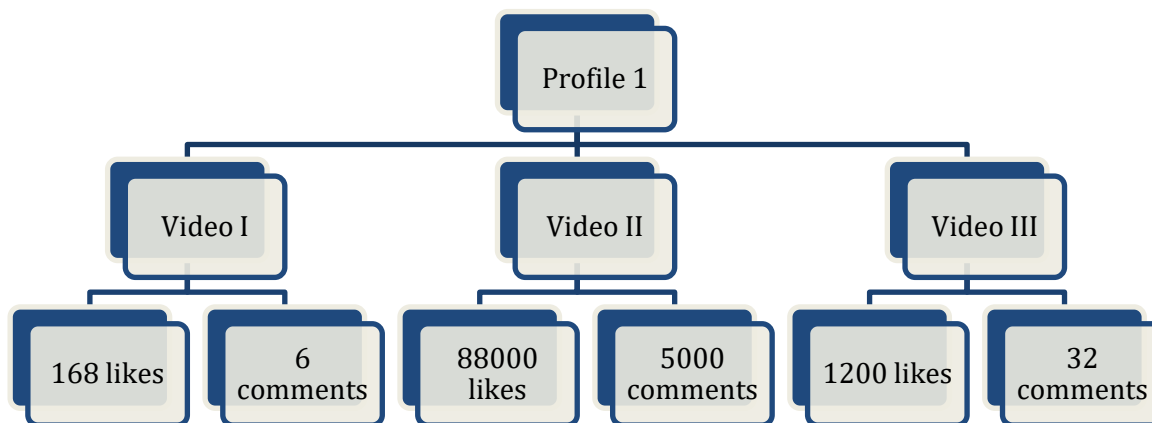


Figure 4.8: Summary of the viewer engagement actions for each of the analyzed videos for Profile 1.

The initial video garnered only six comments, none particularly noteworthy for analysis. These comments primarily expressed solidarity from fellow migrants in Greece who face similar stereotypes.

The second video, however, received a significantly higher volume of comments, reaching 5,000. The content of these responses was deeply concerning and varied widely. A significant portion originated from Muslims, both men and women, expressing hatred and bigotry. These comments denied the legitimacy of "queer Muslims" and demanded the creator repress her identity, stating "not bring your queerness to Islam." This hostility extended beyond religious identity, with comments like "your religion is against you" or "your religion does not accept you, so why blame queer people for not accepting your religion?" perpetuating negative stereotypes about Islam and its compatibility with LGBTQ+ identities.

Thankfully, amidst the negativity, a wave of supportive comments emerged. These messages, overflowing with solidarity and love, came primarily from queer individuals of Middle Eastern descent who shared similar experiences. The final video's comments echoed this sentiment, offering unwavering support and affirmation for the speaker's message, even if the number of comments itself was lower. Beyond expressions of encouragement, a wave of personal experiences arose in the comments. Women from Muslim-majority countries bravely shared their stories, revealing the harsh realities and limited choices they face. Clothing restrictions

and the threat of violence for disagreeing with husbands painted a stark picture of oppression and a yearning for freedom.

4.4.2 Profile 2

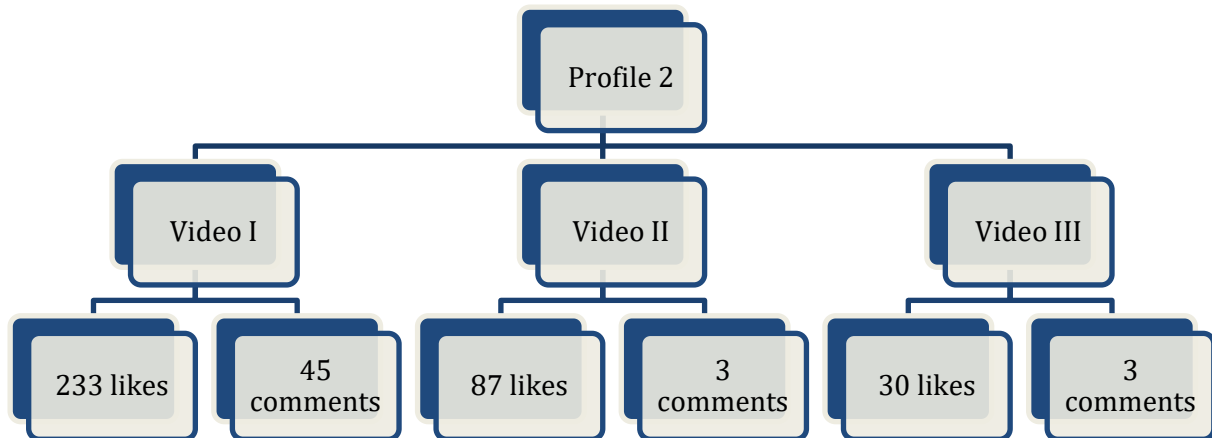


Figure 4.9: Summary of the viewer engagement actions for each of the analyzed videos for Profile 2.

The comments on the first video reveal deeply ingrained stereotypes surrounding Greek and Russian women. Several Greek users, seemingly, reinforce the portrayal of the Greek woman. One comment, however, takes a negative view, labeling Greece as "westernized" and its women as "idiots." Another comment implies Greek women might not be as carefree as they seem, hinting at potential manipulation. Additionally, there's mention of a perceived issue with "gold diggers" in Greece, suggesting women manipulate men into marriage for financial gain.

Regarding the Russian woman, some comments exhibit disdain for her perceived mentality. One user suggests Russian women are "looking for a sponsor," implying they seek Greek partners for financial support. This reflects a broader societal view that former Soviet women are solely interested in marrying Greek men for residency and economic gain, portraying Greek men as victims.

The second video features a single noteworthy comment anticipating "hateful comments from middle-aged Greek women". This suggests a potential backlash from Greek women who might interpret the Russian woman's search for a husband as an attempt to exploit Greek men. This comment highlights ongoing cultural tensions and misconceptions about Eastern European women seeking marriage in Greece.

Alternatively, the comment might stem from concerns about criticism from women holding more progressive views. The previous video might have touched on differences in marriage and family values between Russia and Greece, where women may prioritize career before marriage. This could lead to apprehension about expressing views outside prevailing feminist narratives, particularly those considered "Western" and critical of traditional values.

The last video offers a counterpoint to the negativity. Supportive comments include one highlighting the "sadness" of people readily accepting stereotypes. Others include flags from various countries, symbolizing solidarity between Russia, Cyprus, and Greece.

4.4.3 Profile 3

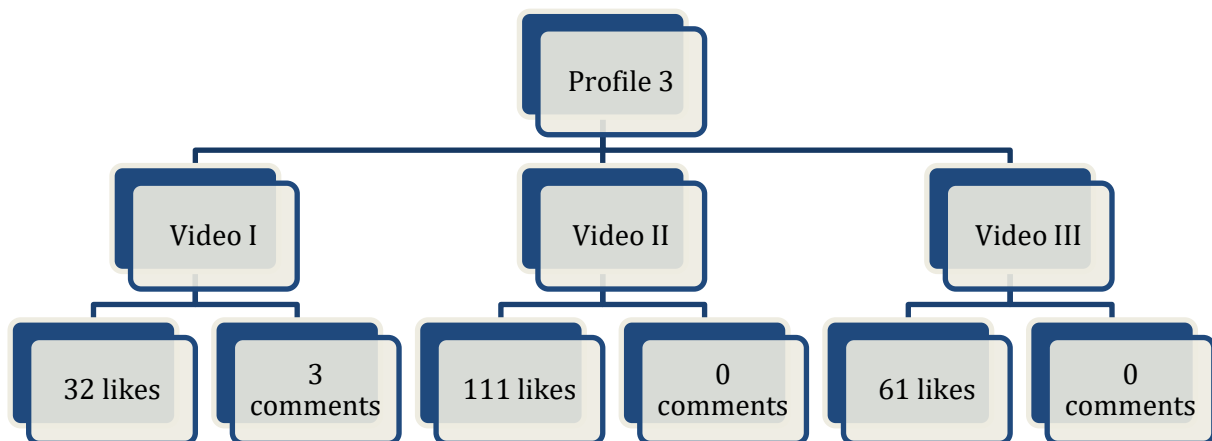


Figure 4.10: Summary of the viewer engagement actions for each of the analyzed videos for Profile 3.

While the initial video hasn't garnered a large number of comments, the responses it has received are heartwarming. One viewer offered a kind welcome and expressed hope for the person's future, stating, "Welcome, and we hope you'll feel at home soon." This simple message captures the essence of empathy and the desire for belonging that many refugees experience. As of now, there are no comments on the second and third videos.

4.4.4 Profile 4

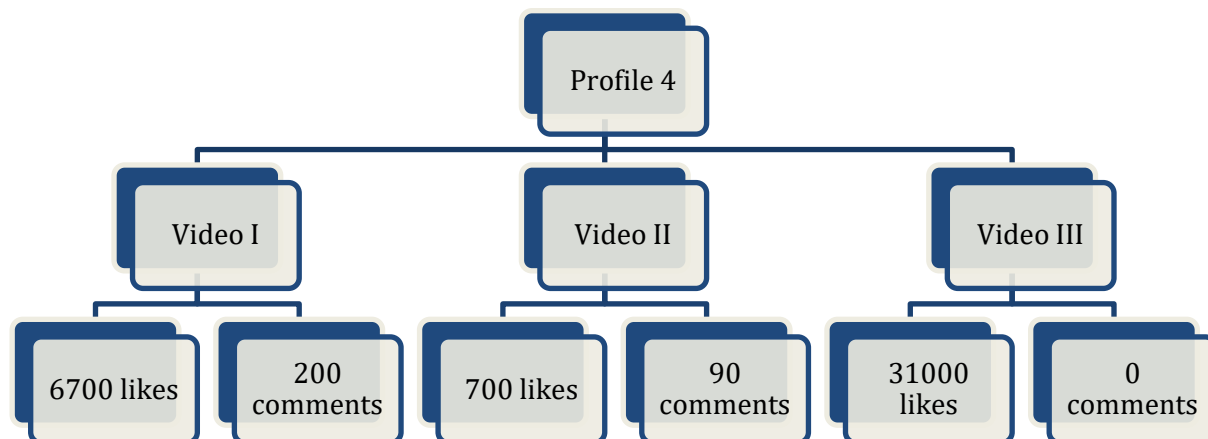


Figure 4.11: Summary of the viewer engagement actions for each of the analyzed videos for Profile 4.

The comments on the first video offer a mixed bag of perspectives. Some viewers express solidarity, particularly fellow Muslims living in Europe facing similar challenges with Islamophobia. One comment, "We are also trying to prove the same thing," highlights a shared struggle against prejudice among progressive Muslims in Europe.

However, negativity also exists. Comments like, "Why kill people of other religions?" reinforce harmful stereotypes and paint the creator as insensitive. Additionally, remarks questioning her faith ("Where is your hijab?") attempt to invalidate her identity and her right to discuss her religion.

The comments on the second video reveal underlying sexism. One simply states "Middle Ages", suggesting these practices are outdated and barbaric. Others compare Syrian dowries to Greece, implying an outdated exchange of goods for marriage in both cultures. Notably, some comments highlight the exploitative nature of marriage in Greece, contrasting it with the Syrian tradition. These perspectives suggest a potential bias towards perceiving Greek practices as more "modern" despite potentially imbalanced dynamics. A particularly judgmental comment criticizes the idea of a dowry altogether, framing it as acquiring a wife rather than a mutual agreement. As of yet, the last video has garnered no comments.

4.4.5 Profile 5

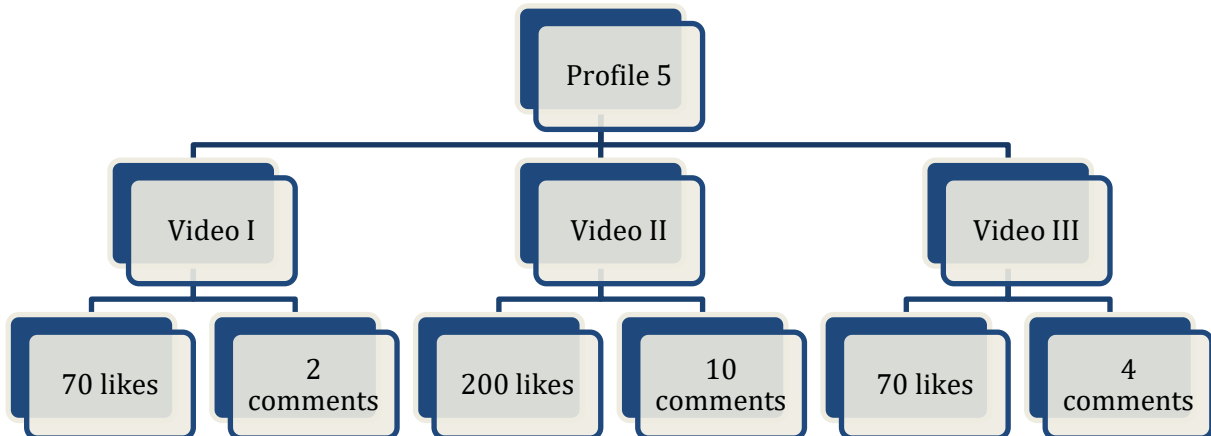


Figure 4.12: Summary of the viewer engagement actions for each of the analyzed videos for Profile 5.

The initial video garnered minimal comments, not providing enough data for a deep dive. The second video, however, struck a positive chord, with all comments expressing approval and appreciation for the content. The third video's comment section remains quiet so far, with no substantial discussion emerging yet.

4.4.6 Profile 6

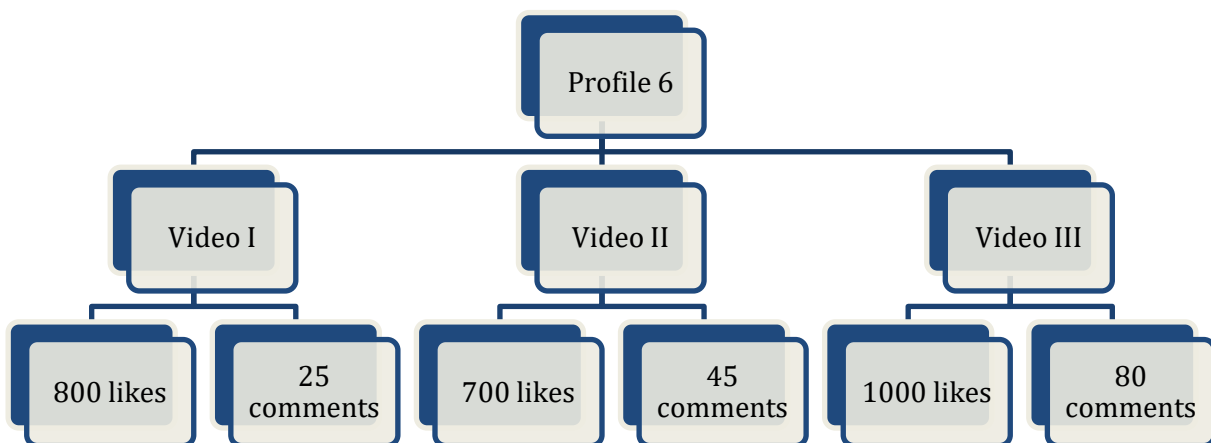


Figure 4.13: Summary of the viewer engagement actions for each of the analyzed videos for Profile 6.

The first video sparked a wave of support, with many praising the woman and expressing solidarity with Gaza. Numerous comments voiced hope for liberation. The second video garnered a significant response, with nearly 50 comments overwhelmingly positive towards the creator. Notably, Muslim women shared experiences, fostering a sense of community. It's

important to remember that these initial responses might not capture the full spectrum of public opinion on such complex issues.

The third video's comments section offered a diverse tapestry. Supportive feedback and agreement with the message were evident, along with lighthearted humor, indicating a range of personalities engaging. While the meaning of some Arabic comments remained unclear, they contributed to the video's global reach. The discussion deepened as some comments tackled the serious issue of violence against women in Greece, prompting a critical question about the focus on Muslim countries, suggesting such problems are not geographically confined.

4.5 Discourses

This section presents an analysis of the relations between the videos, the public response and the public discourses that fuel and give purpose to the creation of the videos. For each video we are trying to establish a relation with one or more public discourse topics that trouble the Greek community and show how the videos are trying to tackle these topics, triggering public discussions or just providing the views and opinions of the content creators about the topics.

Profile 1

Beyond Orientalism: Challenging Stereotypes Through Lived Experience

The first video explores the conflict between two contrasting worldviews. The first worldview, the one that is presented by the woman's boss, embodies an orientalist view of the Middle East and the people living there. Orientalism is a concept with different meanings. The first meaning is that of an artistic movement (18th-19th centuries), particularly in paintings, a movement that followed the French conquest of Egypt. European artists were captivated by "Oriental" motifs and themes and their work was greatly influenced by Oriental art (Haldrup & Koefoed, 2009). The second meaning is that of a dedicated field of academic study – Oriental Studies. During the colonial era, European nations established institutions to study the languages, cultures, and history of the "Orient," which became a recognized discipline by the 19th century. However, Edward Said, a prominent Palestinian-American scholar, offered a crucial critique (Said, 2024). He argued that orientalism, beyond art and academia, represents a broader discourse of knowledge constructed by colonial powers. This discourse remains intact till today, shaping popular perceptions of "Eastern cultures," foreign policy approaches, and interventions in

Muslim-majority countries, particularly those in North Africa and the Mediterranean. Said, drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, viewed orientalism through a post-structuralist view. He highlighted how European (and later US) ideas, cultural depictions, military narratives, and claims of superiority have historically dominated the narrative surrounding the Middle East, particularly Arab and Muslim nations.

The video then contrasts this dominant perspective with a second viewpoint - the one expressed by the woman. Her perspective – “only white people say this stupid shit.”- acts as a reflective mirror, that makes us re-evaluate our collective identity and the narratives surrounding it, especially nowadays when we see the rise of far-right, fascist, and racist ideologies in contemporary Greece and Europe. This alternative view serves as a reminder, that challenges our beliefs and societal norms. It makes us question ourselves and our norms and values as inherently "good" or "ideal". This awakening invites us to deal with some uncomfortable truths, think about alternative perspectives, and engage in self-reflection, ultimately leading to a potential reassessment of our societal values.

Finding Belonging: A Queer Muslim's Fight on Two Fronts

The second video is a very strong example of how different and opposite discourses around identity politics collide in someone's life. In the video, the girl uses the word "disowned", a choice that signifies the pain of being ostracized by one's faith community. The speaker's isolation from both Muslim and queer communities shows how many challenges queer Muslims face in navigating their intersecting identities. She doesn't fully belong neither to the one community nor to the other due to the limitations imposed by each group. The video description with Ramadan wishes for other queer Muslims is an act of resistance against both discourses. It creates a space for solidarity and inclusivity, fostering a sense of belonging that transcends the limitations of existing narratives.

One discourse has to do with the exclusion queer Muslims by their religious community. The speaker's experience highlights the exclusionary nature of some interpretations of Islam towards LGBTQ+ people. This relates also to the broader discourse of religious doctrine, its interpretation and how it impacts social inclusion.

The question about LGBTQ+ rights in Islam communities and countries becomes even more complicated when it comes on Muslims living in Western societies. Scholars affirm the specific moral stance Islam holds against homosexual acts, reflecting a broader ethical framework

rooted in Islamic tradition. This means that these Muslims that live in the West can coexist within secular legal systems that recognize LGBTQ rights while at the same time Islamic teachings prohibit deviation from heterosexual marriage as the sole legitimate framework for sexual relations.

For LGBTQ Muslims that live in Western societies, this presents a dilemma where their identities and rights are secured through secular laws rather than within religious communities. Usually, any attempts to reconcile their faith with their sexual orientation result in marginalization or exclusion within Muslim spaces, a reality that pushes some of them to seek acceptance in secular contexts instead. This dynamic highlights a broader philosophical and theological debate within Islam about the intersection of religious doctrine and individual rights, particularly regarding sexual orientation.

This tension that many queer Muslims experience and the relevant debates that take place on parallel underscores the need for ongoing dialogue and potentially transformative interpretations within Islamic scholarship to address the ethical and social dimensions of sexual diversity in contemporary Muslim societies.

The second discourse is related to the Islamophobic attitudes within some European queer communities. This discourse shows us how complex the relationship between different identity groups may be, and that there is a strong possibility for prejudice to exist within marginalized communities themselves.

There is a prevalent narrative that Islam is inherently homophobic compared to other religions, a narrative that confuses the broader social and political issues. Muslims are often unfairly required to condemn extremists' actions to prove that they are loyal to secular values. This fact highlights their precarious position in Western societies where they must constantly demonstrate their commitment to western values and the ethos of tolerance. This dynamic fosters static, conflicting identities, overlooking the complicated experiences of people that are at the intersection of multiple identities, such as queer Muslims, whose sexuality is often dismissed or berated within their communities (Mahomed, 2016).

European and Western values such as democracy, freedom, and equality are thought to be universally right and the Muslims fail constantly to assimilate. Queer Muslims are often invisible in public debates and perceived as oppressed and unable to express their identities unless they renounce their Muslim heritage. A queer that embraces his Muslim heritage and

religion is seen with doubt and criticism. This European Islamophobia, framing Muslims as the Other, is a unifying factor across the continent, reinforcing racial and religious divisions.

The urban space becomes a battleground for cultural wars, where marginalized groups are excluded from mainstream consumer-citizen status. White, middle-class gay men are posited as successfully integrated, while Muslim communities are framed as culturally and economically deficient. This dynamic allows neoliberal and white supremacist interests to converge, using Islamophobia to justify the reordering of urban spaces and the marginalization of racialized communities (El-Tayeb, 2012).

Beyond the Veil: Challenging Stereotypes of Middle Eastern Women

This video description highlights the conflict between two prevalent public discourses, the assumed hypersexualization and Subjugation of Middle Eastern Women and the Middle Eastern Women fighting for equal rights.

This discourse is reflected in the written statements like "All Middle Eastern women want now is to be naked" and "We treat our women well." These statements perpetuate stereotypes that view Middle Eastern women as influenced by Western trends and hypersexualised and naked women and thus needing control by men. This could be a reference to the Iranian anti-hijab movement where many women in Iran protested against the compulsory wearing of hijab. Although men are increasingly joining the women's liberation movement, many men are also expressing disagreement with protests against mandatory hijab (Leloup, 2023).

The girl's responses and the TV show dialogue ("I gave everything... I gave my whole life") represent the second discourse. They challenge the stereotypes and emphasize the sacrifices women make while facing restrictions like honor killings, limited education, and work opportunities.

By juxtaposing the TV show dialogue about sacrifice with the accusations against Middle Eastern women, the video parallels the fictional character's struggle with the real-life struggles of these women. It highlights the irony of how societal expectations can demand immense sacrifices from women while denying them basic rights and freedoms.

Overall, the video aims to debunk stereotypes about Middle Eastern women, raise awareness about the challenges they face, advocate for gender equality in the Middle East.

Profile 2

Marriage and Expectations: A Look at Marriage Trends in Russia and Greece

According to studies, the perceived ideal age for a woman to get married in Russia was considered at 24 years old in 2021, which remained the same as in 2019 (Statista Research Department, 2023). For a man, this age increases to 28 years. The majority of marriages in the country were registered between grooms and brides aged from 25 to 34 years old.

Other studies explore the characteristics young Russians look for in a potential partner. Young people prioritize personality traits like loyalty, honesty, and intelligence in a partner. Reciprocity of feelings and actions wasn't as important. There is also a trend towards egocentrism, where the focus is on personal satisfaction in the relationship rather than mutuality. Men seek industrious and submissive partners, which doesn't align with women's image of an ideal partner. Young men seem to hold a more traditional view of women's roles, expecting them to fulfill motherly duties (Ivankina et al., 2015).

Overall, there is a disconnect between the idealized partner young Russians envision and the realities of long-term relationships. It also highlights a shift in traditional gender roles within Russian society.

The truth is that following the USSR's collapse, Russian society embraced more traditional values, prioritizing survival (security) over Western ideals. This fostered a form of nationalism and a desire to return to family life. Starting a family early is encouraged, with women seen as homemakers and mothers. Family security is paramount, with a clear division of roles: the husband as provider, and the wife as homemaker. Men are expected to be the financial pillar of the family. Even in the early dating stages, men are expected to cover expenses. While Russian women are independent, this tradition of male provision persists. (This might be less prevalent among Western-raised Russian women.)

However, other qualitative studies show a more complex picture, with persistence of the "working mother" model, growing interest in careers among women and some openness to egalitarian models (Ukhova, 2023).

On the other hand, in Greek reality, there has been a shift in marriage patterns for Greek women since the 1980s. Women are getting married later in life, with the average age at first marriage exceeding 30 years by 2020. This trend aligns with what happened earlier in Northern and Western Europe. The overall number of marriages in Greece has been steadily declining since

the 1980s. Civil marriages are becoming more popular, reaching nearly half of all marriages in recent years. Cohabitation agreements are also on the rise. The later marriage age and decline in marriage rates are linked to a decrease in childbirth, as many women marry closer to the age when fertility declines.

The video creator presents a contrasting perspective on marriage and relationships between Russian and Greek women. However, their approach unintentionally generalizes about these cultures.

While the creator likely aims to share their experiences from both cultures, they fall into the trap of presenting monolithic views of Greek and Russian women. This ignores the vast diversity of experiences and choices within each nationality. The video portrays Greek women as strong, independent, and career-focused, while Russian women are depicted as solely marriage-minded and lacking self-confidence. This reinforces tired stereotypes about both cultures. This simplified portrayal creates an environment where viewers can easily resort to sexist and misogynistic comments, putting down women from either background.

A Woman's Journey Beyond Expectations

As we saw before, many young people in Russia hold more traditional views on marriage and family. This video suggests she might have shared those views initially. However, her experience living in Greece exposed her to different cultural norms.

By showcasing her decision to pursue education, build a career, and achieve success as an entrepreneur, she demonstrates the possibility of defying those expectations. The ironic twist of her "failed" plan is brilliant. It emphasizes her growth and newfound independence – a far cry from the initial housewife vision. This video is a great example of how women can break free from societal pressures and redefine success on their own terms.

Reclaiming The Narrative: Turning Hate Comments into Strength

This video aims to expose and challenge the negativity and cruelty that can exist online, particularly towards women of other ethnicities or those with accents. It highlights the hurtful nature of these comments, targeting appearance, personal life choices, and even cultural heritage. By impersonating the "haters," the woman potentially reclaims the power from their words.

The video could be an attempt to raise awareness about online harassment and the impact it can have on mental health. By speaking out, the woman might be empowering herself and others to challenge negativity and celebrate their identities. Sharing these experiences could connect with viewers who have faced similar online attacks.

The comments that she presents in the video reinforce misogynistic and sexist stereotypes. By calling them out and offering a different perspective, the video can challenge these harmful views and promote a more inclusive and respectful online environment.

The term "crazy Russian" relies on negative generalizations about an entire nationality. It implies all Russians are unstable or unpredictable, which is demonstrably untrue and disrespectful. Using such labels dehumanizes the woman, reducing her identity to a stereotype instead of recognizing her as an individual. This type of comment reinforces the "us vs. them" mentality, creating a distance between the speaker and the woman based solely on her ethnicity.

Comments like "not even pretty" reduce the woman to her physical appearance. It implies a woman's worth is based on how attractive others find her, which is a core aspect of sexism. This type of comment perpetuates narrow and often Eurocentric beauty standards. It disregards the beauty of diversity and implies there's a single standard of attractiveness all women should strive for. By criticizing her appearance, the comment takes away from the woman's other qualities and achievements.

Shaming her for being single and childless reinforces the outdated notion that a woman's value is tied to her marital status and motherhood. This disregards the many fulfilling paths women can choose in life. Comments like these highlight the societal pressure women still face to conform to traditional gender roles. It can be hurtful for women who choose not to get married or have children based on their own desires. Shaming a woman for not following a specific life path excludes other ways of expressing femininity. It suggests women who don't have children or a partner are somehow less feminine.

Labeling her "crazy in her 30s" is a form of ageism, prejudice against someone based on their age. It implies women of a certain age are less capable or more emotional, which simply isn't true. This type of comment highlights the double standard women face. Men are rarely criticized for their age in the same way, and their mental faculties are not typically questioned as they get older.

Profile 3

A Refugee's Journey Through Emotions and Unexpected Belonging

The video participates in the public discourse on several levels. It sheds light on the emotional complexities faced by refugees and displaced people. The opening sentence highlights the trauma of leaving a homeland behind. It also refers to how unexpected encounters with new places can lead to a sense of belonging. It challenges the notion of home being solely defined by nationality. The question "could I feel Greece like home someday?" expresses a sentiment often shared by immigrants. It highlights the desire to rebuild a life and create a new sense of belonging after displacement.

By expressing a mix of emotions through text and emojis, the video encourages open communication about the emotional toll of displacement. This fosters empathy and understanding. Overall, the video contributes to the public discourse by offering a personal and relatable perspective on displacement, cultural adoption, and the search for belonging. It encourages viewers to consider the human stories behind migration statistics and the complex emotions involved in making a new home.

The Unseen Struggles of Cultural Adjustment

This video participates in the public discourse on immigration and cultural adjustment. It tackles the often-overlooked difficulties faced by immigrants beyond the initial hurdles of settling in. It highlights the emotional and social challenges that can linger long after arrival. By mentioning missing family and the struggle to connect with locals on holidays, the video brings to light the feelings of isolation and longing that can accompany cultural adjustment. The statement about introverts in their 30s finding it hard to make friends speaks to a specific and under-represented experience. It expands the conversation on cultural adjustment to include the challenges faced by people who may not be naturally outgoing. The concept of "in-betweenness" captures a core issue of displacement. The video sheds light on the complex emotions that arise from feeling like you don't fully belong anywhere.

Overall, the video contributes to the public discourse by offering a more complex look of the immigrant experience. It goes beyond the practicalities of settling in to explore the emotional and social challenges that can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. By giving voice to these unspoken difficulties, the video fosters empathy and understanding for immigrants

navigating the complexities of cultural adjustment. This video, with its honest portrayal of the unspoken challenges faced by immigrants, offers a valuable perspective for residents of the host country. By sharing her experience in such a personal way (experiential tone), the woman in the video fosters empathy and understanding. This, in turn, can be a powerful tool in combating racism and anti-immigrant sentiment.

In conclusion, this video is a powerful tool for promoting understanding and combating prejudice. By sharing her story, the woman in the video is not just asking for help, but offering a chance for residents to become part of the solution.

Beyond the Pressure to Speak Perfect Greek

The video tackles the pressure immigrants face to assimilate completely, particularly regarding language proficiency. The neighbor's statement, "You must learn Greek, you live in Greece," reflects a public discourse that may not acknowledge the complexities of language acquisition or the time it takes to become fluent. The video portrays a microaggression, a subtle yet offensive comment or action. Here, the neighbor's statement assumes the woman hasn't made an effort to learn Greek and disregards her potential reasons for not being fluent yet. The woman's sarcastic response, "What did I drop? Your nose in my business," expresses frustration with the neighbor's lack of cultural sensitivity. It emphasizes that learning a new language takes time and effort, and immigrants shouldn't be judged for not being fluent immediately.

This video taps into a broader public discourse on immigration. It refers to the challenges faced by immigrants, particularly regarding language and cultural expectations, a debate about whether immigrants should assimilate or maintain their culture.

How does a country's sense of identity and history influence how its citizens view the cultural integration of immigrants? The sense of national identity security seems to play a role. People derive benefits from a shared national identity and its traditions. Immigrants can be perceived as a threat to this identity. The perceived threat depends on how long the national identity has been established (Grajzl et al., 2018). In countries with a younger national identity, immigrants are seen as a bigger threat. This leads to stronger preferences for immigrant assimilation in those countries. Individual characteristics like national pride may also influence these preferences, but mostly in younger nation-states.

Profile 4

Islamophobia: living in the west as a Muslim

This video tackles a sensitive topic currently being debated in Western societies: Islamophobia. The speaker, a Muslim woman living in Greece (a predominantly Christian country), offers her perspective on what Islam truly represents and dispels common misconceptions.

Unfortunately, many in the West view Muslims with suspicion, often stereotyping them as potential terrorists. This dangerous generalization, rooted in Islamophobia, paints all Muslims as extremists with ties to terrorism.

The term "Islamophobia" became widely used in the 1990s, but some evidence suggests it existed as early as the 1920s (Helbling, 2012). Debate surrounds its usefulness. Some scholars see it as a necessary term to capture the specific prejudice against Muslims and Islam. Critics argue it overlaps with existing terms like xenophobia or racism, potentially creating a new social category.

A key question is whether Islamophobia is distinct from general fear of outsiders. Proponents of a distinct concept argue it focuses on negative attitudes towards both Islam as a religion and Muslims as a group, often fueled by stereotypes and generalizations.

Research on Islamophobia was limited before 9/11, despite existing tensions between Muslims and Western Europeans. The attacks appear to have triggered a rise in negative attitudes, with evidence of increased Islamophobia, hate crimes, government control, and intense media focus on Muslims. Islamophobia manifests in various ways. It can be blatant violence, hateful speech, or discriminatory practices. Subtler forms exist in cultural norms and media portrayals. The consequences for Muslim communities are severe, leading to social exclusion, economic marginalization, and even radicalization (Abbas, 2020).

Islamophobia is multifaceted, encompassing individual actions, societal structures, and prejudice against Muslim culture and religion. Denying its existence hinders progress on anti-racism and social justice efforts. Debates on legally defining Islamophobia and establishing "Muslim hate crimes" are ongoing. Some argue Islamophobia is broader than racism as it encompasses both cultural and religious aspects.

Navigating the Dowry custom in Syria and Greece

The video highlights the clash between different cultural expectations around marriage and dowry custom. The woman's message suggests Syrian men are expected to be more extravagant

than Greek men in their pursuit of a partner. This taps into a broader public discourse about gender roles and dating-marriage expectations across cultures.

The video reinforces the stereotype of women in the Middle East being treated lavishly. While there may be some truth to this stereotype in certain regions, it's important to remember it's a generalization and doesn't reflect the diversity of experiences for women in the Middle East. It's important to remember that public discourses can be simplified and sometimes inaccurate. While the video might perpetuate a stereotype, it also highlights the importance of considering cultural differences in relationships.

While the core message of the video highlights the contrast in marriage customs between Syrian and Greek cultures, the woman's preference for a more generous approach clashes with the potential partner's actions, sparking a conversation about cultural expectations in relationships.

Some comments reinforce the stereotype of Middle Eastern women being showered with gifts and treated as property. This perpetuates orientalist views that often ignore the diversity of experiences for women in the region. Other comments offer comparisons between dowry practices in Syria and Greece. These highlight potential double standards and raise questions about the exploitative aspects of dowry traditions in both cultures. The comment "Here in Greece, women should ask for more than just bedsheets and a house" suggests Greek dowry practices might be less extravagant but still imbalanced.

The comment "In your country, you give 20 camels and you're done. Here, you pay the wife until you die" highlights the economic realities woven into some marriage traditions. It raises questions about financial power dynamics within marriages. The comments expose underlying misogyny within a segment of Greek society. These views portray women as manipulative and financially exploitative, framing marriage as a one-sided economic burden for men. Some other comments display also sexist undertones. The judgmental comment accusing the woman of wanting to be "acquired" through money reflects a narrow view of women's agency in relationships.

While the video and comments might perpetuate some stereotypes, they also open the door for a more complex discussion about cultural differences. We can explore cultural differences in dating rituals, challenge stereotypes, and discuss the potential exploitation within some dowry traditions.

Unveiling the Complexities of Gender Dynamics in Syrian Families

This video offers a fascinating glimpse into Islamic family dynamics, potentially challenging Western preconceptions. We often encounter stereotypes portraying Muslim families as strictly patriarchal, with men wielding absolute control and women relegated to a subordinate role. However, the speaker in this video dismantles this simplistic view, presenting a more complex reality where Syrian women may occupy a position of greater authority within the family structure.

This perspective aligns with existing research that delves into the lived experiences of women in Syrian families. Such studies explore women's perceptions of their roles and responsibilities within the household, providing valuable insights into how gender dynamics actually function.

Marriage in Syria is far more than a personal union; it's a social cornerstone. It shapes a woman's place in society, influencing her identity and even reflecting the nation's evolving narrative. This institution acts as a bridge between tradition and progress, with the potential to be a catalyst for social change by challenging established gender norms.

Recent research peels back the layers of simplistic portrayals, revealing the complexities within Syrian marriages (Lokot, 2024). Women emerge not as passive figures, but as individuals who can exercise agency and decision-making power. Defying expectations, they may even challenge their families' wishes when choosing a spouse. The research dismantles the notion of love being absent in these marriages, acknowledging the possibility of love existing alongside a degree of male dominance.

Furthermore, the research critiques stereotypical narratives. It pushes back against portrayals of Syrian women as perpetual victims and men as solely wielding power. It dismantles the simplistic equation of early marriage with displacement or violence, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding. By employing an intersectional lens and emphasizing historical context, the research reveals a dynamic interplay of power. Factors like age, social class, and historical events all influence how power dynamics shift within marriages, particularly when considering the impact of displacement on gender roles.

Profile 5

The Gender Gap in Unpaid Labor

This video tackles the issue of women's disproportionate share of unpaid domestic labor and childcare. Unpaid work duties are heavily influenced by gender. This applies to the total time spent on unpaid work compared to paid work, the specific tasks that make up unpaid work, and who takes responsibility for caregiving (Shelton, 2006). Regardless of employment status, women consistently dedicate more time to housework and childcare than men. They also undertake more of the burden and responsibility for these tasks.

Many theories attempt to explain these gendered patterns, but none offers a complete picture. While each theory has merit, they fall short of fully explaining the time spent on unpaid work by each gender. The truth is, we can't directly measure how much unpaid work is simply a way of expressing gender identity. Instead, we can only see if observed patterns align with the predictions of the model. One thing is clear: women and men participate differently in housework, childcare, and volunteer work. Simply because more women are entering the workforce doesn't erase these gendered differences in unpaid work activities.

In this video, the woman owning the profile acknowledges the significant burdens women carry with household responsibilities and childcare. However, rather than advocating for change or challenging these traditional gender roles, she seems to accept this reality as an inherent part of being a woman.

The second video delves into a personal issue, exploring the woman's internal struggles and her desire for self-acceptance. The third video takes a more introspective approach, celebrating the woman's inner strength. It focuses on her personal journey and serves as a self-affirmation, acknowledging the challenges she's overcome and the resilience she's demonstrated.

Profile 6

Online Activism Aiming Peace

This video tackles a highly sensitive issue: the Israeli military actions in Gaza. It focuses on the human cost of the conflict, particularly the alleged atrocities committed by Israeli soldiers against Palestinian civilians, including women and children. The video owner courageously delves into a topic that continues to spark heated debate, even after documented evidence of potential war crimes emerged. Their stance clearly aligns with the Palestinian cause, offering unwavering support for the Palestinian people.

To convey the gravity of the situation, the video employs powerful imagery presenting the alleged mistreatment of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers.+ These visuals are about acts of humiliation and disregard for human dignity, tactics often associated with wartime brutality.

The general public conversation about Israel-Palestine is biased in favor of Israel (Levine, 2024). They claim this bias is achieved through controlling the language used in discussions. Supporting Israel is presented as the only reasonable stance while criticizing Israel is seen as antisemitic. The phrase "Israel's right to exist" is used to silence criticism. Criticizing Zionism is portrayed as attacking Jewish identity. Words like "intifada" or "from the river to the sea" are demonized to delegitimize Palestinian perspectives. Discomfort felt by some Jews upon hearing Palestinian viewpoints is used to silence those viewpoints, despite no call for violence. Powerful groups are manipulating the conversation to prevent a fair debate about Israel-Palestine. They fear universities, which have offered a platform for Palestinian voices, are now being pressured to silence them.

The UN experts' statement, which highlights the extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and sexual assaults of Palestinian women and girls highlights a different reality regarding the situation in Gaza, especially as the International Court of Justice reviews South Africa's lawsuit accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza (Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 2024). The statement details various abuses, including women and children being deliberately targeted and killed, often while holding white flags, and subjected to inhumane treatment in detention. Some detainees were kept in harsh conditions without necessities and faced sexual violence. Additionally, the statement reports that many Palestinian women and children have gone missing after encounters with the Israeli army, with some infants being forcibly transferred to Israel.

In the video, there are references to rape and other crimes on human dignity committed by the Israeli forces. Throughout history, rape has been a weapon of war used to terrorize civilians and demoralize enemy troops (Barstow, 2024). In the 20th century, cases of wartime rape surged, including those used as ethnic cleansing and genocide. Recognizing this rise, the international community began efforts to classify rape as a war crime. The Geneva Convention and UN resolutions declared rape a violation of human rights and a war crime. International tribunals were established to prosecute such acts, with some even classifying rape as genocide.

One other severe war crime described in this video is the outrages upon personal dignity, acts that severely humiliate, degrade, or violate someone's dignity in a way that most people would agree is outrageous. This can include mistreatment of dead bodies and situations where the victim isn't aware of the humiliation, such as unconscious or mentally disabled people (ICRC Database, Customary IHL, 2024). Cultural background is considered, so acts that shame someone based on their nationality or religion are also included.

Hijab Beyond the Stereotypes: Faith, Identity, and Personal Choice

This video tackles some sensitive topics. The first is about wearing hijab and whether it allows makeup, jewelry, or piercings. The speaker delivers a clear and engaging response, challenging common misconceptions about Muslim women and what the hijab represents. There's no single reason why women wear hijab; it's a personal choice with unique meaning for each person. We should avoid making assumptions about a woman's reasons for wearing hijab based on our cultural perspectives. The main reasons why Muslim women choose to wear the hijab are the following (Piela, 2022):

Piety and Religious Devotion: This is a core reason for many women. The hijab can be a way to express their faith and commitment to Islamic principles. It can be a symbol of submitting to God's will and living a life according to Islamic teachings.

Modesty: The Quran emphasizes modest clothing for both men and women. The hijab can be seen as a way to fulfill this requirement and avoid drawing attention to physical appearance. It allows women to focus on their actions and contributions rather than their bodies.

Cultural Identity: Hijab can be a way to connect with Muslim culture and heritage. It can be a symbol of belonging to a global Muslim community. In some regions, the hijab may be a traditional form of dress, passed down through generations.

Resistance: The text highlights moments in history when women wore hijab as a form of protest. For example, Iranian women adopted the hijab to defy the Shah's westernization policies. Today, some women wear hijab to challenge Islamophobia or negative stereotypes about Muslim women.

Personal Choice: Ultimately, the decision to wear hijab is a personal one. Some women may be influenced by family or community expectations, while others make a conscious choice based on their faith, identity, or simply how it makes them feel.

She also challenges the idea that women's fashion choices are solely motivated by the male gaze. She argues against the objectification of women and dismantles the notion that their appearance exists solely to please men. In a world dominated by sexual imbalance, the pleasure derived from looking is divided between an active/male and passive/female dynamic (Mulvey, 1975). The male gaze projects its fantasies onto the female figure, which is styled to meet these projections. Women, in their traditional exhibitionist roles, are both looked at and displayed, their appearances coded for visual and erotic impact, embodying "to-be-looked-at-ness."

Hijab Isn't the Shield: Dismantling Victim-Blaming & Gender-Based Violence

This TikTok video tackles a complex issue – the intersection of Islamophobia, victim-blaming, and the reality of gender-based violence. The creator responds to a hateful comment demanding she goes to Iran without wearing a hijab.

The response is a powerful deconstruction of the misconception that abuse is linked to a woman's clothing or religion. The question, "Why aren't women abused in Greece? What are they wearing?" directly challenges the assumption that certain attire offers protection. Her personal experience of assault in Greece while wearing a hijab shatters this stereotype.

By revealing three separate assaults while wearing different clothing (hijab, pajamas, diaper), the creator emphasizes that clothing has no bearing on an abuser's actions. Each incident highlights the universality of the issue, regardless of age or attire. The use of sarcasm ("why did you hit him?" - a question raised by a police officer, after she hit her would-be rapist) and a curse word in Arabic expresses her frustration at victim-blaming and societal dismissal of self-defense. Mimicking a police officer's dismissive response ("illegal to practice martial arts") adds to the feeling of being unheard and unsupported by authorities.

The video aims to raise awareness and shift the focus to the perpetrator's actions, not the victim's background or attire. It challenges the societal tendency to victim-blame and normalize abuse. Ultimately, the video promotes a powerful message: abuse is rooted in gender, not clothing or religious beliefs.

5 Discussion

5.1 Main Findings

The present research focuses on the rich and diverse social media profiles created by women in Greece. It explores how these women navigate their identities in a dynamic cultural landscape, revealing a captivating interplay between self-expression, resistance against societal norms, and the challenges inherent in online interactions.

The studied profiles present a fascinating spectrum of approaches to identity construction. Some women weave a narrative of critical engagement. They delve deeply into their personal experiences, meticulously dissecting how their identities clash with existing cultural norms, stereotypes, and dominant public narratives within Greek society. These women become cultural disruptors, refusing to be silenced or assimilated. They wear their heritage and cultural identity with pride, challenging the status quo by refusing to conform to narratives that promote hate speech and "othering."

Other profiles show a more curated aesthetic, focusing on the sun-drenched joys of daily life and travel adventures in Greece. These women paint a picture of themselves as enthusiastic explorers, documenting their journeys through vibrant visuals and captivating stories. They emphasize the fun, exotic trips, and breathtaking beauty of their surroundings, offering an escape into a world of carefree exploration. This curated perspective offers a glimpse into their lives without venturing into potentially contentious topics.

The comment sections beneath these profiles offer a stark contrast to the curated narratives above. Here, negativity and prejudice often surface. Ambient racism, islamophobic sentiments, and sexist narratives frequently appear, mirroring the prevalence of these issues in wider public discourse and the enduring presence of orientalist perspectives. Even more unsettling is the occasional appearance of these biases within some of the profiles themselves, highlighting the complexities of navigating online spaces.

However, amidst the negativity, there are glimmers of hope. A wave of social support and acceptance emerges in the comments, offering a sense of community and belonging. This raises questions about the nature of online interaction. The presence of "echo chambers" fueled by algorithms may explain the prevalence of supportive comments. An echo chamber is the

phenomenon where viewers with similar interests are exposed to content that reinforces their existing views, creating a sense of validation within a closed loop.

Social media have this tendency to create echo chambers where users are exposed to information that confirms their existing beliefs (Cinelli et al., 2021). This can be due to our limited attention span, which leads algorithms to suggest similar content, limiting our exposure to diverse viewpoints. Other reasons may be that we favor information that aligns with our beliefs and that we choose to follow sources that agree with us. Echo chambers can be problematic because they can reinforce existing opinions and lead to group polarization, where groups move towards more extreme positions and also limit our exposure to important information.

While this supportive environment may not perfectly reflect reality, it provides a space where these women feel empowered to embrace and express their authentic identities without fear of judgment.

Finally, this study revealed a crucial aspect: the intersectionality of identities (religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) plays a significant role in how these migrant women express themselves and engage in public discourse on TikTok. This means that the way they navigate the platform and construct their online identities is shaped by the complex interplay of these various social markers. Understanding these intersections is vital for a clearer picture of how migrant women utilize social media to navigate their new environment and potentially challenge dominant narratives.

5.1.1 Women's Voices and Religious Identity

The research revealed a fascinating connection between religion and public engagement. The three Muslim women in the study emerged as particularly dynamic and assertive figures. They actively challenged both Islamophobic and conservative Islamic viewpoints, showcasing a strong sense of pride in their identities, even in the face of potential rejection within their host country.

While research specifically on Muslim women's self-presentation on social media remains somewhat limited, our findings align with existing research on Muslim women and social media. A 2021 study, for example, explored how Muslim women on Twitter use the platform

to challenge traditional narratives and advocate for their rights (Hirji, 2021). This research, like ours, found these women to be active participants in public discourse, actively defying the stereotype of the silent, oppressed Muslim woman.

Social media offers Muslim women a powerful tool for amplifying their voices and reaching a broader audience. These platforms also facilitate connection with allies and the building of online communities. However, it's important to acknowledge the limitations of these spaces. Despite their potential, online environments are not entirely safe for Muslim women. They remain vulnerable to harassment and online attacks, often targeted at their religion or gender.

Furthermore, mainstream media often portrays Muslim women in simplistic binaries. These portrayals depict them as either oppressed victims or liberated Westernized figures. The women in our study, and those in the 2021 research, actively reject these stereotypes and resist attempts to control their narratives (Hirji, 2021).

In contrast to these women, the three non-Muslim women (two from Northeast Europe and one from Southeast Asia) tended towards a more subdued self-expression on TikTok. Their videos generated less controversy, suggesting a different approach to public discourse. This finding underscores the profound influence of intersecting identities on how these women construct their online personas, especially on TikTok.

These initial observations call for further investigation with a larger sample size. Future research can explore the reasons behind this potential religious influence on online engagement. Understanding these motivations could offer valuable insights into the complexities of migrant and refugee identity formation on social media platforms like TikTok.

5.1.2 Identity Construction

Our analysis of migrant and refugee women's TikTok profiles and videos offers a powerful counterpoint to prevailing public discourse. This discourse often portrays these women passively, as objects of pity or concern. However, our research explores and reveals a more complex reality.

Erving Goffman's concept of "frontstage" and "backstage" performances provides a useful perspective, but our findings challenge its limitations (Goffman, 2023). Goffman suggests we wear social masks to conform to expectations. While some online profiles may reflect this

dynamic, many migrant women appear to be doing more than simply conforming. They are actively shaping how they are seen.

Foucault's concept of "technologies of the self" aligns more closely with our observations. Social media platforms act as tools for these women to engage in "reflexivity and subversion" (Foucault, 1987). Judith Butler's performativity theory adds another layer. Identity is not a fixed essence, but rather an ongoing performance (Butler, 2002). The choices women make in curating their profiles and videos contribute to the construction of their identities, both online and offline.

The way these women portray themselves suggests a rejection of dominant narratives. They are actively claiming agency and using social media to speak back to the public discourse that often marginalizes them. Their online presence becomes a platform to resist stereotypical portrayals and celebrate their multifaceted identities.

The extent to which these online performances reflect "true" offline identities is an interesting question. Studies reveal a significant discrepancy between online and offline identities (Hu et al., 2015). This is because users strategically disclose information that curates a desired image or even craft entirely new personas as a platform for self-exploration. While a definitive answer may be elusive, it raises the intriguing possibility that online performance can influence and reshape self-perception, even bleeding into the offline world. Further research could explore this concept in more detail.

Overall, our analysis highlights the agency of migrant and refugee women in Greece. They are not simply victims of circumstance, but active participants in shaping how they are represented in the digital age.

5.1.3 Sisterhood and solidarity

The present study delves into the experiences of women on a social media platform, revealing a dynamic online space that fosters both solidarity and adversity. The research highlights a strong sense of community among the women. Their videos and the comments below express a shared pride in their womanhood, even with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Supportive comments, even on controversial topics like sexuality or religious practices, demonstrate a sense of shared experience and solidarity. This finding aligns with existing research on social media as a tool for feminist community building, as mentioned in literature

review, where both benefits and drawbacks of social media platforms were found. More specifically:

- Benefits: Increased awareness raising, global feminist connection, and mobilization efforts (Crossley, 2015; Schuster, 2013; Eagle, 2015).
- Drawbacks: Online abuse for expressing feminist views and the amplification of misogynistic narratives, potentially reinforcing existing inequalities (Hutton et al., 2016).

Despite the potential downsides, this study's findings suggest that social media platforms can be powerful tools for creating supportive online communities amongst women. This aligns with existing research on the role of social media in contemporary feminism.

5.1.4 Migratory experience and Acculturation

The present research also offers insights into the acculturation experiences of the women under study. Two women, possibly recent arrivals, discuss cultural differences and feelings of homesickness, potentially reflecting the initial "cultural shock" phase. Most of their videos address directly or indirectly cultural differences. This could indicate the desire for retaining their cultural heritage, while at the same time adapting to the host society, aligning with the cultural maintenance model.

The study acknowledges a limitation in definitively proving if social media directly influence the acculturation process. However, existing research suggests social media's potential to empower immigrants to preserve their culture while integrating into the host society (Yau et al., 2019).

The analysis conducted opens doors for further exploration of the specific role social media plays in shaping identity during acculturation, particularly regarding online identity negotiation. Does social media provide a platform for asserting their cultural heritage, or does it present new challenges in this regard?

5.2 Conclusions

The present study delves into the complex issue of self-presentation and public discourse participation by migrant and refugee women in Greece. Existing research is guided by the

following key perspectives: a) macro, which examines social media's impact on migration patterns, b) micro, which focuses on daily migrant use, and c) political, which explores the link to political processes (Siapera & Veikou, 2013). Studies like Dekker & Engbersen's (2014) highlight how social media facilitates migration by connecting migrants with family, friends, and potential support networks (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Others focus on the role of social media in creating "transnational habitus" with immigrants connecting across borders and developing cosmopolitan views (2012) or how social media may lead some immigrants to adopt host country's values (2009) (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Nedelcu, 2012). Finally, more recent studies explore digital practices of migrants (2021) and social media use by refugee women (2020) (Greene, 2020; Merisalo & Jauhiainen, 2021). While these studies explore the impact of online spaces on immigrants, a gap remains in understanding how women specifically construct their identities and participate in online discussions.

The present study fills this gap by focusing on TikTok, a rapidly growing platform that encourages the creation of multimodal content (combining visuals, sound, text, and gestures). This approach, using multimodal discourse analysis, allows for a richer understanding than analyses focused solely on language, image, or sound.

Employing a case study approach, the research provides a detailed examination of selected profiles and videos. This in-depth analysis unveils the strategies these women employ to portray themselves and participate in public discourse. While offering valuable insights into these issues, the study acknowledges its role as a first exploration. The identified themes and strategies open avenues for further research on the multifaceted experiences of migrant and refugee women on social media platforms like TikTok.

This study sheds light on the dynamic world of social media profiles crafted by migrant and refugee women in Greece. It delves into the fascinating interplay between self-expression, defiance of societal expectations, and the challenges of online interaction that these women navigate in their digital identities. The research goes beyond simply observing their online personas. By analyzing the video profiles, it uses them as a window to understand a broader concept: how migrant and refugee women construct their identities online. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of the complexities of identity formation in this specific

context. It doesn't just tell us what these women are doing online, but also delves into the "how" and "why" behind their actions.

Furthermore, the study identifies key themes and strategies employed by these women. This opens doors for further investigations into the multifaceted experiences of migrant and refugee women on platforms like TikTok. These insights can be instrumental in understanding the broader picture of their lives and struggles in their new environment.

5.2.1 The problem

The present research aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how a specific group of migrant and refugee women in Greece use TikTok and the reception they receive. It did not seek to draw generalized conclusions or establish universal strategies for these women. Specifically, the study had the following main aims:

- examine how the women under study utilize the platform to build and share the various aspects that make up their identities. This involved exploring how they portray themselves in terms of culture, religion, experiences as migrants or refugees, and more.
- analyze how viewers react to the content created by these women. We explored potential connections between these online portrayals and broader public discussions in Greece on gender, sexuality, immigration, and related topics.

The detailed understanding gained from this case study makes it a strong foundation for further exploration. It highlights the need for broader research to investigate how migrant and refugee women navigate identity presentation on TikTok across Greece. While the study cannot confirm if the observed experiences represent all migrant and refugee women on TikTok in Greece, it offers valuable insights into their practices. These insights can be a springboard for future research with larger samples.

In simpler terms, research was focused on a small, specific group to understand their experiences, instead of trying to solve a general issue. It provides valuable details but acknowledges the need for future studies with more participants, paving the way for broader research.

5.2.2 The research instrument

This study uses Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis to understand how migrant women build their identities on TikTok. MCDA proved a powerful tool because it goes beyond the surface meaning of online content. Here's why it's a good fit for this research:

- **Unveiling Hidden Messages:** MCDA considers both language and visual elements (images, videos) to uncover deeper meanings. Social media posts often combine text and visuals, and MCDA helps analyze how these elements work together to convey messages.
- **Power and Language:** MCDA explores how language choices reflect and impact social structures. By examining how migrant women use language and visuals on TikTok, we can see how they navigate power dynamics and social expectations.
- **Beyond the Obvious:** MCDA challenges the idea that online content is simply neutral. It reveals how seemingly ordinary language and visuals can promote particular viewpoints and shape how people are perceived (Atalay, 2015).
- **Migrant Women Take Center Stage:** MCDA allows us to see how migrant women actively participate in online conversations and construct their own identities. It empowers their voices and sheds light on the strategies they use.
- **A Multi-Layered Approach:** MCDA analyzes online profiles and videos in three stages:
 1. Overall themes and messages across the entire profile.
 2. Breakdown of individual linguistic and visual elements. (This detailed analysis is included in the appendix.)
 3. How each video interacts with existing societal narratives (discourses) and how the women challenge or reinforce them.

By applying MCDA, this study identified patterns and common themes in how migrant women construct their identities online. It considered the intersection of their various identities (migrant, gender, etc.) to provide a deeper understanding of their online self-representation.

5.2.3 Main outcomes

Our study, as they were defined in the beginning of this research, centers on the following key questions:

- How do migrant and refugee women in Greece use TikTok to construct and share their identities?
- How do viewers respond to the content created by migrant and refugee women in Greece on TikTok?
- Is there a connection between these online portrayals and public discourse on gender, sexuality, immigration, religion, race, and ethnicity in Greece?
- How do migrant and refugee women in Greece perceive the impact of language and education on their lives during their migratory journey?

The analysis of data from the selected TikTok profiles proved instrumental in addressing the research questions we initially outlined.

- Our analysis provided valuable insights into how migrant and refugee women construct their identities on the platform. We observed them actively challenging dominant discourses and constructing empowered narratives of selfhood as women. While limitations exist in understanding whether this online portrayal aligns perfectly with their real-world experiences (as Goffman's "Presentation of Self" suggests), Judith Butler's Performativity Theory offers a potential framework. This theory suggests that the repeated performance of an identity, even online, can become ingrained and influence one's overall sense of self. The analysis further revealed the significant role that intersecting identities (e.g., migrant status, gender, ethnicity) play in how these women construct their online selves. This finding emphasizes the complexity of identity formation and the multifaceted experiences of migrant and refugee women.
- The analysis of viewer response to the migrant and refugee women's content revealed a complex and multifaceted landscape. While some creators received strong support, others faced negativity and bias. Our findings suggest a correlation between content intensity and viewer engagement. Women who expressed more forceful opinions and

engaged with controversial topics tended to attract a larger, more dedicated following. Conversely, those with more moderate stances garnered less visibility. Unfortunately, the analysis also identified a significant presence of hateful comments, particularly directed towards Muslim women who expressed themselves assertively. These comments were often laced with irony, harshness, and negativity, highlighting the prevalence of bias on the platform. However, a more positive trend emerged. The majority of comments across the analyzed videos were supportive, with viewers expressing solidarity with the creators' experiences and viewpoints. This sense of community could serve a dual purpose: fostering a strong network of support among the women, or potentially creating an echo chamber where existing beliefs are reinforced without exposure to diverse perspectives. Understanding the dynamics of viewer response is crucial. Future research could explore strategies these women employ to navigate negativity, build supportive communities, and promote constructive online discourse.

- A surprising and powerful finding of the study was the women's extensive challenge to dominant discourses. This wasn't just about Greek society; the women's experiences as migrants encompassed a complex interplay of cultural differences. Religion, ethnicity, migratory background, and even ingrained mindsets (mentality) became battlegrounds. The host society might use these very aspects to reject the women's identities. However, these women responded with a powerful assertion of self and heritage. This wasn't a monolithic resistance. The women, in some cases, also challenged the dominant narratives within their own religious groups. For instance, the lesbian Muslim girl's experience highlights a powerful pushback against the expectations placed on young Muslim women by some Middle Eastern men.
- Education and language emerge as constant threads throughout these profiles. Notably, most individuals navigate a multilingual world, using their native languages alongside Greek and English. This highlights a resistance to complete assimilation into the host society. One profile even reveals the perception among some Greeks that acquiring their language is a prerequisite for integration. This raises questions about societal expectations. Does integration require sacrificing cultural identity, including language? Or can it coexist with a person's heritage? The women in this research demonstrate a powerful counterpoint. They proudly utilize their native languages, defying the notion

that they must conform to expectations of linguistic assimilation. This is particularly evident in the imagined dialogue of the Ukrainian woman, where she envisions resisting a neighbor's demand to learn Greek. This act becomes a symbolic stand for cultural preservation. Furthermore, retaining their native languages allows these women to maintain vital connections with their home countries and communities. It facilitates communication with loved ones and fosters a sense of belonging beyond geographical borders. Education threads its way prominently through many profiles, defying expectations from both their adopted and home countries. Several women, like the Russian woman, demonstrate a remarkable shift in priorities. Initially drawn to Greece with the hope of marriage, their migration journey sparks a thirst for education. This newfound focus represents a powerful act of self-determination, challenging traditional societal expectations. The narrative of the Muslim girl adds another layer of depth. Her experience highlights the lack of educational opportunities in some Middle Eastern countries, positioning education as a tool for liberation and self-expression. This reinforces the notion that education transcends borders and cultural norms, standing as a fundamental right for young women. These profiles collectively illuminate the transformative power of education. For these young migrant women, it's not just a subject; it's a cornerstone for personal growth, independence, and challenging societal constraints. The desire to retain native languages alongside embracing the host country's tongue highlights a nuanced acculturation process for migrant and refugee women. This study reveals a fascinating duality: their willingness to integrate and actively participate in their new societies is balanced with a strong determination to preserve their cultural heritage. This emphasis on maintaining native languages goes beyond mere sentimentality. It represents a critical lifeline to their identities, communities, and potentially even future generations. This key outcome has significant implications for language education programs designed for migrant and refugee women. By acknowledging this desire to retain their native languages, educators can create more holistic and culturally sensitive learning experiences. These programs could integrate elements of heritage language preservation alongside instruction in the host country's language. This dual approach would empower these women to bridge the gap between their past and present, fostering a sense of belonging in both their adopted home and their culture of origin.

5.2.4 Limitations and future work

This study acknowledges several limitations in its initial approach. Relying solely on hashtags and follower count potentially excluded infrequent users, those using non-standard terms, and women who fostered smaller online communities. Limiting languages further restricted the study's reach. Recognizing these limitations, the researchers made key adjustments. They shifted their focus to ensure a more representative sample of migrant and refugee backgrounds, and acknowledged the generalizability limitations. These revisions significantly improved the research process and the resulting understanding of the women's lived experiences.

Future research could delve deeper into the motivations behind the observed link between religious identity and online engagement among migrant women. In-depth interviews or focus groups could shed light on how these women utilize religious themes on platforms like TikTok. Understanding why they choose to express themselves in this way would provide valuable insights into the complexities of migrant and refugee identity formation in a digital space. Additionally, researchers could explore the role social media plays beyond TikTok. Comparative analysis of migrant women's online behavior across different platforms would reveal how these platforms uniquely shape identity during acculturation. This could involve examining whether these platforms empower them to assert their cultural heritage or present new challenges in that regard.

Further studies could also expand the scope of analysis within TikTok itself. A descriptive content analysis of a larger sample of videos identified through relevant hashtags could be conducted. This analysis, potentially aided by software tools like MAXQDA, would allow researchers to identify recurring themes and patterns around online identity construction of migrant women in Greece in a larger scale.

5.2.5 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the present study made an effort to analyze a set of pre-selected TikTok profiles, using the user-generated videos and the public generated comments that respond to these videos. The selected profiles and videos were selected as representatives of various ethnic and religious backgrounds of migrant women living in Greece, in an effort to identify commonalities and differences between them and in the public response towards them.

The study manages to draw a set of useful conclusions that shed light on the self-representation of these women, depending on their background and their cultural heritage. The study also manages to shed light on the public response and draw clear connections between various topics of the public discourse and the results of the critical analysis performed, while providing answers to all of the research questions posed. Due to the limitations of the analysis tools used a further study is needed in order to draw more generalizable conclusions that are of even greater value to the scientific community.

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Appendix

Analysis of the videos

Profile 1

Video 1

Language

The video encompasses two linguistic elements. The first is textual, where the girl narrates a story that involves her boss, who posed a question posed to her, questioning whether people in Jordan only ride camels or if they also have cars. This highlights a prevalent misconception among many Greeks that individuals in the Middle East and Africa have primitive lifestyles very different from those that we see in the supposedly civilized West. We learn the girl's response through the second linguistic component, which is a spoken statement by a man who says: "It made me appreciate white people because only they this stupid shit like this.". This statement is attributed to Tyler, the Creator, a popular black rapper based in the United States. The girl provides a dubbed rendition of this man's words. These two elements present a stark contrast; the first reinforces stereotypes commonly held by white people, while the second offers a fresh perspective on how others non-white people perceive us. It appears that the image we hold of ourselves may be very different to what we are viewed by others.

Image-Gesture

The atmosphere is dark with very little illumination. Her face and hands are visible against the darkness, her gestures showing dynamism and intensity. She gives a sense of decisiveness and self-assurance in her speech.

Music

In this video, ambient music serves as a background and possibly does not convey any specific message, merely complementing her speech. We hear a male voice discussing about white people (it has been analyzed previously), while the girl provides a dubbed rendition of his speech.

Comments

The video has received four comments, none of which are noteworthy for discussion or assessment. Primarily, they express solidarity from other migrants in Greece who encounter similar stereotypes.

Video II

Language

This video includes one singular linguistic piece: a written text. In this written text, the speaker shares her experience of another Ramadan, facing loneliness. This loneliness originates from her fellow Muslims, who she feels have "disowned" her due to her sexual orientation as a lesbian, which many Muslims do not accept. The use of the word "disown" is poignant, reflecting her emotions of rejection and denial within her faith community, feelings that alienate her from those who should accept and acknowledge her existence. She also experiences another type of loneliness which arises from other European queer communities who exhibit Islamophobia, because of Islam's stance on queer homosexuality is very negative. She is prevented from fully participating in cultural traditions; thus, she often observes and practices these traditions alone.

Additionally, in the video description where she sends her wishes for Ramadan and sends love to other queer Muslims, aiming to show to other queer Muslims the acceptance and support she desires for herself and others like her. This gesture seeks to comfort the feelings loneliness experienced by herself and fellow queer Muslims, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Image-Gesture

The setting is well-lit, a space which is clearly in her home. She does not speak a word, but she communicates only through subtle facial expressions and gestures. Her movements are delicate, almost as if she is attempting to conceal her emotions. There's a sense of melancholy and discomfort in her attitude, as if she is seeking comfort within herself.

Music

We can hear a background music filling the air, a song that focuses on the theme of first love, This song provokes feelings of melancholy and solitude to its audience.

Comments

As it was previously mentioned, the comments on this video reached the 5,000. The content of these comments varied widely. Some of them, coming from Muslims, women and men alike, were filled with hate, asserting that "there is no such thing as queer Muslims" and dictating to the girl to "not bring your queerness to Islam." Members of her own community not only disrespected her but also denied her very existence as a Muslim queer individual. Other comments exhibited pure Islamophobia, stating "your religion is against you" or "your religion does not accept you, so why blame queer people for not accepting your religion?" These comments perpetuate stereotypes about the Muslim religion, portraying it as hostile towards individuals who do not conform to heterosexuality. Lastly, there were some overwhelmingly supportive comments filled with solidarity and love, particularly from queer, gay, and lesbian individuals of Middle Eastern descent who shared similar experiences.

Video III

Language

This video features two linguistic elements. The first is the audio, which the girl is dubbing. It is a dialogue from the animated TV show *Bojack Horseman*, where the characters say:

"- Oh, what did you ever sacrifice?

-I gave everything. I gave my whole life.

-You died in a hedonistic bender.

-I am not talking about death. I am talking about life. I gave my whole life."

Simultaneously, written text appears on the screen, presenting accusations and statements made by Middle Eastern men about Middle Eastern women. The first statement reads, "All Middle Eastern women want now is to be naked." The girl responds to this by stating that women are only asking for honor killings¹ to stop.

¹ The term originally used here is "un@live." According to [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com), "unalive" is a slang term frequently employed on social media as a substitute for verbs like "kill" or other death-related terms, particularly in the context of suicide ([Dictionary.com, 2024](https://www.dictionary.com)). This euphemism is typically utilized to navigate around social media platform regulations that ban, censor, remove, or demonetize content explicitly mentioning killing or suicide. By using "unalive," users can discuss sensitive topics without triggering automatic moderation algorithms or violating community guidelines. This linguistic workaround reflects the evolving strategies individuals employ to address and discuss difficult subjects within the constraints imposed by digital communication platforms.

Women around the world endure so-called "honor violence" inflicted by male relatives in an effort to reclaim family "honor." If a woman or girl is accused or suspected of behavior that could tarnish her family's reputation, she may face brutal retaliation from her relatives, often resulting in violent death (Amnesty International USA, 2012).

These so-called "honor" crimes stem from a global culture of discrimination against women and the deeply rooted belief that women are objects and commodities rather than human beings that have a right to dignity as men do. Women's bodies, in particular, are seen as the repositories of family honor and are under the control and responsibility of their family, especially male relatives. Many societies share traditional notions of family honor and endorse "honor" killings to preserve it. Such killings are widely reported in regions throughout the Middle East and South Asia, but these crimes against women also occur in countries including Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The second statement asserts, "We treat our women well. Women are privileged in the Middle East and treated like queens." She responds emphatically that under no circumstances are they treated like queens (using an exclamation mark to emphasize her point). Instead, they are killed by men in their own families and treated as second-class citizens, with their abusers protected by law. Additionally, many women are denied access to education, and even those who do manage to get an education are often not permitted to work. She highlights the injustice of these inequities with another exclamation mark.

In the end, she stresses (with three exclamation marks) that women and men are not held to the same cultural and religious duties. Society and religion in the Middle East place excessive demands on women while giving them very little in return, whereas men are guaranteed more freedoms. This underscores the significant inequities between the two genders.

Image-Gesture

In the video, the girl who owns the profile is seen in a poor lit space, though it's unclear whether she is indoors or outdoors. Her gestures are very intense, and her facial expressions convey anger and fury.

Music

Background music is present in the scene from which this dubbed segment is taken.

Comments

The video's comment section is filled with solidarity and shared struggle. While the number of comments might be limited, each one appears supportive and affirming of the speaker's message.

Beyond the comments that speak words of encouragement, we find also a wave of personal experiences. Women from Muslim-majority countries share their stories, revealing the harsh realities and the limited choices they are given. Clothing restrictions and the threat of violence for disagreeing with husbands gives us a picture of oppression and yearning for freedom.

Profile 2

Video 1

Language

In the video, the woman speaks while subtitles accompany her dialogue. Initially, she portrays a 27-year-old Russian woman expressing her concerns about her boyfriend, who has yet to propose despite their six-month-long relationship. She begins by emphasizing the duration of their relationship, highlighting the prolonged period of waiting. In her view, his failure to propose signifies a lack of commitment, with the traditional expectation that the decision to marry rests solely on the man, leaving the woman to patiently anticipate his initiative. By stating her age as 27, she implies a sense of urgency, suggesting that she perceives herself as running out of time for marriage. Finally, she concludes with a solemn declaration that she does not have time for games, insinuating that she views a romantic relationship as serious only if it culminates in marriage, and interpreting her partner's hesitation to propose as a form of manipulation or deception.

The portrayal of the Greek woman is markedly distinct, characterized by different linguistic expressions and relational dynamics. Unlike the Russian counterpart, the relationship between

her and Yanis is depicted as mutual and egalitarian. They are described as "dating" and "have not discussed" marriage, signifying a collaborative approach to their relationship and its future. The emphasis is placed on equal participation and open communication between both partners. Additionally, she adamantly expresses her reluctance to exert pressure on Yanis, vehemently stating "no no no no." This underscores the importance of a decision made willingly by both parties, devoid of any coercion or undue influence. Furthermore, she emphasizes her youthfulness, remarking that, at "just" 37 years old, she "still" has ample time and does not wish to "rush" into marriage. These linguistic choices highlight the Greek woman's divergent views on the appropriate age for marriage, contrasting sharply with those of her Russian counterpart.

Image-Gesture

In the scene, she is depicted standing in front of an artful illustration, enveloped by a constellation of delicate lights. While embodying the persona of the Russian woman, she dons a dress and exhibits mannerisms that convey a sense of timidity and unease, evident in her constant fidgeting with her hair. Contrastingly, when embodying the Greek woman, she retains the same dress but adds a leather jacket to her attire. Her demeanor undergoes a striking transformation—her gestures become assertive, punctuating her speech with dynamic movements, and exuding confidence.

Music

This video does not have any music.

Comments

The comments below illustrate deeply entrenched conservative perspectives on Greek and Russian women. Several comments, presumably from Greek users, reinforce the portrayal of the Greek woman, although one commenter perceives it negatively, labeling Greece as "westernized" in Southeast Europe and deeming Greek women as "idiots." Another comment suggests that Greek women may not be as relaxed as they appear, insinuating manipulation. Additionally, there's mention of a perceived issue with "gold diggers" in Greece, with women allegedly manipulating men into marriage for financial gain or a comfortable lifestyle.

Regarding the portrayal of Russian women, one commenter expresses disdain for their mentality, while another comment suggests that Russian women are seeking a provider, with

the phrase "Looking for a sponsor. Be patient, the victim will be found at some point." This remark implies a perception that Russian women are opportunistic, seeking out Greek partners to support their lifestyle. It reflects a broader sentiment within Greek society that former Soviet women are solely interested in marrying Greek men for residency and financial exploitation, casting men as unwitting victims in these arrangements.

Video II

Language

She doesn't speak in the video but shares her thoughts through a piece of text about her migration journey. She writes that she initially set out with the expectation of finding a husband, marrying, and becoming a housewife, with no aspirations for a career. This connects to the previous video and highlights how marriage is a significant issue in Russia and Eastern Europe, where women are often expected to marry young. However, her time in Greece shifted her priorities. She ended up finishing university in Greece, pursuing a career in real estate, and becoming an entrepreneur, aligning herself more with Western expectations. In the end, she notes that her initial plan failed. Despite referring to it as a failure, there's a clear sense of irony, as she appears empowered and independent, having achieved much more than she originally intended.

Image-Gesture

In this video, we see the woman sitting at her desk in front of her laptop. She remains still, only occasionally nodding. Tears stream down her face, causing her mascara to smudge, suggesting she is deeply moved, possibly reflecting on her journey to this moment. The space behind her is brightly lit.

Music

In the background, a touching and deep song plays, enhancing the emotions evoked by the visuals and text.

Comments

There are very few comments on this video. One particularly notable comment read, "I can already sense the hateful comments from middle-aged Greek women coming." This remark anticipates a backlash from Greek women, likely in response to the Russian woman's mention

of coming to Greece to find a husband. This statement taps into a common stereotype held by some Greek women, who believe that many Eastern European women come to Greece solely to marry and take advantage of Greek men. The anticipation of such comments highlights the ongoing cultural tensions and misconceptions surrounding this issue. Alternatively, this comment may also stem from a concern about potential criticism from women holding more progressive views. The previous video might have touched on this theme – the contrast between traditional values regarding marriage and family in Russia, where women often prioritize these aspects, compared to Greece, where women may prioritize career and personal fulfillment before marriage. This concern might lead to apprehension about expressing views that differ from the prevailing feminist narratives, especially if those narratives are perceived as more "Western" and critical of traditional values.

Video III

Language

The woman impersonates her "haters" by listing a series of offensive comments. These comments target her ethnicity ("crazy Russian"), language skills ("terrible accent"), career ("who even cares about Russian language"), appearance ("not even pretty"), personal life ("lonely woman without kids"), age ("crazy in her 30s"), and online presence ("just delete your account").

This video aims to expose and challenge the negativity and cruelty that can exist online, particularly towards women of color or those with accents. It highlights the hurtful nature of these comments, targeting appearance, personal life choices, and even cultural heritage. By impersonating the "haters," the woman potentially reclaims the power from their words.

The video could be an attempt to raise awareness about online harassment and the impact it can have on mental health. By speaking out, the woman might be empowering herself and others to challenge negativity and celebrate their identities. Sharing these experiences could connect with viewers who have faced similar online attacks.

Image-Gesture

On the screen, we see an older video where she demonstrates the names of the months in Greek and Russian. This video retains all its original elements, but now includes the text "If haters

voiceover my videos.” In the older video, her movements are smooth and didactic, and she is smiling, clearly showing that she is happy.

Music

There is a subtle beat in the background originating from the original video, but the focus is clearly on her spoken words.

Comments

This video has received a small number of supportive comments for the Russian woman facing hate comments. One of these comments reads, "Sad how easily people are brainwashed," suggesting that the stereotypes she's facing are perpetuated by various sources. The other comments are also supportive, featuring flags from different countries, including Russia, Cyprus, and Greece, symbolizing solidarity among these nations.

Profile 3

Video 1

Language

A text caption embedded within the video conveys the creator's message. This text expresses a complex mix of emotions and a hopeful yearning for belonging. The opening sentence, "after being forced to leave my country a year ago," sets the stage by highlighting the trauma of displacement. The emojis reinforce feelings of sadness and heartbreak. The phrase "arrived here in Greece with no plan to stay" suggests the initial move was unplanned and possibly temporary. The statement "I've fallen deeply in love with this beautiful place" marks a significant shift. It reveals a newfound appreciation for Greece, surpassing initial expectations. The question "could I feel Greece like home someday?" expresses a desire for belonging and stability after the upheaval of displacement. It's a hopeful but uncertain sentiment.

Image-Gesture

The video's background serves as a stunning visual invitation to explore Greece. A montage of beautiful landscapes unfolds, echoing the spirit of adventure in the description's "journey." These glimpses entice viewers to join the woman on her odyssey, showcasing the beauty that awaits her in this new land.

Music

A melancholic melody underscores the video, hinting at the bittersweet emotions of starting anew while carrying hope for the future.

Comments

Engagement on the video remains modest, with only a few comments. However, the sentiments expressed are heartwarming. One viewer extends a warm welcome, adding a hopeful note: "Welcome, and we hope you'll feel at home soon." This simple message embodies the spirit of empathy and the yearning for belonging that many refugees face.

Video II

Language

This video includes a small text that delves into the often-unspoken challenges of adjusting to life in a new country. The first line, "missing the feeling of the family," highlights a yearning for the comfort and support of loved ones back home. "Seeing how locals are united especially on Christmas or Easter holidays" suggests a sense of isolation during culturally significant events in the new country. "Struggling to make new friends, particularly when you are in your 30s and more introverted" reveals the challenge of building social connections, especially for those who are naturally introverted or face an age gap. "Feeling a sense of 'in-betweenness'." You do not fully belong in either your home country or the country you have moved to" captures the core issue of displacement and the struggle to find a sense of belonging. These unspoken challenges can contribute to feelings of loneliness, isolation, and cultural alienation.

Image-Gesture

The video opens with a tranquil scene of water reflecting the sky on a sunny day. Plants, possibly corn, are also visible. Despite the peaceful visuals, the scene evokes a feeling of loneliness and sadness.

Music

A veil of melancholic melody drapes itself over the video's tranquil scene. The previously described image of water reflecting the sky, bathed in sunlight, is now infused with a deeper layer of emotion by the music. The aesthetic soundscape amplifies the feelings of loneliness and sadness, creating a poignant atmosphere.

Comments

No comments have appeared on the video so far.

Video III

Language

This short TikTok video uses text and audio to convey the frustration of a language barrier and a perceived lack of cultural sensitivity. The written text is: "when a random neighbor telling me 'What do you mean you don't speak Greek? You must learn Greek; you live in Greece.'" This statement highlights the pressure the woman feels to learn Greek. The use of "random neighbor" suggests this encounter might be unexpected and intrusive. The exclamation mark emphasizes the neighbor's forceful tone. The audio dialogue is the following:

- "Excuse me you dropped something?" (Sarcastic delivery)

This question is likely a witty comeback to the neighbor's comment.

- "What did I drop?" (Feigned innocence)

This continues the sarcastic tone, emphasizing the woman's frustration.

- "Your nose in my business" (Assertive delivery)

This is a clear and potentially sassy retort, putting the neighbor in their place.

The video expresses the annoyance and frustration a person might feel when pressured to assimilate by neglecting their own language and identity. The use of humor, through the sarcastic dialogue, offers a way to deflect the neighbor's criticism. It potentially resonates with viewers who have faced similar situations of cultural expectation or judgment. Overall, this short video uses humor to address a potentially sensitive topic. It highlights the challenges faced by immigrants or people living in a new country where they are pressured to conform to the dominant language.

Image-Gesture

The scene opens with the woman seated, possibly at a desk. A laptop rests in front of her, suggesting she's engaged in some digital activity. Her posture and hand gestures are key elements in conveying her emotional state. Sitting at a desk might imply she's working, but her intense hand movements hint at underlying agitation. Furrowed brows and a raised eyebrow can signify both anger and a sense of irony. These facial expressions suggest she's reacting to something she finds both frustrating and possibly amusing.

Music

This video features no background music. The sole audio element is a voice, as the woman is dubbing a pre-recorded dialogue.

Comments

No viewers have commented on the video yet.

Profile 4

Video 1

Language

This video features two different textual elements. The first is written and says: "Me living in Greece trying to explain to my non-Muslim friends." This text is complemented by the spoken words the girl is dubbing over, which state, "Muslim people are not all Allahu Akbar Boom. Not like this." This implies that many in the West see Muslims as fundamentalists who might commit terrorist acts. They perceive every Muslim as a potential terrorist. The video then presents the statement, "We are cute! We are Allahu Akbar yes! Like this! Not Allahu Akbar boom. Not like this!" In this part, she attempts to convey that Muslims are peaceful and devout, loving their God without wishing harm upon people of other religions. The repetition of "not Allahu Akbar boom. Not like this." emphasizes that the stereotype of Muslims as potential terrorists is entirely unfounded.

Image-Gesture

In the video, the girl appears in a brightly lit setting, likely her home. Both her face and hands are visible, and her gestures vary according to the perspectives she presents. When depicting Muslims as perceived by some Westerners—stereotyped as terrorists who would kill for their religion—her demeanor becomes angrier and more intense, characterized by sharp, exaggerated movements. In contrast, when portraying Muslims as she sees them, she adopts a softer, more endearing manner with gentle, fluid gestures. Her facial expressions seamlessly align with these shifts in tone, effectively conveying the contrasting perceptions.

Music

This video does not include any music.

Comments

The comments on the video reflect a range of tones and perspectives. Some come from fellow Muslims living in European countries who are also dealing with similar stereotypes. Other comments come from non-Muslims showing their support for Muslims facing such stereotyping. One comment read, "We are also trying to prove the same thing," indicating that progressive individuals in Europe are also fighting against Islamophobia.

However, there are also comments that perpetuate the very stereotypes the video aims to challenge. For example, comments like, "Why don't you also explain to us why your scriptures tell you to kill people from other religions and non-believers?" or "Make this joke before people who have lost their relatives, you will find out what happens," not only reinforce Islamophobic stereotypes but also portray her as naïve or uninformed.

Additionally, some comments question her religious identity with remarks such as, "Where is your hijab?" or "Are you allowed to put on makeup?" These comments imply that she is less of a Muslim, thereby undermining her credibility in discussing how Muslims practice their faith and deal with misconceptions.

Video II

Language

In the analyzed video, there is a written text in Greek that says, "I grew up in a culture where men give dowry camels and he still believes he can win me over." This message is likely addressed to a potential love interest or someone trying to pursue a relationship with her. The girl responds by indicating that, according to her cultural upbringing, a man must be very generous to have a chance with a woman. She compares Syrian men to Greek men, implying that Greek men may not meet the standards of generosity expected in Syrian culture. This ties into the popular opinion that women in the Middle East are treated like queens.

Image-Gesture

In the video, we see the girl at home, with her face and hands clearly visible. Her playful gestures and expressions convey a sense of happiness and cuteness. She seems at ease and content, making the atmosphere of the video lighthearted and engaging.

Music

The video is set to upbeat and lively Arabic music that inspires a sense of joy and dance.

Comments

The comments on this video are quite revealing, with many expressing sexist views. One comment simply states, "Middle Ages," implying that these practices are outdated and perhaps reflective of orientalist views held by many Europeans. Other comments compare dowry practices in Syria to those in Greece. For instance, one user remarks, "Here in Greece, women should ask for more than just bedsheets and a house," while another adds, "In your country, you give 20 camels and you're done. Here, you pay the wife until you die." These comments reflect an exploitative dimension of marriage in Greece, presenting it as a normal occurrence. Additionally, a particularly judgmental comment accuses the girl of not wanting to be won over by a man but rather acquired through money.

Video III

Language

In this video, there is a written text where the girl has written in Greek: "When he thinks he might have the upper hand but forgets you're from Syria." This statement implies that Syrian women are in control in their relationships. It suggests that she is in a relationship with a non-Syrian man who doesn't understand what it means to be with a Syrian woman like her. Her statement is reinforced by the lyrics of the background song, which depict a dominant woman who has absolute control in her relationship.

Image-Gesture

Once again, we see the woman, showing her face and hands. Her gestures are smooth and feminine, conveying a playful and happy demeanor typical of someone addressing a love interest. Her facial expressions complement and enhance her overall attitude.

Music

In this video, an Arabic song plays a central role, focusing on the dynamics and power balance within a couple's relationship. The song is performed by a female singer. The chorus lyrics translate as follows:

"Dominant, I will make you walk straight like a ruler, I will make you look away if you see another girl in the street, Ya, I'm dominant, you're my sugar, As long as you'll be under my control, Ya I'm arrogant."

Comments

This video has no comments.

Profile 5

Video I

Language

There are two text elements in the video. The first reads: “When they say it’s easy to be a woman. Honestly, it’s not, we just make it look like it is.” The second states: “1. We clean, 2. Cook, 3. Keep the house tidy, and lastly, 4. We care for our man.” These texts highlight the numerous tasks women are expected to complete daily to meet the needs of the household and the entire family. These responsibilities are often taken for granted, with little appreciation shown for the effort involved.

Image-Gesture

In the video, we observe her at home performing various tasks like cooking and cleaning. Her facial expressions are neutral and typical for someone engaged in housework.

Music

The background music in this video is Selena Gomez's song "Love You Like a Love Song." The lyrics of the song likely do not relate to the video's content; it serves more as atmospheric background music.

Comments

There are only a few comments, which are not significant enough to analyze.

Video II

Language

This video includes a piece of oral text. It is not said by the woman owning the profile but it is an audio taken by some profile with quotes. The voice we can hear says “At the end of day I’m a good woman. I’m not perfect by any means but my intentions are good. My heart is pure and I love with everything I have. So, because of those things, I’m worth it. I always have and I will always be.” This text is introspective and shows a need for self-approval and self-esteem when things become difficult. The choice of words shows a need to prove she is good like she

is responding to someone who criticize her. This audio text keeps coming in her profile with different images accompanying it, a thing that shows that sometimes she has the need to upload it for unknown reasons.

Image-Gesture

The video includes footage from earlier videos showcasing moments of her life—on a train, at the beach, on a snowy day, and more. These nostalgic glimpses into the past amplify the emotions the video aims to convey: introspection, self-love, and self-esteem.

Music

The background music is atmospheric and complements the narration we just described with no special meaning.

Comments

All the comments express approval and appreciation.

Video III

Language

The video opens with a heartwarming exchange between a single mom and her concerned mother. A text message from the mom pops up, filled with worry: "Hope you are ok there, always taking care of yourself and Dino." We feel the mother's love and anxiety for her daughter, especially knowing she's raising a child alone.

The daughter's reply, though brief, speaks volumes. With a playful yet reassuring, "Hey mama, don't worry, you raised a gangsta. I'm a survivor." she publicly acknowledges her mother's message. This choice of words hints at past challenges – perhaps echoed in the other videos you analyzed. But here, she emphasizes her strength and resilience: "a survivor." It's a message of both reassurance for her mom and a touch of pride in her own journey.

Image-Gesture

This video features summer camping snapshots of the profile owner.

Music

The video's soundtrack features "Painting Pictures," a song by American rapper Superstar Pride. The song's lyrics resonate deeply with the woman's message. In the song, Pride recounts

his family history and connection to street life, but ultimately praises his mother's resilience in raising him. ("Mama, don't worry, you raised a gangster, I'm a survivor"). This specific lyric seems to be the woman's reply to her own mother's anxieties. It suggests that despite the challenges she faces, she draws strength from her upbringing and her ability to persevere.

Comments

The comments on this video haven't sparked much discussion yet.

Profile 6

Video 1

Language

This video features five written text elements, each appearing sequentially and connected to the various personas she adopts, as described below. At the beginning, she emphasizes basic human rights that should be universally respected but are currently being violated by Israelis in the attack on Gaza. She specifically writes: "Respect and equality, freedom in our lives and bodies, the right to not be afraid to exist should be non-negotiable." Here, she highlights the values of equality, freedom, and living without fear.

The next text elements describe specific instances where Israeli soldiers have violated these fundamental human rights:

"For the pregnant woman in Al-Shifa, where Israeli forces raped her in front of her husband, children, and relatives. They threatened her family with death if they closed their eyes. Then they killed her husband and her unborn child."

"About the woman in the Al-Khair hospital who was raped for two days until she lost the ability to speak."

"About the woman in the Nassar hospital, a Palestinian woman who was stripped in front of her husband and brother. When one of them tried to cover her with his own clothes, Israeli soldiers killed her brother and husband."

In these texts, she centers on women, highlighting cases where women's bodies were used to exert pressure on the enemy. These accounts are presented from a female perspective, underscoring the brutalities faced by women.

Finally, she calls for action with the statement: “Do not stop talking about Palestine!!!” She emphasizes this call to action using an imperative tone and three exclamation marks, underscoring the importance of the message to her.

Image-Gesture

In the opening moments of the video, we see the woman who owns the profile wearing a Palestinian keffiyeh on her head, with meticulous makeup and eyeshadow in the colors of the Palestinian flag. Her style and expression convey a sense of seriousness. In the subsequent frames, as she describes the atrocities committed by Israeli soldiers, she appears deeply saddened; her chest heaves as she sobs, and red tape forming an "X" covers her mouth, symbolizing forced silence. Tears stream down her face, smudging her makeup and mascara. In the concluding frames, she dramatically removes the tape with anger and determination, her expressions becoming increasingly intense as she calls for action and raises awareness. She begins shouting, her face reflecting a powerful mix of emotion and resolve.

Music

The video is sound tracked by "Labor," an alternative folk song by British singer-songwriter Paris Paloma. Released in March 2023, the track is described as an anthem addressing gender inequality within societal structures. This powerful choice of music creates a poignant backdrop for the video's subject matter: the atrocities women face in the Palestinian genocide.

The song featured in the video includes the following lyrics:

These lyrics paint a vivid picture of a woman burdened by societal expectations and the unfair division of labor within a relationship. “All day, every day” emphasizes the constant nature of the woman's responsibilities. Listing various roles - "therapist, mother, maid" - highlights the emotional, physical, and domestic labor she performs. "Nymph then virgin, nurse then a servant" suggests a progression where the woman's value is defined solely in relation to the man's needs. "Just an appendage" emphasizes her perceived lack of independence or agency. "Live to attend him" portrays her life as revolving around his comfort and needs. "So that he never lifts a finger" exposes the one-sided nature of their dynamic. "24/7 baby machine" reduces her to a tool for procreation, disregarding her individuality. "So, he can live out his picket fence dreams" suggests his desires are prioritized, even if they come at her expense. "It's not an act of love if you make her" challenges the notion that sacrificing her well-being is an

expression of love. "You make me do too much labor" directly addresses the unfair situation and demands change. These lyrics convey a sense of frustration, resentment, and exhaustion. The woman feels exploited and undervalued, yearning for a more equitable partnership.

Comments

All comments on this video are supportive of its message, with many expressing positive sentiments about the woman who owns the profile. Additionally, there are numerous comments expressing solidarity with Gaza and voicing hopes for its liberation.

Video II

Language

The video functions as a direct response to a critical comment left on the profile. The comment itself is integrated into the video, becoming a focal point as the woman addresses it directly. Here's the gist of the comment: "You're joking, right? Full makeup, a facial piercing, and you cover your hair? Make up your mind! Don't mislead everyone."

This comment essentially accuses the profile owner of hypocrisy. It highlights a perceived contradiction: on the one hand, she takes care of her appearance with makeup and a piercing, suggesting a desire to be perceived as attractive. On the other hand, she wears a hijab, a garment associated with modesty in Muslim tradition. The commenter interprets this combination as a way to attract attention while simultaneously avoiding provoking men.

This accusation reveals several underlying assumptions:

- Makeup and piercings solely serve to attract male attention. This disregards the possibility that these choices are about self-expression or personal preference.
- The hijab inherently negates femininity and attractiveness. This ignores the diversity of perspectives within Muslim communities and the fact that many women find beauty and self-expression compatible with wearing the hijab.
- There's an inherent conflict between outward beauty and religious practices. This overlooks the potential for religious practices to empower women and enhance their sense of self.

By addressing this comment in a video, the profile owner has a chance to reclaim her narrative and challenge these assumptions.

The woman's response is a powerful and multifaceted rebuttal to the critical comment.

She starts with the statement: "Choosing to wear a hijab is a personal decision, not a way to avoid scandalizing others." She emphasizes the word "scandalize" with a mix of sarcasm and annoyance. It's clear she's tired of this stereotype. She clarifies that the hijab is a spiritual garment for Muslim women, but chooses not to delve into specific religious reasons. This avoids getting sidetracked and keeps the focus on personal expression. She firmly asserts that her faith and cultural practices don't negate her desire to look and feel beautiful. This challenges the misconception that femininity and religious attire are mutually exclusive. She then tackles ingrained societal pressures, particularly prevalent among some men in Greece. Her list highlights the double standards women face: makeup is seen as seeking attention, no makeup as being unattractive, covering up as being nun-like, and showing skin as being provocative.

The crux of her response lies in the powerful statement: "In this patriarchal society where everything we do is seen as for men, allow me to do whatever I want." It's a direct challenge to the notion that women's choices are solely motivated by male approval. She concludes with a defiant gesture and a farewell in Arabic. This combination conveys her anger and frustration, but also a sense of pride. It implies, "I will be myself, on my own terms, regardless of your disapproval."

By unpacking these elements, the video transcends a simple response to a comment. It becomes a powerful statement about self-determination, challenging narrow-minded perceptions and embracing the complexities of Muslim women's identities.

Image-Gesture

The video depicts a woman walking briskly on a nighttime street. She holds a mobile phone in her hand, and the frame captures most of her body.

Music

The video lacks background music. The audio track primarily consists of ambient sounds from the street environment. Additionally, the audio captures the speaker's labored breathing, likely due to concurrent talking and fast walking.

Comments

The video has garnered a significant response, with nearly 50 comments, all expressing support for the profile owner. Notably, several Muslim women have shared their own experiences, demonstrating a sense of solidarity and understanding. It's important to acknowledge, however, that while the current comments appear positive, this doesn't necessarily reflect the full range of public opinion on such a complex issue.

Video III

Language

The woman is responding to a comment left on a previous video, likely one where she was wearing a hijab. The comment, "go to Iran and do not wear the hijab," is dripping with Islamophobia and intolerance. It implies that her choice of wearing a hijab is somehow incompatible with living in her current country.

Her response is a powerful and multifaceted attack on the misconception that abuse is linked to a woman's clothing or religious beliefs. She directly confronts the comment by highlighting the fallacy of associating abuse with dress code or specific countries. The question, "Why aren't women abused in Greece? What are they wearing?" challenges the assumption that certain clothing offers protection against abuse. Her personal experience of being assaulted in a Western country (Greece) while wearing a hijab further dismantles this stereotype. By revealing her own experience of being targeted for abuse three times, she emphasizes the universality of the issue. Specifying the different types of clothing she wore during each incident (hijab, pajamas, diaper) underscores the point that clothing is irrelevant to the perpetrator's actions. The use of sarcasm ("why did you hit him?") and a curse word in Arabic expresses her frustration and anger at victim-blaming and societal dismissal of self-defense. Mimicking the police officer's response ("illegal to practice martial arts") adds to the feeling of being unheard and disrespected by authorities. Mentioning wearing a diaper as a baby during the third incident makes a powerful statement – abuse can target anyone regardless of age or attire. She concludes by clearly stating that abuse is rooted in gender, not clothing or religious beliefs.

This response aims to raise awareness and shift the focus to the perpetrator's actions, not the victim's background or attire. It challenges the societal tendency to victim-blame and normalize abuse. By sharing her story, she might connect with survivors who have faced similar experiences and societal judgment.

Image-Gesture

The video opens with a close-up shot of the woman walking down a street in broad daylight. Her face is the only part of her visible, and a range of emotions flit across it - irony, outrage, and a sense of being fed up.

Music

The video is devoid of music, with only the sounds of the street audible. These include traffic noise, such as cars and motorcycles, and the woman's breathing.

Comments

The comment section of this TikTok video reflects a variety of perspectives. Support for the creator is evident, with viewers offering positive feedback and aligning with her message. Lighthearted humor also appears in some comments, indicating a diverse range of personalities engaging with the content. While the meaning of comments in Arabic remains unclear for some viewers, they contribute to the video's global reach and showcase the platform's multilingual nature. The discussion takes a more serious turn as some comments highlight the realities of violence against women in Greece. These comments raise a question about the focus on Muslim countries, suggesting that such issues are not geographically limited.

Author's Statement:

I hereby expressly declare that, according to the article 8 of Law 1559/1986, this dissertation is solely the product of my personal work, does not infringe any intellectual property, personality and personal data rights of third parties, does not contain works/contributions from third parties for which the permission of the authors/beneficiaries is required, is not the product of partial or total plagiarism, and that the sources used are limited to the literature references alone and meet the rules of scientific citations.



Eirini - Argyro
Psachoulia

Self-representation through TikTok for
migrant and refugee women living in
Greece