From liberation to control: understanding the selfie experience

Richard Kedzior and Douglas E. Allen
School of Management, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, USA

Received 31 July 2015
Revised 1 June 2016
Accepted 7 June 2016

Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to serve as an integrative literature review that organizes the burgeoning literature and findings related to possible impacts of the selfie phenomenon on consumers.

Design/methodology/approach – This is a conceptual paper.

Findings – The current empirical scholarly work supports two conflicting perspectives on the impact of selfies: the selfie experience as a source of empowerment and the selfie as embodiment of societal control and expression of existing power-relations. While the two perspectives are seemingly discordant, in fact, they pertain to different levels of analysis – individual and social, respectively.

Originality/value – While the empowerment aspect of the selfie experience has been well-documented in existing literature, the mechanisms of control and disempowerment have remained underconceptualized. This research paper offers a framework which addresses this omission and theorizes ways in which the selfie phenomenon perpetuates societal control and maintains power-relations.

Keywords Technology, Panopticon, Empowerment, Selfie, Spectacle, Synopticon

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction

The selfie as the most recent embodiment of self-portraiture has become a noteworthy cultural phenomenon. In 2014, Google estimated that 93 million selfies were being taken each day on the Android platform alone (Brandt, 2014). This rampantly increasing popularity has earned the selfie the status of the word of the year 2013 according to *Oxford Dictionaries* (2013).

While self-portraiture as an artistic tradition dates back to the Renaissance period, in lay photography, self-portraits seem to have always yielded to taking photographs of others (Schwarz, 2010). Yet, the increased interest in photographic self-portraiture has been noted since the 1970s, when artists such as Germaine Krull, Vivian Maier, Sally Mann or Cindy Sherman used it to express feminist values (Murray, 2015). Historically, the selfie also has been linked to snapshot photography identified with leisure and play, meant to represent authentic, spontaneous and unposed situations (Iqani and Schroeder, 2015).

On the cultural and societal front, some scholars have observed deep cultural changes accompanying the proliferation of selfies (Schwarz, 2010; Senft and Baym, 2015). Owing to the internet, lay photography can now be shared beyond the usual circle of family and friends. With this possibility of vernacular photography reaching new audiences, scholars have noticed the shift from "photographing others for

European Journal of Marketing
Vol. 50 No. 9/10, 2016
pp. 1893-1902

0309-0566
DOI 10.1108/EJM-07-2015-0512

self-consumption to documentation of self for consumption by others" (Schwarz, 2010). Interestingly, as some scholars point out, such means of self-documentation are used to shape and discipline our actions, both individually and as a society, and thus are conceptualized as technologies of the self in the Foucauldian sense (Rettberg, 2014). In contrast, more emancipatory readings of this phenomenon stress individual empowerment stemming from a total control over the ways in which one is represented in the selfie (Walker, 2005).

From the technology perspective, the cultural success of selfies is linked to the proliferation of digital cameras, which made producing selfies easy and cost-effective (Walker, 2005). Another frequently discussed factor contributing to selfie prominence is the development of information communication technology, especially social networking sites and digital-sharing platforms (Barnard, 2016). By grounding the high incidence of selfies in the convergence of a digital camera, app-based software and mobile data transfer in one single device – a cell phone, the selfie emerges as a technology-driven phenomenon.

As the extant research demonstrates, consumers' relationships with technology are multifaceted phenomena, and technology use is often marked by paradoxical consumer experiences (Mick and Fournier, 1998). Unsurprisingly, the selfie is no exception to such a paradox. Here, one major facet of the ongoing academic and societal debate about the consequences of selfie use revolves around the paradoxical themes of empowerment and control (Tiidenberg and Gómez Cruz, 2015; Barnard, 2016; Simmons, 2013; Ryan, 2013). Given the fact that the selfie is a fairly recent phenomenon, the existing academic research on the topic remains necessarily fragmented, as the studies usually focus in-depth on either of these positions. To rectify the situation, first this research note provides a systematic review of the relevant literature. In the ensuing analysis, we highlight findings about the empowering nature of selfies and note a dearth of research illuminating the dynamics of control. We then offer a theoretical framework, which organizes issues pertinent to this theme. The proposed framework extends the current academic discussion and is intended to serve as a basis for future empirical investigations.

Paradoxes in selfie experiences

Despite the relative novelty of the selfie in consumer culture, the scholarship in media studies, communication and marketing has already documented various contexts in which selfies are used and outlined some of the selfie's functions (Senft and Baym, 2015; Warfield *et al.*, 2016). Given the genealogy which links the selfie to self-portraiture, selfies have been most frequently studied as tools for self-presentation and communication (Bellinger, 2015; Katz and Crocker, 2015; Frosh, 2015). They have also been shown to be a form of journalistic documentation (Koliska and Roberts, 2015), political messaging (Baishya, 2015), resistance (Nemer and Freeman, 2015), artistic expression (Murray, 2015), visual commodity (Iqani and Schroeder, 2015) and conspicuous consumption (Marwick, 2015).

While the academic interest in selfies spans a diverse array of topics, the societal debate has generally focused on the consequences of selfie use for individuals and has been dominated by two perspectives (Senft and Baym, 2015). The first one celebrates selfies as means of empowerment and self-expression (Warfield, 2014; Simmons, 2013); the second decries selfies as expressions of narcissism and self-centeredness (Fallon,

2014; Munar, 2010). Regrettably, as pointed out by Rettberg (2014), such a dichotomous framing of the debate obscures a more nuanced understanding of the selfie phenomenon. There is much confusion about what impact selfies really have on consumers: Are they empowering or disempowering? Are they expressions of individualism or narcissism? The recent scholarship suggests many readings of the selfie phenomenon in regards to their empowering or disempowering potential. Below we present an overview of both perspectives and highlight the most important arguments underpinning each of them.

Selfie empowerment

One dominant theme in discourse on the significance of the selfie phenomenon for individuals is empowerment. This perspective is premised on the assumption that digital self-portraiture is an act of self-revelation, which in combination with the possibility of online publication democratizes access for individuals to the visual mediascape (Walker, 2005; Schwarz, 2010). In consequence, it empowers the posters and gives them control over the way in which they are represented.

This point is echoed in a number of studies. For instance, in her study of a self-shooting online community, Tiidenberg (2014) has found that selfie takers were able "to construct a new, empowered, embodied identity for themselves" in opposition to often hegemonic, normative assumption about bodies in the wider culture. By doing so, the community participants in this study were able to reduce feelings of social alienation.

In a similar vein, Tiidenberg and Gómez Cruz (2015) have documented how taking selfies can be experienced as a "self-therapeutic and awareness-raising practice". The self-therapeutic element of the practice stems from the reflexive ability to see one's own image in opposition to consumer culture-driven normative ideals and to find spaces (even if only online) to define one's own self-perceived attractiveness. Thus, as the authors point out, practices related to taking and posting selfies are experienced as increasing informants' control and agency.

Empowerment can also arise from a supposedly disempowering rhetoric. The selfie's visual focus on the body has rendered its takers vulnerable to accusations of narcissism and self-obsession. However, as a study of self-imaging strategies of young women artists has demonstrated, despite such trivializing discourses, selfie takers were able to "claim a representational agency" and resist the cultural tendency to "negate, ridicule, malign and sexualize them" (Murray, 2015). Similarly, a study of selfie takers who are marginalized due to their poverty has revealed that selfies are not expressions of narcissism, conspicuous consumption or self-promotions but "selfies, rather empower the users to exercise free speech, practice self-reflection, express spiritual purity, improve literacy skills, and form strong interpersonal connections" (Nemer and Freeman, 2015).

Yet, as some studies show, empowerment can flourish not only in spite of the cultural dismissal of selfies as vain and narcissistic acts, but exactly because of it. As Abidin (2016) has documented, under the guise of frivolity, online influencers were able to "reappropriate the selfie for self-branding, financial gains, and self-actualization pursuits". In this way, they were able to exercise their agency and achieve individual benefits from their selfie-social media engagement.

Disempowerment and control

While the discussion about the empowering nature of taking and sharing selfies evokes notions of increased agency and ability to resist and be subversive toward the hegemonic and normative aspects of culture, many authors have voiced concerns regarding the sole focus on individual perceptions with little consideration for structural factors which affect agency (Schwarz, 2010; Barnard, 2016).

For instance, Schwarz (2010) points out that the discussions of selfies which frame them as empowering or "reflexive representations of self […] produced under circumstances of artistic freedom" fall prey to the desocialization of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993). To remedy such shortcomings, any study of selfies as a social phenomenon has to take into consideration audience expectations, logic of exchange, methods of appraisal and power-relations, which can affect individual agency.

Taking into consideration that most selfies are taken to be shared through social networking sites, Schwarz (2010) critiqued what he terms the "emancipation thesis" for confusing "the eye with the gaze, assuming that since the eye behind the camera belongs to the photographed person him- or herself, photography is no longer subject to any external scopic regime". Based on his sociologically driven analysis, selfies facilitate the exchange of different forms of capital among community members. Thus, rather than for empowerment or self-expression, the selfie is used for generating interaction with strangers and maintaining social hierarchies online and offline.

Building on the critique of the emancipation thesis, Barnard (2016) has also pointed to the fact that the agency in discussions about empowerment is often limited to the control of the camera, with neglect to the fact that the product itself (i.e. the selfie) may reproduce dominant visual discourse. To describe the existing tension, Barnard introduces the term (dis)empowerment paradox, which emphasizes that individual feelings of empowerment can accompany the production of selfies while simultaneously reproducing hegemonic visual discourse. Thus, the selfie which is empowering on the individual level may be disempowering on the collective, societal level.

For instance, Tiidenberg's (2015) study of the selfies taken by pregnant women shows that despite women's efforts to increase the visual presence of pregnancy images in social media, their selfies depicted femininity that fits in with heteronormativity and expectations of hegemonic masculinity (e.g. by featuring poses conforming to male gaze). Similarly, in the study of breastfeeding selfies, Boon and Pentney (2015) have observed that taking and sharing selfies construed as an act of "lactivist engagement" offered individuals a sense of self-realization. Yet, in a broader societal context which may lack the appropriate commentary or contextual framing, these efforts "can easily reinscribe cisgender and heteronormative frameworks".

As demonstrated in the examples above, the disempowering potential of selfies often results from specific forms of control, be it the male gaze or hegemonic cultural norms. The control can also materialize in the form of peer pressure out of the activity which initially was experienced as emancipating. For example, in their study, Tiidenberg and Gómez Cruz (2015) have documented the presence of the "popularity paradox". These authors have noted that instead of experiencing agency due to freedom of self-expression, selfie posters felt "pressure to deliver more and more selfies or have to perform in specific ways to meet their audience's expectations". Another element of control related to the selfie phenomenon is the previously mentioned accusatory

discourse of narcissism. As the studies by Burns (2015) and Murray (2015) demonstrate, the negative perceptions of selfie practices function as a form of gendered social discipline. Selfies are used to generate knowledge about subjects in ways that sustain power-relations.

Despite the undeniable presence of control and discipline themes in relation to the selfie phenomenon, the current literature on the topic does not offer any comprehensive overview of how such control operates. Given the selfie's visual nature and the power-relations aspect of empowerment-disempowerment debate, we turn to the concepts of panopticon, synopticon and spectacle as a useful framework for exploring issues of control.

Selfies and the control of intersecting gazes

Going beyond popularly voiced critiques that selfies encourage isolated narcissism, this section introduces a framework for categorizing mechanisms of control stemming from the socially embedded, structured context of most selfie experiences. The central logic running through our categorization is that structural/societal control emanates from of a series of intersecting *gazes*. While the power of the gaze to control has been recognized since ancient times, as in the case of Medusa's stare, we begin with the modern theorist most associated with the controlling power of the gaze, Michel Foucault, whose work, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, emphasizes that, "Visibility is a trap" (Foucault, 1977, p. 200). Beyond narcissistic concerns that selfies encourage individuals to become entranced by their own visages, the concept of gaze emphasizes socially embedded control exercised by surveillance – seeing others or being seen by others.

The panoptic gaze

The genesis of Foucault's work on the power and control exerted by surveillance is rooted in Jeremy Bentham's concept of the panopticon. The panopticon was a conceptual prison design in which a center guard tower existed, permitting a guard to monitor inmates continuously. At the same time, prisoners had no way of seeing the guard due to lines of sight and lighting effects. Implicit in this design was the recognition that it was physically impossible for a guard to view all prisoners all the time; however, this surveillance mechanism exerted control as a result of the potential for a prisoner to be monitored. Under this framework, the mere possibility of being monitored, even in the absence of any guard, creates internalized habituated modes of action, the epitome of the power of Foucault's all-seeing omnipresent eye to control masses of people. Foucault used the concept of the panopticon to explore control operative in modern twentieth-century institutions such as prisons, asylums, schools and factories, in which the few were watching the many.

In the context of the selfie phenomenon, the internalized panoptic control is evidenced by Barnard (2016), who has documented how the logic of the male gaze is underlying the creation, sharing and responses to selfies. Similarly, Christensen *et al.* (2015) document the panoptic nature of social media communication via Snapchat. In this study, participants have revealed the presence of an internalized panoptic gaze of self-policing. It was expressed by them as the effort to "look their best" in selfies, which implies some pre-existing understanding of proper, desired posing, framing and the content of the selfie. In contrast, violation of such understandings usually reveals the inner workings

of the societal discipline. This is most evident in cases when posting individual selfies deemed by the public as inappropriate has cost posters their jobs or political careers (Socha, 2015; Hernandez, 2011). Similarly, Burns (2015) argues that the selfie experience can take on the quality of a participatory panopticon in which participants discipline each other through the use of critical memes, such as the widespread condemnation of the duck-face pose so commonly deployed in selfies.

Synoptic gaze

Foucault's concept of the panoptic gaze was complemented by Mathiesen (1997), who posited the simultaneous presence of another control structure – the synoptic gaze. In contrast to Foucault's panopticon, where the few are watching the many, the synopticon refers to control that results from the many watching the few. Mathiesen has introduced this idea to account for the rise and impact of mass media and their potential to shape people's practices. In his understanding, the synoptic gaze does not replace the panoptic gaze, but, rather, both work in conjunction. Whereas the disciplining power of the panopticon stems from the invisibility of the control, in the case of the synopticon, the visibility of the few (e.g. celebrities) is exactly the mechanism that is able to "control or discipline our consciousness" (Mathiesen, 1997). Social media networking has given rise to a new form of celebrity. Not one with an identity that is carefully scripted, produced and curated by big media companies via the old channels of distribution (e.g. TV, movies), but rather a more naturalistic, if exhibitionistic, persona who appears authentic. With respect to selfies, Kim Kardashian is probably the figure that comes most readily to mind as an influencer of the selfie practices of many, not only in terms of legitimating the style of practice itself, but often capitalizing on and reinforcing the aesthetics of male gaze (Kardashian, 2014).

The functioning of the synopticon is premised on its ability to capture attention. Interestingly, in social media, an individual's cachet is determined by the capability to catch the audience's attention (i.e. number of "likes", re-tweets, shares, etc.). Social media networking is said to have precipitated the emergence of an endemic form of celebrity, so called microcelebrity, for which the selfie is an ideal means to garnering audience (Senft, 2013). As Marwick (2015) has shown in her study of Instagram selfies, "those successful at gaining attention often reproduce conventional status hierarchies of luxury, celebrity, and popularity that depend on the ability to emulate the visual iconography of mainstream celebrity culture".

Although social media are in one sense more democratized (i.e. distributed and in the hands of individuals), that does not necessarily mean that they are not susceptible to the synoptic control of "old" mass media, as described by Mathiesen (1997). Indeed, as Jenkins (2006) points out, both social media and mass media are becoming intertwined and self-referential, and as such reinforce hegemonic and normative gazes and existing hierarchies of distinction.

Spectacular gaze

The third and final mechanism of control that we propose connects the production and consumption of selfies to the notion of the spectacle. Debord (1967/2012) emphasized the power of spectacle to arrest, control and preoccupy perception. Spectacle has its roots in demonstrations and exercise of sovereign power, such as public executions and torture. It entails magnificent display and functions to

overwhelm the senses of masses of people. Debord (1967/2012) postulates that much of modern consumer culture takes the form of spectacle, and consumer researchers have described consumption domains, such as Niketown and ESPN Zone, that exhibit qualities and effects associated with spectacle (Peñaloza, 1998; Kozinets *et al.*, 2004). Similarly, the selfie consumption experience and network of exchange can be viewed as a *locus* of spectacular consumption that is an extension of consumer capitalism (Iqani and Schroeder, 2015).

It can be further argued that the production and consumption of selfies are governed by yet another logic of spectacle. That is, spectacle as "[…] a person or thing exhibited to, or set before, the public gaze as an object either (a) of curiosity or contempt, or (b) of marvel or admiration" (Kan, 2004). In this sense, some moments of the selfie experience can be construed as making ourselves into spectacles. As a result of media convergence (Jenkins, 2006), and particularly the explosion of social media embedded in cell phones, it may become increasingly difficult to avoid stepping into the bright lights of the stage for all to see, especially for children whose social existence and self-concept may be inextricably bound to social networking.

Through engaging in selfie practices, one is temporarily becoming a spectacle within a spectacle, and it has important consequences for the self. One of them has been described by Tiidenberg and Gómez Cruz (2015) as the "popularity paradox". In their study, selfie-posters experienced feeling pressured to constantly deliver new selfies and perform in specific ways to meet audience's expectations and keep their attention. Similarly, Orenstein (2016) and Sales (2016) in their accounts of teenager's social media use document nude selfie exchanges or "flashing" intimate body parts as means to achieve popularity among peers. Thus, selfies controlled by spectacular gaze carry a risk of vulnerability. In attempts to mitigate such risk, selfie posters often deliberately share low-quality selfies to "avoid image reappropriation, unauthorized distribution and potential identification of the selfie's author" (Tiidenberg and Gómez Cruz 2015).

To conclude, we invoke the recognition of Boyd (2014) that social media experiences are complicated. In some instances and certain moments, the lived experience of selfies can indeed possess a quality of emancipatory liberation, as noted above. In other instances, the selfie lived experience can take on compulsive feelings to be seen and to see others. The entire emerging selfie assemblage can function as another field in which the values of neoliberalism shape the enterprising self that is increasingly inclined toward continuous self-improvement (Rose, 1992), rather than the unreflective experience of being comfortable in one's own skin. Much like plastic surgery, self-help programs and self-branding, selfies represent yet another medium for continually augmenting the self for presentation and evaluation by others and the self. And while postmodern perspectives celebrate the potential agency afforded by such trends, others see such trends as further reinforcing a socially engrained habitual state characterized by hyper-reflexivity in which one is continually looking over one's shoulder, ridden with *angst* and anxiety (Sweetman, 2003). The other side of the coin is the compulsion to evaluate others based on these standards that correlate with continuous "improvement", as well as invidious comparison of ourselves with others, creating mimetic desire and rivalry (Girard, 1965) that in the case of selfies often takes the form of FOMO (fear of missing out).

References

Abidin, C. (2016), "'Aren't these just young, rich women doing vain things online?': influencer selfies as subversive frivolity", *Social Media + Society*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 1-17.

Baishya, A. (2015), "#NaMo: the political work of the selfie in the 2014 Indian general elections", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 9, pp. 1686-1700, available at: www.ijoc.org

Barnard, S.R. (2016), "Spectacles of Self(ie) Empowerment? Networked individualism and the logic of the (post)feminist selfie", in Laura Robinson, J.S., Shelia, R.C., Hale, T.M., Williams, A.A. and Hightower, J.L. (Eds), *Communication and Information Technologies Annual (Studies in Media and Communications*), Vol. 11, pp. 63-88, available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S2050-206020160000011014

Bellinger, M. (2015), "Bae caught me Tweetin': on the representational stance of the Selfie", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 9, pp. 1806-1817, available at: www.ijoc.org

Boon, S. and Pentney, B. (2015), "Virtual Lactivism: breastfeeding selfies and the performance of motherhood", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 9, pp. 1759-1774, available at: www.ijoc.org

Bourdieu, P. (1993), *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, Polity, Cambridge.

Boyd, D. (2014), *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

Brandt, R. (2014), "Google divulges numbers at I/O: 20 billion texts, 93 million selfies and more", available at: www.bizjournals.com/sanjose/news/2014/06/25/google-divulges-numbers-at-i-o-20-billion-texts-93.html (accessed 6 October 2015).

Burns, A. (2015), "Selfie control: online discussion of women's photographic practices as a gendered form of social discipline", Doctoral dissertation, Loughborough University.

Christensen, J.R., Hansen, J.C., Larsen, F.H. and Nielsen, J.S. (2015), "From snapshot to Snapchat: Panopticon or Synopticon?", *Akademisk Kvarter*, Vol. 11 (Summer), pp. 69-84.

Debord, G. (1967/2012), *Society of the Spectacle*, Bread and Circuses Publishing, e-book.

Fallon, K. (2014), "Streams of the self: the Instagram feed as narrative autobiography", in Hudson, M., Sternberg, R., Cunha, R., Queiroz, C. and Zeilinger, M. (Eds), *Proceedings of the Interactive Narratives, New Media & Social Engagement International Conference*, *Toronto*, pp. 54-60.

Foucault, M. (1977), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Vintage, New York, NY.

Frosh, P. (2015), "The gestural image: the selfie, photography theory, and kinesthetic sociability", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 9, pp. 1607-1628, available at: www.ijoc.org

Girard, R. (1965), *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore.

Hernandez, R. (2011), "Weiner resigns in chaotic final scene", available at: www.nytimes.com/2011/06/17/nyregion/anthony-d-weiner-tells-friends-he-will-resign.html?_r=1 (accessed 12 March 2014).

Iqani, M. and Schroeder, J.E. (2015), "#selfie: digital self-portraits as commodity form and consumption practice", *Consumption Markets & Culture*, Vol. 19 No. 5, pp. 1-11.

Jenkins, H. (2006), *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, NYU Press, New York, NY.

Kan, L. (2004), "Spectacle", available at: http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/spectacle.htm (accessed 5 January 2015).

Kardashian, K. (2014), *Kim Kardashian Selfish*, Rizzoli International Publications, New York, NY.

Katz, J.E. and Crocker, E.T. (2015), "Selfies and photo messaging as visual conversation: reports from the United States, United Kingdom and China", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 9, pp. 1861-1872.

Koliska, M. and Roberts, J. (2015), "Selfies: witnessing and participatory journalism with a point of view", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 9, pp. 1672-1685, available at: www.ijoc.org

Kozinets, R.V., Sherry, J.F., Storm, D., Duhachek, A., Nuttavuthisit, K. and DeBerry-Spence, B. (2004), "Ludic agency and retail spectacle", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 658-672.

Marwick, A.E. (2015), "Instafame: luxury selfies in the attention economy", *Public Culture*, Vol. 27 No. 1 75, pp. 137-160.

Mathiesen, T. (1997), "The viewer society: Michel Foucault's panopticon' revisited", *Theoretical Criminology*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 215-234.

Mick, D.G. and Fournier, S. (1998), "Paradoxes of technology: consumer cognizance, emotions, and coping strategies", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 123-143.

Munar, A.M. (2010), "Digital exhibitionism: the age of exposure", *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*, Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 401-422.

Murray, D.C. (2015), "Notes to self: the visual culture of selfies in the age of social media", *Consumption Markets & Culture*, Vol. 18 No. 6, pp. 490-516.

Nemer, D. and Freeman, G. (2015), "Empowering the marginalized: rethinking selfies in the slums of Brazil", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 9, pp. 1832-1847.

Orenstein, P. (2016), *Girls & Sex: Navigating the Complicated New Landscape*, HarperCollins, New York, NY.

Peñaloza, L. (1998), "Just doing it: a visual ethnographic study of spectacular consumption behavior at Nike Town", *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, Vol. 2 No. 4, pp. 337-400.

Rettberg, J.W. (2014), *Seeing Ourselves Through Technology*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Rose, N. (1992), "Governing the enterprising self", in Heelas, P. and Morris, P. (Eds), *The Values of the Enterprise Culture: The Moral Debate*, Taylor & Francis, Routledge, New York, pp. 141-164.

Ryan, E.G. (2013), "Selfies aren't empowering: they're a cry for help", available at: http://jezebel.com/selfies-arent-empowering-theyre-a-cry-for-help-1468965365 (accessed 9 December 2015).

Sales, N.J. (2016), *American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenagers*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY.

Schwarz, O. (2010), "On friendship, boobs and the logic of the catalogue online self-portraits as a means for the exchange of capital", *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 163-183.

Senft, T.M. (2013), "Microcelebrity and the branded self", in Hartley, J., Burgess, J. and Bruns, A. (Eds), *A Companion to New Media Dynamics*, Wiley, Malden, MA, pp. 346-354.

Senft, T.M. and Baym, N.K. (2015), "Selfies introduction ~ what does the selfie say? Investigating a global phenomenon", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 9, pp. 1588-1606.

Simmons, R. (2013), "Selfies are good for girls", available at: www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2013/11/selfies_on_instagram_and_facebook_are_tiny_bursts_of_girl_pride.html (accessed 15 November 2014).

Socha, S. (2015), "Could a selfie cost you your career? Social media etiquette explained", available at: www.linkedin.com/pulse/could-selfie-cost-you-your-careersocial-media-etiquette-sarah-socha (accessed 5 February 2016).

Sweetman, P. (2003), "Twenty-first century dis-ease? Habitual reflexivity or the reflexive habitus", *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 51 No. 4, pp. 528-549.

Tiidenberg, K. (2014), "Bringing sexy back: reclaiming the body aesthetic via self-shooting", *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, Vol. 8 No. 1.

Tiidenberg, K. (2015), "Odes to heteronormativity: presentations of femininity in Russian-speaking pregnant women's Instagram accounts", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 9, pp. 1746-1758.

Tiidenberg, K. and Gómez Cruz, E. (2015), "Selfies, image and the re-making of the body", *Body & Society*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 77-102.

Walker, J. (2005), "Mirrors and shadows: the digital aestheticisation of oneself", *The Proceedings of Digital Arts and Culture*, IT University, Copenhagen, pp. 184-190.

Warfield, K. (2014), "An open letter to mass media explaining, definitively, the meaning of selfies", available at: www.makingselfiesmakingself.com/an-open-letter-to-mass-media-explaining-definitively-the-meaning-of-selfies.html (accessed 11 July 2014).

Warfield, K., Cambre, C. and Abidin, C. (2016), "Introduction to the social media + society special issue on selfies: me-diated inter-faces", *Social Media + Society*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 1-5.

Further reading

Poster, M. (1995), *The Second Media Age*, Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge, MA.

Corresponding author

Richard Kedzior can be contacted at: rk034@bucknell.edu