

LUNDS UNIVERSITET

Sociologiska Institutionen

***THE INFLATED COST OF INTERPERSONAL
RELATIONSHIPS***

‘Self-Marketization and Identity Conflict in the Digital Age of Web 2.0’

Fortune B. Dagnogo

Handledare: Johan Sandberg



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Abstract

This thesis investigates how students navigate interpersonal and professional relationships in the context of neoliberal rationality and Web 2.0 digital infrastructures. Focusing on self-marketization practices and the conflict between online personas and real identities, the study draws on qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with university students aged 20–35. Using a dual theoretical framework of Rational Choice Theory and Symbolic Interactionism, it explores how emotional labor, digital capital, and compatibility logic shape identity performance and social connection in digital social arenas (DSAs). The findings reveal that while students engage in strategic self-presentation to remain visible and competitive, this often results in emotional fatigue, ambivalence, and feelings of disconnection. Suggesting an “inflation” of interpersonal relationships of increased access, but a paradoxically devaluation of genuine connection. The study contributes to a broader understanding of how neoliberal market logic and digital culture restructure intimacy, identity, and social meaning and digital landscapes.

Keywords

Web 2.0, Self Marketization, Digital persona, Neoliberal rationality, Inflation, Digital capital, interpersonal relationships commodification, Connection, performance Digital Social arenas

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This is dedicated to Mon Papa Ben avec toi Yaya.

*And all those who have cultivated my intellect and academic curiosity
beyond the pages of an essay, a special gratitude to: Mon grand frere Kiki,
A little alien Annika, Et ma maman Ami.*

*And special acknowledgement to all the participants who were willing to
take part of this investigation, my gratitude extends beyond these borders and
will carry your insight inevitably.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The idea of humans being prone to exchanging labour, resources and value, in romantic courtship or while building friendships, is not a new phenomena. Social systems of exchange are deeply rooted from a biological need to survive, Evolutionary scientists have explored in many species the role of mutualism; relationships premised on mutual development along others akin (TECT, 2008). Long term survival required the capacity to assess compatibility through primitive and instinctive inspections as well as the ability to present one's value to others in order to build cooperation and trust. Such research additionally demonstrates that natural exchanges can be initiated from an altruistic intention but arguably driven to benefit their own, and their alliances' well being. As society grows increasingly complex the evolutionary instinct for exchange to form and seeking beneficial connections stays the same, but in contrast the arenas in which we seek those exchanges; continuously undergo cultural, economic, political and social shifts. Radical macro shifts are often largely emphasized to indicate these significant changes. Resulting in//or breaking certain fundamental social fabrics, specifically; how humans exchange or form alliances and what now constitutes an identity equipped to adapt to such changing landscapes.

There exists a paradox in contemporary life; where regardless of the various technological tools disposable for interacting and access to social relations without the hindrance of geographical distance. Such a shift shows that, as dating apps and social media use rise, so do reports in neuroticism, (Rochat et al., 2019). Contemporary indicators show a rise in burnout, depression, loneliness, and social withdrawal (Eurostat, 2017) further showing a decrease of in person social interaction among peers (Finlay et al, 2019). A pattern however is such contradictions and interpersonal struggles are primarily experienced by western individuals who are required to adapt to this digital social arena, and utilize such platforms in order to foster social bonds and navigate professionally. The formerly mentioned statistical data suggest that certain younger international populations with access to devices such as digital phones and social media, although have greater access to romantic and professional opportunities, many still report experiencing greater interpersonal insecurity, anxiety (World Happiness Report, 2025). Such transformations in both

social and institutions are reflecting a shift towards an ideology which presupposes that actors are liberal motivated agents, inclined towards financial, personal and institutional growth (Friedman & Friedman, 1980, p.42). However in the process breaks certain social fabrics In which “society has to play catch-up in order to reform itself under changed conditions.” (Fukuyama,1999,p.21). additionally reporting difficulty in the competitive global economic and romantic markets as potential factors (Twenge, Spitzberg and Campbell, 2019). Therefore I believe an investigation of such relationships can provide new research into the sociological context of how this paradox manifests as both objects within the digital landscape and subjects of social and cultural reality, how the self-constructions with decreased reliance on physical proximity in social systems to form mutual cooperation, and to meet their needs. Additionally, how Web.20 has contributed to a new digital social arena pertaining to its potential interpersonal effects on younger (20-35) participants, Therefore leading to the;

Research Question: *To which extent do students use self-marketization practices within web 2.0; as well as experience conflict between their online persona and real identity? Moreover, can this be seen in professional and interpersonal relationships?*

This paper's chapters will explore the practice of Self-Marketization and Digital capital. The performance of Digital Dualism as conflict between the online persona, and real Identity, The rationalization of compatibility Commodification and Labour. Furthermore this thesis utilizes both rational choice theory with Gary S. Becker's 'A treatise of the family' 1981 and symbolic interactionism, particularly Erving Goffman concepts within 'The presentation of the self in everyday life' 1956. Both common and new to the traditional sociological approaches. Although this paper acknowledges the holistic causations and elements such as of neoliberalism pertaining to Web 2.0, it will primarily centralised the micro e.g epistemic data through an abductive inference method, in order to analyse and provide a theoretical interpretation of social action and how it may be embedded within larger cultural narratives as well as technological and economic structures (Smith, 2005).

1.2 Problematizing

Fundamental to fostering certain desired connections are the milieu that actors interact within. The praised onset of digitalization and AI in platforms, although structurally advanced civilization, has been extended beyond institutions and into the daily personal lives of millions, and the ways that individuals now relate to their community peers and personal relationships is now decreasingly limited to physical proximity and marked by access to potential romantic, friendship and networks and labour opportunities than at any other point in history (Balbi & Magaudda, 2018), and in consequence may have heightened individualistic expectations. choices which are contemporarily expanded to a global digital stage with social media apps. It's fair to assess that such an economic landscape has enriched social areas of life such as particularly a nature of selfhood while humans are social creatures who paradoxically require connection in order to thrive.

I believe that this paper contributes to an increasing academic interest and need in sociological analysis particularly pertaining to ways we engage with devices, whose effects have been explored in depth through frameworks of ethics, psychology and cognitive sciences. As collectives, the very pragmatic use of devices is crucial to understanding the forces that are shaping norms, values, Particularly in the west “Thus, people feel pressed to keep up with the speed of change they experience in their social and technological world” (Rosa, 2003, p.87:87) Where various global, economic and political tensions are at play, and are highly accelerated. .Whereas the demographic pattern shows what these issues primarily pertaining to the youth, little research is constructed pertaining to the voices of a generation born within the ‘*Age of Information*’ (Shannon, 1948), and their general conditions that proliferate such difficulties in navigating interpersonal relationships.

1.3 Purpose and Motivation

This paper aims to investigate how a sample of students' participants reflect upon digital personas, A critical understanding of Interpersonal relationship pertaining to theoretical and sociological insight. I will Investigate the process of internalization of digital norms e.g the cultural terrains of web 2.0. and if there is an overlap among each domain. This phenomena will be assessed through the primary demographic of individuals between the ages of 20 and 35, explicitly among students. The purpose of which is to optimize the potential results pertaining to the implementation of digital devices in their daily lives as having witnessed the potential increased digitization of their social milieu. In addition, students may be able to critically assess and reflect upon their values within interpersonal relationships, and epistemic data in reference to their experiences upon entering the labour market and their professional networking strategies.

Moreover, the motivation of this paper is to bring academic value to their voices as well as to understand the root of their potential frustrations within DSA and analyze its potential social virus and problematize their perspectives within a larger geo-political pattern towards a breakdown in social fabrics framed in references to sociological theory; As such research can be used to address pressing social issues and the underlying economic superstructure in potentially proliferating neuroticism in younger populations.

Furthermore the academic significance of this target group lies in the understanding of the values, principles and conduct they bring forth with them. The ways that this tool is being utilized among the future populations is academically significant; As relative social agents the chosen representative sample play a role in creating and upholding foundations of our collective civil society contemporarily and hereafter. For that reason, as the future arbiters of the new world, their ideologies, ethos and standards will be rooted within their present circumstances as well as shape future political, social and economic landscapes.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This section provides a Historical overview of terms, concepts and shifts within socio-economic theory, followed by the trajectory towards digitalization and their significance in the rationalization of IPR.

When asked what specific social shifts that marked the way generations to come, interact with one another, history tends to foreground radical transformations such as the Industrial Revolution, colonization, World Wars, and political revolutions (Mbembe,2021). High significance is often placed on historical circumstances where certain domains of life change in a rapid way. However Less widespread coverage is given to measure the significance of recent changes on the collective, especially those without overt violence or tense conflict. A radical but pacific shift marked in this investigation is the emergence of '*Neoliberalism*' as the economic and ideological operating system of contemporary capitalism (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005). Karl Polanyi's '*The Great Transformation*' (2001) historically outlines and critiques these transformations towards self regulated markets, as a false utopia of; economic prosperity at the costs of social and institutional stability. An economic apparatus pertaining primarily in the west and has been historically used to demonstrate principles of civilization, of liberal and free political and economic organisation which was "absorbed in the social system" (Polanyi, 2001 p.91:93). Therein neoliberalism has additionally functioned as a social and ideological model; emphasizes individual choice, privatized markets seeing limited governmental intervention, secularity and economic expansion as freedom; the *summa et ultimum* (corresponding to; the peak and final point of life). However he demonstrates how "An economy of this kind derives from the expectation that human beings behave in such a way as to achieve maximum money gain" (Polanyi, 2001,p.93) and private institutions increasingly prioritise corporate and or personal needs at the cost of the collective wellbeing. The most important elements pertaining to this overview are the historical trajectory tIn reference will be used to indicate neoliberal market logic in interpersonal and how its potential ethos manifest in social network exchanges.

Another slow but significant shift was the digital revolution. At the onset of its inception in the late 1950s (TV and mobiles) was well underway, already creating major shifts in communication,

policies and sparked dramatic social change (Kovarik, 2016). Moreover, Under the large umbrella of the digital revolution was the invention of the ‘World Wide Web’ (WWW) in 1989 by the English engineer Tim Berners-Lee (Briggs, Burke & Espen Ytreberg, 2020). Such an invention led to the very platform era known as ‘Global village’ (McLuhan, 2001), when referring to the networking social systems found within devices such as phones or laptops. These devices can create both dualistic and dielectric relationships between the agent and the technology. Functionally designed to meet the specific needs of its owner for personal use, therefore can exist ‘as extensions of the self’ (Hulme & Peters, 2001; Turkle, 2008). An objective techno material that encompasses a subjective self, while being and a deeply personal tool that's fundamentally used to navigate the world. The deregulated connection of users worldwide is more pronounced in the rapid rise of ‘*Digital Social Arenas*’ (DSA) Web 2.0: A phase of the internet characterized by participatory and user-generated content by consistent externalization of oneself. The most commercial DSA's being Instagram, Twitter and Reddit, there exist certain Networking apps such as Facebook, LinkedIn, dating apps such as Tinder and Hinge. most which boomed in the early 2000s, primarily used for its social forums or a space to express oneself creatively. Understanding such norms and performing the required standards in order to generate desired outcomes, has been explored as the historical inclination towards a monetization is often seen in all mediums (Briggs, Burke & Espen Ytreberg, 2020). With further input from the father of surveillance analysis; Jean Pierre Foucault, who originally defined ‘DSA’ as:

“For each heterotopia has a precise and determined function within a society and the same heterotopia can, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or another.” (Foucault, 1984, p.5)

Referring to spaces that are simultaneously physical and symbolic where both hyper-surveillance and radical anonymity coexist and social media platforms are some widespread examples of this phenomena. In this sense Digital heterotopias transmute space and time, occupy multiple spatial dimensions, They exist everywhere and can be likened to alternative timelines which are stagnant or remain in constant motion. In summary both shifts have laid the foundation on the degree of individual rationalization and various technologies embedded within western society in both public and private life. The defined terms are historically rich concepts that will be used in reference to this investigation, Particularly how neoliberal market rationality emerges in digital and interpersonal relationships exchanges.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides an overview of previous academic research; it will highlight literature pertaining to the interdisciplinary and conceptual relationship among sociology, technology and economic theory.

3.1 Exploration of Web 2.0 As ‘DSA’

In exploring the onset of Web.2.0 and the transformation of social interaction, significant within this field of research is *‘Machine Habitus’* (2022) by Massimo Airoldi; His academic composition demonstrates in a number of ways the historical developments pertaining to the digitization of social interaction, the internet and its transition towards 2.0. Building upon Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of *‘Habitus and Field’* (Bourdieu,1991). In terms of the digital evolution, Airoldi skillfully offers historical and theoretical adaptations to analyse such epistemological frames. In particular how these digital services are created function to represent different worlds with distinctive different norms, subculture and regulations.

3.1.1 Digital Capital

Where individuals' social economic political and global positions overlap within technological fields; new forms of exchanges emerge where; “Access and expertly master-ing information technologies is in effect a *‘Digital Capital’* (Airoldi; (Ragnedda and Ruiu 2020 , p:117).

Digital systems of exchange “is directly converted into platform-specific cultural capital, social capital and prestige” which will be used in this thesis as digital capital, where this form of currency is a game of visibility that is “objectified by metrics such as the number of followers, video views, retweets or likes” (Airoldi, 2022,117) .Specifically explore how digital capital being is measured by an individuals' capacity to function, As well as how students navigate cultivating a digital persona that generates desired form for attention, becoming a means for cultivating IPR.

Such heterotopias don't exist in isolation rather emerge from society's normative assumptions, culture and underbellies, all form of capital have the capacity to be transmuted to DSA, but mediated through AI which has the capacity to enforces/ upkeep of certain cultural ideals and proliferates them, This will be explored by Cathrin Hakim's theory on '*Erotic Capital*' (2010), her work similarly large theoretical influence from Bourdieu's concepts. Erotic capital pertaining to this analytical framework functions as a valuable tool in socialization and structural mobility, in addition scholars such as Kelly Cotters provides the necessary focus on social relations, In '*Playing the visibility game*' (2019) which critically assess the role of market logic and how algorithmic driven exchanges are performed within DSA specifically within Web 2.0.

3.1.2 Web 2.0

Digital capital pertaining to this essay takes the form of a cultivation of technological skill, in both pragmatic as well as symbolically use. Pertaining to that, Web 2.0 is characterized by participatory, user-generated content on digital platforms, marking a shift from users as passive consumption to active producers of digital media (O'Reilly, 2005). A shift where the average 'user' could now create-share and curate a symbolic identity differing in each DSA. Web 2.0 is characterised by an increasing distinction made between 'online and offline' as separate realms, encompassing different sets of behaviors, norms and rules. This dielectric phenomenon has been explored as '*Digital Dualism*' ;A term first coined by contemporary sociologist Nathan Jurgenson who offer a critique stemming from:

“The systematic bias to see the digital and physical as separate; often as a zero-sum tradeoff where time and energy spent on one subtracts from the other. This is digital dualism par excellence.” (Jurgenson,2011)

This literature modeled above will be used to explore the phenomena of interconnectedness through smart objects. The agents' experiences of self- marketization and how they navigate digital heterotopias in terms of interpersonal relationships. Conceptually grounded in assessing the phenomena of digital dualism, and lastly the degree to which they may place themselves within digital infrastructures pertaining to digital capital in terms of social or professional arenas.

3.2 The Rationalization of 'IPR'

This section provides an overview of key sociological concepts related to emotional life through neoliberal rationality. It centers on the transformation of connection, social exchanges and selfhood under modern conditions.

Why apply the economic term "inflation" to interpersonal relationships?

Rather than beginning with economic theory alone, this essay proposes a sociologically grounded metaphor: that the dynamics of supply and demand, cost, and devaluation can be applied to modern IPR. Eva Illouz's *'Why Love Hurts'* (2012) provides a compelling foundation for understanding how emotions have been subsumed into rationalized, market-oriented frameworks. This paper's problematization section will be primarily built from such foundational causation and effects, pertaining to social exchanges mediated by digital platforms. The consequences of such technologies of choice and identity and if they experience elements of digital dualism in the IRP domains. The metaphor of "inflation" is introduced to highlight how an oversupply of accessible connections can devalue the emotional labor and investment required for meaningful relationships.

3.2.1 What is Neoliberal Rationality?

Building upon Illouz 'conceptual language, Neoliberal rationality refers to a framework in which individuals internalize market logic in non-economic areas of life. Demonstrates how the notion of Self-regulating mechanism and 'free-will' in contemporary consumer culture delegate self-marketing acts as a form of self expression; of autonomy over identity and of freedom in determining the value/choosing of others to exchange with in free markets. but the concept of Bounded rationality is often a "economic prejudice" which diagnoses systemic disadvantages as a lack of 'will' and contradictions threaten the: Neutral secular ideal built towards optimization efficiency and dehumanization as a means to one's ends in effect "obscuring social visions" (Polanyi, 2001, p.214).

3.2.2 Self-Marketization Practices and 'TOC'

Practices pertaining to self-marketization have been widely and critically explored, but the definition that is most sociologically adept to such practices in this essay was first conceptually seen in Jean P. Foucault's lectures on biopolitics, pertaining to; *'Entrepreneurship of the self'*. His analysis suggests its widespread emergence is inadvertently linked to the neoliberalism of rationality encroaching within non-economic domains (Tim, 2020). Expressions of such are mediated by *'Technologies of choice'* (TOC) referring to the identifiable apparatus for self-marketing practices. These technologies are marked by a visual display of others and oneself, an increasing access to an abundance of individuals within Web 2.0 and generating global competition in DSA. This designed abundance of choice in options becomes the standard means to which individuals network and seek potential IPR. Although this choice is not conducive to humans natural compatibility assessment, and could lead to further estrangement as she illustrates how choices is excised through "an "instantaneous" snap decision but each of these routes has specific cultural pathways, which remain to be elucidated." (Illouz, 2012, p.20). She highlights that due to TOC being shaped by algorithmic technologies and consumer culture, even rational choice risks being counterproductive.

Furthermore this paper aims to not challenge but provide an alternative definition to the former mentioned works; That self-marketization practices could be rooted in the social mechanisms developed, from not a premis of social insecurity rather a human inclination towards cultivating a social self, And general adaptation to new terrains (e.g Web 2.0).

3.3 Commodification Of Connection

This literature will be used to determine the degree of inflation within IPR, whether such technologies have increased the 'emotional cost' in digital assessment of compatibility which has been previously investigated as the concept of: *'Emotional Labor'* (1989) as defined by Arlie Hochschild. She explores how the act of; both direct and in-directly caring is the management of internal feelings and expectations manifested as social or occupational practices towards others similar to Illouz primarily in romantic heterosexual relationships. which provides the lense that such emotional labour is more a cause of historical, institutional and social expectations placed on individuals (Hochschild,1989). In digital environments lies the underlying expectation for individuals to always be emotionally present, keeping mental inventory of responsibilities within DSA is delegated as showing interest, ambition and/or care (Illouz, 2012,180:184). The commodification of connecting refers to the TOC which mediates these emotionally embedded interactions.

In summary this essay aims to further fill a gap in research by evaluating not solely romantic digital exchanges but how friendships and networking are approached. The situated literature helps build upon a conjecture of; firstly how the labour required under Web 2.0 in order to access IPR requires ('purchasing power') a varying degrees of emotions, labor and resources.

Secondly, investigate how resources such as time, attention and effort under Digital IPR markets could function as commodities which can be sold as well as obtained depending on the degree of digital capital each individual possesses. Lastly, provides an academic accumulation by offering an epistemic insight into the social mechanisms of individuals under web 2.0, Rather than a critical analysis of conflict and power relations among actors, I will particularly focus on how they assess compatibility, how social mechanisms become proliferated under modern economic landscapes, and specifically investigate how individuals navigate digital spaces, in pursuit of IPRs.

4. THEORETICAL BASE

This section explores the two theoretical frameworks used in this investigation and how they will be utilized to guide the research design as well as in the problematization in later chapters.

4.1 The Economic Framework of Rational Choice

The first foundations of this essay will be built from: The Rational Choice Theory (RCT), Proposes that individuals organise themselves strategically within social dynamics in the pursuit of their own goals. by use of social economist Gary Becker's framework for defining an underlying 'transactional' and economic nature of social organisation and the choices made in regards to 'Social Capital' (Becker, 1981). This paper will utilize a similar ethos of RTC's core concepts particularly to pragmatically personify self-marketization practices in agents as liberal actors. Which pertaining to the analysis, structure and problematization, brings forth the necessary methodological aspects of the study and provides relevant grounds to explore digital landscapes through concepts.

Rational Choice Theory in Context - In order to assess whether the proliferation neoliberal ideologies within the digital landscape of web 2.0 are reflected in real social exchanges, interviewing students provides insight into rationalities that underpin their approaches to social life in contrast to digital life, the various factors subjective and external institutional mechanism which they use to weigh the cost/ benefits of digital behaviour.

4.2 The Model of Symbolic Interactionism

The second foundation of this essay will be built from Symbolic interactionism, pertaining to Erving Goffman's notions of social presentation. The theory of 'Front Stage and Back Stage; performances (Goffman,1959,22:112).This framework of assessing the individual as a social phenomena thus can offer such an investigation with a larger scope of explanations for data

results outside of RTC. In this sociological analysis the individual is important but is not isolated from the society and is an active participant in upholding its culturally shared symbolic meaning. and utilized in method design to guide the thematic organizations of the observations made.

Symbolic Interactionism in Context - May provide the subjective interpretation of lived experiences but as manifestation of shared collective ideas. By assessing the complex and multidimensional relationships individuals have to themselves, the world and to digital heterotopias. Symbols are fostered in an environment that relate and reflect ideas upon layers of narratives and norms, which contextually could provide insight into the social process that maintains larger social institutions, cultures and ideologies both in real life and online.

4.3 Dual Theoretical Framework

In summary both RCT and SI theoretical perspectives that will be used abductively; operating in close relation to the available epistemic data and detect thematic directions. Both provide valuable guidance in observational and analytical techniques, That can be later correlated to the wider collective shift in expectations, norms and standards as well as offer guidance to indicate the values and motivations underlying social practices (Smith,2005). Although built from Becker's economic concepts as previewed and the formation of the Questions (See Appendix, APPX:2, 3) in reference to thematic structure. Inorder to provide a model of how to theoretically interpret the phenomena without falling into limiting of either, the duality is to provide reference for when the other may lack the nuance needed to pragmatically attribute meaning, for example translating the ways economic logic is expressed in in the competitive professional and interpersonal markets, While providing a reflective cyclical framework to investigate the individual's relative, social and subjectives experiences.

5. METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the method and research design used to explore how students navigate digitally mediated interpersonal relationships. It focuses on the strengths and limitations, the abductive analytical procedure, data collection and ethical safeguards.

5.1 Research Design

This research is designed to collect data through Individual interviews (II) and one Focus Group (FG). Both are an achievable interactive model of participant observation (PO), and are demonstrative epistemic evidence for my sociological research. In order to get a variety of opinions, stimulate conversation, but not overwhelm the ratio, Around 1-10 private interviews and holding a small group interview with 6-10 people is ideal Within this research scope (Luker, 2008, p.181:187). This method will be premised on dialogue elements, therefore the question format is aimed at optimizing both methods to widen the variations of observations, to gather both thick as well as some thin descriptions, which could enrich the following analysis. Unlike II, FGs requires a facilitator to mediate the continuous discourse because such an environment can be highly contingent and operate within an interactional field.

Central to this is the ongoing process of meaning-making, and the researcher's role is to mediate and interpret continuous stimuli responsibly. Therefore this investigation will optimize an abductive methodology. I intend to interpret empirical patterns through an interactive theory-data dialogue rather than hypothesis testing. The research collection process is designed to “sample carefully, operationalize fastidiously, and stay connected to theory” (Luker,2008, p.44). A process encapsulating a dynamic movement from empirical observations to pattern generalization, giving weight to both theory and data as anchors, And I aim to achieve by meticulously collecting field notes, and voice recordings (via iphone) to be transcribed and organised. recording in order to preserve the content and not miss or forget certain mnemonic indispensable elements (Tavory & Timmers, 2014,52:55).

It is important to highlight that as a social researcher it's crucial to try to minimize partisan bias, although bias is inherent in all sciences, is not always a vice and can be a pragmatic navigation tool to further question, investigate. Therefore a process of 'Defamiliarization' (Tavory & Timmers, 55-58) with data will be taken prior to performing an open coding of transcriptions; Which pertains to laying out of interviews with the lookout for similarities and differences. Then subsequently axial coding; a process of thematically organising the most significant topics, quotes and looking for a variation of prominent themes.

Furthermore the question format and guide is designed to; Firstly, outlining the motivations, strategies, values, and opinions. Secondly, how participants themselves describe external structures in influencing their self-presentation. Thirdly, how students may interpersonally practice self-marketization within DSAs. Guided by the dual theoretical frameworks formerly mentioned. In summary, optimising abductive imagination and rethinking the research is designed to look at the contractions of plausible semiotic meanings when observing the interaction dynamics (Tavory & Timmers, p.25). In order and potentially generate 'New theoretical insights' from observations in the problematization analysis (Tavory & Timmers, 24:37) interpreting and discussing plausible justifications within a larger sociological context.

5.1.1 Strengths and Weaknesses

A strength of the research method is offered by the larger data sets, A wider scope could lead to more empirically robust answers. Certain notable weaknesses are that the FG may lead to a superficial description of concepts or experiences; due to the larger number of people and limited time to explore the phenomena in depth. In addition increases the risk of and potential misinterpretation of terms (such as Web 2.0) which could cloud the definition of my own assessment of those concepts. II and FC are both time consuming and require social knowledge, different question formulations and research layouts. In terms of sampling, which may be challenging in finding diverse participants and limited sample possibilities but diversity in such research is practiced encapsulation of various voices and perspectives which is fundamental to modern sociological research.

5.1.2 Reflexivity and Bias

The aim of generating a diverse sample, such as relative research designs, are prone to bias due to differences in cultural or socio-economic background. Particularly in this investigation, the differences of understanding could emerge in terms and language, or misinterpretation/understanding of the questionnaire. Despite this, a pragmatic solution to decrease biases would be to facilitate occasions where participants can define the terms for themselves, known as 'Emic coding' (Alasuutari, 1995, 63:69). Moreover, by defining the terms themselves, allows for all agents involved (including the researcher) to know and agree on a collective meaning of such concepts. In addition, another bias prone to such a method is the facilitator or presence of a recording device in the room, which may influence the interaction. Although a valid acknowledgement, I believe this plays little relevance in the study as the participants will be made aware of the ethics and care principles of the study, prior to the engagement (Eldén 2020) and understand that the core of the investigation is also about digital devices embedded in daily interaction and is therefore not except for academic research (Collins, & Restivo, 1983).

5.2 Epistemic Data Collection

The primary empirical collection strategy was designed to oscillate between both individual interviews and one Focus Group (FG). All interviews were conducted within the month of May 2025. The collection resulted in nine in-depth Individual Interviews and one extended focus group Interview.

In gathering material, firstly was sampling, which took place within campus locations in Lund. Finding participants willing to partake in the study through campus. After asking round of 39-45 individuals, the main challenge was scheduling the time. However, in large part, most participants included in this investigation were gathered from 'word of mouth'; by asking the student who denied if perhaps they knew of someone else interested, and this strategy greatly benefited the time constraints and led to more contacts. After the interviews, I would ask the participants if they knew of additional people that were willing to partake, but this time with an

emphasis on certain demographics that I had not interviewed yet (criteria such as race, age and gender) was given secondary contacts given from participants themselves e.g Snowballing sample, This was done with the purpose of widening the scope of the sample population (Smith, 2005).

The Interview guides were semi-structured and tailored to each format developed for both II and FC. This structure consisted of 9 individual interviews and 1 focus group with 8 participants in total 19 participants. The II were each ranging from approximately 30 minutes to one hour in length. Additionally, the focus group session was held for 1.5 hours (Which was longer than intended) finding a suitable unbooked room for the FC was another unintended challenge, but once located and set up (including fika) processed with the introduction, consent forms and subsequent recording. The general setting for II, included quiet rooms at Lund University, and public areas, benches etc (location depending on availability and limited noise pollution). Furthermore once all the recording were gathered due to having ease in interviews and talkative participant the structure was not confined to the written guide rather, I noted as “changing depending on the topic covered” (II: Transcripts, 2025) which improved my format and I learned how to better frame, a question and ways or follow up the questions,with each new participant.

5.3 Empirical Material and Coding

In organising the material, interview transcripts were not rearranged to fit the structure's original order of question (Q1-5), which to some degree defamiliarized myself from one structure of question to another and embraced the participants natural stream of expression; *'A context of discovery'* (Swedberg, 2016, 1:6) by how they each correlate different phenomena together although at times cluttered, lead to gaining new perspectives. In addition, by going back and forth with the data once transcribed, I re-familiarize myself primarily with the scope of the research, and then the theoretical framework. And revisiting observation brought fourth layers of opposed ideas and new theoretical positions suggesting this abductive strategy lead me to enough distance to see a larger pattern, but with enough epistemic accounts to validate and invalidate some conceptual assumptions made throughout. Subsequently the process of transcribing resulted in a rich and complementary dataset of

themes and topics, while it should be noted that some participant answers reached beyond the scope of this research; which suggest that the questionnaires may have been more broad than intended. Nonetheless the guide still facilitated the necessary limits in thematic dimensions. In conclusion the coding of the qualitative material led to a wide selection of evidence pertaining to the topic. Assessing contemporary effects of digital landscapes within IPR.

5.4 Ethics and Consent

All participants provided signed consent and privacy forms, Interviews and the focus group were anonymized, recorded with permission, and conducted in settings that ensured confidentiality. Such ethical considerations to preserve the privacy of participants were followed: Asking for voluntary participation and title and aim of research project. Provided consent form to all participants (except participant #9 due to digital zoom meeting; offered digital consent form alternative) Returned signed consent form, prior to recording audio. highlighting how audio will only be utilized to confirm the anonymous state within quotation but geographical information such as age and gender may be used within analysis and theory. Lastly, digressing that participants on sensitive info (names and information regarding personal identities) is anonymized in transcripts and in presentation of findings.

6. ANALYTICAL STRUCTURE

This chapter gives an overview of the thematically coded data, suggests a layout for participants and provides a guide on how the data has been structured and the ways that it will be analysed in later chapters.

The emerging themes within the empirical material once transcribed and coded, the analysis is section into two parts. Firstly, the Presentation of empirical findings (A) and later the Problematization and Analysis (B), Both are structured around three major themes that emerged from the data: Theme 1: Self-Marketization, Theme 2: Digital Capital, Theme 3: Digital Dualism. Furthermore each theme has further broken down into specific sub-themes based on recurring patterns across interviews and focus groups. Corresponding each, section (A1-9) will have an holistic description of the various observational summaries and reflections that were collected with some representation quotes from participants, followed by the observation summary.

6.1 Empirical Findings Guide:

7.1 TH1 - Self Marketization,

7.1.1: Marketization on dating platforms

7.1.2: Fatigue of marketization practices

7.1.3: Compatibility assessments

7.1.4. Ambivalence and critique of platforms use

7.2 TH2 - Digital Capital

7.2.1: Social Media as a tool for professional fields

7.2.2 : Pressures and insecurity regarding digital performance

7.2.3: Conflict of maintaining online persona/ performance

7.3 TH2 - Digital Dualism

7.3.1 : Surveillance and digital stalking culture

7.3.2 : Online vs offline contradictions

6.2 Problematization Analysis Guide:

8.1 Problematizing Self Marketization Practices

B:1 - TH1 Marketization (*A : 1 to A : 4*)

8.2 Problematizing Digital Capital

B:2 - TH2 Digital Capital (*A : 5 to A : 7*)

8.3 Problematizing Digital Dualism

8.3.1 Surveillance and Digital Pathologies

B:3 - TH3 Digital Capital (*A : 8 to A : 9*)

8.4 Problematizing Market Logic & Digital Dualism (*B:1 and B:2*)

8.5 Commodification of Connection (*B:1 to B:3*)

Participant Layout:

The themes will be combining individual interviews and focus group discussions to capture both personal narratives and collective discourse. In order to distinguish the data sources, participants have been labeled as follows:

<i>Type of Observation</i>	<i>Individual Interview</i>	<i>Focus Group</i>
Student	Participants #1 - #9	Participants #A - #H

Because a mixed-method approach was used, this structure allowed for thematic comparison across both individual and group dynamics numerically (II), and alphabetically (FG) in order to preserve anonymity, clarity and consistency throughout the presentation and analysis. Additionally All additional trancoptes quotes used in the problematization will be referenced according to the participants as: (#). And sections as: (A: 1-9). The in text citations that are not within the empirical findings but quoted or referenced are within transcriptions and referenced in bibliography due to limited space.

7. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This section shows the empirical findings. Displaying the research question as well as some in text citations from participants pertaining to the thematic structure. it additionally inserts observational reflections of the overall subgrouping.

7.1 Self Marketization

To what extent do students use self-marketing practices as well as experience conflict between the online persona and real identity in interpersonal relationships?

Overview of theme 1: Participants showed a consistent pattern of curation of their self-presentation. As well as partook in self assessment of others on similar digital platforms. Especially on dating and social media apps which often generated feelings of objectification, anxiety, or detachment from their ‘real’ selves as well as apprehension towards others online.

7.1.1: Marketization on Dating Platforms

A:1 - Interview data observations drawn pertaining to the practice of self marketization.

Participant #G:

“Well relationships app are basically advertising yourself - that's what you do”

Participant #B:

(in agreement) “Yea, absolutely.... like the society has set up a system like this, if you're not indulging in it then you cannot move forward”

Participant: #8:

“And that's the same thing that happened in the dating apps as well. When I was catering this handpicked pictures, or like handpicked prompts or whatever that I had. I was constantly thinking about how this is going to be perceived by the other end? And is this likeable enough”

Participant #9:

“But when I look at a gay dating app, what I see is only bodies. It's only sex. It's only how attractive you are physically, how much muscle you have, how much hair you have, how large is your penis. Let's be real, that's also... I remember one guy asked me, “is your penis at least 21 centimetres?” If it's not, I don't even want to see you.”

“We have these apps and us gay men are a lot more sexual.....That's like very standard Grindr behaviour.”

Observational summary: In these examples, participants viewed self-presentation online as a performance, for social validation. Many felt pressure to appear appealing in a system that objectifies identity into attractive/sellable traits, illustrating how different apps target different interpersonal domains (such as romantic, sexual ect) for meeting the needs of the user.

7.1.2: Fatigue of marketization practices

A:2 - Interview data drawn pertaining frustration and pressure felt to successfully market themselves

Participant #B:

“I was, thinking about making my profile but it was already so exhausting. Just fitting everything I took a lot of time on what should i feel, what should I post. What's an interesting about me and I started thinking...is there anything interesting about me?” (said sarcastically)”

Participant #A:

“ Also, I think there is a kind of a stereotype of the way you want to be seen online for some people. So you kind of, like this person, if they have a very stereotypical way of taking profile pictures with a very stereotypical way of showing yourself online: ‘I have lots of friends, and I'm a very friendly person and outgoing and smart can feel forced”

Participant #8:

“Like you have to have to be skinny, you have to be able to go to the gym, have abs, do this, do that, be able to wake up at six in the morning, have a routine, take care of yourself, be healthy, yada, yada, yada, all these things that like, it's really hard to meet. And also like, it's like, so time consuming, as well as like energy consuming that it's like, how am I going to be able to do all of this and have all my responsibilities?”

Observational summary: When discussing the process of creating online profiles, participants often noted mental and emotional labour required in assessing one's presentation as an exhaustive and time consuming task, causing them to feel digitally induced fatigue. Participant #8 particularly explores the feeling of overwhelming external pressures that emerge in assessing oneself within the market logic of self optimization.

7.1.3: Compatibility Assessments

A:3 - Observations drawn pertaining to how participants look for compatibility indicators on digital platforms

Participant #2:

“Because online at least it's a bit more difficult to know if they're.... Judging a bit by its cover kind of thing. I think a lot of the time, I go for people that have similar music tastes.....maybe common music means sometimes means a common in like just other things“

Participant #4:

“It can be physical appearance, but also maybe things they say or how they present themselves aesthetically”

Participant #8:

“Then I would like, feel like I'm so compatible with that person.....We both like doing the same things. Like, you know, we're both faking this the same exact way....we usually like bond over the fact “

Observational summary: Compared to the majority who did not currently use dating apps, the participants who did or had previous experiences tended to assess compatibility through how users curated their digital presentation, as a rational tool for compatibility; in the absence of deeper interpersonal context. This offers a valuable insight into the clues and ways individuals present themselves functions as means to assess compatibility though similarity in personas, therefore in, optimizing their self-presentation, increases finding others alike and can bond as well as take comfort in their digital homogeneous market visibility.

7.1.4. Ambivalence and critique of platforms

A:4 - Interview data observations of participants to critiques and feeling of ambivalence towards DSAs.

Participant #4 :

“online, it feels a bit more sterile. So you're just seeing a screen with some pictures and some phrases that somebody puts.....And you cannot assess if there's any chemistry”

Participant #2

“I feel like it's a lot more like a situationship kind of thing. Like they'll want to, just want to see how things go before they actually commit”

Participant #9:

“But then whenever I had sexual encounters through Grindr, I always felt empty afterwards. There was nothing. It was just, um, physical activity of sex instead of doing sports.”

Observational summary: Participants generally expressed an ambivalence towards the platforms. The ones that did partake suggested having had few social meetings in real life. For example #2 noticed a general decrease in commitment in her dating app experiences. Similarly #9 remarks of engaging via apps as another “physical activity” rather than a tool for fostering meaningful connections, demonstrates the general unreciprocated interest in emotionally engaging while noticing that most people are still obligated to operate under such platforms. Thus proposes a sense of self-interest when searching for a partner.

7.2 Digital Capital

How do students perceive Web 2.0 as accelerating these practices and to which extent do they account for digital capital as a means of success ?

Overview of theme 2 - Participants often highlighted digital knowledge or an ability to transmute capital digitally as a significant attribute of success in modern life, and could be used to navigate DSA towards economic, social or cultural success.

7.2.1: Social Media as a tool for professional fields

A:5 - Interview data pertaining the value students place on and pressures of digital capital/literacy in their personal and professional lives.

Participant #D :

“Even if you don't like it, you feel pressure to do it because it takes a lot of privilege to not be in that situation yourself”

Participant #G:

“I mean, if you want a good job, then if you have a really good LinkedIn profile, that might be a good idea. If you want to get a booking on Instagram, then maybe having a very good profile might be good”

Participant #7:

“So content creation is basically where you just make content out of your gadgets, People make a living out of that...In a week, they'll make a salary of a person who works in a big company”

Participant #1:

“ I don't know to what extent people with digital skills are actually really attractive on that market... I feel like they are..... I think you're always going to do better if you have more digital skills than if you don't.”

Observational summary: Such examples of his social circle demonstrating an increasing need and the capacity to cultivate a linkedin profile inorder to advance marketability towards career opportunity.For some to accumulate clients and resources and such digital literacy could mean a survival in the labour market and something that offers a wider net of opportunities. Some Participants felt comforted in their path not requiring digital literacy to the same extent.

7.2.2 : Pressures and insecurity regarding digital performance

A:6 - Interview observations pertaining to the pressures within presentation of the self in DSA

Participant #B:

“But I think if people are making a profile then they would try to put the best of them, what they think of themselves. And it's that's the best of what they think of? for me, it's already like, no. So this would definitely change my perspective”

Participant #6:

“when you see people that are in the, let's say, the Instagram life, like the models, and the influencers, they care a lot about that”

“So some people don't even take someone as their friend because they don't match their aesthetic.So again, if you want to be that type

of person, you got to know what comes with it, So just pick your poison.

Participant #5:

“because we see other people. We always have something to compare to. In many situations, when I have contact with other people. And that could be in the physical world, but also on the internet”

Participant #8:

“Because I feel like with social media nowadays, with like, everything that is being fed to us by like, the capitalism, obviously, but also like, like these influencers and like, the beauty standards and everything, you have to be a certain way to be able to probably like, be happy. And that's what it's being fed to us.“

Observational summary: These examples further highlight the rationality of assessing the underlying meaning of certain digital associations. They practice filtering other individuals and show a high placed value of ‘aestheticism’ in certain algorithmic DSA. Furthermore the data shows participant often critiqued such self- marketization they show an awareness of online curated posts, and often comment on influencers’ gaining economic capital from promoting their inauthentic personas, it also provides an example of how certain social groups can exclude others persons who do not perform digitally to a similar degree.

7.2.3: Conflict of maintaining online persona/ performance

A:7- Interview observations pertaining to experiences of external pressure to maintain an active digital persona

Participant #8:

“I feel like a part of like my goal at least is like networking and like having this and following that would like lead me to success, but I don't want to let that define me”

Participant #1:

“That gives you reassurance, it gives you a feeling of being safe, And then you're much more... you know when a stressful situation comes up... You're much more prepared to handle that situations.....I didn't have that digital capital”

Participant #F:

“Yeah I feel the same, I don't know if I'm supposed to keep posting everything about my opinion about myself and adding to the pollution online.”

Participant #A:

“I think it can be very different from what you expect, especially for the job..... nowadays, if you share your political opinion, especially about politics, you will have a lot of trouble just entering into this job market.

Observational summary: These highlight the potential pressures, competition and economic gains/fears, participants face within DSA. Lastly some choose to either limit their presentations online and remove the apps or completely refuse to practice the expected performances involved in apps.

7.3 Digital Dualism

To which extent do students use self-marketization practices within web 2.0; as well as experience conflict between their online persona and real identity?

Overview of theme 3 - Participants notably demonstrate an advance awareness of the distinctions between the digital world (online and the offline) and the in person reality of others (and themselves), are fundamentally different. Participants showed a pattern of trivializing presentation of oneself within web 2.0, neurotic behavior such as surveillance anxiety.

7.3.1: Surveillance and Digital Stalking culture

A:8 - Interview Data observations drawn pertaining to digital paranoia, general trivialization of their own presentation, inclusion and exclusions of interconnected communication in Web 2.0

Participant #5 :

“So my initial thought when meeting someone new on the internet is, ironically, if the person exists in real life...I would check the legal database, of course ... “

Participant # 2:

“Maybe a bit sneaky.....It's not like it's like delving into something really secret. It's like a social platform.”

Participant # 6:

”Two things can be true. You can acknowledge that, ' hey, I'm watching this person' But if you do it, you might come across weird”

Participant #7:

“Firstly, I snoop on their social media profiles; That's one thing because it's easier and then friend groups-The sense of the same-birds or what of the same Flock, Fly together? ...If I find a lot of solid information, then I feel good about myself”

Participant #9:

“Yeah, So I want to know something about their life. Who better to tell me about their life - than themselves? My personal digital footprint is small. So how fair would it be if I go and see their thing and they can't see mine?”

Observational summary: These examples of online vs offline contradictions show that most participants similarly recognized that their online identity doesn't fully reflect their offline self. Many repeated the term “stalker” in expression of surviving the online personals of peers, Participants engaged in it to assess compatibility or assess safety.

7.3.2 : Online Vs offline contradictions

A:9 - Interview Data observations drawn pertaining to the practice of digital dualism, to the awareness of contradictions , appreciation or discomfort in those practices.

Participant #9:

“I was asking for him to tell me what he saw and something personal.. But he thought it's easier if I just show you.- He just gave me his phone and walked away”

Participant #2:

“You can find kinds of communities on the internet that like to go through similar things to you. But I think it's also good to have real personal experiences”

“I think maybe online people say more than they would say than in person like because you've got a... little mask

Participant #5:

“that people tend to be more brave on the internet and express feelings and opinions that they would normally not say.

Participant #1:

“But all my friends were on Tumblr. And they met people like in China, through chatting....They got a lot of happiness through this Because it's amazing to meet people like that. And meet people with the same interests. In that way it's amazing”.

Observational summary: the data shows many comments on how a key factor of such DSA is the anonymity it provides users with. They described digital interactions as curated, sometimes brave or exaggerated, and often in contrast to how they act in real life. Many felt their digital-selves served a purpose but lacked depth or authenticity. While others described digital spaces as vehicles for personal connection, many of the sample participants were in long distance relations and used DSA as a means to stay updated and maintain intimacy.

8. PROBLEMATIZATION ANALYSIS

This section offers theoretical problematization of the epistemic data within a wider sociological context (B1,B2,B3), through use of the conceptual and theoretical language illustrated in both 3. Literature review and 4. Theoretical base.

This thesis explores a contemporary transformation in the relational terrain, where individuals operate within increasingly fragmented social ecosystems under the logic of market optimization. The research question of: *to what extent students use self-marketing practices, experience conflict between their online persona and real identity?* Will be embedded within a wider sociological theory, and contextualized using primarily Airoldi and Illouz. Theoretical grounding will be through both RTC and SI, and additional provisional references for a nuanced interpretation. In order to exemplify theoretical and/or observational insights this section will follow a formless structure, presenting *B: Theoretical Problematization*, and *A: Empirical Observations* (from A:1-9) in the most suitable thematic category.

8.1 Problematizing Self Marketization Practices

This section is mainly interpreted through Rational Choice Framework (RCT); The participants demonstrated how ‘the self’ under modern conditions, becomes an investment project, and one’s skills, aesthetics, or social lifestyle, functions as a proxy for exchange value (seen in A:2, #8 & #B), One participant described seeking connections online as:

“It’s like advertising yourself. That’s what you do.” (#G)

While others saw it as a form of “*entertainment*” or an social “*experiment*” , a competitive game among couples to and see who acquires the most matches (#1, #E). Rational choice theory such as Becker's notion of productivity and capital and investment theoretically grounds the observations pertaining to self-marketization practices. He highlights how commodities are

not produced in the marketplace (Becker, 4:25). Where individuals become products of their own labor as well as responsible agents for organizing, managing and optimizing their capital value, social and emotional output as ‘commodities’ in this sense take a dual form of fragmenting their identity towards consumer traits (appearance, humour, hobbies, skills) while exchange on DSA eg IRP marketplaces. Illouz’s modern adaptation of such exchanges incorporates the digitalization of interpersonal marketplaces; in which actors present themselves to be ‘consumed’. See this in A:1, Particularly P.#8 who additionally reflected upon their entrance into the dating marketplace within the interview transcripts as:

“it's because I'm like fresh meat” (#8)

As a result of receiving an abundance of likes (via dating app: ‘Hinge’) suggesting a degree of self-objectification with the metaphorical comparison to meat on being and newcomer within such competitive terrains, As TOC enables the rapid consumption of others. Secondly commodities function in the emotional exchanges received and given throughout the engagements, where actors invest differing degrees of automated emotional labour presence and absence in the web 2.0 marked by autotelic IPR idealization (Illouz, 232:237). As formerly illustrated, this labour may lead to a state of a hyper-cognition, where continuous monitoring of self-presentation, being active ‘online’ due to digital engagement requiring performative responsiveness. Furthermore we see the rationalization of social input and expected returns in the students' digital interactions. This culture of maximizing ‘Earning potential’ through self marketing as student #B exclaims:

“if you're not indulging in it then you cannot move forward” (A:1, #B)

Suggesting that participants understand the inst by institutional pedestalization of productivity in attaining IPR within modern landscapes. This encroachment of maximizing oneself towards desired IPR is not an extension of individual philosophies rather a larger cultural standard. Illouz similarly explores an invasive encroachment of entrepreneurship principles through an alternative premise of modernity, as the historical inclination towards free privatized and unregulated global markets. This new ‘*Ecology of choice*’ is the result of changes in conditions that enable them towards certain decisions and argues that love and relationships are increasingly shaped by internalized heuristics of worth tied to consumer culture, (Illouz, 42:55) participants practiced compatibility assessments that suggest being rooted in neo-liberal

cultural principles however contrary to Becker's analysis the data shows such rationality as pertaining to not just romantic but platonic relationships too (A:7 - #A, #7, #D).

Moreover such practices are estimated by the degree of productivity and time allocated to developing oneself, by oneself. In terms of for both IPR and in professional DSA (A:5 - #G,#1) were once collective responsibilities, towards singular individuals to mobilize as well as navigate these complexities (Polanyi, 2001, 202:214) which could be an indicator of neoliberal rationality upon such DSA, for example where the essence of time, once associated with leisure, intimacy, and care, now becomes a resource for self optimization (seen in A:1 - #8). In addition, in RCT relationships are pressured to justify their exchange value which is "determined by the allocation of time" rather than inherent worth (Becker, 1991, 21:22).

Additionally within the theme of self-marketing, participants expressed discomfort with being objectified in DSA romantic markets, because they pertain to a degree of self-modifying and assessing oneself value that could be consumed to others and in effect dehumanization of oneself (A:1-2). The search for a partner or friend is delegated as a systematic practice of symbolic interpretations and navigated similarly to optimizing market decisions.especially in contrast to other digital social arenas like LinkedIn, where there was reported pressure to perform productivity, and not intimacy, therefore, within TOC modern romantic or social pursuits where as often noted as; "*Exhaustive*" and "*Sterile*" (A:1,4) which may be a relevant factor for why students in large displayed, internal conflict, feelings of ambivalence and superficiality towards such digital platforms. And most recognized that while operating on a neo-liberal cultural framework, a failure in the minimization of emotional and social risk is delegated as unproductive, inadequate or lacking a desire to acquire a form of capital that in order generate more IPR.

This section is mainly interpreted through Symbolic Interactionism Framework (SI); Actors within such terrains function as self-marketized entities in increasingly competitive digital social arenas (DSAs). They assess others through a similarly objectified lens. While the logic behind these interactions may claim to be rational, there is a dual structure: cultural notions of beauty and capital are both sought after and penalized. Particularly for women and femme-presenting individuals. This suggests that the logic of self-assessment and potential objectification is experienced as a conflict in self-marketing practices.

A form of internalized heuristics exist in the micro interactions, that reinforced digital roles/archetypes Through continuous daily web interferences a social process embedded digital tools, that are significant reflexive entity that penetrates into daily reality of the students private and professional exchanges (Goffman, 1959, 3)(Alordi,61&65) For example, this nonstatistical or scientific decision inferences surfaced through the observed emphasis on compatibility assessments in which physical appearance, and attractiveness (e.g Erotic capital) was considered an important element (#5, #4, #B, #7), however under Web 2.0 such an undefined cultural standard becomes Culture *in Code*’ which the algorithm can structure according to pre-existing forms of shared capital or interest (Alordi,35:48). According to Illouz, this is tied to larger institutional forces that profit from consumers' centralization of materialistic ‘desire’ as subjective taste and consumption as power and the romantic or sexual consumption of others (Illouz, 42:49); Often detached from emotional entanglements or reciprocity and therefore is designed to have users remain within such arenas even if they do not form meaningful connection;

“Like, I use it just to scroll. And push yes or no” (e.g #1)

Illustrating how this rapid ‘Swiping process’ in TOC was trivialized, and the ability to exercise self-awareness and choice by evaluating others symbolic perception lead to increased focused on appearance, For example:

“too much makeup” Or “They posts too much” (#5) (#E)

In contrast they personally still practiced a careful curation of a symbolic social identity, and carefully what to highlight in their profiles (A;1 A:5-7) but with other notes on variables that are often perceived as superficial or validation-seeking. This was common in all genders who felt pressure to meet a typically physical ‘standard’ in dating, because they held sentiments such as :

“if you put a version that wants to be seen online, then we're going to take you for that person” (#7).

Which was often an indirect agreement particularly in the FG observations, But there was a larger emphasis on appearance in women's presentation, which according to the literature

suggests beauty acts as a generalized metaphor of desire, health and morality (Illouz, 2012,50). In addition she argues, adding that such monitoring acts of interpreting symbols aid to protect the self from threat of rejection thus may overexpress symbolic contradictions as valid factors for incompatibility (Illouz, 131). However, this was expressed in many participants regardless of gender orientation (#8, #2, #9). Such epistemic insights suggest consumer appreciation of beauty and voyeuristic tendencies are not celebrated, but slightly feared and apprehended and prone to unwarranted moral judgments. this is additionally evident in statements such as:

“I don't wanna be perceived” (#8)

In summary, such sentiments were echoed across themes, particularly in relation to the increased proximity that digital technologies afford to one's image or persona, with many participants expressing discomfort with this kind of exploration regardless of gender. suggesting that although erotic capital has long been a prominent feature in modern media, it now takes a voyeuristic and privatized form through such digital devices that centralize visual perception and presentations. TOCs provide visual display of others and oneself. These structures reproduce cultural narratives in which individuals possessing erotic capital are rendered as objects of consumption. Proliferated by web 2.0 but lacked reflection or substantive depth. Rather than framing these platforms as spaces for genuine connection, self-marketing is portrayed by students as not only as a practice, but a continuous lived expectation and experience.

8.2 Problematizing Digital Capital

Digital capital, as articulated by Cotter functions as; a platform specific accumulation of influence, measured through visibility, engagement, and algorithmic fluency in ‘playing the visibility game’ (Cotter, 2019, 899:900). Within the empirical material, participants expressed both awareness and ambivalence towards this ‘game’: recognizing its increasing necessity for professional fields and a vehicle for social mobility (A:6 -7) (Goffman 1959,36). Information is now the main form of productivity, e.g. ‘*Datatification*’; the constant production and demand for data, primarily the west (Alordi,2:16) Many felt the pressure of producing data (content) similar to an anecdotal: *work ethic* being present and one as a means to signal productivity and therefore increased value in the labour market (seen in A:5).

Within A SI frame, I observed a polarization of the idea or methods in regards to digital capital, it could be interpreted that both efforts made to move upwards through engagement within DSA, and keep from moving downwards with engagement, but on extreme ends where both too much or too little of either caused more anxiety in participant. However in different ways, some experienced it more Interpersonally with self marketization in dating apps and others in professional networking apps such as LinkedIn. Therefore to keep up with this ideal standard made by them requires the “emotional sacrifices on authenticity” and time (Goffman, p,36). For example some students (Seen in A:7) share:

“I don't know if this is a job because its like you said (to #B) this is exhausting” (#G)

“how am I going to be able to do all of this and have all my responsibilities”(#8)

These examples particularly explore the feeling of overwhelming external pressures that emerge in assessing oneself within the ethos market logic of self optimization. This cultivation of digital capital function both pragmatically daily lifestyle as well as symbolically (A:6 #8). And such integral practices of impression management are only amplified via web 2.0 due to a digital footprint, as some claimed DSA as being forever as:

“The internet doesn't forget.” (#7)

And was referred to as “*Limitless*” in both its access as well as damage (#4). Participant #F for example, chooses to not engage in online discourse due to an aversion to creating “*online pollution*” (e.g content) which was met with several agreements across the RG room. The exclamations of feeling ‘exposed’ or vulnerable lead to many practicing a careful assessment and self monitoring .

8.3 Problematizing Digital Dualism

The collected empirical material revealed a recurring observation of symbolic dissonance between the digital and the real self. Where most participants describe digital interactions as curated, brave, or even performative (#4, #5). This aligns with Jurgenson's critique of digital dualism, the fallacy of treating the online and offline as separate realms rather than embodied interconnected parts. Although some such as #G compared it to being a “microphone” (A: #G) were online and offline presentations more alike than different (Jurgenson,2011).

8.3.1 Surveillance and Digital Pathologies

Another prominent theme in the interviews is the normalization of digital surveillance or “stalking” justified under the logic of safety, compatibility, or curiosity (A:8) (#3, #5, #7). While some participants expressed discomfort, they nonetheless framed this behavior as expected or strategic. This reflects a cultural shift wherein surveillance is no longer perceived as a violation, rather an acceptable method of relational assessment. An insight that aligns with Cheney-Lippold’s Foucauldian analysis of new algorithmic identity within the context of Web 2.0 as a feature of modern capitalism, His investigation expands upon how a paradigm shift from instrumental to interactional devices has led to regulation and control of subjects ‘Digital Positions’, identity, and feeds, that are turning individuals into digital personified profiles (Lippold,2011,164:181).

The viewpoint that AI is similarly undergoing a process of ‘Socialization’; The internalization of reality and content as data points (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, Which Alordi examined that central to Web 2.0 is Artificial Intelligence, which has been given the role of governing interaction, according to sub-groups based on existing cultural themes because it can recognise human propensities. These ‘*Feedback loops*’; meaning what we feed (the information) and the ways we interact within algorithmic DSA, becomes is what it gives back but amplified (Airoldi,2022, 48).But the effects of such on society at large was defined being active ‘*code in culture*’; encroachment of AI on on social behavior and shared ideas manifested in reality

(Alordi, 85:99). Furthermore AI which fosters path dependent calculations always forecasted on selected, past human situations, and is therefore and ontologically limited because “probabilistic, path□dependent and pre-reflexive ways” (Alordi,28) But machines as sociological objects, similar to democracy optimize engagement (Amoore and Piotukh 2016) where both tech and people are continuously evolving from the influence of the other, but in digital infrastructures monopolized their provision of services by continuous engineering of DSA platforms being consumer friendly, saturated with algorithmically tailed advertisements (Mellet& Beauvisage,2020). For example demonstrated by a student stating:

“Sometimes I lose myself in the Instagram reel. I deleted tik tok, like, I hated the app because I hated how good the algorithm was.”(#E)

Illustrating how the student ‘self’ becomes encoded within machine habitus. Airoidi’s historical analysis illustrates that this is creating widespread dependency and may in effect be generating a subcultural eco-chamber of ideas, views and beliefs. With narrow ideals of society and others which may be more artificially constructed rather than realised amount especially vulnerable groups, where such unregulated information and expressing of harmful opinions:

“And the people that sit behind the screen and read this don't have that in mind often, but think that, okay, this is the popular opinion or the accepted opinion, so therefore I can also adapt to that”(#5)

Which many participants highlighted as a relevant issue pertaining to DSAs, showing that there exists dialectic distinctions between both realms but nonetheless causes interpersonal effects such as decreased trust in others, and potentially constitutive of subjective difficulties in relating to others, pathologies e.g loneliness, lack of empathy, and competition common to these markets (Hartmut 2020,60:67).Such devices yet, still demand that individuals both curate and feel deeply, in order to continuously feed its surveillance engines with attention / content, the transformation of social digital action into digital quantifiable data, which commodifies actors as a means for major corporations to utilize the profitability (Lippold, 2011) Yet, participants seem to internalize this contradiction, seeing online performances as both undesirable but inevitable (A:7 #7, #9),often leading to increased suspension (e.g stalking others), Which could be theorized as only further as distancing them from seeking interpersonal connection in real life.

8.4 Market Logic and Digital Dualism

Interpreted with Goffman's dramaturgical model, curated identity functions through specific platform expectations and digitally fragmented performance. An act that is "molded, and modified" to fit social standards (Goffman,36:43). Users must infer compatibility and intellectual visualization through limited cues; likes, bios, photos (Illouz,180:181). Accumulation of digital capital requires a constant front-stage performance tailored to imagined audiences and algorithmic establishments seen in (B:1). What participant #6 called "*The instagram life*" (A:6), practices which operate under their own consensus of maximizing cost by centralizing social engagement through aesthetic and symbolic presentations that appeal to the senses of its users. Self-marketing here is seen to require navigating social mobility by 'gamified' metrics such as producing social exclusivity while visually appealing to the masses (Cotter, 896:897).

A general consensus emerged that digital capital should be optimized within private markets such as Tinder (i.e., romantic markets) but expressed conflict with their own online vs offline identity e.g. 'Backstage'; pertaining to participants' private expressions of pressure to maintain such a performance (B:3). This was particularly marked when exploring the phenomena of influencers' eg content creators;

"Digital influencers are a type of micro-celebrity...who have accrued a large number of followers on social media and frequently use this social capital to gain access to financial resources"(Cotter, 2019 p.896),

An observational note made when noting influencers was is hypothesized as often pertaining to be female archetypal lifestyle (A:#7) by a significant margin,such persons who use their persona online for capitalI observed how participants often critiqued and penalized it inauthenticity as 'fake' or 'superficial' (seen in A:6 & A:9 #C).This suggests a larger cultural narrative at play, of "a patriarchal bias" (Hakim, p.499) digital capital similar to erotic capital was often deemed superficial; When utilized in public markets such as larger social media platforms, thus audiences may "deny it exists or has value, and have taken steps to ensure that

women cannot legitimately exploit their relative advantage”(Hakim,p.499:500).Suggesting that similar to the socialization of cultural ideals individuals particularly women who pay the ‘visibility game’ similar to Hakim's notion of erotic capital as a mechanism of social mobility receive advanced IPR opportunity (such as more matches reflected in the observations (A:4&5) or presumed financial opportunity (A:5, #7)) in digital infrastructures.

On the other end this 'idealized mask' (Goffman,112) showed to result symbolic violence (*empirical note :a tone of condescension routinely emerged in such topics with participants') toward those attempting to harness both erotic and digital capital at the same time,(A:1 6). Female participants in comparison, expressed anxiety (A:2) due to the awareness of receiving increased attention in the algorithmic landscape (Duff & Hund,2015) and potential judgments from their peers, as Goffman express due to to their potential ‘manipulation of impressions’ and are there surveillanced to a higher degree and expected to maintain such a performance both online and in person (Goffman,51) which tend to require more “emotional labour” (Hakim,502) to not misrepresent themselves within DSA and interactions .

The Student participants demonstrated contradiction in terms of their personal philosophies and feelings of general vulnerabilities or insecurities as being proliferated by social expectation of having a digital presence (Airoidi,118).This reveals the core paradox: where participation in digital fields is strategic, abstention is costly, but neither guarantees authentic connection, but many agree that it has provided others with a sense of belonging. For example when asked in in II Q6 and FG Q3 (APPX: 2,3). While some highlighted a that “*balanced*” approach may be more necessary (particularly; #C, #7, #1,#B) Most students answered that personal and social connection, superseded online forums by a large margin. Additionally did not desire to partake in surveillance culture or practicing self marketization once they experiences the negative consequences of such on some prominent factor being “mental health” (#5 & #2) self-esteem and worth (#8, #B,ect,) or unequal relational dynamics. (#8, #C,#F, ect). In conclusion many participants expressed gratitude and appreciation for the global community that was provided from such forums and some actively showed reflexivity by not partaking.

8.4.1 Market Rationality and Emotions

While platforms offer increased access to social fields, they simultaneously raise the cost of meaningful connection. Several participants describe digital engagement as emotionally exhausting (B:1). This exhaustion is symptomatic of what Illouz calls the “Inflation of emotional economies” where attention and emotional availability become scarce and thus valuable commodities (Illouz, p.203). A psychological theory which explores how ‘Rational or objective decisions’ even in economics strategizing are prone to bias and narrative fallacies. This systematic dysfunction can result in a ‘*Hyper-cognized*’ state of compatibility assessment (Illouz, 2012, p.92). In this context manifest as over-assessment, self monitoring and overriding natural decision-making heuristic that function primarily on automatic impulses, such as attraction, alliances and love, connections that tend to be rapid, instinctive, and emotional rather than logical, while competitive, and precarious.

B:1 shows a transformation of interaction is reduced to digital indicators of interest, generating IPR is replaced by an emotionally laborious task of self-presentation and constant decoding of the other to profiles which becomes a difficult task particularly in a global area of potential symbolic meanings (B:3). In addition this particularly highlights how emotional labour this becomes valuable in both DSA, as the literature suggests occupations operating to an externalization of oneself such as ‘content creations’ a digital industry that's primarily dominated by women and girls and requires continuous production of emotional labour in both self preservation and management of preconceived social judgments on their work performance.

8.5 Commodification of Connection

Participants expressed discomfort with the reduction of self and others into quantifiable traits, metrics, or aesthetic choices (seen in A: 1 & A11 #5, #8). This aligns with Illouz's claim that modernity has redefined recognition, desire, and the will into market logic. Platforms like Tinder were often viewed as superficial or trivial, but participants simultaneously acknowledged engaging with them for fear of exclusion or social stagnation. This reflects the contradictory nature of the modern actor under neoliberal rationality: to both critique and comply with the very systems that commodify them. The data suggest such self-regulation and performative authenticity leads to burnout and disengagement, not as personal pathologies but as socially induced conditions. The emotional fatigue expressed by participation students mirrors the broader rationalization of intimacy and its transformation into strategic, rather than spontaneous, practice.

In summary of the analysis: I noticed a central theoretical challenge emerging in understanding how digital tools, premised on user's interaction construct relational dynamics that reward a dual curation of identity. Optimization, and emotional labor, all while paradoxically undermining the stability and authenticity of interpersonal relations. In this dual function, platforms become both arenas of expression and surveillance, where identity itself was a symbolic performance yet a highly inauthentic one. The formerly mentioned notions were noted in Participants, individual dialogues and social dynamic reflections. The epistemic collections echo this dualistic performance. The online is experienced as a duality and distinct from their real world selves, and interactions remain the desired but cultivating connection becomes increasingly inaccessible. therefore suggesting a potential inflation of interpersonal relationships among students. These assessments were drawn from symbolic interactionism and sociological rational choice, the problematization foregrounds the duality between micro-level interactional practices and macro-level ideological apparatuses.

Through these lenses, the digitally performed self is not just a presentation but a strategic act situated within neoliberal incentive structures. The very 'will' with RTC is filtered through an

internalized schema of exchange, emotional cost-benefit analysis, and compatibility optimization,. This has resulted in a collective state wherein actors are required to function simultaneously as producers, consumers, and commodities of affective labor.

9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion this study explored how neoliberal rationality and digital infrastructures intersect and reshape interpersonal relationships among students. Through a dual qualitative approach of individual interviews and a focus group. The design combines individual semi-structured interviews and a focus group to generate rich data on motivations, values, and how participants internalize and practice digital self-presentation and connection. In addition, data was collected through ethnographic methods primarily observation and field notes. Both thick and thin descriptions were marked, for example focus groups allowed for interactive dynamics and discursive flows, while individual interviews provided private spaces for subjective insight. I explored how the digital landscape acts as both social arena under algorithmic agendas, nudging individuals toward cost-benefit-based social exchanges that reflect rational choice logic, It became evident that digital platforms accelerate self-marketization. Students described feeling pressure to present an appealing digital identity, often leading to identity conflict, emotional labor, and fatigue. Despite increased access to potential connections, participants experienced higher barriers to authentic engagement due to the commodification of connection and the constant evaluation of social worth via metrics. This research leads to the conclusion of how the inflation of interpersonal relationships emerges not from scarcity but from the rising symbolic and emotional costs of connection, particularly in a system where visibility, performance, and efficiency override intimacy and presence.

9.1 Implications of Results

The findings of this study indicate that interpersonal relationships (IPR) are increasingly negotiated through the structural logics of neoliberal rationality and digital infrastructures, which may be a pattern in larger sociological transitions. I show how encroachments of economic rationality within non economic arenas foster a marketized identity as well as social insecurity. Through epistemic collection the results showed that students' experienced an internalized shift: where social actors are compelled to perform selves

optimized for algorithmic recognition and audience legibility, while simultaneously reporting emotional fatigue, fragmentation, and dissonance in offline settings. This suggests that the inflation of IPR is not merely metaphorical, but a structural condition emerging from the tension between affective labor and platform logics. Furthermore, these findings provide insight into how digital capital, while rational to accumulate, also serves as a symbolic index of exclusion, disciplining users to perform, adapt, and re-curate their identities under the new spirit of capitalism, while decreasing real IPR due to suspension and decreased trust or feelings of ambivalence therefore it is crucial to ask how this future generation will navigate an increasingly accelerated and technological world, if such digital infrastructures are only within their inception.

9.2 Suggestions for Future Research

Due to the nature of this dissertation certain themes could not be displayed and will centralise the elements that pertain to the scope of this research. Future research may benefit from longitudinal studies that follow how these rationalities develop over time, particularly across different socioeconomic and geographic populations (see appendix: 'APPX2') but limits of such research only pertain a focused epistemic look. I believe it would be of value to further exploration into non-platform-based relational formations such as informal communities, its effect on third spaces, or analog social rituals, which may illuminate potential modes of resistance or reconfiguration. Additionally, interdisciplinary collaboration with algorithm studies and digital anthropology could deepen understanding of how digital infrastructures concretely script behavior, identity, and symbolic value and what future mechanism will be employed.

Finally the inflation of interpersonal relationships, as demonstrated here, is not only about increased demand and decreased depth. It is about how systems shape the emotional economy of human life and how, in the process, the self becomes both product and price.

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11. APPENDIX

(APPX1 1.1) - Participant Overview Tables

<p>Participant #1</p> <p><i>Age :</i> 25 - Female</p> <p><i>Nationality:</i> Swedish</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> White Caucasian</p> <p><i>Field:</i> Human Ecology</p> <p><i>Sexual Orientation:</i> Heterosexual, Single</p>	<p>Participant #2:</p> <p>20 - Female</p> <p>British</p> <p>White Caucasian</p> <p>Biology</p> <p>Bisexual, Single</p>
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<p>Participant #3</p> <p>21 - Male</p> <p>Nationality: Swedish</p> <p>Caucasian / white</p> <p>Field: Medicine</p> <p>Heterosexual, coupled</p>	<p>Participant #4</p> <p>25</p> <p>: Italian</p> <p>White Causacion</p> <p>Geo-politics</p> <p>Heterosexual, coupled</p>
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<p>Participant #5</p> <p>26 - Male</p> <p>Swedish / Albanian</p> <p>Baltic / white</p> <p>Business Law</p> <p>Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual, single</p>	<p>Participant #6</p> <p>27 - Male</p> <p>Finland</p> <p>Black / Somali</p> <p>European Tax law</p> <p>Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual, single</p>
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Participant #7	Participant #8	Participant #9
22 - Female	25 - They/them	26 - Male
Botswana	Swedish	Italian
Black / African	White / Baltic	White Caucasian
Psychology	Business & Economics	Finance, Accounting
Homosexual, Single	Pansexual, single dating	Homosexual, Single

(APPX 1.2) - Focus Group Student Participant Overview Table

Participant #A	Participant #B	Participant #C	Participant #D
<p><i>Field:</i> Human Geography</p> <p><i>Age:</i> 30s</p> <p><i>Nationality:</i> South Korean</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> NorthEast Asian</p> <p><i>Orientation:</i> Heterosexual, Single</p>	<p><i>Field:</i> Physics</p> <p><i>Age:</i> 23</p> <p><i>Nationality:</i> India (Punjabi)</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> South Asian</p> <p><i>Orientation:</i> Heterosexual, Partnered</p>	<p><i>Field :</i> Physics</p> <p><i>Age:</i> 21</p> <p><i>Nationality:</i> India (Sri-lankan)</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> South Asian</p> <p><i>Orientation:</i> Asexual, Single</p>	<p><i>Field:</i> Human Rights Law</p> <p><i>Age:</i> 26</p> <p><i>Nationality:</i> Brazilian</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> Latina</p> <p><i>Orientation:</i> Bsexual, Partnered, Polyamrious</p>

Participant #E	Participant #F	Participant #G	Participant #H
<p><i>Field:</i> Gender studies</p> <p><i>Age:</i> 23</p> <p><i>Nationality:</i> French /Norwegian</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> Caucasian</p> <p><i>Orientation:</i> Heterosexual, Partnerd</p>	<p><i>Field:</i> Human Geography</p> <p><i>Age:</i> 28</p> <p><i>Nationality:</i> Thailand</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> SouthEast Asian</p> <p><i>Orientation:</i> Heterosexual, Partnerd</p>	<p><i>Field:</i> Development & Economics</p> <p><i>Age :</i> 28</p> <p><i>Nationality:</i> Brazilian</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> Latina</p> <p><i>Orientation:</i> Bisexual Partnered</p>	<p><i>Field:</i> Human rights law</p> <p><i>Age :</i> 26</p> <p><i>Nationality:</i> Lithuanian</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> Caucasian</p> <p><i>Orientation:</i> Heterosexual, Open-relationship</p>

(APPX 2) - Individual interview Table 2

'The inflated cost of Relationships'

Interview questions

General Question:

Field of study, Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Relationship status, Nationality and ethnicity

1. How do you perceive the current social landscape ?
 - a. In person, online , both what are its effect on you / collective
 - b. What are the positives and negatives of (web 2.0)
 - c. Was it always this way?

8 *Ask:could you define the term*
2. What are your social and personal motivations for entering and or maintaining interpersonal relationships?
 - a. Is this done though connections either Irl or digitally
 - b. Is this is approche convenient or inconvenient in your daily life ?
3. What general rule do you follow in assessing compatibility?

When you date / seek new friends / network

 - a. Is it a successful/rule and what influences its strategy ?
 - b. Dose their digital presences play a role in assessing compatibility
 - i. And where do you go to find information on the person you are curious about and why?
 - c. How do you feel about yourself in the process
4. Did you notice a change in attitudes, approaches or ideas regarding the ways to pursue interpersonal relationships ?
 - a. If yes, when?
 - b. and in what way?

Degree of Commodification

Q1: What are the most important attributes to have if one aims to live a comfortable life in your personal opinion ?

Q2: What are the most important attributes to be considered a good dating option?

Q3:What are the most important attributes to be considered a friendship of yours?

- And why

Q4: What's most important social, economic or cultural or physical capital in the world from your perspective

- And why?

Q5:Do you feel the need to also meet these standard

- If yes in what ways
- If not then what standards do you feel the need to meet ?

Q6: To what extent do you agree with this statement

The most successful people nowadays are those who have digitally valuable skills .

Q7: To what extent do you agree with the statement

The happiest people are those can exist in in various digital or online social spaces places

(APPX 2.2) - Focus Group Question Table 3

Focus Group Questions:

General Question:

Field of study, Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Relationship status, Nationality and ethnicity

Q1- Strategy and motivations

Advocating for individuality, self-reliance and privacy over relationships is a better use of time

What is the smarties ways for people to approach making friends

What is the smartest way for people to approach dating currently

Q2- Online presence

In your experiences it is more 'convenient' to interact with family members online (Communication apps) or in real life?

Do you believe most are experiencing authentic relationships?

If yes, why

If not, why

Q3- Degree of IPR

It's easier to work more hours for future stability then create a social network for stability?

Q4- Commodification: Economic, Cultural & Social Capital

What's most important social, economic or cultural or physical capital in the world

The happiest people are those can exist in in various digital or online social spaces places

What are the most important attributes to have to live a comfortable life

What are the most important attributes to be considered a good dating option?

What are the most important attributes to have in a successful long-term relationship ?

The most successful people nowadays are those who have digitally valuable skills .

Q5- Perceptions of status quote (marketization)

Where do you go to find friends

Where do go to meet family

Where do you go to find potential romantic or sexual interest?

It is your approach that is more convenient or more inconvenient in your daily life.



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Box 114, 221 00 LUND

www.soc.lu.se