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WEARABLE HEALTH TRACKERS SHAPING NEW NORMS OF “HEALTHY” BODIES

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Abstract

Wearable health trackers are redefining health as a calculable, platform-mediated construct. Health tracking companies have become epistemic infrastructures in health communication. Originally limited to tracking steps and sleep duration, tracking devices now analyse dozens of physiological and behavioral metrics, transforming intimate, embodied experiences of health and wellbeing into quantifiable and continuously monitored data streams. Existing research focuses on behavioral outcomes, missing how platforms produce normative models of the body. Using the Oura ring as an example, a critical analysis of the health mediatization will be conducted. First, Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) is used to analyse the company’s marketing materials (platform blog, community stories, case studies). This analysis examines how the platform mobilizes datafication (through scores, trends, and visualizations) to construct a normative, algorithmically defined model of the “healthy” body. Secondly, frame analysis is employed to examine how the epistemic logic of the wearable medium reconfigures authority, displacing both medical expertise and embodied intuition. Finally, the consequence of this shift to governmentality is addressed. Using online survey we analyse how the new mediatized health norms are internalized by users as a form of self-

discipline, from the care of the self into a practice of continuous digital surveillance and moral self-evaluation.

Keywords:

Health Mediatization, Platforms, Datafication, Multimodal Discourse Analysis