(Re)visualizing in social media: The case of doing and transgressing motherhood

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Communication in informal and interest-driven social media contexts often involves the selection and integration of a range of semiotic materials. These include resources provided by language(s), varieties, styles and genres, along with other semiotic resources – textual forms and patterns, visuality, still and moving images, sound, music, and cultural discourses (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001; Scollon & LeVine 2004– as well as their mobilization in processes and practices of entextualization (Bauman & Briggs 1990; Blommaert 2005) and resemiotization (Iedema 2003; Leppänen et al. 2014).

In my talk, I will highlight how such multilingual and multimodal communicative resources serve as key means for social interaction, collaborative and participatory cultural production, identification and critical action in social media. More specifically, I will demonstrate how in such social media practices, (re)visualization plays a key role. Drawing on a transdisciplinary framework provided by digital ethnography, the study of computer-mediated discourse and the study of multimodality (see e.g. Leppänen & Kytölä, 2017), and with the help of data from Finland-based social media, I will discuss how particular styles of visuality are taken up, reanimated and subverted in constructions of and interactions around a shifting and contested social category - motherhood.

References