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Social Media & Harms:

A Move to Criminalising Vulnerability of the Digital World?

Lauren Doyle
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BSC 2022: Reimagining Criminological Futures: New Criminologies in a Changing World

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Rationale

Positioning vulnerability within the digital world

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Youth Self-Image

A key area of interest to individuals discussing their experiences in this study was where their standards of beauty, lifestyle and wealth come from. And. their perception of vulnerability when they cannot live up to these standards.

Existing literature, that mostly falls under the umbrella of psychology, when focusing on youth self-image explores alterations we make to the body due to our expectations created by the digital world.

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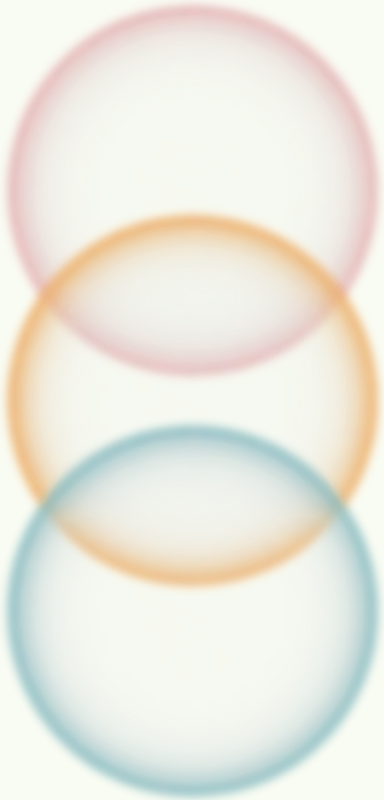


Understanding future crimes in the online space

We are going through a period of transition in our understanding of harm, harms in the digital world, how we can utilise the digital world in a really positive way, and setting in stone through Government channels how we can appropriately manage areas of the digital world that can pose harm on a person.

A huge area of impact in relation to youth self-image is online diet culture, as well as filtered imagery online and hate incidents [i.e. trolling].

Lived experience in the use of social media is a crux to this, it is necessary to feed into how future crimes, and understanding harms within legal frameworks should be shaped.

Lauren Doyle

Platforms Designed to Harm? Tattle.Life

Tattle life rules overview, please read and only submit to join if you agree to follow them

No moderating and telling people what they can or can't post. If there's a post you don't like either keep scrolling, add the user to your ignore list or report.

Don't attempt to shut down the conversation.

Keep it on tattle, and don't encourage any behaviour that could be seen as harassment.

Don't derail threads. We're relaxed about going a bit offtopic but people that deliberately try to provoke are not welcome. Please report anyone you have concerns with.

No promotion of unrelated accounts. Lots of small accounts (with bought followers) insert themselves into the narrative and unless they are connected to an account it usually isn't an interest to the majority of members.

We do not allow free advertising on this site, do not promote your own company, your own social media content or the social media content of smaller channels/Influencers

Don't attack other members, we're not here to fight each other and turn it into a mess. If you don't agree with a member you can add them to your ignore list or report.

No posting of hidden shortened links like bit.ly as people need to know where a link will take them and people have been using these links to collect data. Please report if you see a disguised link.

Discussion of moderation is to be avoided. All mod decisions are made just to make the conversation flow. It gets offtopic discussing moderation in the threads and it's usually not fruitful as members only see a fraction of what happens behind the scenes. Posting asking why a post was deleted is offtopic and annoying and risks a ban (temporary or permanent) if you've already had several warnings.

No flouncing and posting that you're leaving. If you want to take a break from tattle do so without announcing it or use the links in the top to delete your account.

No vague [illegible] posts, like "check out X's story. Say what a story contains or attach it. This is often used to try to identify users or promote an account.

No abusive or hateful messages.

No messages that are a privacy concern. Even if an influencer releases private information themselves we can't allow it to be repeated here as we take privacy far more seriously than many influencers do themselves.

Unsavoury comments about children are not allowed. Their parents may broadcast their children's image to make money, but as they are too young to have consented in this unregulated industry we dont allow comments that may upset the children when older.

No chatroom style messages as this is a forum. If you agree with someone or love their post use the reactions.

Don't quote a message just to post a clapping hands emoji or say you agree as it adds unnecessary scrolling, just use the reactions instead.

No posting of private accounts or friends and family members accounts that don't put themselves in the public eye.

Lauren Doyle

Platforms Designed to Harm? Reddit.

“I can only begin to put into words how fucked up diet culture got me. The damage it did to me mentally, emotionally and physically. The damage it still does.

I was nine years old when I first started restricting food. I was 13 when I was first beaten up in the street for being fat. I was 14 the second time it happened. I was 16 when I started starving myself on less than 500 calories a day. Oxo cube soup for lunch. Plain vegetables for dinner. Laxatives for dessert if I was feeling more self-hatred than usual - if that was even possible.

The weight dropping off me was much more delicious and rewarding than the taste of any cake, any packet of crisps or any chocolate bar.

The fact that my period disappeared for over a year when I was 17 didn’t bother me as much as being fat did. In fact, I enjoyed it because the sugary cravings disappeared too. Bonus points there.

The praise received from friends and family meant everything. The number on the scale reducing gave me validation that I was doing the right thing.

The fact that anyone turn around and say “diets are good” or “diets are helpful” will never fail to refuel my passion for educating women and girls around the world and helping them to see that diet culture is nothing but lethal.

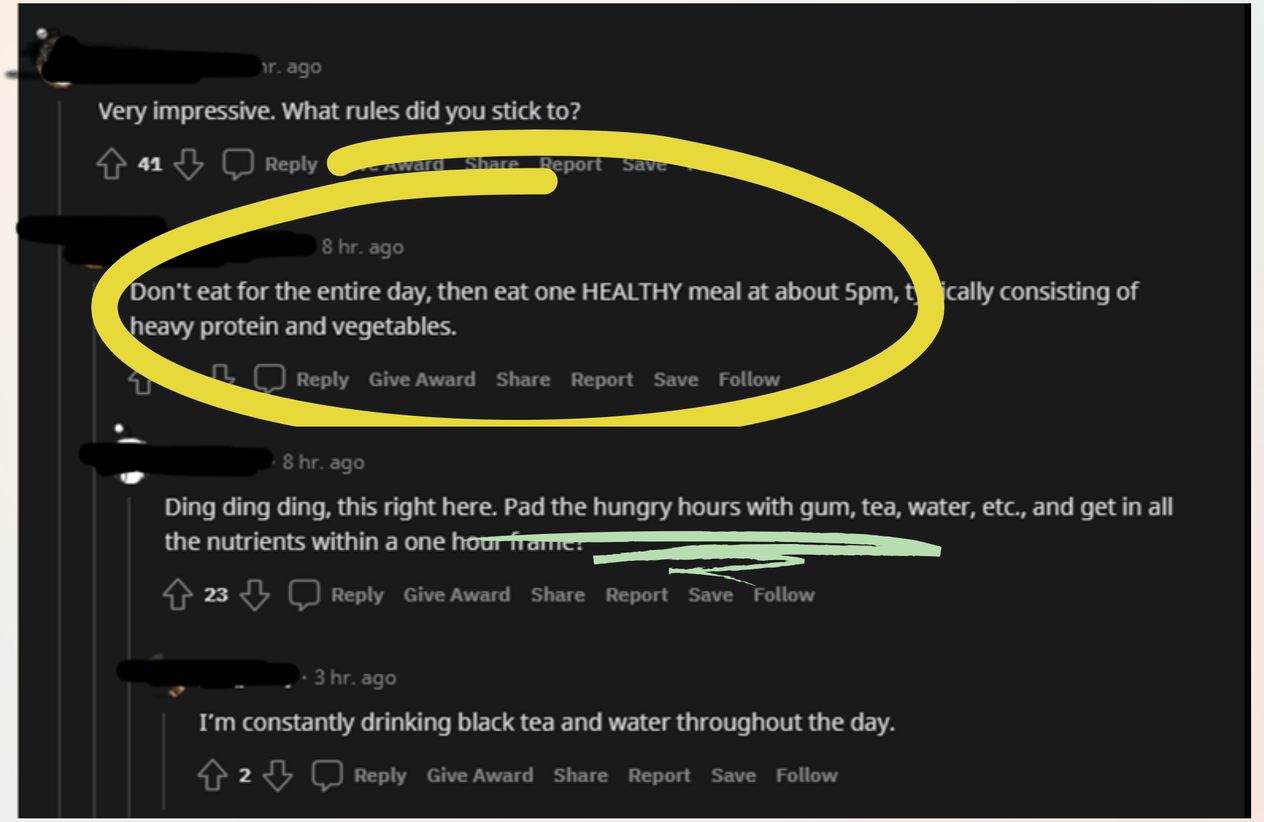
Diets don’t work.

Diet culture profits off of self-loathing" [Anonymous User 27]

<u>TITLING THREADS W/ THEMES SUCH AS:</u>

- Wanting to talk to someone who understands
- Wanting advice as healthcare service waiting lists are so long
- ‘Ranting’ about experiences, or other online spaces
- Feeling ‘safe’ in their sub-reddit
- Wanting to understand weight loss from another person’s perspective (for example, being congratulated by family members for unwanted weight loss that has come as a consequence of illness, or being the only ‘plus size person’ in their workplace not on a diet.
- The association between weight loss and getting support for other health conditions.
- Tackling different mindsets in a relationship re: food/body

Platforms Designed to Harm? Reddit.



Upvoted 1826 times in 11 hours.

Lauren Doyle

University of Sunderland

Normalising Hate

Hate Incidents in the Digital Space

Online Safety Bill [Draft 2022]

"A Bill to make provision for and in connection with the regulation by OFCOM of certain internet services; for and in connection with communications offences; and for connected purposes" (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2022: unpaginated).

The Online Safety Bill is looking to frame an understanding for illegal content online [geared towards hate crime, sexual offences, harassment and cyberstalking - to name a few]. As well as focusing on legal but harmful behaviours online, such as misogynistic behaviour, advocation for self-injurious behaviours, and the spread of misinformation.

There remains vast concerns around the management of freedom of speech online, and the normalisation of directed hate towards online users [for example: the statement of ruling by Tattle.Life of accepting hate towards individuals who post their lives online].

How do we move away from victim blaming in trolling and hate incidents online?

How do we distinguish liability in hate incidents online, that do not fall under the actions of hate crime?

Lauren Doyle

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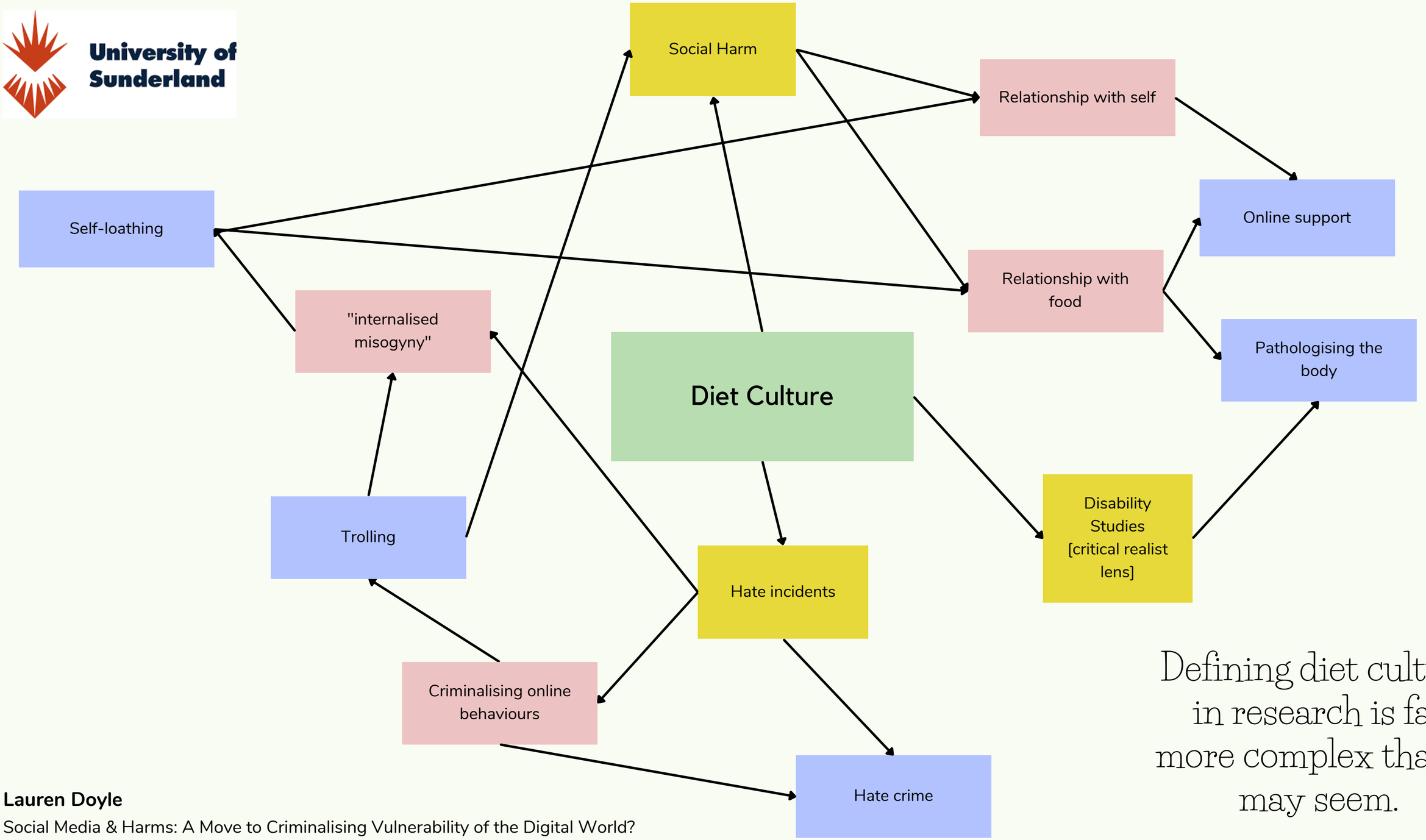
Diet Culture

'Offline' World

'Online World'

Lauren Doyle

University of Sunderland



Defining diet culture in research is far more complex than it may seem.

Lauren Doyle

Social Media & Harms: A Move to Criminalising Vulnerability of the Digital World?

Recommendations

- A clear emphasis from the upcoming Online Safety Bill of the responsibility of agencies, platforms and society [individual and as a whole].
- Awaiting the outcome of recommendations from ongoing publications relating to the UK Government around influencer culture, the digital space, and the projection of the 'picture perfect' emphasised through mass and social media spaces.
- At this stage, the findings highlight a need for understanding ontological implications of a move to criminalising harm.
- Further research into the harms of the online space, and the role of vulnerability within this.