Please 'Like' Me: Reconfiguring Reputation and Shame in Southeast Turkey

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Abstract: This article draws on long-term ethnographic research on the uses of social media and their consequences for people's everyday lives to shed light on how young men's long-standing concerns over reputation and shame have been rearticulated through the use of social media. In Mardin, a medium-sized city in southeast Turkey, reputation and shame are key concerns in social media usage and affect different domains of people's everyday lives, such as politics, love and friendships. In this article, reputation is conceived as the value an individual has in other's people eyes, on social media being granted by displaying the desired qualities and by receiving expressions of social approbation in a context of constant surveillance. This has been extensively described in terms of the logic of honour across different cultures and at different times. Shame is viewed as an emotional experience generated by social practices that openly transgress social norms. Viewing reputation and shame as bound to mediated practices opens up new opportunities to investigate the transformation of long-standing concerns that continue to have great significance in people's lives in southeast Turkey. It sheds light on processes of continuity and transformation that are entangled with the diffusion of digital communication technologies.
[honour; reputation; shame; social media; Turkey]

Introduction

> I have friends who had arguments on Facebook. They wrote to each other with bad comments, they made a scene, argued, got seriously offended, and then unfriended each other. It's so bad! Everybody sees it. It's shameful! […] What starts as a problem between two people becomes a public issue. One unfriends the other, he then writes to him again…so on and so forth. It's shameful!

In these words, a man in his late twenties described a social media interaction that he considered to be shameful. In Mardin, a medium-sized city in southeast Turkey, social media generates new opportunities to improve one's reputation, but it also multiplies the chances of being shamed. This article draws on long-term ethnographic research on the uses and consequences of social media on people's everyday lives in Mardin (Costa 2016) in order to shed light on how longstanding concerns over reputation and shame have been rearticulated through the use of social media. Reputation and shame are key concerns in Mardin and are a constant preoccupation in people's everyday use of the internet. Leading tropes of the anthropology of the Mediterranean until the 1980s,

honour and shame became the target of a large number of extensive critiques (among others, see Abu-Lughod 1986, 1989; Fernandez 1983; Gideon 1988; Gilmore 1987; Herzfeld 1980, 1984, 1987; C. Stewart 2015; Wikan 1984). More recently, Horden and Purcell (2000) have reopened the debate over these reciprocal values. And some recent ethnographic research has demonstrated the ongoing relevance of the culture of honour in Turkey (Kogacioglu 2004; Parla 2020), including among Turkish and Kurdish migrants in Europe (Akpinar 2003; Ewing 2008; Wikan 2008). These works described the multiple ways in which modern institutions, governments and processes of migration and globalization have contributed to transforming notions and practices of honour and shame. This article continues this conversation by foregrounding the role of media technologies in accounting for the important place that reputation and shame have in people's lives and to counter essentialist views that perpetuate assumptions about the seamless features of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. In Mardin, it is through the use of social media that reputations and shame have reconstituted themselves as key concerns in people's everyday lives.

This article focuses on the experiences of young Kurdish and Arab men and adopts the broader and less elusive term 'reputation' in describing the importance of honour and other values as those on which men's worth is assessed. As I will explain later in the article, in Mardin honour was one of a number forms of recognition that men strove for on the mediated public stage. 'Reputation' is conceived as one's value in other's people eyes (F.H. Stewart 1994), while 'shame' is an emotional experience generated by those social practices that openly transgress social norms. The article views reputation and shame as bound to mediated practices that are enabled by social media's affordance of visibility (Boyd 2010, 2014; Costa 2018) and that are entangled in the set of gendered social norms that rule people's behaviour in the online public space. This perspective on media practices opens up new opportunities to investigate the transformation of longstanding concerns that continue to have great significance in people's lives in southeast Turkey.

An extensive body of literature across different disciplinary fields has discussed the multiple ways in which people engage in impression management and self-presentation on social media in different geographical and social contexts (among others, see Arora and Scheiber 2017; Drory and Zaidman 2007; Duffy and Chan 2018; Mishra and Basu 2014; Schlenker 2012; Triandis 1989; Pearce and Vitak 2015). These works tend to agree that social media's affordances have increased the opportunities for visibility and reputation management, while at the same time increasing the risks of surveillance and public shaming. A similar argument has also been put forward by Miller et al. (2016), who define social media a 'scalable sociality', a configuration of more or less private and public spaces that can be inhabited by smaller and larger groups of people. The theory of 'scalable sociality' shows that social media has created different scales and at the same time multiplied the opportunities for visibility and concealment. This concept emerged from a cross-cultural comparison of social media practices in nine different countries, the WhyWePost project (Miller et al. 2016), to which the ethnography informing this article contributed. 'Scalable sociality' also shows that op-

portunities for public and private communications have been appropriated in different ways and for different purposes by different groups of people across the globe (Miller et al. 2016). Thus, the honour and shame-related practices illustrated in this article are simultaneously the results of specific technological affordances and the enactments of local norms and values. Also, the concept of 'affordances-in-practice' (Costa 2018) is useful in stressing that the properties of digital platforms are always enacted by specific users in specific settings and cannot exist outside their context of usage.

The early formulations of the honour and shame dichotomy were made in the context of British structural functionalism. Peristiany (1966) and Pitt-Rivers (1965) focused on the internal logic of systems of values and showed how the relations between their different parts worked, emphasizing in particular the complementarity of honour and shame. Furthermore, they used this dichotomy to try and identify common cultural traits across the Mediterranean region. Later anthropological literature on the Mediterranean emphasized the presence of a large variety of codes of honour, as well as the economic, social and sexual standards that are represented by the words 'honour' and 'shame'. This variation led Michael Herzfeld (1980) to oppose the formulation of massive generalizations. He showed that honour and shame have different meanings in different contexts across the Mediterranean and that the principle of honour was not at all uniform. Honour, he argued, is the equivalent of 'socially appropriate behavior', something that can differ significantly from one locality to another. Most conceptualizations of honour and shame during the 1960s, '70s and '80s viewed them as parts of more or less coherent systems of social evaluation. In this paper, I discard the notion of a 'system' and the related concerns with coherence and consistency that influenced old debates, thereby moving away from the analysis of terminological systems of social evaluation. Instead I approach honour and shame as bound to mediated practices. This perspective suggests that reputation and shame are not parts of a functioning and coherent whole, but are rather entangled with a large range of diverse actions and routines that can also contradict each other.

This approach resonates with the perspective developed by media scholars Pearce and Vitak (2015), who investigated social media usage and impression management in Azerbaijan and identified two components of what they define 'online honor cultures': first social surveillance, and the related need for the constant validation of others; and secondly punishment for non-compliance with codes of behaviour. These two elements of social media usage also apply to my case study in south-east Turkey. The need for the validation of others and the fear of shame that results from non-compliance with social codes are very strong motives in Mardin, being the main forces behind the formation of a 'mediated public'. Not only do Mardinites present an online self that conforms to gendered social norms, they also actively look for public expressions of social approbation, for example, in the form of Facebook 'likes'. The desire for recognition and the fear of shame have shaped the mediated public across a large variety of domains of everyday life, such as politics, entertainment, kinship and friendships. Thus, social media practices speak to reputation and shame as central hinges of Arab, Kurdish and Turkish society.

Site and Methods

Mardin is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious city located in the Kurdish region of Turkey, thirty kilometres from the border with Syria and around 250 kilometres from the border with Iraq. It is inhabited by Sunni Muslim Arabs, Kurds and Turks, as well as a small minority of Orthodox Syriacs and a very few Catholic Armenians. Mardin has around 87,000 inhabitants and is undergoing significant transformations brought about by processes of urbanization and economic development (Costa 2016). Long-term ethnographic fieldwork was carried out in 2013 and 2014 in the new part of the city (*Yenişehir*), a fast-growing urban centre that started to be built in the late 1990s. The new city is inhabited mostly by Arabs who moved there from the old town, Kurds who migrated from other towns in the province and region, and Turkish and Kurdish civil servants who have arrived from all over Turkey. The new city is considered to be more modern than all the other urban centres in the province. Here women go to school and are more likely to work outside the home, while a significant number of modern shops and cafés have changed the consumption habits of both women and men (Costa 2016). Inhabitants of the new city tend to be more educated and digitally literate, and they use social media more often than the inhabitants of other urban centres and rural parts of the province. In the new city, nuclear family households are more common, and families usually have only a few children, whereas in the old city and rural areas people more often live in close proximity to their extended families, and married couples tend to have more children (Costa 2016). Urban and economic transformations have affected relationships between gender and gendered norms. Although women have increased their presence in public spaces, schools and university are gender-mixed, and modern cafés facilitate gender-mixed forms of sociability, social life in Mardin tends to be gender-segregated (Costa 2016). Women's reputation is largely built on modesty, a lack of contact with men, virginity and the strict observance of social norms. Even a minor deviation from the norm is immediately judged with the expression 'shameful' (*ayıp*), uttered several times a day as soon as a family member or friend does not conform to social expectations. Many young women experience 'the pressure from the neighbourhood' (*mahalle baskısı*) as an overwhelming everyday oppression. For example, Ayşe[1] is a 26-year old English teacher who lives with her parents and younger brother in an apartment in the New City. She describes her family as more educated, progressive and open-minded than the majority of people living in the town. Her father is a retired high-school teacher involved in left-wing politics, her mother a housewife like many other middle-aged women in Mardin. They are Arabic speakers, but self-identify as Kurds. Ayşe is freer from the social restrictions that limit other women of her age. She can go out and sit in cafes with her friends and can visit her fiancé at the weekend. Yet she feels burdened by her mother's concerns for the family's

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1 All names are pseudonyms, chosen to keep my research participants anonymous.

reputation, which translates into frequent daily exclamations such as 'What would others say?' (*Elalem ne der?*)

In Mardin, I carried out traditional anthropological fieldwork for fifteen months in 2013 and 2014. I lived on my own but became close friends with around a hundred individuals and ten families. I carried out more than one hundred interviews and distributed two different types of questionnaire, as well as conducting online participant observation of around two hundred Facebook accounts. As a woman, I had more close contacts with women, but I was also able to gain access to male domains. Moreover, as a single European woman living on my own, local friends and research participants often used the expression *ayıp* (shameful) to comment on my behaviour. I was immediately judged whenever my actions failed to conform to social norms, such as not having proper curtains in my house, wearing inappropriate clothes, the failure to remove the hair under my arms properly, or the excessive amount of time I spent in cafés. *Ayıp* was commonly applied to men's behaviour as well. The elderly also used the expression *utanma yok* (lack of shame) to criticize young people for their lack of a sense of shame and shyness, and to make negative comments on the younger generation's life-style. More generally, the social changes that had been affecting the region were often described by the middle-aged and the elderly as representing the progressive spread of shameful behaviour.[2] People also often used the expression *şerefsiz*, which literally means 'dishonoured' and has a more negative connotation than *ayıp.* In Turkish Kurdistan this word is usually addressed to the entire person, whereas *ayıp* is used for actions (Wikan 2008).[3] *Şerefsiz* was also used by youngsters and young adults in Mardin to make fun of someone else or bad-mouth male and female acquaintances and friends. These Turkish words were used in everyday conversations in the New City of Mardin, where Mardinites, especially the young, spoke Turkish more than Arabic or Kurdish, languages spoken mostly in the private space of the house.

Social Media and Young Men's Shame

Traditional anthropological literature on Turkey and the Mediterranean has mostly focused on shame as a female experience (Herzfeld 1980; Peristiany 1965; F.H. Stewart 1994; Wikan 1984, 2008), and it is true that in Mardin the expression *ayıp* (shame) is used to judge women more often than men. Women are also affected by more serious consequences when they do not conform to the accepted standards of online behaviour. Yet shame often fell upon men too because of their failure to control the women they were responsible for and as a result of their own actions. Sometimes inappropriate behaviour was defined as sinful, but 'shameful' (*aiyp* and *şerefsiz*) was the most

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2 See Costa (2016a) for a more extensive description of the social changes brought about by social media.
3 See Wikan (1984) for an in-depth account of the differences between the two expressions.

commonly used idiom for both women and men. Shame was very much alive in local vocabularies and in the deep fears of Turks, Kurds and Arabs in Mardin, and social media amplified these fears even further. Both women and men perceived online platforms as a threat that could cast shame on them. And shame was an overarching theme in many conversations that women and men had about social media. In what follows, I describe two different forms of male shame emerging from the use of Facebook. The first is bound to women's online public presence, while the second stems from men's increased visibility on social media, which can turn any deviation from accepted norms into an experience of shame.

Hakim is a twenty-year-old university student enrolled at Mardin Artuklu University. He grew up in a Kurdish family from the district of Urfa as the eldest of six children. He had moved to Mardin a year earlier to start a university degree in the Faculty of Business and Economics. Like many other first-year students, he sleeps at the Fethullah Gülen dormitory that provides students with hot meals and affordable accommodation. Hakim is in a relationship with a girl from the same province of Urfa whom he had met at the university a few months earlier. They see each other every day in class and make extensive use of the private chat functions of Facebook and SMS to communicate with each other. Hakim is diligent and introverted, fully committed to his studies and his girlfriend. He makes great use of Facebook and admits he likes it, although the care he has to put into managing his own and his girlfriend's profiles is a constant source of worry to him. In order to keep their relationship secret from their families and the wider Facebook audience, they engage in indirect communication with each other. For example, he posts love songs and nice images addressed to her, but only she and a few other friends from the university know who the recipient of the message is. One day his girlfriend posted a picture of the two of them standing in a classroom with a university teacher in between, confident that the setting of the university and the presence of the teacher would not reveal their relationship to the outside world. One of the girlfriend's male friends from school, who did not know about their relationship, 'liked' the photo and wrote a comment on it politely expressing appreciation of her clothes. The following day, Hakim became angry and was seriously concerned that his school friends could have made fun of him. He knew that being in a relationship with a woman who publicly receives appreciations from other men could have brought shame on him. He was worried that he could have lost face in front of his friends and didn't know how to react. Eventually, he told his girlfriend off and persuaded her to delete the picture.

On another occasion, he experienced the opposite situation. He received a call from a male friend from high school, who started asking him over the phone why he was commenting on a Facebook post put up by his ex-girlfriend. The friend asked Hakim not to interact with her anymore, and they ended up arguing on the phone. The friend also called the girl and asked her to stop publicly talking to other men. Eventually, the friend unfriended Hakim from Facebook; as reaction, Hakim closed his Facebook account and stopped communicating with him completely. Only after a few weeks

did they calm down and make peace, and Hakim reopened his Facebook account again. In Mardin, it is pretty common for boys and young men to challenge each other intentionally or unintentionally through Facebook and to argue over it or even fight together afterwards. The Facebook wall of a boy's girlfriend or ex-girlfriend therefore often becomes a cause of conflict.

In high school, these fights can also increase in size and involve entire groups of people. Zengin, a nineteen-year-old youth, recalled how, one year earlier, he and another ten boys ended up coming to blows at the entrance to his high school. One morning, one of his friends had got into an argument with another boy after he saw that he had friended his girlfriend on Facebook. They started arguing and then pushing each other. Zengin and other friends saw what was happening and joined in. After a few minutes, more than ten boys were fighting, stopping only when they realized that some of them were related. These fights reproduce traditional practices of duels and confrontations between men re-establishing their reputations after their women transgress social norms regarding sexual behaviour. They show that an increased public presence and visibility for women poses new challenges to young men. At a younger age boys argue and fight, but women's online behaviour often becomes a serious source of anxiety to their fathers, older brothers and husbands. Strategies that men put in place to limit and control the online public presence of female family members are many, changing with social class, age, ethnicity and religious group. They include everyday control of social media accounts, sharing passwords, bans on friending men or communicating with them, bans on using the internet and social media, cutting off Wi-Fi, confiscating smartphones and computers, and sometimes also verbal or physical punishment.

The above accounts illustrate the shame males experience because of women's online behaviour. In what follows, I describe the experience of shame that can arise from the increased visibility of men. In Mardin, young people lived in fear that their Facebook accounts could be stolen, as they all heard stories from acquaintances or friends of passwords being stolen so that the thief can bring shame on the victims (Costa 2016). Whereas pranks on women mostly involved sex, pranks on men included posts with insults, blasphemy, use of bad words or sex images. Alternatively, the password thief might access young men's private chats, copying and pasting on the public Facebook wall the secret and intimate conversations they had with their girlfriends. The thief could also demand money on public-facing social media. Publicly presenting themselves as poor or as in need of help was a serious threat to men's status. Alternatively, the cheaters could also post pornographic videos and images. The idea that this terrible experience might happen to them could generate deep feelings of anxiety among young men in Mardin. The thought that a large audience of people could see shameful images and texts posted on the Facebook wall for several minutes, in some cases even for a few hours, was unbearable.

Other online practices that were viewed as shameful (*ayıp* or *şerefsiz*) to men included being contradicted, or even worse, hosting a discussion or a heated argument

on the Facebook wall. This would immediately bring shame to the account owner, and in some cases, it would lead him to unfriend the other person or even block his Facebook account. The public Facebook wall was not the place to have a disagreement. As a consequence, men tended not to post images or news that could prove controversial or could have started an argument. It was a tacit assumption that posts on public-facing walls were supposed to elicit 'likes' and not arguments. This became particularly evident during the political campaign for the local elections in March 2014, when offline Mardinites engaged in passionate offline activities in support of their political parties and favourite candidates, but refrained from using social media to do so (Costa 2016). Mardin is a divided city with a history of political violence related to the Armenian genocide and the conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement. In March 2014, the three main parties competing for the municipal government, the pro-Kurdish BDP (Peace and Democracy Party), Tayyip Erdoğan's AKP (Justice and Development Party), and Saadet (the Felicity Party), organized a heated political campaign in the streets of the town. On the public-facing Facebook pages, by contrast, politics was not discussed, and the respective candidates were not openly supported. People read the online news, followed and 'liked' the pages of local politicians, but did not use their own profiles to support candidates or their political parties (Costa 2016). I was told that people did not want to be publicly associated with a political party or candidate that might lose the elections. A Facebook wall full of the posts of the losing party would seriously damage one's reputation. In order not to run the risk of being contradicted, people avoided any posts that could have elicited different opinions or negative comments. Political debates and conversations were not appropriate for the online public. Posts that could not elicit a high number of 'likes' were intentionally avoided for fear of one being seen as an isolated individual lacking in social approbation. 'Likes' were expressions of respect, a lack of them a sign of the opposite. People's desire to be worthy of the recognition of others and to avoid shame played an important role in stopping Mardinites from online political participation during the campaign for the local elections. This occurred in the context of state censorship and surveillance, and supporters of the Kurdish party were also worried about being prosecuted for their posts. Yet AKP and Saadet supporters also refrained from publicly expressing their views during the political campaign. Concerns over one's reputation and shame involved equally pro-government and anti-government supporters.

Moreover, men had to refrain from displaying any content that referred to sex or alcohol, or that hinted at the presence of promiscuous relations with women outside the family. Other strategies of self-management that were put in place to reduce the risk of shame included active control of privacy settings, which aimed to keep different audiences apart. Only a selected and controlled number of posts, news and photos were addressed to the wider public. It was also common to close and open new Facebook accounts. For example, when a young man breaks up with a partner, has a major argument with a friend or realizes he has an enemy, he tends to close his Facebook account to prevent them from posting anything disrespectful. Men try to keep their visibility

always under control. Privacy settings are changed in such a way that publishing a post on someone else's wall always needs permission.

In Mardin, public-facing social media are under surveillance. While increasing one's visibility, public recognition and acquisition of status, they also increase the risks of unintended disclosures that bring shame on people. In this section, I have presented two different aspects of the public-facing social media that lead to men being shamed. First, I showed that the increased presence of women in the online public space generates new opportunities for male shaming. Norms of female decency are very much operational in Mardin, and they have shifted to fit into the new architecture of Facebook. Secondly, I showed that increased online visibility can easily bring shame to transgressors of social norms. I have also illustrated the social norms of public presentation and the strategies adopted to avoid or contain the consequences of unintended transgression. In Mardin, the consequences of social media for people's everyday lives are fully understood by taking into account the permanent and endless fears of 'shame'. The shame is amplified by the constant online surveillance of relatives, acquaintances and friends, which generates gossip. Running the risk of shame is worth it, though, because enhanced visibility facilitates the acquisition of status and fame.

Shame and the fear of shame are viewed as emotions that are bound to mediated practices of public visibility. Also, they pertain to men as well as women. This article moves away from the former static conceptualization and dichotomized system of values that associates honour with men and shame with women. Earlier anthropology of the Mediterranean showed that men's honour is bound to women's public behaviour. Pitt-Rivers described how the code of honour and shame 'delegates the virtue expressed in sexual purity to the females and the duty of defending female virtue to the males' (1966: 45). In this model, men are public and have to control the sexual behaviour of their female family members, while women are private and have to be protected by the men. This static model was followed by more dynamic frameworks that stressed the disparities between different forms of honour and shame, and the more diversified roles of women and men in it (see for example Gilmore 1987; Lever 1986; Cole 1991; Wikan 1984). My ethnographic material shows that shame and the fear of shame are very important motives in the digitized lives of boys and young men in southeast Turkey. Social media affordances of visibility turned shame and the fear of shame into common emotions for men too. In the following section, I will focus on the public performance of masculinity that confers value and prestige. I will illustrate mediated practices that bring reputation that goes with rank, what F.H. Stewart (1994) defined as 'hierarchical honour'.

Hayat sefer fons binbeşyüz:[4] Young Men's Reputation in the Mediated Public

Ahmet is a twenty-year-old man from Mardin. He was born in the old city from a family with both Kurdish and Arab origins. He is a second-year university student in Science Tourism at Mardin Artuklu University, but he is dreaming of a job in the Turkish army that can give him a decent salary and hopefully bring him closer to the west of the country. Ahmed describes Mardin as a place inhabited by conservative and backward people, whose lives are ruled by traditional social norms and customs. Like many young men of his age, he wanted to move somewhere else in the west of Turkey:

> I feel in jail here. Look, I cannot wear shorts in Mardin. It is terrible! I have clothes for Mardin and clothes for the rest of the country. Or look at my parents! They cannot hold their hands in the street because it is considered shameful (*ayıp*). You cannot do anything in this town. Yes, it is much better now than years ago, but I feel in jail here!

Social media played an important role in bringing him closer to the modern world he longed for. On Facebook, he met a girl from Mersin with whom he has been on an online relationship for two years. He saw her occasionally during the summer or on weekend trips. Women who are not from the south-east are preferred by young men from Mardin because they are less concerned about family honour, have more freedom, and better embody the ideals of modernity. Facebook gave Ahmet access to a world he views as more modern. On the one hand, he often criticized Mardinites' obsessions with conservative codes of public presentation, while on the other hand he fully conformed to them. Like most of his friends, on Facebook he shows off his success in sport and study, and looks for social recognition from his friends and acquaintances. As a Facebook profile picture, he posted an image of himself wearing a professional suit he rarely uses in real life. He often posts images of himself standing alone in front of the camera and wearing important clothes, or at the gym showing big muscles. One day while he was with me he published a new photo of himself, and for the following half hour proudly showed me the number of friends that had 'liked' his image. He also confessed that he sometimes privately asks his friends to 'like' his photos. I then discovered that this was common practice in Mardin. Receiving several 'likes' contributes to one's status in what is a play for distinction, where the marker is the number of 'likes' a person receives on Facebook.

Many Mardinites recognize that Facebook is a site on which to show off new clothes, expensive items, cars and wonderful trips. A friend said:

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4 This is a traditional saying in Mardin. It is used to describe the local inclination to display wealth, even when someone is poor. The translation is: 'Life is zero, but the image is 1500'.

In the past, people displayed gold and dowry, now they display any other items on Facebook. They want to appear richer than they actually are, even when they are really poor. They might have no food to eat, but they have to show off. They do not eat, they do not pay electricity, they don't go to doctors, but they want to have a big car and show it on Facebook. Mardinites are crazy; in Istanbul they are more relaxed. 'Life is zero, but on the image it is 1500' [Hayat sefer fons 1500] is an old idiom that well explains people's behaviour on social media!

In Mardin, public-facing Facebook is used to achieve popularity and recognition through different forms of conspicuous consumption and the display of intellectual, moral and religious values. Neoliberal politics have turned professional achievement and good incomes into common aspirations, and social media was the place where young men showed off the success they desired in the professional field. Money was commonly described as the main source of male prestige, in opposition to older forms of status embedded in traditional kinship practices. From an early age, boys felt the pressure to find remunerative jobs that could give them a good income, and they were aware of the importance that money had in giving them status. One high-school student claimed:

These days, a strong man is a man with money. In the past, a man was strong if he had people supporting him. In other words, the more respectable, the more popular and worthy you were, the more people would support you, and the stronger you would be. Now, money makes the difference. If you have a money, you will have people backing you up, and you will have power.

In a previous paper, I showed how young women in Mardin used social media and locative technologies for purposes of conspicuous consumption (Costa 2019). Young men also used social media to display wealth in a competition for fame and status with their peers. The display of wealthy life-styles reflects changing norms of masculinity in the context of increased consumption opportunities in neoliberal Turkey (for more detailed analyses of masculinity in contemporary Turkey, see also Gökarıksel and Secor 2017; Mcmanus 2013; Ozyegin 2015; Özbay 2016). Along with the public display of wealth, men tended to post visual content that expressed values that were widely shared by the wider population and could elicit more 'likes'. This included Muslim memes, depictions of family gatherings and good food.

Not only were young men obsessed with the display of images and posts that could enhance their value, they also searched for public signs of social approbation. Many privately called their friends and ask them to 'like' their new pictures. Others actively looked for new Facebook friends. They played online games or joined new Facebook groups to find new friends and display these new friendships. It was common to define, with some envy, those who had a few thousand Facebook friends as 'popular' (popüler) men. Being on multiple social media accounts such as Instagram and Twitter, beyond the more common Facebook, was also recognized as a sign of distinction. The effort

that young men put into crafting their own online public presence to elicit signs of approval shows that social media usage in Mardin reflects an important concern, which is to be worthy in the eyes of others and be accorded public recognition of this value. Also, what is important is not what others really think, but what they openly express. One's social reputation is defined by the validation of others and is granted through social approbation and open recognition in the context of constant surveillance.

It is useful to mention here F.H. Stewart's (1994) differentiation between 'horizontal' and 'vertical' honour, as it describes two main concerns that people had in their use of social media in Mardin. The first is the aspect of a person that mostly derives from one's sexual conduct, which can be either lost or gained, being lost when one fails to meet the minimum standards. The second is part of a vertical system of value and can be increased (F.H. Stewart 1994). The use of social media in Mardin shows, on the one hand, a clear set of rules that men have to observe in order not to bring shame on themselves, and on the other, the display of values to increase individual status. People tended to define as 'honour' (*şeref* and *namus*) the values derived from the observation of social norms on sexual conduct and interactions between women and men, what F.H. Stewart defined as 'horizontal' honour. One young man in his early twenty stated:

> Dishonorable (*şerefsiz*) men are those who cheat on their wives, or flirt with a girl and leave her afterwards, or those do not fight equal battles with their peers. A man who wants to look more honourable on Facebook uses polite words, speaks well, posts photos of themselves where they do not do 'dirty' things, and 'like' no 'dirty' pages or images. Men can be seen as honourable, even if they are not hardworking, nor cool or successful.

A woman in her early thirties said: 'Flirting with a person one day and with another, another day. Supporting a party one day, and another party the other day. This has to do with [dis]honour (…)'. Gul, an eighteen-year-old girl in the last year of high school, explained to me why she didn't privately flirt with boys on social media:

> Mardin is a small place. We have something called honour. If your honour[5] falls, nobody will look at your family member's face anymore. Nobody will look at the father's face and speak to him. He won't be able to speak to anyone because he has shame on him. This is what happens in the east [of Turkey]. My uncle's daughter ran away with a boy and married him. My uncle had a heart attack and died. My dad has diabetes, and people with diabetes die from stress and sadness. I can't do this to him, I can't.

Conforming to the minimum standard of honourable behaviour was the prerequisite for being on social media. Deviation from these norms would have brought dishonour and shame to both female and male users. Yet, competing for higher reputation and

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5 'Bizde namus diye bir şey var, namus, şeref derler'.

status, what F.H. Stewart (1994) defined as 'vertical honour', was the main purpose for being on public-facing social media in the first place. In both cases, reputation was characterized by the constant validation of others in the form of 'likes' or appreciative comments in an online space that was under the surveillance of relatives and friends.

In the traditional anthropological literature on the Mediterranean region (Peristiany 1965; Pitt-Rivers 1965; F.H. Stewart 1994; Wikan 1984), being worthy in the eyes of others was described as being the founding element of one's honour. Drawing on F.H. Stewart (1994), Wikan (2008) conceptualizes honour in Kurdish society above all as a matter of how a person is seen by others, of their values in the eyes of others. Honour is different from the individual responsibility for moral integrity and one's values in one's own eyes. According to Wikan (2008), in Kurdish society it is not important what others really think, as only the public and visible evidence of appraisals counts. Consequently, honour depends on the open and manifest reactions of others, rather than on the values of specific actions in the eyes of those who execute them. This view resonates also with the theoretical framework formulated by the philosopher Appiah (2010). He approaches honour cross-culturally and defines it as the recognition of someone's value that comes with compliance to specific norms and practices. Honour results from the individual's desire to be seen as worthy by others. Appiah's work emphasizes that aspirations to honour are generators of practices and actions, regardless of their inherent moral values. This conceptualization of honour accounts for Facebook usage in Mardin too. My ethnographic data show that on Facebook young men do not simply perform masculinities that are seen as admirable by others; above all they want to elicit public expressions of appraisal and avoid expressions of disapproval. They want to be highly regarded and be confirmed in their high value. The need for constant validation by others was also defined as the central element of 'online honor culture' by Pearce and Vitak (2015) in their study of Facebook usage in Azerbaijan.

Conclusion

In this article, I have shown that reputation and shame are key concerns in the use of social media in Mardin. They affect multiple domains of people's lives, such as politics, love and friendships. Honour and shame are not simply 'othering labels' used to 'make contemporary honor and shame societies non-coeval with the Modern Western societies' (C. Stewart 2015:181). Local notions of 'honour' are not the equivalent of 'socially appropriate behaviour' (Herzfeld 1980) either. Along with Parla (2020), I argue that the wave of critiques of these two tropes has led scholars to underestimate the importance that a concern with honour and shame still have in some Mediterranean societies.

My goal in this article has been to point out the value of studying reputation and shame from a media practice perspective that analyses what people do with media. This approach allows us to shed light on processes of continuity and transformation

that are entangled with the diffusion of media technologies. I have presented stories that show how young Kurdish and Arab men experience shame and how they compete for reputation and fame on public-facing social media, where they are under the surveillance of friends, family and acquaintances. On their personal pages, they aim to conform to the accepted codes of behaviour to avoid shame, showing off clothes, cars and holidays, as well as success at school, work and sport. It does not matter whether their posts reflect their offline lives or not, or whether their friends truly believe their veracity: what is important is that people openly 'like' them. Social media users aim to elicit social recognition in the form of 'likes' and positive comments. In Mardin, values are accorded through the expression of social approbation by others in the context of constant surveillance.

This logic informs work on the different systems of values that are taking shape through the use of social media, which have also been described as adhering to a logic of honour across different cultures and times (among others see Appiah 2011; F. H. Stewart 1994; Pearce and Vitak 2015). At the same time, though, social media have introduced new elements to this logic. First, visual communication and affordances of visibility have facilitated the public display of wealth, encouraging increased competition between peers. Second, augmented female visibility has increased the risks of male shame. Third, augmented visibility has reduced the control that men have over their own image, as a result of which the shame that comes from the unintended transgression of social norms has become even more dangerous. The study of social media practices has opened up a space of reflection to address the important role that digital technologies play in reshaping long-standing aspects of Arab, Kurdish and Turkish public life. A media practice approach to honour and shame offers a way to move through the region in new ways (Shryock 2020) while not leaving behind the relevant anthropological knowledge that has been produced so far.

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