Sexual Datafication

This editorial brings together the articles on sexual datafication available in Vol. 27, Issue 7 of Sexualities.

Digital technologies have become thoroughly integrated into sexual culture over the past twenty years, affecting marriage trends and reproduction, the evolution of sexual cultures, sex work, proprioception and societal norms regarding even the mechanics of sex itself. The integration of smart and now AI technologies into people's bodies and relationships renders data crucial to understanding contemporary sexuality. Data is central to smart and AI-assisted Things, to platforms and apps and to large-scale infrastructures of datafication related to digital capitalism and state institutions, and so data also becomes central to sexuality.

This special issue introduces the concept of sexual datafication to describe the importance of data to the development of contemporary sexual culture(s), rights and discourse. The concept was first introduced in Bodies of Work: the Labour of Sex in the Digital Age (Saunders, 2020) to describe the impact of data economies and cultures on the evolution of pornography. Here, the concept is expanded to investigate how sexuality more broadly is shaped by datafication, which Cukier and Mayer define as 'render[ing] into data […] aspects of the world that have never been quantified before' (2014: 29; see also Kitchin 2021). Sexual datafication describes how sexual relationships and bodies are transformed into data in ways that influence sexual norms and moral values in societies and change in highly material ways how people desire, love and have sex. The datafication of sex takes place through technological and virtual means of data collection and processing, including through: platforms, apps and wearable devices; machine learning and AI; big data; and the deployment of algorithms both to shape cultural content and parse user data.

Sexual datafication also focuses on the monitoring and regulation of sexualities that takes place through dataveillance (Van Dijck, 2014). The regulation of sexuality has historically been vital to the functioning of capitalist, state and colonial systems of power. The regulation of the body and the 'manipulation of the "collective affects" – passion, emotion, feeling or sentiment' (Rose, 2007) are the foundation of biopower. Regulating sexual bodies and behaviour is key to generating economic value and constructing societal structures of legitimacy, morality and deviancy (Foucault, 1990; Foucault, 1977; Dabhoiwala, 2012; Morini and Fumagalli, 2010). Kafer and Grinberg describe sexuality as a key 'technique by which states manufactured systems of behaviors and social relations to channel the pleasures, energies, and sensations of the body into birth rates, reproductive guidelines, and matrimonial customs' (2019: 592). Stryker describes the 'somaticization by individuals of the bodily norms and ideals that regulate the entire population to which they belong' as 'conjoined by the domain of sexuality.' (2014: 38). Sex is the ur- form of biopower. Saunders 1969 How people have sex, fall in love and relate to their bodies and sexual identities is therefore inseparable from power. Now that capitalist, colonial, governmental and medical systems of power are bound up with data, data power becomes key to understanding contemporary sexuality. Data power describes how governments and private corporations exercise power in many spheres of human life and society, including immigration, policy-

making, health, journalism and education, through the production and deployment of data (Kennedy and Bates, 2017; Lynskey 2019). The regulation of sexuality - that is, the construction of forms of sexual expression as morally good or degenerate, the violent policing of certain bodies and relationships and the freighting of particular groups with an excessive sexualness that creates renewed disciplinary imperatives– now takes place through data power. Sexual datafication considers data to constitute the next significant phase in the history of sexuality.

As a conceptual framework, sexual datafication grows from feminist, queer and postcolonial surveillance studies and data studies (Boyd and Crawford, 2012; Conrad, 2009; D'Ignazio and Klein, 2020; Dubrofsky and Magnet, 2015; Kitchin and Lauriault, 2018; Noble, 2018). These disciplines recognise the importance of regulatory systems of surveillance and dataveillance to how intersectional axes of social difference such as gender, race, class and sexuality are experienced. Sexual datafication draws out further the sexuality component that is often lifted up by scholars in these fields. It uses these disciplinary perspectives to explore the specific contexts in which datafication is brought into relation with sexuality; how data cultures and practices significantly impact on sexual relationships and attitudes; and how, through data, sexuality is shaped by capitalist, state and colonial systems in new ways. Sexual datafication explores continuities and shifts in how sexuality is constructed and regulated by data power.

Sexuality is central to some of the most pressing human rights issues of our time and is currently at the heart of judicial, political and cultural disciplining of populations. While the twenty-first century has included progressive sexual rights movements for women and trans people, it has also witnessed the rise of far-right sexual politics, a significant reversal in women's sexual rights including in North America, China, Afghanistan and Iraq, and violent backlash against non-heteronormative sexualities and communities in countries including the UK, Russia, America, Hungary and Poland. Understanding how sexuality is monitored and controlled in the age of data power is crucial.

This introduction identifies five key areas to begin theorising sexual datafication. It investigates data as a cultural phenomenon, a capitalist and colonial enterprise, a tool of the state, and as a means of justice and visibility. These are introduced in five sections related to: the impact of data cultures and data practices on sexual culture; data as an intermediary between people and states; the privatisation of datafication and sexuality's evolution in relation to data capitalism; the role of data as a necessary means of justice and visibility; and the importance of data colonialism to understanding global power dynamics in relation to sexual cultures in the Global South.

Data cultures and data practices

Sexual behaviour and attitudes are now powerfully shaped by data cultures and data practices. Data cultures are defined by Acker and Clement as 'reflect[ing] epistemologies1970 Sexualities 28(5-6) about […] ordering, classification and standards' (Clement and Acker, 2019: 3). The epistemological rationale of data cultures are expanded here to include: knowability, quantification, binaries, formalisation, hierarchies and ranking and ideas of

objectivity and truth (see Katyal and Jung, 2022; Mau, 2019; Porter and Haggerty, 1997; Striphas, 2015). The economisation of data also produces particular cultural effects which are relevant across the different aspects of data cultures set out by Albury et al. that relate to how data is produced, cultivated, algorithmically managed and used (2017). As desire and relationships accrue new capitalist value in the data economy, the imperative of growth that governs platforms and app ecosystems produces concomitant cultural imperatives. More relationships, more sex and more matches and connections signify greater fulfilment and socio-sexual success. Managing this growth efficiently through data practices becomes the responsibility of a 'good neoliberal citizen' (Randles and Woodward, 2017). Building on Ruppert and Scheel's exploration of data practices from infrastructural and professional perspectives (2021), the data practices considered to have the greatest cultural influence here, are those undertaken by users themselves. Individuals' intimate relationships with data practices include transforming their sexual experiences into numbers and quantities; regularly checking devices and applications; and engaging in data visualisations about their body and sexual relationships. These data practices interpolate data cultures into sexual subjectivity. Self-management, improvement, externalisation and control, also important features of data cultures, become central to sexual subjectivity. Moore and Robinson gesture too towards a related temporal culture that emerges from the neoliberal aspect of datafication that is efficient, linear and dromological (2016; see also Swan, 2013; Virilio, 1986). As data practices become a normative part of people's romantic and sexual lives, especially in the Global North, these features of data cultures become central to sexual culture.

The online pornography and dating app industries are important examples of this. Central to these technologies are features of data cultures such as speed, imperatives for more, and the reduction of people to quantifiable metrics of desirability. The epistemological and economic foundation of datafication dominate user engagement with these technologies, as users engage directly with the categorisation and algorithmic modulation of people, bodies and emotions. The digital porn industry is worth over one hundred and fifty billion dollars and dating apps are used by three hundred and fifty million people worldwide. These technology industries have been hugely influential in shaping sexual cultures (Adult Entertainment Market, 2025; Curry, 2025). Changes in sexual cultures bound up with these technologies include attenuations in the primacy of monogamy and marriage (Yeo and Fung, 2016); the flowering of marginalised sexual cultures (Chan, 2021; Miles, 2017); increases in STD rates (Alsing et al., 2021; Lehmiller and Ioerger, 2014; Queiroz et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2023); and changing attitudes towards sexual violence, anal sex and BDSM (Cama, 2021; Gewirtz-Meydan et al., 2024; Keilty, 2018; Rama et al., 2023; Tarzia and Tyler, 2021; Tziallas, 2018). The extent of people's immersion in these technologies, with daily or even hourly engagement, influences significantly how people conceptualise love, sex and relationships. New sexual norms are being forged through data cultures and practices.

The sex-tech and fem-tech industries are also rapidly growing, worth seventy and forty billion dollars respectively, with both set to double by 2030 (Albury et al., 2023; SexTech Market Size, 2025; Size of the femtech market worldwide, 2024). The sex-tech industry comprises a wide range of technologies, including sex tracking apps, sexual therapy and

relationship apps, AI relationship chatbots and smart sexual devices. These technologies often require even more explicit transformations of sexual relationships and bodily sensations into data than take place on dating apps and porn platforms. Users are required to conceptualise their bodies and relationships in quantifiable terms and engage with data visualisations about their sexual activity. Many sex tracking apps quantify sexual experiences in terms of longevity, number of sexual positions and calories burned and blend economised aspects of data cultures with sex positivity and corporatised sexual wellness (Saunders, 2024). Data practices are brought into people's intimate relationships and often literally people's bodies, as is the case, for example, with the Lioness vibrator and FirmTech cock ring where data is gathered directly from the vagina and penis during sex. Sex-tech also establishes data as a communicatory mediator. Users learn about their partner's desires, fears, traumas or whether they give consent through engaging with numerical information in a shared app (Saunders, 2023). The intimacy, physicality and constancy of these libidinal relationships between sex and data cultures has an important material impact. Data practices are integrated into orifices, bodily fluids, hormones, love and desire, typifying the material basis of data's extraction and the materiality of its effects (Ajana, 2017; Ball et al., 2016; Saunders, 2023).

Fem-tech is defined by similar ideas of datafication as providing superior and definitive knowledge about the body and sexual activities (Rizk and Othman, 2016). This industry includes devices, platforms and tracking apps related primarily to menstruation, fertility and menopause. Like many types of sex-tech, these technologies draw on the authority of data science to endow them with a medical validity and often market themselves as sexual health products, with connections with sex education providers and medical institutions. Engaging in data practices to navigate sexual relationships becomes normative and even essential for the digitally affluent and health-conscious individual.

Sexual datafication describes the ways that data cultures and practices in these industries shape dominant sexual norms and moral values, particularly in the Global North where these technologies are prevalent. The impact of these industries on sexual behaviour typify 'soft biopower' (Cheney-Lippold, 2011: 172). People's pleasurable and willing engagement with dating apps, porn sites, AI sex toys and sexual health devices, together with a culture of constant phone use, powerfully shape sexual attitudes. Through these technologies, data therefore becomes central to the evolution of new notions of sexual morality, health, purity and discipline that have been central to the history of sexuality.

The state, the sexual subject and data

The ways in which big data is deployed by state institutions amplifies their capacity to regulate sexuality. Counting and labelling sexual bodies and behaviour has been central to states' regulatory function (Alonso and Starr, 1987; Bowker and Star, 1999; Martin and Lynch, 2009). Sexual bodies typify the 'immeasurable excess' power has sought to control and economise and so have been particularly vulnerable to the rationalizing strategies of states (Anderson, 2012: 36; see also Gleeson, 2007; Greenberg and Bystryn,

1984). Control through classification was at the heart of social hygiene initiatives, colonial sterilisation and religio-psychiatric hospitals and prisons that have historically policed female sexuality, women of colour and non-heteronormative sexualities (McCormick, 2013; Parish et al., 2021; Pluskota, 2018; Stote, 2015; Thomas and Gurevich, 2021; Whitehead, 1995). The eighteenth century 'age of statistical observation' (Espeland and Stevens, 2008: 417) formalised counting as a function of state power. Labelling and categorising people produced the sexually healthy and the degenerate, the sane and the hysterical, the heterosexual and the Other.

Big data, AI-assisted technologies and algorithmic prediction are continuations of these 'analogue antecedents of power' (Clarkson, 2014: 36). These digital forms of datafication extend previous forms of state surveillance and control. Browne calls large-scale datafication 'a technology of social control' (Browne, 2015) and Dǎgdelen and Poyraz describe big data as a 'social classification tool' (2023: 518) characterised by power inequalities. These forms of collecting and managing data are now used in welfare, prisons and policing, immigration and the biomedical sciences. (Ferguson 2017; Karatas et al., 2022; Sangaramoorthy and Benton, 2012; Van Zoonen, 2020). This has significant ramifications for the regulatory relationship between the sexual subject and the state. It is hard to separate the epistemological rationale of classifying populations on the basis of their sexual orientation, sexual health status or gender identity from particular colonial and heteropatriarchal contexts in which classificatory systems are deployed. Counting can seem inherently heteronormative, seeking to produce fixed and knowable sexual bodies, binary and definitive identities and dyads of sexual legitimacy and deviancy. This epistemological reductiveness blends with the discrimination of hetero-normative state apparatuses. Where non-heteronormative people, particularly trans people, circulate in state systems of surveillance, their 'inconsistent administrative identity' (Spade, 2015: 339) arises from the epistemological limits of classification itself. A significant part of the violence trans people face derives from their inability to function numerically in taxonomic state systems (see also Baker et al., 2018; Squatriglia, 2008), making it harder for these citizens to access welfare services, homelessness services or engage with the justice system. Critical data scholars note the inherent opposition between datafication and LGBTQI + sexual bodies and identities. Shelton et al. describe non-heteronormative sexualities as necessarily 'challeng[ing] big data-driven truths' and the 'gendered assumptions of […] data systems which are reliant upon the fixed/reductive categorisations of individuals' (20212: 519). Ruberg and Ruelos describe the 'friction between LGBTQ lives and data' that 'challenge us to reconsider the logics of data itself.' (Ruberg and Ruelos, 2020: 2-3; see also Gieseking, 2018; Drabinkski, 2013: 96; Currah and Mulqueen, 2011). The scale and pervasiveness of datafication intensifies this dis-criminatory relationship between counting and classification and non-heteronormative sexualities.

The capacity to rapidly aggregate different datasets from different levels of government means local, community surveillance can be combined with surveillance taking place on a national level. Where governments use big data for sexual healthcare and disease surveillance, this dataveillance puts LGBTQI+ citizens particularly at risk. From 2020, the Data-to-Care initiative, for example, undertakes 'HIV surveillance' of prisoners

in North Carolina jails. This localised dataveillance has been linked to potential criminalisation as the data is repurposed for other state actors, and has resulted in individuals refusing care because of their distrust of the motives for dataveillance (Buchbinder et al., 2022; see also Bao et al., 2024; Mello and Wang, 2020; Waldman, 2023; Young et al., 2021). Health data has been purchased by credit card, insurance and credit scoring companies and used, for example, to reduce credit for individuals using marriage counselling and psychotherapy. Data brokers have been found selling lists of rape victims and of men with erectile dysfunction (Hirsch, 2014; Redden and Brand, 2017). Auto-mated decision-making and predictive analytics also expand and naturalise existing prejudice against various sexual Others. Davis et al. explore how Australia's National Digital Health Strategy to digitise patient records that began in 2023, continues state-sanctioned sexual discrimination, 'straightwashing data medicine' and failing to 'serve minority communities or address health needs that attract stigma and prejudice' (Davis et al., 2023; see also Donnelly and Stapleton 2022). AI-assisted technologies such as biometric facial recognition software and Automatic Gender Recognition software used, for example, in airport body scanners discriminate technosocially against queer bodies through their 'abstraction of […] a human body into a series of data points' (Shelton et al., 2021: 520) related to voice, face, breast shape and gait. Similarly, the use of big data and algorithmic prediction in policing to generate risk models and anticipate areas and individuals most likely to commit crimes negatively impacts marginalised sexualities (Brayne, 2017). Algorithms automate the ways in which non-heteronormative sexualities are already freighted with a dangerously excessive sexualness that produces over-policing. Big data, algorithmic predictions and AI-automation blend with the heteropatriarchal epistemology of datafication to produce new ways for the state to monitor and regulate people on the basis of their sexuality, particularly in countries with extensive homo- and transphobic nationalistic projects and advanced cultures of digital surveillance. Data establishes a new bio-political frontier between the state and the sexual subject that deepens the importance of counting and labelling to how sexuality is shaped by power.

Data capitalism

This function of data as a mediator between the state and the sexual subject is bound up with data capitalism. Data capitalism describes the centrality of data to various forms of capitalism. It relates to platform and informational capitalism; the commodification of data; and the power inequalities between those from whom data is extracted and those who financially benefit from gathering and selling data (Fuchs, 2019; Myers West, 2019; Sadowski, 2020). A small monopoly of technology companies dominate the production and processing of big data that is utilised by states. Where the regulation of sexuality has been crucial to the historical development of capitalism, principally through the pro-duction of a work force and free gendered labour (Canaday, 2009; Federici, 2004; Turner, 1992), the biovalue (Rose, 2007) of sexual bodies and affect find new expression in data capitalism. This section sets out how the largely privatised context of datafication

produces new constellations of power between nation states and data capitalism that shape sexual discourse and sexual cultures in new ways.

The recent alliance between tech CEOs Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk with US President Donald Trump point to the potential connections between religious and political state interests and newer technological systems of power. Technology companies have a greatly expanded capacity for monitoring populations. Individuals' use of search engines, social media platforms and myriad tracking devices enable 'interconnected and perpetual' mass dataveillance (Maras and Wandt, 2019: 160; see also Tufekci, 2014). This privatised dataveillance can work in tandem with regressive state ideologies to discipline female and non-heteronormative sexualities. In the United States, where abortion is now illegal, data gathered from women's purchase history, geolocative tracking and social media activities can be released to federal and state law enforcement agencies in cases where women have sought reproductive healthcare (Chin, 2022; Tian et al., 2021). Social media platforms have become a key site for monitoring and disciplining groups whose marginalisation is related to their sexuality. The oppression of trans people has been central to Musk's politicised purchase of Twitter and his role as Director of Government Efficiency is closely linked to the US Government's subsequent widespread outlawing of pronouns and anti-trans legislation. In China, the suppression of 'male effeminacy' (Griffiths, 2019) is enacted partly through the monitoring and censorship of social media platforms. Douyin, WeChat and Sina Weibo have repeatedly been forced to undertake' 'cleanup' effort[s]' (Hernandez and Mou, 2018) to ensure their content aligns with the sexual conservatism of 'Xi Jinping Thought' (Xu and Albert, 2017; see also Timmins, 2021; Caini, 2022; Mozur, 2022). The changing ownership of Grindr's data stores from the United States to China between 2018 and 2020, which included individuals' sexual images and conversations from the male gay hook up app, similarly illustrates how privatised dataveillance endangers non-heteronormative people (Kokas, 2023). Social media companies' ability to predict people's sexual orientation with over 80% accuracy (Kosinski et al., 2013) poses a danger for women and LGBTQI + people, particularly in contexts of right-wing nation building where data capitalism and conservative state ideologies can work together to regulate sexualities (Foremski, 2013; Jernigan and Mistree, 2009; Mosse, 1985; Nagel, 1998).

Data capitalism is also central to the construction of sexual discourse. Social media platforms, whose sustaining principle is the datafication of relationality, affect and attention, are now at the heart of public discourse and cultural production (Hillis et al., 2015; Alaimo and Kallinikos, 2017; Fuchs, 2013; Huberman, 2013). The economic imperatives of the data economy shape the discourse around sexual justice issues such as sexual consent and trans rights. The economic need to maximise the time people spend on social media platforms and their affective engagement with these spaces has facilitated discursive extremism and polarisation related in particular to transphobia and misogyny (Govers et al., 2023; Whittaker et al., 2021). This makes data capitalism instrumental in shaping public discourse on sexual identities, sexual politics and sexual rights.

Data capitalism also shapes sexual cultures and identities through algorithms. Algorithms are bound up with online cultural production, modulating what media content users are able to access and often significantly influencing the content of media itself. The

algorithmic management of user data shapes the sexual subjectivity of users. The deployment of user data affects how individuals are addressed and ultimately how they conceptualise themselves. Cheney-Lippold explores how 'a subject's identity can be articulated according to the programmed rationale of the algorithm' (2011:170). Raley also describes the movement from 'descriptive (monitoring)' to 'predictive (conjecture) and prescriptive (enactment)' that takes place in the algorithmic shaping of user identity (2013). Dataveillance anticipates users' identities in ways which shape behaviour and self-perception. The inferential and recommendation algorithms used to target advertising, for example, reproduce cisheteronormative stereotypes by gathering and processing simplified and binary data regarding sexual orientation and gender (Bivens and Haimson, 2016; Myles et al., 2023; Nieuwenhuis and Wilkens, 2018; Noble, 2018; Vormbusch, 2022).

The algorithmic sorting of sexual content and user data also regulates marginalised sexualities through censorship. Female sexuality is simultaneously monetised and policed on platforms like OnlyFans and Instagram. Sex workers and porn performers face regular shadowbanning and censorship, while their labour sustains these platforms. (Blunt and Stardust, 2021; Pilipets and Paasonen 2022; Rauchberg, 2022). Algorithm-driven content moderation systems discriminate against non-heteronormative sexualities. Across META platforms, filtering software conflate any LGBT content with 'mature content', resulting in discussions of gay marriage and trans and bisexuality content being removed (Katyal and Jung, 2022; Myles et al., 2023). Sexual health organisations such as the American Sexual Health Association have found LGBTQI + sex education information automatically removed from digital platforms as inappropriate. This harms organisations' ability to provide vital sexual health advice to non-heteronormative communities (Madison, 2015; P´erez, 2021). Meanwhile, dataveillance and algorithmic analytics are not instrumentalised to police male sexual violence online, with social media and porn platforms failing to protect female and non-heteronormative content creators from the data harms of online abuse. Data capitalism therefore regulates sexuality in multiple reactionary ways. It controls how and what sexual content and sex education people can access; how sexual rights issues are understood and framed in public discourse; and is central to restricting the labour rights of sex workers (Redden and Brand, 2017). However, the demands of data capitalism– for more data, more growth and therefore more relationality– can also shape sexual cultures in progressive ways. Just as the needs of industrial capitalism shaped the moral primacy of the family and heterosexuality, so forms of sexual sociality that have emerged on social media platforms and in dating app cultures represent departures from heteronormativity, marriage, monogamy and reproduction (Castro and Barrada 2020; Olivares-Garc´ıa, 2022; Onanuga, 2021; Yue and Lim, 2022). Recommendation algorithms can spread queer and trans content across heteronormative networks, just as they can spread extremism (Wang et al., 2023). The blossoming of non-heteronormative sexual cultures across digital networks poses clear problems for states seeking to oppress and control citizens on the basis of their sexuality.

Where tech behemoths have significantly attenuated state power, data capitalism can operate in opposition to the interests of heteropatriarchal state institutions. Sexual datafication, by providing a conceptual framework that highlights the different contexts in

which sexuality and data interact, clarifies contradictions in how sexuality is regulated through data capitalism. The biopolitical interests of state and capital can be dangerously aligned in ways that intensify the monitoring and control of sexuality, but there can also be tensions in how capitalist and state forms of power operate on sexuality. These tensions plays out on sexual bodies in unpredictable and culturally specific ways.

Data as visibility

The sexually progressive effects of data capitalism in some cases point to the important role of data as a means of visibility. Datafication and dataveillance are not only tools of economisation and bureaucratic control. They are also an essential means for bringing to light sexual discrimination and human rights issues connected to sexuality. Adrienne Rich's assertion that an identity needs to be named in order to exist is true of data too (2003; see also Caswell et al., 2016). To be counted is to be recognised by a society as deserving of recognition and societal support and is necessary for understanding the specific health, educational, welfare and justice needs of sexually marginalised groups. Organisations and initiatives such as the United Nation's Data2x, the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative's Data-Pop Alliance and Mexico's Global Centre of Excellence for Gender Statistics assert the necessity of data for bringing to light important 'sexual rights' issues (Richardson, 2000: 98) such as child marriage, sex trafficking and rape as a tactic of war. The UN warns that 'important data about women and girls is incomplete or missing' (data2x, n.d.). Its goal is to expand the production and demand for this data as the key way to improve sexual and gender equality. The Data-Pop Alliance similarly describes its objective to 'Change the World with Data,' asserting that gathering data about women and children's experiences is crucial for change. The 2019 LGBTIQ survey of 100,000 Europeans conducted by the European Union Agency for Funda-mental Human Rights similarly sought to gather data on non-heteronormative people's experience of discrimination and violence in employment, education, healthcare and housing. Large-scale datafication is necessary to better understand the lived realities of people and communities with marginalised sexual identities - over half of the world's population - and address their needs. Data is 'witness and action,' in Coleman's words (2018: 391) and many critical data scholars assert the necessity of data for social justice related to gender and sexuality (Cruz, 2020; Heeks and Renken, 2018; Henne et al., 2021; Kshetri, 2014; Vaitla et al., 2017). Data as a means of fighting for sexual rights - and the paradox this poses in the context of regulatory state and capitalist dataveillance - are vital considerations for sexual datafication.

Data colonialism

The role of data in ensuring visibility is prominent in humanitarian and philanthropic contexts. What the World Economic Forum terms 'data philanthropy' (Big Data, Big Impact, 2012: 6) not only describes the positive aspects of visibility afforded by data

gathering. It also points to the relevance of 'data colonialism' as a final theoretical framework that is necessary to develop an understanding of sexual datafication (Couldry and Mejias, 2019; Milan and Trer ́e, 2019; Raval, 2019). Organisations in the Global North, often working with branches of technology companies like Google.org and Microsoft's Tech for Social Impact, gather data about people's sexuality in the Global South: data is gathered, often in local, community contexts about people's sexual attitudes, their experiences of gendered sexual violence and their access to sexual health services and education. Such data philanthropy needs to be analysed with regard to the powerful rhetorical role it plays in establishing the infrastructures and ideologies of datafication in the Global South, something which is vital to global digital capitalism (Browne, 2015; Hoffmann, 2021; Mann and Daly, 2019; Taylor and Broeders, 2015). Synonymising datafication with sexual rights is a potent justification for the expansion of tech corporations in the Global South and can also function as an effective whitewashing for other forms of exploitative data practices. Data colonialism and related questions of data agency and data justice (Taylor, 2017; Taylor and Broeders, 2015) are important for understanding how sexual cultures are framed in international contexts and constructed through power inequalities between the Global North and South. Sexual datafication is interested in exploring how datafication and related emergent technologies are constructed as a benevolent and civilizing force, while sexualities on the margins of digital Empire are subject to pathologisation and decontextualisation through that datafication. The complexities of sexualities across multiple regions and cultures are often obscured when sexual bodies in the Global South are framed by the numerical parameters set by organisations such as the ICT Global Agenda and Corporate Human Rights Benchmark (Costanza-Chock, 2020; Lepri et al., 2017; Leurs, 2017; Welles, 2014).

Controlling sexuality has been central to colonial enterprises, where justifications for European and Christan colonial expansion leant heavily on the construction of African and Asian sexualities as dangerous and uncivilised (Fanon, F 1963; Said, 1979; Smith, 2015). Now, data colonialism is important for interrogating how datafication is wielded by Western democracies and technology companies. Ideologies of big data uncritically celebrate the production of philanthropic data as a seductively simple and reassuringly technological solution to the complexity of the patriarchal, capitalist and colonial systems in which global sexual inequalities are embedded. Sexual datafication interrogates not only how data can be used to foster sexual justice through visibility, but how a simplistic notion of data as sexual justice can obscure new ways that data colonialism legislates marginalised sexualities. This special issue explores these different aspects of sexual datafication, in order to better understand the impact of data on sexuality. Oscar Tianyang Zhou and Shuaishuai Wang analyse how the algorithmic management of social media data provides a new visibility of gay culture in China on the Douyin and Zhihu platforms. David Myles relatedly considers the implications for queer citizens in China of both the commodification and censorship of the queer hook up app Grindr. Darra Hofman and Michele Villagran explore the relationship between LGBTQ + communities and dataveillance in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The 'soft biopolitics' of sexual datafication is explored in Alberto Cossu and Carolina Bandinelli's article on the evolution of reputational metrics in dating app culture.1978 Sexualities 28(5-6)

Cosimo Marco Scarcelli explores the rise of sex tracking apps and their biomedical, sexual and cultural implications. Finally, Natalie Hammond and Angelo Moretti's article focuses on the rise of big data in addressing sexual and reproductive health in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and considers the challenges related to gathering sexual data in the Global South. These articles demonstrate the necessity of datafication, as it takes place through myriad technologies and infrastructures, in order to understand how sexuality is being disciplined, shaped and economised in the twenty-first century. They also show the inter-disciplinarity of sexual datafication, spanning fields including critical, queer and feminist data studies, AI and algorithm studies, surveillance studies, digital health, platform studies, political economics, digital sociology and gender and sexuality studies.

References

Adult Entertainment Market: Global Industry Analysis and Forecast (2025-2032) by Type, Gender, Age Group, Distribution Channel and Region (2025) Available at. https://www.maximizemarketresearch.com/market-report/adult-entertainment-market/190504/ (Accessed 12 March 2025).

Ajana B (2017) Digital health and the biopolitics of the quantified self. Digital health 3: 2055207616689509.

Alaimo C and Kallinikos J (2017)"Computing the everyday: social media as data platforms". The Information Society 33(4): 175–191.

Albury K, Burgess J, Light B, et al. (2017) Data cultures of mobile dating and hook-up apps: emerging issues for critical social science research. Big Data & Society 4(2): 2053951717720950.

Albury K, Stardust Z and Sund´en J (2023) Queer and feminist reflections on sextech. Sexual and reproductive health matters 31(4): 2246751.

Alonso W and Starr P (eds) (1987) The Politics of Numbers. Manhattan, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Alsing KK, Sejersen TS and Jemec GBE (2021)"Geosocial dating applications mirror the increase in sexually transmitted diseases". Acta Dermato-Venereologica 37(1): 1490.

Anderson B (2012) Affect and biopower: towards a politics of life. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 37(1): 28–43.

Baker AC, Kroehle K and Patel H (2018) Queering the uestion. Child Welfare 96(1): 127–146.
Ball K, Di Domenico M and Nunan D (2016) Big data surveillance and the body-subject. Body & Society 22(2): 58–81.

Bao H, Liu H and Wang L (2024) Using healthcare big data analytics to improve women's health: benefits, challenges, and perspectives. China CDC Wkly 6(10): 173–174.

Big Data, Big Impact: New Possibilities for International Development (2012) World Economic Forum.
https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TC_MFS_BigDataBigImpact_Briefing_2012.pdf

Bivens R and Haimson OL (2016) Baking gender into social media design: how platforms shape categories for users and advertisers. Social Media and Society 8: 1–12. Available at: https://perma.cc/9PAV-87X9.

Blunt D and Stardust Z (2021) Automating whorephobia: sex, technology and the violence of deplatforming: an interview with hacking//hustling. Porn Studies 8(4): 350–366.

Bowker G and Star SL (1999) Sorting Things out. Classification and its Consequences. Cambridge, MA: MIT press, 2000.

Boyd D and Crawford K (2012) Critical questions for big data: provocations for a cultural, technological, and scholarly phenomenon. Information, Communication & Society 15(5): 662–679.

Brayne S (2017) Big data surveillance: the case of policing. American Sociological Review 82(5): 977–1008.

Browne S (2015) Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness. Durham: Duke University Press.

Buchbinder M, Juengst E, Rennie R, et al. (2022) Advancing a data justice framework for public health surveillance. A JOB Empirical Bioethics 13(3): 205–213.

Caini Y (2022) Liking'illegal' social media posts to be punished in China. https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1011776/liking-illegal-social-media-posts-to-be-punished-in-china-

Cama E (2021) Understanding experiences of sexual harms facilitated through dating and hook up apps among women and girls. In: The Emerald International Handbook of Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse. Leeds, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited, 333–350.

Canaday M (2009) The straight state. In: The Straight State. Princeton, UK: Princeton University Press.

Castro A and Barrada JR (2020) Dating apps and their sociodemographic and psychosocial correlates: a systematic review. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 17(18): 6500.

Caswell M, Cifor M and Ramirez MH (2016)"To suddenly discover yourself existing": uncovering the impact of community archives. American Archivist 79(1): 56–81.

Chan LS (2021) The Politics of Dating Apps: Gender, Sexuality, and Emergent Publics in Urban China. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Cheney-Lippold J (2011) A new algorithmic identity: soft biopolitics and the modulation of control. Theory, Culture & Society 28(6): 164–181.

Chin C (2022) What privacy in the United States could look like without Roe V. Wade. https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-privacy-united-states-could-look-without-roe-v-wade

Clarkson NL (2014) Biometrics. TSQ: transgender studies quarterly 1(1–2): 35–38.

Clement T and Acker A (2019) Data cultures, culture as data. Journal of Cultural Analytics April. Available at: https://doi.org/10.22148/16.035

Coleman B (2018) Domestic disturbances: precarity, agency, data. In: Losh E and Jacqueline

Wernimont J (eds) Bodies of Information: Intersectional Feminism and the Digital Humanities. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 391–408.

Conrad K (2009) Surveillance, gender, and the virtual body in the information age. Surveillance and Society 6(4): 380–387.

Costanza-Chock S (2020) Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Couldry N and Mejias UA (2019) Data colonialism: rethinking big data's relation to the contemporary subject. Television & New Media 20(4): 336–349.

Cruz TM (2020) Perils of data-driven equity: safety-net care and big data's elusive grasp on health inequality. Big Data & Society 7(1): 2053951720928097.

Cukier K and Mayer-Schoenberger V (2014) The rise of big data: how it's changing the way we think about the world. The best writing on mathematics 2014: 20–32.

Currah P and Mulqueen T (2011) Securitizing gender: identity, biometrics, and transgender bodies at the airport. Social Research: International Quarterly 78(2): 557–582.

Curry D (2025) Dating app revenue and usage statistics. Available at. https://www.businessofapps.com/data/dating-app-market/. Accessed at 12 March 2025.1980 Sexualities 28(5-6)

D'Ignazio C and Klein LF (2020) Data Feminism. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Dabhoiwala F (2012) The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution. Oxford, UK:Oxford University Press.

Daˇgdelen E and Poyraz T (2023) Big data, digitization and new surveillance practices: new decision-making culture and panoptic classification. Journal of Faculty of Letters/Edebiyat Fakultesi Dergisi 40(2): 518–530.

data2x. Available at. https://data2x.org. Accessed 13 March 2025.

Davis MDM, Schermuly A, Smith AKJ, et al. (2023) Diversity via datafication? Digital patient records and citizenship for sexuality and gender diverse people. BioSocieties 18: 451–472.

Donnelly N and Stapleton L (2022) The social impact of data processing: the case of gender mapped to sex. IFAC-PapersOnLine 55(39): 117–122.

Drabinkski E (2013) Queering the catalog: queer theory and the politics of correction. The library quarterly: information, communication. Policy 83(2): 94–111.

Dubrofsky RE and Magnet SA (2015) Feminist Surveillance Studies. Durham: Duke University Press.

Espeland WN and Stevens ML (2008) A sociology of quantification. European Journal of Sociology 49: 401–436.

Fanon F (1963) The Wretched of the Earth. New York: Grove Press.

Federici S (2004) Caliban and the Witch. New York, NY: Autonomedia.

Ferguson AG (2017) The rise of big data policing: urveillance, race, and the future of law enforcement. In: The Rise of Big Data Policing. New York: New York University Press.

Foremski T (2013) Facebook'likes' can reveal your sexuality, ethnicity, politics, and your parent's divorce. Retrieved on 28 Aug 2014 from. https://www.zdnet.com/facebook-likes-can-reveal-your-sexuality-ethnicity-politics-and-your-parents-divorce-7000013295/

Foucault M (1977) Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Vintage Books. trans. A. Sheridan.
Foucault M (1990) The History of Sexuality: An Introduction. New York: Vintage, Vol. I. Trans. Robert Hurley.

Fuchs C (2013) Critique of the political economy of informational capitalism and social media. In:Critique, Social Media and the Information Society. Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge, 51–65.

Fuchs C (2019) Karl marx in the age of big data capitalism. In Digital Objects, Digital Subjects: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Capitalism, Labour and Politics in the Age of Big Data. London: University of Westminster Press, 53–71.

Gewirtz-Meydan A, Volman-Pampanel D, Opuda E, et al. (2024) Dating apps: a new emerging platform for sexual harassment? A scoping review. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse 25(1): 752–763.

Gieseking JJ (2018) Size matters to lesbians, too: queer feminist interventions into the scale of big data. The Professional Geographer 70(1): 150–156.

Gleeson KD (2007) Discipline, punishment and the homosexual in law. Liverpool Law Review 28: 327–347.

Govers J, Feldman P and Dant A (2023) Down the rabbit hole: detecting online extremism, radicalisation, and politicised hate speech. ACM Computing Surveys 55(14s): 1–35.

Greenberg D and Bystryn MH (1984) Capitalism, bureaucracy and male homosexuality. Contemporary Crises 8: 35.

Griffiths J (2019) Can you be gay online in China? Social media companies aren't sure. https://edition.cnn.com/2019/04/17/tech/weibo-china-censorship-lgbt-intl/index.html

Heeks R and Renken J (2018) Data justice for development: what would it mean? Information Development 34(1): 90–102.Saunders 1981

Henne K, Shelby R and Harb J (2021) The datafication of# MeToo: whiteness, racial capitalism, and anti-violence technologies. Big Data & Society 8(2): 20539517211055898.

Hernandez JC and Mou Z (2018)'I am gay, not a pervert': furor in China as Sina Weibo bans gay content. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/15/world/asia/china-gay-ban-sina-weibo-.html

Hillis K, Paasonen S and Petit M (eds) (2015) Networked Affect. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hirsch DH (2014)"That's unfair - or is it: big data, discrimination and the FTC's unfairness authority". Kentucky Law Journal 103(3): 345–362, 2014-2015.

Hoffmann AL (2021) Even when you are a solution you are a problem: an uncomfortable reflection on feminist data ethics. Global Perspectives 2(1): 21335.

Huberman BA (2013) Social computing and the attention economy. Journal of Statistical Physics 151: 329–339.

Jernigan C and Mistree B (2009) Gaydar: Facebook friendships expose sexual orientation. First Monday 14(10). Available at: https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v14i10.2611

Kafer G and Grinberg D (2019) Editorial: queer surveillance. Surveillance and Society 17(5): 592–601.

Karatas M, Eriskin L and Deveci M (2022) Big ata for ealthcare ndustry 4.0: pplications, challenges and future perspectives. Expert Systems with Applications 200: 116912.

Katyal SK and Jung JY (2022) The gender panopticon: AI, gender, and design justice. Dukeminier Awards: Best Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity L. Rev 21: 135.

Keilty P (2018)"Pornography's white infrastructure". Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience 4(1): 1–9.

Kennedy H and Bates J (2017)"Data power in material contexts: introduction". Television & New Media 18(8): 701–705.

Kitchin R (2014) The Data Revolution: Big Data, Open Data, Data Infrastructures and Their Consequences. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kitchin R and Lauriault TP (2018) Towards critical data studies: charting and unpacking data assemblages and their work. In Thinking Big Data in Geography: New Regimes, New Research, Thatcher J, Eckert J and Shears A (eds), Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 3-20.

Kokas A (2023) Data trafficking and the international risks of surveillance capitalism: the case of grindr and China. Television & New Media 24(6): 673–690.

Kosinski M, Stillwell D and Graepel T (2013) Private traits and attributes are predictable from digital records of human behavior. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 110(15): 5802–5805.

Kshetri N (2014) The emerging role of big data in key development issues: opportunities, challenges, and concerns. Big Data & Society 1(2): 2053951714564227.
Lehmiller JJ and Ioerger M (2014)"Social networking smartphone applications and sexual health outcomes among men who have sex with men". PLoS One 9(1): e86603.

Lepri B, Staiano J and Sangokoya D (2017) The tyranny of data? The bright and dark sides of data-driven decision-making for social good, In: Cerquitelli T, Quercia D, Pasquale F (eds) Transparent Data Mining for Big and Small Data, Studies in Big Data. Transparent Data Mining for Big and Small Data 3–24.

Leurs K (2017) Feminist data studies: sing digital methods for ethical, reflexive and situated sociocultural research. Feminist Review 115(1): 130–154.

Lynskey O (2019)"Grappling with"data power": normative nudges from data protection and

privacy". Theoretical Inquiries in Law 20(1): 189–220.

Madison A (2015) When social-media companies censor sex education (Accessed 12 February 2025). The Atlantic 4. Available at: https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/03/when-social-media-censors-sex-education/385576/.

Mann M and Daly A (2019) (Big) data and the North-in-South: Australia's informational imperialism and digital colonialism. Television & New Media 20(4): 379–395.

Maras MH and Wandt AS (2019) Enabling mass surveillance: data aggregation in the age of big data and the Internet of Things. Journal of Cyber Policy 4(2): 160–177.

Martin A and Lynch M (2009) Counting things and people: the practices and politics of counting. Social Problems 56(2): 243–266.

Mau S (2019) The Metric Society: On the Quantification of the Social. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

McCormick L (2013) Regulating sexuality: women in twentieth-century Northern Ireland. In: Regulating Sexuality. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Mello M and Wang CJ (2020) Ethics and governance for digital disease surveillance. Science 368(6494): 951–954.

Milan S and Trer´e E (2019) Big data from the South(s): eyond data universalism. Television & New Media 20(4): 319–335.

Miles S (2017)"Sex in the digital city: location-based dating apps and queer urban life". Gender, Place & Culture 24(11): 1595–1610.

Moore P and Robinson A (2016) The quantified self: what counts in the neoliberal workplace. New Media & Society 18(11): 2774–2792.

Morini C and Fumagalli A (2010) Life put to work: towards a life theory of value. Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization 10(3/4): 234–252.

Mosse GL (1985) Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Mozur P (2022) Grindr is pulled from apple's app store in China. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/02/business/grindr-apple-app-store-china.html

Myers West S (2019) Data capitalism: redefining the logics of surveillance and privacy. Business & Society 58(1): 20–41.

Myles D, Duguay S and Echaiz LF (2023) Mapping the social implications of platform algorithms for LGBTQ+ communities. Journal of Digital Social Research 5(4): 1–30.

Nagel J (1998) Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations. Ethnic and Racial Studies 21(2): 242–269.

Nieuwenhuis M and Wilkens J (2018) Twitter text and image gender classification with a logistic regression n-gram model. In: Proceedings of the ninth international conference of the CLEF association (CLEF 2018), Avignon, France, 10–14 September 2018.

Noble S (2018) Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism. Manhattan: New York University Press.

Olivares-Garc´ıa FJ (2022) The communication of sexual diversity in social media: TikTok and transcommunity. IROCAMM-International Review of Communication and Marketing Mix 5(1): 83–97.

Onanuga P (2021) Coming out and reaching out: linguistic advocacy on queer Nigerian Twitter. Journal of African Cultural Studies 33(4): 489–504.

Parish S, Cottler-Casanova S, Clayton AH, et al. (2021) The evolution of the female sexual disorder/dysfunction definitions, nomenclature, and classifications: a review of DSM, ICSM, ISSWSH, and ICD. Sexual Medicine Reviews 9(1): 36–56.

Perez BP (2021) Facebook doesn't like sexual health or sexual pleasure: big tech's ambiguous content moderation policies and their impact on the sexual and reproductive health of the youth. International Journal of Sexual Health 33(4): 550–554.

Pilipets E and Paasonen S (2022) Nipples, memes, and algorithmic failure: NSFW critique of Tumblr censorship. New Media & Society 24(6): 1459–1480.Saunders 1983

Pluskota M (2018) Prostitution and Social Control in Eighteenth-Century Ports. Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge.

Porter TM and Haggerty KD (1997) Trust in numbers: the pursuit of objectivity in science & public life. Canadian Journal of Sociology 22(2): 279.

Queiroz A, Matos M, Evangelista de Ara´ujo TM, et al. (2019) Sexually transmitted infections and factors associated with condom use in dating app users in Brazil. Acta Paulista de Enfermagem 32: 546–553.

Raley R (2013) Dataveillance and countervailance. In: Gitelman L (ed) Raw Data Is an Oxymoron. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 121–145.

Rama I, Bainotti L, Gandini A, et al. (2023) The platformization of gender and sexual identities: an algorithmic analysis of Pornhub. Porn Studies 10(2): 154–173.

Randles J and Woodward K (2017) Learning to Labor, Love, and Live: Shaping the Good Neoliberal Citizen in State Work and Marriage Programs. Sociological Perspectives 61(1): 39–56.

Rauchberg JS (2022) # shadowbanned: users and disabled creator responses to algorithmic oppression on TikTok. In: LGBTQ Digital Cultures. Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge, 196–209.

Raval N (2019) An agenda for decolonizing data science. Spheres: Journal for Digital Cultures 5(S): 1-6.

Redden J and Brand J (2017)"Data harm record".https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/107924/1/data-harm-record-djl2.pdf

Rich AC (2003) Compulsory eterosexuality and esbian xistence. Journal of Women' s History 15(Number 3): 11–48.

Richardson D (2000) Rethinking Sexuality. London: SAGE.

Rizk V and Othman D (2016) Quantifying fertility and reproduction through mobile apps: a critical overview. Arrow for Change 22(1): 13–21.

Rose N (2007) The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century. Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press.

Ruberg B and Ruelos S (2020) Data for queer lives: how LGBTQ gender and sexuality identities
challenge norms of demographics. Big Data & Society 7(1): 205395172093328.

Ruppert E and Scheel S (2021) Data Practices. In: Ruppert E and Scheel S (eds). Data Practices: Making Up a European People. Goldsmiths Press, 29–47.

Sadowski J (2020) Too smart: how digital capitalism is extracting data. In: Controlling Our Lives, and Taking over the World. MIT Press.

Said E (1979) Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books.

Sangaramoorthy T and Benton A (2012) Enumeration, identity, and health. Medical Anthropology 31(4): 287–291.

Saunders R (2020) Bodies of Work: The Labour of Sex in the Digital Age. London, UK: Palgrave.

Saunders R (2023) Sex tech, sexual data and materiality. Porn Studies 10(2): 120–134.

Saunders R (2024) Sex tracking apps and sexual self-care. New Media and Society 26(4): 2006–2022.

SexTech Market Size (2025– 2030) Share & trends analysis report by product (bluetooth-enabled sex toys, VR porn), by distribution channel (e-commerce, D2C), by region, and segment forecasts, 2025– 2030. https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry analysis/sextech-market-report (Accessed 12 March 2025).

Shelton J, Kroehle K, Clark E, et al. (2021) Digital technologies and the violent surveillance of nonbinary gender. Journal of Gender-Based Violence 5(3): 517–529.1984 Sexualities 28(5-6)

Size of the femtech market worldwide from 2023 to 2029 (2024) Available at. https://www.statista.com/statistics/1483460/femtech-market-size-worldwide/#:~:text=In-2023%2C-the-femtech-market,52-billion-U.S.-dollars-worldwide

Smith A (2015) Not-seeing: state surveillance, settler colonialism, and gender violence. In: Dubrofsky RE and Magnet SA (eds) Feminist Surveillance Studies. Durham: Duke University Press, 21–38.

Spade D (2015) Administrating gender. In: Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 73–93.

Squatriglia H (2008) Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in the juvenile justice system: incorporating sexual orientation and gender identity into the rehabilitative process. Journal of Law & Gender 14: 793–817.
Stote K (2015) An Act of Genocide: Colonialism and the Sterilization of Aboriginal Women. Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.

Striphas T (2015) Algorithmic culture. European Journal of Cultural Studies 18(4-5): 395–412.

Stryker S (2014) Biopolitics. Transgender Studies Quarterly 1(1-2): 38–42.

Swan M (2013) The quantified self: fundamental disruption in big data science and biological discovery. Big Data 1(2): 85–99.

Tarzia L and Tyler M (2021) Recognizing connections between intimate partner sexual violence and pornography. Violence Against Women 27(14): 2687–2708.

Taylor L and Broeders D (2015) In the name of development: power, profit and the datafication of the global south. Geoforum 64: 229–237.

Taylor L (2017) What is data justice? The case for connecting digital rights and freedoms globally. Big Data & Society 4(2): 2053951717736335.

Thomas EJ and Gurevich M (2021)"Difference or dysfunction? deconstructing desire in the DSM-5 diagnosis of female sexual interest/arousal disorder". Feminism & Psychology 31(1): 81–98.

Tian Y, Gomez R, Cifor M, et al. (2021) The information practices of law enforcement: passive and active collaboration and its implication for sanctuary laws in Washington state. Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology 72(11): 1354–1366.

Timmins B (2021) China's media cracks down on'effeminate' styles. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58394906

Tufekci Z (2014) Engineering the public: big data, surveillance and computational politics. First Monday 19(7). Available at: https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v19i7.4901

Turner BS (1992) Regulating Bodies: Essays in Medical Sociology. Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge.

Tziallas E (2018) The pornopticon. Porn Studies 5(3): 333–337.

Vaitla B, Bosco C, Alegana V, et al. (2017) Big data and the well-being of women and girls: applications on the social scientific frontier. Data2x. Available at: https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/407908/1/Big_Data_and_the_Well_Being_of_Women_and_Girls.pdf.

Van Dijck J (2014) Datafication, dataism and dataveillance: big data between scientific paradigm and ideology. Surveillance and Society 12(2): 197–208.

van Zoonen L (2020) Data governance and citizen participation in the digital welfare state. Data & Policy 2: 10.

Virilio P (1986) Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology. New York: Semiotext(e).

Vormbusch U (2022) Accounting for who we are and could be: inventing taxonomies of the self in an age of uncertainty. The New Politics of Numbers: Utopia, Evidence and Democracy, Mennicken A, Salais R (eds). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 97–134.

Wachter S and Mittelstadt B (2019) Right to reasonable inferences: re-thinking data protection law in the age of big data and AI. Columbia Business Law Review 2019(2): 494–620.

Waldman AE (2023) Gender data in the automated administrative state. Columbia Law Review 123(8): 2249–2320.

Wang K, Chen S and Wu F (2023) Dating app use and sexual risk: understanding the associations between casual sex motivation, number of sexual partners, and STI diagnoses. *International Journal of Sexual Health* 35(2): 209–217.

Welles BF (2014) On minorities and outliers: the case for making big data small. Big Data & Society 1(1): 2053951714540613.

Whitehead J (1995) Bodies clean and unclean: prostitution, sanitary legislation, and respectable femininity in Colonial North India. Gender & History 7(1): 41–63.

Whittaker J, Looney S, Reed A, et al. (2021) Recommender systems and the amplification of extremist content. Internet Policy Review 10(2): 1–29.

Xu B and Albert E (2017) Media censorship in China.
https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/media-censorship-china

Yeo TD and Fung TH (2016) Relationships form so quickly that you won't cherish them: mobile dating apps and the culture of instantaneous relationships. In: Proceedings of the 7th 2016 international conference on social media & society, London, UK, 11-13 July 2016, 1–6.

Young S, Crowley J and Vermund S (2021) Artificial intelligence and sexual health in the USA. The Lancet Digital Health 3(8): e467–e468.

Yue A and Lim RP (2022) Digital sexual citizenship and LGBT young people's platform use. International Communication Gazette 84(4): 331–348.