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My deepest appreciation to Endah Triastuti, Ph.D for inspiring me to write, advice and input into my research.

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In Quest of Mother’s Worth: How Millenial Instamoms’ Sharenting Revisit Women’s Traditional Roles

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the performance of the so-called digital mothers "Instamom" in Indonesia in the cultural contradiction between the construction of women's subjectivity that commodifies motherhood and intersubjectivity as to fulfilling women's traditional role. Using performativity theory, I argue that the phenomenon of Instamoms’ sharenting is a communicative practice in the digital space that demonstrates the performance of a fluid and dynamic maternal identity without rigid boundaries. This research applies a digital ethnography approach to the everyday life’s practices of Stay-At-Home-Mothers that focus on the complexities of women's experiences in engaging with social media throughout the transition to motherhood. For this reason, this study conducted in-depth interviews and collected digital data from Instagram accounts. The findings show becoming a Stay-At-Home-Mothers is their resolution to negotiate the image of an "ideal mother" through the subjective performance of a "good mother" that emphasizes neoliberalist maternal femininity. Gradually, this practice creates a digital mother performance that fulfills the demands of self-governmentality to replace women’s past professional career through digital entrepreneurship and commodification maternal identity. In conclusion, by performing digital mother, women play a variety of roles as they look for new opportunities whilst their traditional role serves as the main framework.

Keywords
Identity performance, Instamom, Digital motherhood, Sharenting, Social media

Introduction

“I quit my dream job to be a mom. Life is full of sweet surprises!” (Quoted from Instagram Bio of La, Millenial Stay-At-Home-Mother/ Mumpreneur)

“The responsibility is really huge... being a mother has a very wide impact... to the child and other parties too. So you really have to think many times before deciding something
Rony Agustino Siahaan, How Millennial Instamoms' Sharenting Revisits Women’s Traditional Roles

when you become a mom..." (Interview with Ti, Millenial Stay-At-Home-Mother/ Founder of @mominfluencerid)

Sharenting, which is generally defined as parents' behavior of sharing their parenting experiences that also disseminate their children's identities online, has created a contradiction of intensive parenting with possible risks to children (Choi & Lewallen, 2018; Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017; Steinberg, 2017). Previous sharenting research indicates high levels of women's engagement with digital media in relation to the demands of being a 'good mother' (Ammari et al, 2015; Kumar & Schoenebeck, 2015). This engagement refers to digital activities in the context of technological domestication according to the daily experiences of stay-at-home mothers (Pink, 2012). Meanwhile, sharenting narratives about being a 'good mother' in the context of women's traditional roles articulate women's strategic efforts to mitigate the complexity of maternal domestic roles (Damkjaer, 2018).

Ultimately, the practice of sharenting problematizes maternal identity, which stems from a complication of social constructions of gender and motherhood that limit women's roles (O'Reilly, 2021). Academically, this research suggests that the polemic on sharenting has its roots in the cultural contradictions of contemporary maternal identities that present a self-image of active and independent women while at the same time practicing intensive parenting that idealizes the traditional domestic role of mothers (Ennis, 2014; Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Hays, 1996). This contradiction has led to ambivalence about performing motherhood in the digital era, which adds to the complex history of women's identification as mothers, especially of urban middle-class women as first-time mothers, which is intertwined with the myths of femininity (Friedan, 1963). Reflecting on the reality of contemporary mothers above, I argue that the phenomenon of sharenting as a communicative practice in the digital space that contests the practice of 'good mothering' (Lazard et al, 2019; Damkjaer, 2018), otherwise demonstrates the performance of a fluid and dynamic maternal identity without rigid boundaries by observing ideological practice and women’s situatedness.

The ideology of contemporary motherhood in Western societies, for example, has developed a new myth of maternal femininity regarding women's subjectivity in self-governing the way they carry out their chosen roles (Gilbert, E., et al, 2022; Chodorow, 1978; Hollway, 2001). This subjectivity relates to the performance of Stay-At-Home-Mothers (SAHM) that to some extent can be distinguished from traditional housewives. Within that ideology, women make the choice to become SAHMs and perform entrepreneurial economic activities through the digital practice of "Momblogger" which commodifies mothering experiences (Orgad & De Benedictis, 2015). Although Mombloggers controversially subvert the image of the ideal mother in mainstream media, feminism views that the emergence of the SAHM/Momblogger is a backlash to women's struggle to break out of the domestication trap (Williams & Chen, 2013). In fact, the commodification of motherhood as the practice of a private matter is contrary to the strategy of feminism which has earlier projected the personal experience of mothers to become a political issue (Van Cleaf, 2015). Later the emergence of "Instamom celebgrams" normalized this commodification in the consumer culture of Instagram, which became the main means for mothers to carry out intensive parenting (Krzyżanowska, 2020). Putting in cultural framework, the practice of sharenting laden with economic values is a manifestation of the identity task of a 'good mother' in the neoliberal era that demands women's productivity in the labor market (Couldry, 2010; Duberley & Carrigan, 2013; McRobbie, 2013; Tyler, 2011). Yet, the mothers' commercial activities in digital practices that present images of successful and confident women have come under scrutiny from mainstream society for violating traditional maternal norms of simplicity, passivity, and dependence on others (Negra & Tasker, 2014; Akass, 2012).
Taking into account women’s situatedness, this study assumes that millennial SAHM in Indonesia who engage in Instamom’s sharenting can alternatively perform other contemporary maternal identities in the context of non-Western societies that idealize traditional maternal roles as women’s moral careers (Simorangkir, 2015; Liamputtong, 2006). In this role, women perform the obligations of housewives who are fully responsible for nurturing and maintaining the harmony of family life. Although feminist discourse downplays the meaning of traditional maternal roles since it refers to myths of femininity that essentialize maternal identity and marginalize the role of women (Hrdy, 2000; Glenn et al, 1994), I argue that the performance of SAHM/ Instamom which meets the demands of women’s traditional roles is actually an intersubjective accomplishment referring to the strategic role of mothers in term of relationality and collectivity that shape women’s identity (Mitchel, 2014; Yin, 2009; Prus, 1999).

Looking at the two different cultural backgrounds above that reflect the reality of contemporary mothers in Indonesia, this study uses a pragmatic approach in conceptualizing the performance of maternal identity according to the feminist theory of performativity (Butler 1989; 1988) related to women’s subjectivity in digital practices, and to the interactionist approach of power as an intersubjective accomplishment (Prus, 1999) related to the strategic role of mothers. Through the case of digital practices of millennial SAHM, which is focused on the transitional experience of new mothers that is significant to women's self-transformation (Miller, 2007; 2005), this research aims to investigate the performance of the so-called digital mothers "Instamom" in Indonesia in the cultural contradiction between the construction of women’s subjectivity that commodifies motherhood by doing digital activities in response to work productivity, and intersubjectivity on becoming housewives as to fulfilling women’s traditional role. For that purpose, this research asks the following questions: How do millennial SAHMs perform and negotiate maternal femininity and various demands of women’s roles through their digital practices in Instagram?

Cultural Backgrounds of Women’s Traditional Roles in Indonesia

Socio-historically, women’s situatedness in Indonesia refers to the post-colonial social construction of women’s domestic roles as wives and mothers. Niewenhuis (1987) suggests that the ideology of Ibuism controls the role and position of women. Niewenhuis' version of ibuism is a combination of the characteristics of Dutch bourgeois class women with traditional Javanese priyayi women. Then Suryakusuma (1996) developed the theory of State Ibuism that positions men as the core element of the state and women as secondary elements in the family to devote themselves to the state. Thus, the state hegemony has put women under control with a "culture of following the husband" and ultimately encourages the domestication of women for the advantage of male dominance over the public sphere. The ideology of State Ibuism at a certain level has succeeded in building glorification of motherhood and rationalization of women’s dual roles in replace of women’s dual burdens.

Meanwhile, this research also argues that the discourse on gender roles in Indonesia historically cannot be separated from the diversity of norms that do not limit the roles of women or mothers in strict distinctions between private and public spaces. In traditional culture, gender roles do not refer to the concept of work associated with sexuality that makes a separation of space, but rather to the discourse of moral responsibility that society expects of mothers. Handayani & Novianto (2004) state that Javanese women do men’s work while still showing femininity which can even be a source of power. In this case, women become the real rulers in the domestic sphere who are also able to influence social processes in the public sphere, even though normatively women are not in decision-making positions. Because Javanese women
are accustomed to performing roles simultaneously in the domestic and public spheres, there is no clear division of gender roles in both spheres. Javanese women take the main role in the care, education of children, and all household affairs and also have an important role in earning additional income and strategic role in maintaining social harmony. According to Permanadeli (2015) the many roles that Javanese women have do not make them feel constrained but rather interpret it as a responsibility.

Culturally, Indonesian women actually have extensive roles in the family and social life at large. Brenner (2012) emphasizes the uniqueness of traditional Javanese women's power at home and in the market. The two spheres are connected to each other through local economic activities that include production and exchange processes. However, Brenner found that the center of economic and social power has shifted from the family to the state which reorients the family to the national political agenda. Another study conducted by Koning et al (2001) shows how a housewife act as the head of household. Global and multicultural feminism also needs to be considered given the different cultural contexts of society (Tong, 1998). Indonesian women come from various ethnic groups with their own kinship systems and national collectivities that determine the position of women and the power women have (Vreede-De Stuers, 2008; YuvalDavis, 1997). Consequently, this diversity will result in various women's experiences. Sen (1998) observes the changing discourse on women which are concerned with replacing the paradigm of women as housewives with the construction of working women. Although socio-political changes in Indonesia have led to an establishment of modern society and now adopted the rationality of neoliberalism, traditionalist femininity hegemony and the ideology of Ibuism are still at work in the social construction of motherhood in Indonesia.

Defining Motherhood as a Problematic Social Construct

Maternal identity is actually a fragile construct because it is built on the basis of the situatedness of women ranging around the spectrum of mothering and social institution of motherhood (O'Reilly, 2021; Miller, 2005; Rich, 1995). Mothering in this study refers to the personal experience of women in caring for children (Miller, 2005). However, Chodorow (1978) states that women do caregiving and consider it important to their self-identity because of women's gendered experiences since childhood that identify themselves with their mothers. The deconstruction of mothering separates women's self-identity from women’s situatedness that defines the role of mother. This role refers to the term 'motherhood', which is historically, socio-culturally, politically, and morally shaped in broader social relations as a relatively new social construction in the history of modern society (Savedra & Cameira, 2017; Hager, 2011; Miller, 2005). Tobin (2010) shows how motherhood has been socially constructed by media discourse creating a cult of domesticity.

Meanwhile, women's lived experiences about their transition to motherhood is significant in determining the women course of lives (Miller, 2005). Laney et al. (2015) state that the transition is an empirical experience of women’s struggles with shifting identities. The birth of the first child has a major impact on the disruption of women’s work productivity from the public to private sector (Smith, 2007; Horne et al 2005). Ever since the transition, women are given obligation of motherhood, which is not their choice (Horne et al, 2005). In this regard, Choi & Tree (2007) show that women's unpreparedness to become mother results in their expectations about motherhood based on myths. The greater the gap between myth and reality, the greater the efforts of women to show themselves as "supermom", "supergirl", and "supereverything". Heisler & Ellis (2008) finds that women construct those maternal identities to gain acceptance and recognition even though women do not actually want to play the "good mother" face. Using her own personal experience, Hager (2011) proves that the myth of mother is a control mechanism to suppress and exploit women. In media discourse,
Johnston and Swanson (2003) show how contemporary magazines promote the myths about the differences between working mothers and Stay-At-Home-Mothers (SAHMs).

In many cultures, the myth of mother is often presented as "natural", "instinctive" and "intuitive" (Hrdy, 2000), rather than as cultural, economic, political or historical. Regarding this, scholars claim that the myth aims to preserve the patriarchal system (Ruddick, 2009; Hays, 1996; Thurer, 1994; Rich, 1976). Within the myth is the belief that every woman's happiness lies in achieving her identity as a mother, so her unhappiness and dissatisfaction may indicate her failure. The myth also says that a good mother is a happy mother, and an unhappy mother is a failed mother. Such a myths attribute maternal responsibilities to individual women rather than to the system (Johnston & Swanson, 2003). That is why maternal identity is always in conflictual situation since the myth of mother becomes a source of crisis by giving women the wrong impression which causes disappointment and feelings of loss of identity (Ambrosini & Stanghellini, 2012; Weaver & Ussher, 2007). Oakley (1979; 2019) has long researched the myth of mother that says all women must become mothers, must be able to do all kinds of tasks, and have an unselfish nature. This myth justifies women's busyness in the domestic sphere and keeps them away from the real center of power. In late modernity, the myth of mother is even stronger in contemporary parenting culture. In Hays’ term of intensive mothering ideology, it is a "child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive and financially expensive" method of parenting.

This section aims to show how problematic and complex are maternal identities interlocked with politics of gender. Even to this day, contemporary mothers who practice SAHM's intensive mothering ideology (Orgad & De Benedictis, 2015) are still struggling with complexities of the role of mother (LaneY et al, 2015; LeMaster & Marcus-Newhall, 2004; Vincent et al, 2004; Smith, 1999), which ideologically separate the space between work and home (Hays, 1996). Previous research on the SAHM phenomenon called 'New Momism' in Western countries can illustrate the complication of traditional and contemporary ideologies of maternal femininity which is feared to revive the myth of mother that domesticates women (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Ennis, ed, 2014). However, this research argues that millennial SAHM/Instamom perform self-governing subjectivities by appropriating the role of traditional mothers with the neoliberalism demands on working women (McRobbie, 2013).

Identity Performance: In-between of Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity

This research uses performativity theory to investigate subjective performance or identity performance for short. According to Butler (1988), who defines performativity in relation to the construction of gender identity, identity is loosely formed over time, which is constituted as reality through repeated and stylized actions in a continuous manner. Furthermore, Butler argues that performativity is subversive to normativity by modifying it. Using Butler's argument, this research proposes the concept of performative identity as an antithesis to static, formative, and normatively rigid identities. I also reflect this performance of identity on Giddens' (1991) construction of self-identity in late modernity as an identity project that produces a "self-biography".

According to Butler (1988), there is no identity without performance. Performative acts are not only symbolic because they create messages, but also constitutive for the enactment of a reality. Ultimately, meaning is manifested in a series of actions, and identity is the result of actions that are self-effort and meaningful to him, or in Butler's terms, the accomplishment of performativity. In Butler's view, identity is a concrete and historically mediated expression that is shown to the world, and therefore identity is a symbolic reality or similar to virtual reality, myth or fiction that is not an actual reality but is believed to exist. In this case, performativity materializes the social
conventions that underlie the establishment of this reality. Agency presents its performance to carry out the 'constitutional duties' of a society bound by the same norms. If the individual actor does not act in this way, then he or she will receive social sanctions for being out of line. Therefore, performativity has the potential to be subversive when placed within the subjective experiences.

This research follows Butler's performativity not as a resistance to the institutionalization of identity, but as a strategic endeavor relating to the construction of identity. For that purpose, I make a reinterpretation of performativity in interactionist approach to power discourse as an intersubjective accomplishment (Prus, 1999). This research responds to Butler's (1988) critical theory about agency by critiquing her dualistic view of conventional norms that only provide two options, namely resistance and consolidation (XIE, 2014). In non-Western feminist perspective, there is nothing subversive about norms that can be implemented in various ways (Mahmood, 2005). Therefore, this research suggests to apply conventional norms in the interpretive community so that subjective performativity does not have to be subversive to conventional norms. For this reason, I propose identity performance as communicative practice (XIE, 2014).

In Butler's view of performativity, the agency is in control of his own actions but at the same time his actions are disciplined by conventional norms that objectify him. Thus, historically, identification of the self is embodied into performance of identity. In this research I argue that identity performance is the practice of everyday life that refers to the intersubjectivity of human group life. Thus, individuals actually do not completely lose control of themselves or otherwise have complete autonomy, but are always positioned in a cultural community situation (Prus, 1999). In Prus' interactionist argument, individuals will always make strategic endeavor to exert influence on others through the roles played by each individual as a form of social process in certain situations. In the context of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, this research suggests that the performance of maternal identity takes place in certain discursive situations that offer various ways for women to anticipate and understand themselves and negotiate their roles as mothers (Allen and Osgood, 2009).

**Research Methods**

This research uses a digital ethnography approach to understand Instamoms' sharenting as a cultural practice that is still evolving and contested today. The Instamoms represent themselves on the Instagram digital platform through performances that combine social media characteristics with storytelling elements (Underberg & Zorn, 2013). Ethnographic investigations in the digital realm can help understand the cultural experiences of women as "digital mothers" who enable and are enabled by digital technologies (Hine, 2000). Therefore, this study applied experiential observation to process text and graphic data collected from Instamom accounts and analyze data from interviews in order to capture the meanings portrayed in their sharenting content. The millennial mothers who participated in this study were purposively selected with a total of 10 modern young mothers (Rewindinar, 2019), who has just passed the transition to first-time motherhood; and they are also everyday mothers (not celebgrams) who have monetized their Instagram content. They live in the urban areas characterized by a population that no longer consists of traditional families but still maintains the tradition of child-rearing in the private family environment (Karsten et al, 2012). In order to investigate the meaning of Instamom's sharenting practices according to the cultural context and the women situatedness in Indonesia, this study considers the selection of participant subjects that can be differentiated based on multicultural backgrounds. Therefore, each participant is positioned as a subject who reflects on the events in her life, the decisions she makes, and the actions she takes to be interpreted in relation to identity.
formation (see Miller, 2005).

To access Instamom’s digital life, I familiarized myself with the practice of sharenting on Instagram and built a network with Instamom. After that, I attempted to meet them face-to-face and create rapport through conversations as fellow parents of young children (Duncombe and Jessop, 2002). The process continued with informal interviews with them after I obtained their agreement to provide information. The interview focused on women’s lived experiences of gendered digital practices in interconnected moments of events before and since motherhood, to understand how disruptive circumstances or transitional events of motherhood can be accepted by individuals, through their active efforts to shape and think about their biographical disruptions (Reissman, 1990). Based on the data obtained through interviews and digital texts on Instagram, I then conduct the first stage of analysis by constructing a narrative about the case of each participant’s individual experience related to the performance of motherhood identity. All data from each participant will be re-read to create a comprehensive narrative of the story that contains the individual voice without the need for interpretation. This narrative includes elements of the relationship between events, the passage of time, and individual intentions. In the second stage, analysis is conducted to provide interpretation of the narratives from the summaries of each case. Here I will look for similarities and differences in patterns from the readings between individual cases.

Results and Discussion

In analyzing the results of this study, I make a comparison of Instamoms’ sharenting in Indonesia which is sometimes also identified as microbloggers with their counterpart Western SAHM Mombloggers, to emphasize an Asian-centric perspective towards gendered communicative practice through the lens of multicultural identity (Sparrow, 2000; Adler, 1977). The experiences of millennial mothers’ digital practices on Instagram can be differentiated from Mombloggers who practiced emotional resilience upon their maternal burdens and then normalized it by commodifying their blogging experiences (Makinen, 2020). Meanwhile, millennial mothers have tolerated their vulnerability from the beginning of their journey to motherhood by accepting the roles of traditional housewives. Their strategic endeavor in combining intensive mothering with extensive roles of traditional mothers and intensified day-today engagement with Instagram that create new entrepreneurial subjects as “mominfluencers” or “momendorsers” (Archer, 2019 Duberley & Carrigan, 2013). In general, they are content creators and sharent for the establishment of maternal femininity in digital market place as seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Instamom's performance can be compared to Momblogger's performance which is called radical because it practices subjectivity that displays women's resilience in empowering themselves regarding everyday life's practices at home (Lopez, 2009; Pink, 2012). Momblogger’s performance constructs an image of a relatively "good mother" that represents intensive parenting but also subverts the image of the ideal mother in mainstream media through the practice of sharing authentic personal experiences as expression of private life freedom (Van Cleaf, 2015). Meanwhile, Instamoms subjectivity displays women's negotiation in relation to the self-realization of idealized motherhood as seen in Figure 2. Thus, Instamoms are not as radical as Mombloggers because of their different attitude of flexibility in practicing intensive mothering. Instamom's performance are increasingly fluid in carrying out multiple roles as they move from one role to another (Butler, 1988; 1989). This answers the long complicated maternal discontent and inadequacy concerning the mother role and nonfamily role (Miller et al, 1991). The two major themes generated from the analysis below can describe the subjective performance of millennial mothers in the digital space based on their reflexive digital practice that capitalizes on their maternal identity in co-existence with the intersubjectivity of women’s traditional roles (Gilbert et al., 2022).

**Negotiating Ideal Mother into Good Mother**

Millennial mothers recognize the acquired housewives' roles as idealization of motherhood but also desire to demonstrate their subjectivity that generate a sense of liberated women who contribute to society by carrying out their responsibility in child-rearing. Engagement with digital media would condition millennial women to make the choice to become SAHMs as everyday life’s practice in response to intensive parenting ideology following their transition to motherhood. By doing that, they have fulfilled conventional norms of traditional mother while engaging social process to return to being active and reinvigorating women’s self-governing identity. As the result, they did not experience prolonged dilemmas in their transition of motherhood due to the complexities of performing their gendered roles. Ti's transition experience can describe how millennial women mitigate the struggles of becoming first-time mothers.

"...It also turns out that from what I do (digital activities, e.g. blogging) from what was just a 'passion' or just an escape, it turns out to be able to produce as well, not only about money but I feel inner satisfaction, then I feel like I can exist again, I feel like I have to learn again, I have the enthusiasm to learn again, not just waking up taking care of children, going to the market, cooking, and washing clothes... so I can think creatively...
So there are many challenges, even though being a mother." (Ti)

La's experience demonstrates their strategic endeavors to escape those complexities without abandoning intensive parenting through their engagement with the Instagram networked publics that extends their domesticity to virtual world. In particular, they connected with fellow SAHMs who are existentially positioned to understand the ambivalence of intensive mothering and women's desire of self-monitoring in response to the price of motherhood which is unnoticed by the society (Mitchell & Green, 2002; Crittenden, 2001).

"...from Instagram it's like we have our cellphones in our hands every day... to do business from our cellphones, socialize even with friends after giving birth. I rarely meet friends, it's really hard ... after resigning, so it's like through social media too, in addition to sharing, it's like we're closer to friends, it's like having virtual friends. " (La)

Western SAHM discourse on sharenting considers the boundaries of women's individual self-identity in public surveillance of "good mothering" (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017). Meanwhile, millennial mothers reflect their relational self-identity in the intersubjectivity of performing traditional mother as housewives who are obliged to consult their husbands. Furthermore, Instamoms' sharenting would form a networked individual self-identity on Instagram without making a dichotomous separation between private/public spaces. In this situation, millennial mothers go through a negotiation process as Ti did regarding private information.

"Yes, I really take care of my child's privacy. That is also one of the conditions from my husband, 'You can go into this world but', but my husband is very, very restrictive about it... So I finally said to my husband, 'It's okay to share family photos occasionally'. Because I'm often mistaken for a college kid, that's why." (Ti)

Contemporary maternal femininity commodifies personal experiences that demonstrate their resilience in overcoming motherhood complexities. Nonetheless millennial mothers' digital practices go one step further in redefining the domesticity that differs from traditional conception about home which is negated to be a work place. Ste negotiates this contemporary mothering ideology throughout their traditional mothers positioning by becoming an entrepreneurial subject who stays at home. She reflexively formed digital entrepreneurship that suited her personal situation and maternal lived experience.

"Actually, my dream was that at that time I wanted to be in the office ... I wanted to get the highest position... But that's yesterday... But now I just want to be successful in the Instagram world... I'm quite satisfied with my achievements now actually... I can control Owi too, I can watch him, monitor what he's like, even though I sometimes at home stick to my cellphone because I have to do editing or something. But overall I really enjoy it." (Ste)

In contrast to Western Mombloggers who still rely on women's reflective consciousness at the cost of creating ambivalence about motherhood, Instamoms are self-reflexively made by choice in the image of the idealized mother which they appropriate to create on themselves. Millennial mothers, like Fe, reflexively capitalize on status of motherhood and make it as strategic endeavor in taking precarious opportunities to live their own life.

"Being a mom, you know, I think it's complicated, but it turns out that it's a choice. We can be full-time housewives at home, but for me... I chose to do a lot of works because I can not be passive, so I decided choosing to be a doctor... to be a business woman, or I could choose to make time for my child... choose to be a microinfluencer and so on..." (Fe)
However, the lived experiences of urban middle-class women in multicultural Indonesia shows the diversity of women’s personal situations before becoming mothers, resulting in different negotiation processes. For Jo, who voluntarily had let go her dream career, she had to undergo temporary struggle of motherhood transition until she transformed into a maternal self and unexpectedly found good mother’s dreams around her extensive strategic roles of traditional mother.

"Being a parent, especially mothers... our dreams are delayed. That’s what I think is the hardest... finally I gave in ... even I forgot dreaming ... because the consideration is family ... all thoughts are also divided because of the family... It’s an obstacle, but it can also be a surprise... I found the 'read aloud' activity which turned out that Gantari was the inspiration there..." (Jo)

This study found that millennial mothers' digital practices are neither value-free as suggested in media determinism nor even value-laden as in parental determinism. Nevertheless, in this case their everyday life’s practice as SAHM is shaped by women’s post-colonial experiences in adopting idealized role of women as homemaker that eventually reshapes their digital practice concerning the performance of “good mother”. This is evident from Ti’s lived experience of expressing herself as independent woman by negating but also negotiating the traditional belief of motherhood.

"I was indoctrinated the most by my family when I lived in Java. You have to be able to cook. Because later when you get married you have to serve your husband. We have to cook, we have to take care of the children, we have to take care of the house... In Sulawesi it’s not... indoctrinated like that... I tried to adapt... But now I feel that there are benefits too. It was for my advantage that I was forced to be able to take care of the house even though now is needed adaptation again." (Ti)

Performing Negotiated Digital Motherhood: The Practice of Expecting the Unexpected

The performance of millennial mothers can be distinguished from previous generations of digital mothers, especially in Western societies where hegemonic rationality in intensive parenting has led to ambivalent maternal roles (Orgard & De Benedictis, 2015). Even though millennial mothers generally practice the same pattern of sharenting, their personal goals expect individualization of performative accomplishment of digital mother (Butler, 1988; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). The lived experiences of mothers who sharent show that they have saved personal aims in the spirit of motherhood collectivism. For example, Fe, although she joins a small group of Instamom friends, her digital practices have different goals and expect performative accomplishment of digital mothers in her own sense.

"I had difficulty having children, then I gave birth. The process was very difficult, and at that time I promised him (husband) ... if for example my IVF is successful, I will share and I will help people... My IVF was successful because I read blogs... Even if I don’t get paid, I’m willing to share... like I helped a life to be born, you know, without me doing anything, just typing and telling..." (Fe)

The sharing practices of millennial mothers above deradicalize Western mommy blogging that constructs highly individualized motherhood. In contrast to Momblogger, which emphasizes neoliberal maternal femininity that does not give rise to a reflective consciousness of husband/partner involvement in their personal (moral) career, millennial mothers remain bound to the traditional roles of women in hope for equal marital partnership. Ste, more or less negotiates her husband’s supporting roles in child-caring and domestic chores, so that there are opportunities for her to become SAHMs who can practice intensive parenting and explore extensive roles of traditional
mothers as well.

"It's definitely hard, but so far I enjoy being a woman and being a mother. Especially from my side, I'm lucky enough to have a man like this. It's like he always supports whatever I do... like whatever you want, what you like, just do it... And he never demands. What makes me not heavy burdened..." (Ste)

While Western Mombloggers reflect on their digital practice to resist the idealization of motherhood, millennial mothers started with non-strategic, unorganized, and "playful" digital activities. In the end, their intensified engagement with Instagram formed a recurring pattern that manifested into the performance of digital mothers. Far from being a radical act of making public their personal experiences, Instamom's sharenting appropriates the usage of Instagram into SAHMs everyday life's practice.

"I diligently participated in 'giveaways' and then suddenly I won. I was told to review it. That's how it started... with consumer good I have bought that I use for Owi. I took photos, then I reviewed them... I was just doing it for fun. I started from there." (Ste)

Western Momblogger's performance shows ambivalence that only provides two choices, namely conforming or resisting the identity of the traditional mother roles. Whereas the Instamom’s performance creates wide-range of possibilities for women to accomplish identity task with many given roles by negotiating the normative motherhood. That performance ultimately constructs women's subjectivity that makes their own blends of mothering and self-satisfying pursuits, as stated by Dhe.

"So now it's really mixed, you know. The business works, so does the mothering. But actually, my 'passion' is to produce something anyway... Finally I made something and... it happens to work." (Dhe)

Western Instamoms have not only commodified motherhood status but also normalized their commercial digital practices that exercise individual motherhood. Meanwhile, for millennial mothers, their engagement with digital media has become everyday's life practice that forms collectivity among fellow mothers. Ste's engagement with contemporary parenting culture in Instagram has accelerated her transition to motherhood into a new normal as she gradually entered into Instamom subculture.

"When I was pregnant, I didn't follow Instamoms. I just looked around... So like in 'explore' there are ... I only follow a few celebgrams... Yes, just for fun. For example, I was on 'explore'. There's Orami (parenting media), then I go to its Instagram account..." (Ste)

Compared to Western SAHMs’ reflective process in interpreting the struggles of intensive parenting based on their personal experiences, millennial mothers carry out a reflexive process that creates their own desires and activities in the online realm related to their motherhood status. Fe's commercial digital practice follows the flow of increasingly intensified stages of engagement with the Instagram networked public and is shaped by interactions with a group of fellow Instamoms who have already monetized their digital motherhood as "endorsers".

"At first it was like blind ... it was like a plunge. Because I said earlier... I feel satisfied by being able to share...suddenly someone said, 'Mom I want to 'endorse' honey.' I really remember that first time... 'Endorse'? What?"... I asked my friends... they explained, you can give a 'fee' or something like that... it seems pretty good right. Honey is also useful. So I accepted..." (Fe)
Conclusion

Rony Agustino Siahaan, How Millennial Instamoms’ Sharenting Revisits Women’s Traditional Roles

Redefining the Roles of Traditional Mothers in the Digital Age

Based on the power discourse in term of interactionist tradition (Prus, 1999), this research concludes that the performance of SAHM as digital mother in the case of Instamom’s sharenting in Indonesia is an intersubjective accomplishment of the roles of traditional housewives-mothers that negotiate neoliberal women’s subjectivity.

Sharenting has exposed multicultural identity backgrounds of contemporary mothers in this study in recurrent joint actions of Asian way of relationalism and the practice of social networking in convergence culture (Mitchell, 2014; Papacharissi, 2010). That’s why the choice to become a SAHM is a redefinition of idealized mother in the digital era, thanks to the mother’s engagement with social media as everyday life’s practice (Pink, 2012; Takahashi, 2002). In the case of Indonesia’s contemporary mothers, SAHM/Instamoms digital practices bring together the traditional “domestic” roles of women and the digitally-mediated performance of "good mothers" in the intersectionality of neoliberal intensive mothering and Indonesia’s Ibuism ideology as to fulfilling a mother’s moral career and woman’s desires for personal success by capitalizing on maternal femininity that does not strictly separate private and public spaces (Liamputtong, 2006; McRobby, 2004). Such performance is an embodiment of motherhood in many other influential roles (Miller et al, 1991). Millennial mothers appropriate Instagram for the making of contemporary motherhood identity within a traditional family.

Historically, millennial mothers in Indonesia ascribed gendered role of traditional mother from the intersubjective identities between mothers and children, and also interpersonal identities between husbands and wives. Their role as housewives in nurturing children and family are not denied by acclaimed neoliberal women’s independence, confidence, resilience, and self-empowerment in relation economic activities. Instamom’s digital practice addresses the demands of intensive parenting to become “professional mothers” through the narratives of economic productivity and personal achievement. This practice demonstrates how the choice to become SAHMs and the endeavor to pursue accomplishment of digital mother performance (e.g., influencer, content creator) are as lucrative as any other job that women may choose. Therefore, millennial mothers’ self-efficacy in appropriating the usage of social media is similar to the strategic roles of traditional mother in creating influence.

This research contributes to the theory of identity construction in digital era by understanding of the making of digital mother in cultural and situational context. Millennial mothers take on the role of traditional mothers by performing digital intermediation of their intersubjective and interpersonal relationalities with children, parents/their mothers and spouses/their husbands to fit the formation of networked self in digital space. Thus Instamoms’ sharenting practices in Indonesia do not face the same ethical problems as their Western counterpart mothers regarding their relational self-representation with children and networked public in digital spaces. Their practice eventually mitigates their "sense of identity loss" as they are gradually being transformed into digital workers (e.g., influencers, content creators). This creates a sense of independence to compensate their opting out of professional job career. In that sense, Instamoms are performative accomplishments of digital motherhood which is modified to negotiate the conventional norms so as to be adaptive to the Instagram’s consumer culture. The implication of this study suggests that no role identity will ever be stable or static, lest they can change over time. In digital motherhood performance, women can play a variety of roles whilst their traditional role serves as the main framework, so that each mother may perform their identity differently according to the choices shaped by their personal experiences and situations.
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Rony Agustino Siahaan, *How Millennial Instamoms’ Sharenting Revisits Women’s Traditional Roles*

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