



### **Putting passion to work: Passionate labour in the fashion blogosphere**

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## Putting passion to work: Passionate labour in the fashion blogosphere

**Purpose:** This study explores passionate labour in the fashion blogosphere and addresses two research questions: How does passion animate passionate labour? How does the emotion of passions and the discipline of labour fuse within passionate labour?

**Methodology:** A three-year netnographic fieldwork of replicate fashion blogger-preneurs. Data are based on in-depth interviews, blogs, social media posts and informed by the relationships developed across these platforms.

**Findings:** Throughout our findings we unpack the ‘little passions’ that animate the passionate labour of blogger-preneurs. Passions include: passion for performing the royal lifestyle; the mobilisation of passion within strategic sociality and; transformation and self-renewal through blogging. Lastly, the cycle of passion illustrates how passions can be recycled into new passionate projects.

**Research Implications:** We offer insight on how passionate labour requires the negotiation and mobilisation of emotion alongside a calculated understanding of market logics.

**Practical Implications:** Our study raises implications for aspiring blogger-preneurs, luxury brand managers and organisations beyond the blogging context.

**Originality:** Our contribution lies in the cultural understanding of passion as a form of labour where passion has become a way of life. Our theorisation of passionate labour contributes to existing research in three ways. First, we identify social mimesis as a driver of passionate labour and its links to class distinction. Second, we offer insight on how passionate labour requires the negotiation and mobilisation of emotion alongside a calculated understanding of market logics. Third, we advance critical debate around exploitation and inequality within digital labour by demonstrating how passion is unequally distributed.

**Keywords:** passion, labour, blogger-preneur, fashion, netnography

## Introduction

An emerging body of work has conceptualised the innovative forms of digital labour facilitated by social media (Duffy and Hund, 2015; Duffy, 2016; Anderson, Hamilton and Tonner, 2016; Mardon, Molesworth and Grigore, 2018; Drenten, Guerrieri and Tyler, 2019; McFarlane and Samsoie, 2020). Our study focuses on the blogger-preneur (Duffy and Hund, 2015), a form of micro-entrepreneurship which empowers individuals to craft, reposition, blend and share online in novel ways (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013). The fashion blogosphere is a domain worthy of further study because of the inseparability of the fashion consumer and fashion producer (Laurell, 2016). Indeed, without any institutional mediation fashion bloggers can develop reputation capital comparable to traditional professionals by gaining a mass audience for their posts through the performance of taste leadership (McQuarrie, Miller and Phillips, 2013). Research has recognised that fashion bloggers are driven by their passion for fashion (Duffy and Hund, 2015; Dolbec and Fischer, 2015; Duffy, 2016). However, the role of passion is often accepted at face value without a clear understanding of its character and essential ingredients. In this paper, we theorise the sources of passion and how this passion animates forms of passionate labour in the fashion blogosphere.

Passionate labour is of research interest because it offers insight into the conditions of work in the new media environment. One of the few studies that directly explores passionate labour is Postigo (2009, p. 467) who conceptualises it as “the structural conditions of co-creative work, the subject positions of those doing free labor and the discourses and perspectives they make possible”. Postigo’s (2009) research centres on co-creation related to the willing contribution of free labour by volunteers. We extend conceptualisation of passionate labour by exploring the alternative subject position of the blogger-preneur who is in pursuit of self-transformation and seeking to capitalise on their labour. Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003,

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3 p. 333) suggest that passion is experienced as “an intense and usually highly positive emotional  
4 state”. Baudrillard (1998 [1970], p. 114) acknowledges passion as “a concrete relation to a total  
5 person or to some object taken as a person” and indicates that passion requires “total investment  
6 and assumes an intense symbolic value”. However, when passion becomes passionate labour  
7 it is much more than simply emotion and is combined with the effort and discipline of labour.  
8 We address the following research questions to structure our ideas: How does passion animate  
9 passionate labour? How does the emotion of passions and the discipline of labour fuse within  
10 passionate labour? We draw upon Cooren’s (2010) analysis of “little passions” to demonstrate  
11 that when passion becomes a form of labour, strategic thinking is infused with emotion to  
12 negotiate and make compatible the multiple forces that animate behaviour.  
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26 Our theorisation of passionate labour contributes to existing research in three ways.  
27 First, we identify social mimesis as a possible driver of passionate labour and its links to class  
28 distinction. Second, we offer insight on how passionate labour requires the negotiation of  
29 emotion alongside a disciplined and calculated understanding of market logics. Third, we  
30 advance critical debate around exploitation and inequality within digital labour by  
31 demonstrating how passion is unequally distributed.  
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40 Our paper is structured as follows. We begin with a theoretical review of the various  
41 forms of labour that have emerged within the digital context, before considering passionate  
42 labour within the fashion blogosphere. We then present the details of a 3-year netnographic  
43 fieldwork of bloggerpreneurs who blogged about Kate Middleton’s fashion choices. We  
44 proceed to present our findings around the themes of: performing the royal lifestyle, the  
45 mobilisation of passion within strategic sociality, transformation and self-renewal and, the  
46 cycle of passion. We end with the contributions and implications arising from the study.  
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## Mapping the terrain of digital labour

The broad scope of digital labour is recognised by Fuchs (2014, p. 4) who defines it as the “collective work force that is required for the existence, usage and application of digital media.” It encompasses all forms of waged and unwaged labour brought about by the Internet (Scholz, 2013). In this section, we review the various forms of labour evident within the digital context. Much of this literature is informed by earlier theorisations of labour identified within face-to-face service interactions. In order to track development in thinking, we begin with a brief overview of emotional and aesthetic labour before moving on to consider the ways in which the rise of digital and social media has shed new light on understandings of labour.

The theoretical conceptualisation of emotional labour originated from Hochschild’s (2012 [1983]) fundamental work on the nature of employee emotion management in the airline service sector. According to Hochschild (2012) emotional labour comprises of idiomatic bodily performances of ‘emotion work’ e.g. voice tone, facial expressions, gestures, appearance etc. and socially shared ‘feeling rules.’ Scholars have used emotional labour to understand emotion itself as well as to explore job role characteristics and how social relationships in the workplace shape emotion work (Wharton, 2009). Aesthetic labour emerged to address critiques of how Hochschild’s (2012) focus on emotion reproduced a mind/body dualism where the mind controls the exterior body (Entwistle and Wissinger, 2006). Aesthetic labour is a form of embodied work which necessitates that a worker has certain “capacities and attributes” (Warhurst, Nickson, Witz, and Cullen, 2000, p. 2) that echo the image and ideals of the organisation which pays them “indirectly or directly, for their own body’s looks and affect” (Mears, 2014, p. 1332). Aesthetic labour is often theorised using Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of embodied cultural capital and it has been used to explore how bodily indications or signals of

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3 social class status manifest in fashion service jobs (e.g. Warhurst *et al.*, 2000; Petersson-  
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5 McIntyre, 2014; Cutcher and Ahtel, 2017).  
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8         Scholars have explored the ways in which emotion and aesthetic labour have been  
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10 adapted for the digital era. Lazzarato's (1996) conceptualisation of immaterial labour provides  
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12 a useful perspective on the macroeconomic forces which underpin the different forms of labour  
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14 which now take place within digital spaces. Lazzarato (1996) largely positions immaterial  
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16 labour as an intellectual labour that produces informational and cultural content. Hardt and  
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18 Negri's (2000) seminal piece complements this intellectual focus by developing the idea of  
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20 affective labour that individuals engage in to manage their emotional state during immaterial  
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22 labour. An interesting example is Mardon *et al.*'s (2018) exploration of the forms of emotional  
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24 labour employed by tribal entrepreneurs within YouTube beauty blogs as bloggers seek to  
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26 balance tribal bonds and commercial opportunities. Unlike the established perspective of  
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28 feeling rules determined by an organisation (Hochschild, 1983), Mardon *et al.* (2018) reveal  
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30 how emotion culture emerges within the tribe itself so that tribe members and tribal  
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32 entrepreneurs co-produce successful tribal entrepreneurship.  
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37         A significant feature of immaterial labour is its position at "the crossroads (or rather, it  
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39 is the interface) of a new relationship between production and consumption" (Lazzarato 1996,  
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41 p. 137). The expanding role of consumers as workers has sparked debate about the exploitation  
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43 of consumer labour for corporate benefit. Cova and Dalli (2009) suggest the 'working  
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45 consumer' as a helpful concept to describe the immaterial labour performed by consumers that  
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47 tends to be exploited by market forces. The often-unpaid labour of consumers that involves  
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49 online content creation for corporations is positioned as capitalism's domination, alienation  
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51 and exploitation that "has negative impacts on the lives, bodies or minds of workers" (Fuchs,  
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54 2014, p. 4).  
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3 Perhaps the strongest critiques of digital labour emerge in relation to gender. In the  
4 cultural industries and specifically within the context of blogging, Hochschild's (2012)  
5 fundamental observation that emotion work is stereotypically feminine is advanced to capture  
6 the ways in which women's often low or unpaid digital labours require them to invest affective  
7 energy and time as they produce content that generates profit for online platforms (Duffy, 2015:  
8 2016; Arcy, 2016; Duffy and Schwartz, 2018). Duffy (2016, p. 449) refers to these women as  
9 "emotional labourers for the social media age" and coins the term aspirational labour to  
10 recognise the invisible yet future orientated nature of their labour that is driven by the hope of  
11 economic and social rewards. Duffy (2016) is particularly critical of how the rhetoric of  
12 aspirational labour related to 'doing what they love' masks gender and class inequalities. The  
13 gendered nature of digital labour is also evident in Drenten *et al's.*, (2019, p. 45) study of the  
14 sexualised labour performed by female influencers on Instagram who navigate online bodily  
15 sexual performance for attention and financial gain. Alongside personal financial gain, Drenten  
16 *et al.* (2019) also note that the digital marketplace equally exploits female influencers'  
17 sexualized labour for its own gain.  
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37 Another form of immaterial labour associated with the practice of social networking is  
38 social labour. Social labour is "the means by which consumers add value to their identities and  
39 social relationships through producing and sharing cultural and affective content" (Anderson  
40 *et al.*, 2016, p. 384). Anderson *et al.* (2016) acknowledge that social labour shares  
41 commonalities with emotion and aesthetic labour, yet a distinguishing feature is how it is  
42 recompensed in the form of social value rather than economic payment. The sociocultural value  
43 of social labour in digital contexts is further explored by Biraghi, Dalli and Gambetti (2020, p.  
44 16) who demonstrate the "virtuous, ethical, phatic, and communicative nature" of social labour.  
45 This perspective argues that cultural performativity within social media unleashes "connective  
46 energy" (p. 18).  
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3 It is implicit within this body of literature that passion is an integral ingredient for some  
4 of the immaterial forms of emotional and aesthetic labour identified in the organisational and  
5 services literature and, more recently, within the digital context. For example, Petersson-  
6 McIntyre (2014) demonstrate how aesthetic labour within fashion retail relies on 'the  
7 commodification of passion'. Of interest is the way in which aesthetic labour is driven, not  
8 simply by management control, but by the workers themselves whose passion adds meaning to  
9 work that is structured and underpinned by neoliberalism. Passion is also a central emotion  
10 within the aspirational labour described by Duffy's bloggers (2016), linked to the ideal of  
11 getting paid to do what you love. Similarly, within social labour passions manifest through  
12 cultural curations on social media that are centred on passionate projects (Biraghi *et al.*, 2020).  
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26 Yet, scholarship that theoretically centralises the role of passion within digital labour is  
27 more limited. The exception is Postigo (2009) who recognises that the concept of passionate  
28 labour provides a means to understand the conditions of co-creation within digital  
29 environments. Postigo (2009, p. 467) refers to passionate labour as "the structural conditions  
30 of cocreative work, the subject positions of those doing free labor and the discourses and  
31 perspectives they make possible." Similar to the issues of exploitation discussed above,  
32 Postigo's (2009) analysis of passionate labour acknowledges the tension between a discourse  
33 of passion driving online activity and the necessity of the discourse of labour to legitimate it.  
34 Postigo (2009, p. 467) recognises that passionate labour functions "under the ethos of social-  
35 network markets", that can take different forms depending on the subject positions of those  
36 involved. Whilst Postigo (2009) focuses on co-creation involving the free labour of volunteers,  
37 we apply the concept of passionate labour to the subject position of the blogger-preneur. The  
38 role of passion is often accepted at face value without a clear understanding of its character so  
39 we build on existing work to unpack what it means to do what you love and better locate the  
40 passion in passionate labour. Given the digital democratisation of fashion (Duffy, 2017), we  
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3 have selected a group of bloggers within the fashion industry for the basis of our research.  
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5 Before detailing our methods, the following section lays the theoretical groundwork for our  
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7 conceptualisation by exploring how passionate labour manifests within the fashion  
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### 15 **Passionate labour within the fashion blogosphere**

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20 The work of Hirschman (1977) charts the rehabilitation of passion historically when he  
21 demonstrates how the view of passions shifted in the eighteenth century from one of them as  
22 destructive to the “essence of life and a creative force” (1977, p. 47). Passions are a “shared  
23 language” (Williamson, 1985, p. 13) that may be culturally and socially produced (Illouz,  
24 2009). One arena where passion emerges as a culturally and socially produced creative force  
25 is the fashion blogosphere. It is well established that fashion bloggers exhibit passionate  
26 appreciation and enthusiasm (McQuarrie *et al.*, 2013; Dolbec and Fischer, 2015; Duffy, 2016).  
27 Our perspective is that passion is the basis for passionate labour. In viewing passion as a form  
28 of labour, we are guided by previous research on the professionalization of blogging. This  
29 research suggests that passions are structured in ways that blur the producer-consumer divide  
30 as bloggers adapt their online posts to create likeable content and attract a larger audience in  
31 ways which “twist the passion” from the blog topic towards online profile visibility (Kozinets,  
32 Patterson and Ashman, 2017). As a result, bloggers are no longer merely consumers but can be  
33 entrepreneurial (Gannon and Prothero, 2018) and emerge as brands in their own right (Erz and  
34 Christensen, 2018).  
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54 The fashion blogosphere often contains a mix of personal and commercial content (Pihl  
55 and Sandström, 2013) which demonstrates the inseparability of the fashion consumer and the  
56 fashion producer (Laurell, 2016). Indeed, fashion bloggers can develop reputation capital  
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3 comparable to traditional professionals so to suggest that they are ordinary consumers would  
4 perpetuate a myth of amateurism (Duffy, 2015). McQuarrie *et al.* (2013) investigate how  
5 fashion bloggers exploit their cultural capital for economic and social rewards. They reveal  
6 how consumers can gain a mass audience for their posts through the performance of taste  
7 leadership in what they refer to as the ‘megaphone effect’. This can transform individual  
8 consumers into institutional entrepreneurs whose blogging practices lead to new market logics  
9 within the fashion industry (Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013; Dolbec and Fischer, 2015). But such  
10 studies tend to be silent on the role that emotions play in the performance of taste leadership.  
11 This is especially so when we consider the role of marketplace sentiments within consumer  
12 culture, defined as “cultural patterns of feeling and emoting...cultural scripts for individual  
13 thought, feeling or action” (Gopaldas, 2014, p. 998). Gopaldas identifies the role of anger,  
14 disgust and guilt but says little on the role that passion may play in the formation of marketplace  
15 sentiments, despite the fact that passion is identified as a key resource by a number of his  
16 informants who speak of the ‘passion for making a difference’ and their ‘passion’ for the planet  
17 (p. 1002).

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Petersson McIntyre (2014, p. 80) explains that “passions work as flows, coming from different directions” and are “forces that animate” people to behave in particular ways. The popularity of blogs is often explained through the theory of uses and gratifications (Ruggiero, 2000) which assumes that blogs fulfil inner motivations. For example, Sepp, Liljander and Gummerus (2011) identified a range of process, content, and social gratifications associated with blogging. However, a passionate labour perspective on blogging requires us to think more broadly as passions can originate from forces that are both internal and external to the individual (Petersson McIntyre, 2014).

To further understand passion as “forces that animate”, it is helpful to consider Cooren’s (2010) idea of ‘little passions’. As Cooren (2010, p. 63) explains, “From the

1  
2  
3 monolithic world of the singular passion, we progressively move to the plural world of passions  
4 (with an s), which irremediably comes with more sophisticated and complex forms of  
5 reasoning.” Cooren explains that behaviour in the context of a singular passion is akin to  
6 obsession, whilst the latter better recognises that multiple forces animate behaviour and need  
7 negotiation to make them compatible. The emotional element of passion is undeniable and has  
8 been well recognised in previous literature (Baudrillard, 1998; Belk *et al.*, 2003). However,  
9 Cooren’s analysis of little passions (also referred to as animations) highlights that passion  
10 demands assessment, evaluation and judgment. Whilst Belk *et al.* (2003) speak of the  
11 irrationality of desire, we draw on Cooren (2010) to suggest that making one’s behaviour  
12 accountable is just as important as emotion when passion becomes a form of labour.  
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26 The narrative that fashion bloggers achieve career success whilst sharing their passions  
27 masks the labour required in creating blog content (Duffy and Hund, 2015). Whilst the “Do  
28 What You Love (DWYL)” approach to labour may imply freedom from the “dark side of  
29 work,” Sandoval (2018) suggests that the DWYL mantra is a trap that opens the door for  
30 individual blame and responsibility in line with a neoliberal ideology. This perspective  
31 illustrates the importance of situating passion within its broader ideological field. This is  
32 particularly evident in Kozinets *et al.*’s (2017, p. 667) research on networks of desire whereby  
33 “energized passion” interacts with technologies, consumers and virtual and physical objects.  
34 These interacting components of the network are situated within wider social structures so that  
35 the network “disciplines thoughts and feelings in a way that can easily be seen as ideological.”  
36 In our study, we demonstrate how bloggers who focus their passions around the fashion choices  
37 of Kate Middleton are disciplined by the ideology of royalty. We now turn to the methodology  
38 to explain our approach to data collection and analysis.  
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## Methodology

Our theorisation of passionate labour emerged from a three-year netnographic fieldwork of blogger-preneurs who blogged about Kate Middleton's fashion choices. Kate Middleton, known by title as the Duchess of Cambridge and wife of Prince William, is a recognised fashion icon for her conservative yet feminine style choices. The instantaneous sell-outs of the items of fashion apparel worn by the Duchess of Cambridge generated in excess of £152 million for British fashion brands in 2015 (Brand Finance, 2017). A phenomenon known as the 'Kate effect' which has subsequently transferred to the Duchesses' three children. In this study, we are interested in a niche group of bloggers who use their passion for Kate's fashion to inspire their blogger-preneurship.

The in-depth interviews and virtual qualitative data we draw from are foregrounded in the netnographic research tradition outlined by Kozinets (2015). The fast evolving nature of technology and the participatory mediated landscape means that netnographic research captures phenomena of interest which have already materialised in form and are reflective of particular sociohistorical conditions (Kozinets, Scaraboto and Parmentier, 2018) which was the case in our study. From October 2013, the lead author participated in Kate related blogs across multiple online communication platforms including: fashion blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Skype and Facebook/Twitter private message. Early observations and participation to identify items of clothing that Kate was featured wearing in the media involved commenting on posts about the style of outfits. These observations were recorded in fieldnotes and helped to establish community boundaries (Ferreira and Scaraboto, 2016). At this time there were only four fashion blogs (see Table 1) dedicated to Kate's fashion that had an official company registered domain. These blogs went beyond simply sharing images of the outfits that Kate was photographed wearing and seemed to engage in co-collaborative activities with their 1000+

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2  
3 followers to identify the brands and items that Kate wore. The lead author systematically  
4 analysed the images and words of each post paying particular attention to the language and  
5  
6 visual aesthetics of bodily poses used to illustrate Kate's style. This typically involved  
7  
8 analysing blog and social media posts and comments from multiple periods from blog inception  
9  
10 to the 20 most recent posts and the up to 50 comments from followers attached to each blog  
11  
12 and/or social media post (McQuarrie *et al.*, 2013; Pihl, 2013). The lead author also identified  
13  
14 how bloggers replied to followers' comments and incorporated this into subsequent blog and  
15  
16 social media posts. This analysis concentrated on the marketing strategy behind bloggers posts  
17  
18 and followers' comments.  
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#### 24 Insert Table I

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27 The nature of the lead author's online interactions and the three year longitudinal time  
28  
29 frame established trust (Ruth and Otnes, 2006) and researcher recognition within the niche  
30  
31 community of Kate bloggers. These pre-established relationships and social media findings  
32  
33 formed the basis of Skype video interviews with bloggers (6) and core followers (2) who  
34  
35 assisted in their entrepreneurial pursuits. Interviews varied in length from 60 to 160 minutes  
36  
37 and followed McCracken's (1988) in-depth conversational approach to access the 'lifeworld'  
38  
39 of these bloggers. This power neutral technique enabled the conversation to flow freely and  
40  
41 sensitive to novel and unforeseen phenomena as well as that which is left unsaid to emerge  
42  
43 (Kvale, 1996) such as visual and social cues including body language and voice intonation  
44  
45 which were noted and later assisted in the coding and analysis of passion in the interview  
46  
47 transcripts. A topic guide with questions around motivations for blogging, emotions invoked  
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49 by this and the inspiration behind pockets of entrepreneurial activity was developed. Moreover,  
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51 the lead author had the added depth of being able to clarify further questions in ongoing  
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53 discussions in private messaging chat functions. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identities  
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55 of participants who requested this (Logan, 2015; Kozinets, 2015).  
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3 All data was analysed following the three step iterative hermeneutic circling approach  
4 outlined by Thompson (1997). With each reading of the interview transcripts and virtual data,  
5 ideas were developed until a coherent account was reached (Arnold and Fischer, 1994). The  
6 dynamic interrelationships between the core themes formed the basis of theory development  
7 (Spiggle, 1994) around passion and labour. The first order coding involved engaging in line by  
8 line open coding to identify emic codes within the transcripts and virtual data focusing on  
9 blogger practices. From this initial coding, all authors engaged in the discussion and analysis  
10 of the emotional sentiments including 'purpose', 'love', 'social' that started to emerge from  
11 the data. Second-order coding concentrated on the experiences of the bloggers themselves, the  
12 entrepreneurial activities that they engaged in and, the creativity and time involved in creating  
13 blog posts. At this stage the second and third authors began to verify the data and the emerging  
14 theoretical mapping of the findings suggesting better data examples to illustrate each code. In  
15 the final stage of coding, all three authors mapped the patterns that started to emerge from the  
16 data until no further ideas were unaccounted for. These patterns are reflective of the 'little  
17 passions' (Cooren, 2010) that animate the passionate labour we identify in our findings.  
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### 41 **Locating the 'little passions' in passionate labour**

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46 'Replikate' has become part of contemporary mainstream media culture. According to  
47 Maclean (2015), the term refers to 'a piece of clothing that is clearly inspired by something  
48 worn by the Duchess of Cambridge'. We see this replication as a form of Girard's (1977) social  
49 mimesis, that is grounded in mimetic desire and stemming from the social recognition attached  
50 to the consumption of particular objects. Objects are consumed to emulate others to be and feel  
51 like them (Belk *et al.*, 2003). On the surface, the passionate labour of our bloggerpreneurs is  
52 animated by a love for fashion, however, simplifying bloggerpreneur activities as being  
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3 animated by only a love for fashion would omit the way in which passionate labour combines  
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5 the emotion of passion with the discipline of labour.  
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8 Our blogger-preneurs recognise the aesthetic value of fashion (Lonergan, Patterson and  
9  
10 Lichrou, 2018) and devote time and energy to strategically integrate their passion for fashion  
11  
12 into their blogs and social media. This passionate labour navigates the ideology of royalty  
13  
14 projected by the British Royal Family that is constructed in the media. Crucially, as Balmer  
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16 (2011, p. 533) has identified, members of the Royal Family engage in certain “regal” actions  
17  
18 and behaviours, our blogger-preneurs recognise and utilise those that they believe represent  
19  
20 “what is appropriate” for acquiring royal status. Our blogger-preneurs have varying degrees of  
21  
22 success in terms of the capitalisation of their labour. Some have been able to generate the  
23  
24 equivalent of a full-time income through click-through banner advertisements, affiliate sales,  
25  
26 luxury brand collaborations and even creating and selling their own Kate inspired merchandise.  
27  
28 They achieve this by publicly aligning themselves with influential members of the media in  
29  
30 real-time, who cover and photograph the public engagements that Kate attends, to drive traffic  
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32 to their blogs. However, others are less successful and as a result, their blogger-preneur  
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34 activities are relatively short-lived.  
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40 Throughout our findings we unpack the ‘little passions’ (Cooren, 2010) that animate  
41  
42 the passionate labour of blogger-preneurs in the replicate fashion blogosphere. Passions  
43  
44 include: passion for performing the royal lifestyle; the mobilisation of passion within strategic  
45  
46 sociality and; transformation and self-renewal through blogging. Lastly, the cycle of passion  
47  
48 illustrates how these passions can be recycled into new passionate projects.  
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### 52 *Performing the royal lifestyle*

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54 Passion for recreating aspects of the royal lifestyle animates the passionate labours of  
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56 blogger-preneurs. Simmel (1957) wrote the “real seat of fashion is found among the upper  
57  
58 classes” (1957, p. 547). In our context, female self-fashioning practice is a tool for social  
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3 distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) and class performance (Simmel, 1957) as blogger-preneurs use  
4  
5 their passion for mimicking Kate to produce blogs:  
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8 “I’m not crazy, crazy obsessed with Kate. I just love the lifestyle that she embodies.  
9  
10 And I think that obviously other people love it and can really relate from it, and really  
11  
12 gain from it.... I sometimes think that some of our articles aren’t so much about what  
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14 Kate the Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton this Catherine woman would do, so  
15  
16 much as what a Duchess, a Princess, a well-mannered, well-spoken woman would do.”  
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19  
20 [Claire]  
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23 Claire’s blog positions Kate Middleton as a “life mentor” that followers turn to for inspiration.  
24  
25 Claire highlights a significant point; blogger-preneurs are not obsessed with Kate but the ideas  
26  
27 that she represents in terms of fashion, class and femininity. Blogger-preneurs relate to Kate  
28  
29 differently from other celebrities and believe that she did not actively seek fame, achieving  
30  
31 celebrity through her marriage to Prince William. As Chantelle suggested, the media “*made*  
32  
33 *her into one [celebrity] because people want to know her so they’ll buy magazines about her*”.  
34  
35 Here the recurring media coverage characterising Kate Middleton as an aspirational royal  
36  
37 figure becomes part of the network of desire (Kozinets *et al.*, 2017) within which our blogger-  
38  
39 preneurs function. In particular, the mythic portrayal of the “attainability of the fairy-tale  
40  
41 ending” (Otnes and Maclaran, 2015, p. 33) drives blogger-preneurs’ passion to know more  
42  
43 about the private aspects of Kate’s life and, live that experience themselves.  
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48 A central element of the labour of blogging within this context is blog posts that educate  
49  
50 how to ‘replikate’ Kate’s fashion:  
51  
52

53 Taylor: “OMG! My dream has come true! I LOVED the silver and diamond fern  
54  
55 brooch that Kate wore a few times during the recent Royal Tour [...] I already came  
56  
57 to terms with the fact that it was a one-of-a-kind design and I would never be able to  
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3 wear it myself. But now I can (and I will)! Because the Royal Collection Trust Shop  
4 is now offering an exact replica of the brooch (only this one is made of white gold-  
5 plated metal and Swarovski crystals, obviously) for only 65 GBP! \*drool\* You can  
6  
7  
8 buy it here: [deleted hyperlink]" [Blog post]  
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12  
13 Brianne: I love the 'Jinan' Navy [Ted Baker] trench! My first RepliKate!:) (outfit she  
14 wore on her Canada/US trip) [Facebook post]  
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18 Kate Middleton's 'Preppy' modern Sloane<sup>1</sup> style becomes a tool for distinguishing and  
19 performing the royal look. As taste leaders within the shelter of the British Royal Family,  
20 bloggerpreneurs actively seek to achieve this look and identify the processes behind it e.g.  
21 locating original and imitation items. In doing so, they leverage their following to negotiate  
22 affiliate sales and receive commissions on click-throughs and purchases. Far removed from the  
23 overtly sexualised labour that has featured in prior research (Drenten *et al.*, 2019), replikation  
24 finds are structured around an appropriate, modest way of dressing to bring the 'Preppy'  
25 modern Sloane style typically representative of white, upper-middle class women within reach  
26 for the average woman. Someone who can, according to bloggerpreneurs, afford these items  
27 and, by wearing them, access a piece of the royal lifestyle. Bloggerpreneurs purposefully  
28 evoke their passion for the attainability of the royal lifestyle and practice enthusiasm and  
29 positivity ("OMG" "drool" "love") in their emotional labour to manage digital sentiments with  
30 thoughtful precision.  
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54 <sup>1</sup> Sloane Ranger, a stereotype associated with the country lifestyle of the upper and upper-middle classes around  
55 the Sloane Square area of London (York and Stewart-Liberty, 2007). 'Ranger', as in 'Lone Ranger', referred to  
56 the Hermès or Liberty silk scarfs worn by the Sloane women who participated in equine activities. According to  
57 Mount (2012), thanks to Kate Middleton, "Sloane characteristics are so deeply ingrained that you can be a Sloane  
58 anywhere. A brand once defined by a single London address – Sloane Square – is magically equipped to migrate  
59 across the globe".  
60

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3 Previous research has established that the servicescapes of luxury brands provides a  
4 class model that educates consumers on elite class behaviour (Dion and Borraz, 2017). We  
5 demonstrate how the blogosphere is another forum that works to shape status through the  
6 education of followers. Passionate labourers instruct and deliver advice on how to perform the  
7 royal lifestyle through posts and images. Some bloggerpreneurs extend this further in their  
8 embodiment (Bourdieu, 1984) of the replikate style (Figure 1):  
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18 Insert Figure 1  
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20 Fashion choices mirror Kate's style and postures - Brianne has her hands on her hips and her  
21 left knee tucked in front of the right and Nathalie has her hands clasped. These women have  
22 educated themselves on how to technically pose the body by imitating what they perceive to  
23 be a successful series of bodily actions. This is a form of 'prestigious imitation' (Mauss, 1973)  
24 as the body "is not only socially constituted through education, but it is also 'assembled by and  
25 for social *authority*'" (Lash and Urry, 2002, p. 45). In this case, social authority is performed  
26 by an individual who reigns over them as a Duchess in a sovereign capacity. Brianne gifts  
27 instructional visual collages where she provides an itemisation of where to find replikate items  
28 and the total cost of the outfit versus the estimated cost of Kate's total look with click through  
29 hyperlinks to purchase while, Natalie's image gifts how Kate's look can be recreated to suit  
30 different body shapes. Bloggerpreneurs set and perform bodily signals that permit or prevent  
31 entry into the royal replikate blogosphere. The digitisation of these instructional images  
32 produces a form of digital aesthetic labour and social exchange which seeks to imitate the  
33 ideology of femininity projected by media coverage of Kate. Bloggerpreneurs enhance the  
34 media's naturalisation of middle-class dispositions and help mask the aristocratic lifestyle  
35 privileges of the British Royal Family by contributing to the ideology that they are 'like the  
36 rest of us'. For as Henry and Caldwell suggest ideologies "serve to normalize socio-economic  
37 hierarchies by [...] providing explanations that mask the underlying structural forces." (2018,  
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3 p. 155). Here passionate labour utilises cultural capital for economic effect. Blogging as a  
4 marketplace performance is revealed as embedded in socioeconomic valuations, status games  
5 and class stratification (Üstüner and Thompson, 2012). Choices and tastes reveal the labour  
6 necessary for the establishment of authority and status especially when passion “calibrates  
7 bodily affects” (Wissinger 2007, p. 251) through an appeal to sociality.  
8  
9

### 15 *Mobilising strategic sociality*

16  
17 Passion energises a strategic form of sociality which is the foundation for the co-  
18 production of passionate labour. Bloggers recognise the strategic importance of connecting  
19 with their followers:  
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25 “It’s my personal mission to respond to every Tweet because people want to know and  
26 they care, they want to hear either what we are thinking or what we know. And I think  
27 that those connections are important [...] We have taken on a tone on our website that  
28 has a personality. So especially on Twitter we try and be funny and cheeky and voice  
29 our opinions back.” [Claire]  
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36  
37 Claire’s dedication to responding to her followers by providing information on Kate’s fashion  
38 or sharing opinions on particular styles demonstrates how blogger-preneurs establish public  
39 opinion on fashion tastes. Their engagement is a form of what Lazzarato (1996) has termed  
40 ‘immaterial labour’ because they autonomously create and reproduce a new mode of  
41 communication by engaging in aesthetic reflexivity in their production of posts. This is evident  
42 in Claire’s tone and language in her communications with followers, a considered choice to  
43 reflect her blog identity.  
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53 This strategic sociality results in a shared passionate dialogue (Williamson, 1985)  
54 which produces a collective sensibility to fashion. The aesthetic style of communication  
55 enables blogger-preneurs to assert taste leadership and distinction through the mobilisation of  
56 passion both individually and collectively. The social nature of passion emerges in emotional  
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3 exchanges between blogger-preneurs and followers where affective energy nurtures and  
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5 sustains digitally networked connections:  
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8 Taylor: So, yeah, I thought it would be fun to collect all my replikates into one big  
9 picture...  
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12  
13 Erin: Omg I love this photo! ;) I don't think I have seen you wear the polka dot Topshop  
14 dress or the Hobbs Wessex dress! Hah- now I feel like taking a photo of all of mine!  
15  
16 (did you have the Great Planes Cezanne dress? I thought u had it but I don't see it  
17 there...)  
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23 Taylor: @Erin I sold the Cezanne dress again, it didn't suit me. There are actually still  
24 missing quite a few items. Both my Aquatalia, my SW boots, Longchamp bag, Cath  
25 Kidston bag, Temperley Odele coat replikate, Darwin coat replikate, my Zara cape...  
26  
27 It just didn't fit anymore :\$  
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33 Claire: Love your stuff!!  
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36 Denitsa: Oh!!! How fabulous!!!!!! looove it!! And yes, must see u in polka dotted  
37 dress!!! Please!! [Facebook post]  
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41  
42 Through the production of what Gannon and Prothero (2018) term 'shared repertoires', the  
43 dialogue develops around an excitement for identifying and discussing Taylor's wardrobe  
44 contents. Taylor's reference to selling "*the Cezanne dress again*" demonstrates another form  
45 of blogger capitalisation. For some bloggers, luxury brand finds which are no longer produced  
46 yet remain in high demand, are sold to the highest bidder in Shop my closet e-bay auctions.  
47  
48 Followers demonstrate an awareness of the contents of the blogger's closet and ask about the  
49 items not on display. Follower interactions clearly demonstrate that they embrace the blogger's  
50 expression of style and their flattery and support that co-produce the blog content are  
51 reminiscent of Mardon *et al.*'s (2018) other-praising emotions which are themselves a form of  
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3 emotional labour. Here passion is not only structured by a cultural practice and a social media  
4 platform (Kozinets et al., 2017) but also by a distinct interest and look aimed at specific  
5 audiences which operates at a societal, structural level through the ideology of royalty and the  
6 markers of this look. Status, authority and power relies upon an emotional terrain and exchange.  
7  
8 As sociologists of human emotions have detailed: “The more that individuals and collective  
9 actors hold power, prestige, and other resources or gain these resources, the more likely they  
10 are to experience such positive emotions as satisfaction, happiness, well-being and confidence  
11 and the more like they are to give off positive emotion to others.” (Turner and Stets, 2006, p.  
12 40). In our context this is evident in the ways in which blog followers echo and reinforce the  
13 positive emotions of bloggers through such dialogues.  
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27 Through the creation of a “collective subjectivity” and “sociality” (Hardt, 1999, p. 96),  
28 these women develop a “community of style” (Pihl, 2013) that they regard as a safe online  
29 space. Blog settings and/or closed Facebook groups are managed in ways that enable these  
30 women to express their opinions and share images of themselves without fear of ridicule or  
31 denigration from outsiders: *“I’m very protective of my site. I’m working so hard to groom in a  
32 way that women feel comfortable to share their own photos of themselves, to know that the  
33 comments are going to be supportive and there are not going to be any negative comments.”*.  
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51 The relationships that blogger-preneurs forge with their followers demonstrates that  
52 passionate labour also constitutes elements of social labour. Digital sharing practices are driven  
53 by a commitment to monitor social media posts to maintain social activity and visibility  
54 (Anderson *et al.*, 2016). Such affiliations and forms of belonging mask the forms of symbolic  
55 power enacted through the social, for as Bourdieu (1992, p. 106) suggested “agents possess  
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3 power in proportion to their symbolic capital.” Here symbolic power and ‘playing the game’  
4 reveals itself through its affects and passion and emotion management become strategic and  
5 calculative. This is not simply for ‘catharsis’ or emotional release (Sepp *et al.*, 2011) or to  
6 enthuse others, but also, to maintain status and the marketplace performance of authority.  
7 Blogging is thus understood as a socioeconomic practice that reworks culture and the social  
8 spaces of digital interaction and enthusiasm for its own gain.  
9

### 17 *Transformation and self-renewal*

19 Our findings suggest that passion invigorates strategic personal transformation and self-  
20 renewal. Bloggerpreneurs are driven by personal life challenges which they harness to  
21 purposefully create blog posts:  
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27 “I decided as my new year’s resolution that, I had moved home to my parent’s home  
28 to take a break from Los Angeles and I was kind of like in this lull where I felt like...  
29 I wasn’t like doing my hair and I wasn’t using makeup as much... I decided how can  
30 I be forced into getting dressed and prepped every day? And, I said, ‘Alright new year’s  
31 resolution I’m going to start the blog and Facebook. I’m going to post a photo, a brand  
32 new photo every day of myself in a different outfit.’” [Brienne]  
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41 Brienne creates blog material to fulfil her longing for aesthetic self-transformation to overcome  
42 economic and labour market challenges that resulted in her returning to live in the family home.  
43 Through her blog, Brienne successfully manages her own emotions to overcome her ‘lull’. In  
44 this way, passion fulfils an internal aspiration for self-transformation and admiration (Belk *et*  
45 *al.*, 2003) as bloggerpreneurs actively seek a more personally fulfilling vocation. Akin to  
46 aspirational labour (Duffy, 2016), this explains their willingness to accept the time commitment  
47 required for blogging and their efforts to upskill:  
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58 “...It takes time. I usually use the weekend to prepare a blog post”. [Chantelle]  
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3 “...during the [royal] tour I had to get up in the middle of the night because it was a 9  
4  
5 hour time difference...when I’m looking for replikates it usually takes several hours  
6  
7 to find the replikates and then, you know, Photoshop them together and put them in a  
8  
9 blog post.” [Taylor]  
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11

12  
13 Chantelle and Taylor explain that posts are often created and edited outside of the traditional  
14  
15 working week during unsociable hours. Our blogger-preurs are motivated by what Ashman,  
16  
17 Patterson and Brown (2018, p. 479) have identified as “the creativity dispositif” (which draws  
18  
19 on the work of Foucault). Their passionate labour is driven by an internalised neoliberal  
20  
21 ideology that future success as “independent creatives” necessitates “continuous striving” to  
22  
23 self-acquire blogging skills that enable them to stand out in the hyper competitive field of  
24  
25 fashion blogging. While this could be viewed as exploitation (Cova and Dalli, 2009; Fuchs,  
26  
27 2014), for those that are successful, this offers the opportunity to move on from full-time  
28  
29 employment to fully focus on the blog as the main source of income. For example, Sarah  
30  
31 confirms her commitment to seek a balance between her personal and professional life and sold  
32  
33 her online retail business to pursue the Kate blog as a full-time career:  
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39 “I had to work it in more with my schedule. I basically worked almost two jobs... I  
40  
41 would have to find time to do it [fashion blogging] when I wasn’t, you know, working  
42  
43 at the online store that my husband and I owned. There were a lot of 18 and 20-hour  
44  
45 days because when your phone rings and it’s a customer you need to deal with them.  
46  
47 We were very fortunate that it was a very popular business and we recently sold it. So  
48  
49 now I’m just being able to step back a little bit and kind of take a deep breath and not  
50  
51 feel quite so, I don’t know, absolutely crushed!” [Sarah]  
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56 With more flexibility, Sarah can devote attention to sourcing and creating new fashion pieces.  
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58 Bloggers who transition to full-time successfully integrate their fashion finds into posts which  
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3 use images and hyperlinks to combine the aesthetic and stylistic modes of communication seen  
4 in professional fashion magazines (Engholm and Hansen-Hansen, 2014). Income generation  
5 comes from: affiliate sales through click-through banner advertisements, hyperlinks to  
6 purchase items, brand collaborations where fees are negotiated for featuring brands in detailed  
7 posts and optimising posts with highly searchable terminology. In this way, bloggers' upskill  
8 by legitimising and professionalising blog content with the aim of blogging for exposure.  
9  
10 Through 'entrepreneurial brand devotion' (Duffy, 2016), this labour involves aligning their  
11 own self-brand with the fashion brands Kate is featured wearing in the media. They do this by  
12 interacting with journalists, photographers and other press members; blogging about events in  
13 real-time; competitions, give-aways and auctions:  
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27 "it's a battle with other blogs to get the photos out before anyone else because that's  
28 free advertising for your blog..." [Brienne Facebook PM]  
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32 "we'll Tweet them and say: "Callum can you get a picture of x, y, z today?" And, they  
33 will. We'll feature that in our blog and social posts." [Chantelle PM Twitter]  
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38 "How exciting! Claire was interviewed for USA Today! Read the online version here:  
39 [deleted hyperlink] [Claire Facebook post]  
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42  
43 Claire's excitement at being featured and recognised as the replikate taste-maker in an  
44 international, daily American publication demonstrates how passion can be evoked to  
45 invigorate personal transformation and social admiration. Fashion does not appear on "real  
46 news pages" because it is often regarded as "frivolous and fun" and requires legitimation by  
47 individuals (e.g. designers, journalists, editors) in institutions who have the power and authority  
48 to make aesthetic judgments (Kawamura, 2005, p. 79). These women follow and blog about  
49 the public events that Kate attends in real-time to be recognised and featured in the main media  
50 channels by those in possession of this power and authority. Moreover, as Chantelle  
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3 acknowledges, bloggers leverage their relationships with members of the media to drive traffic  
4  
5 to their blog and thus generate capital through affiliate sales. These labours demonstrate that it  
6  
7 is not only corporate fashion brands that capitalise on the passions of female blogger-preneurs  
8  
9 (Duffy, 2016) but also the wider media system who profit from the use of their ‘invisible’  
10  
11 fashion inspired blog and social media content. Crucially, blogger-preneurs navigate tastes that  
12  
13 are already situated within British Royal Family taste structures. By interacting with members  
14  
15 of the media and using the images and social media content they produce, blogger-preneurs  
16  
17 contribute to the construction of the ideology of royalty.  
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20  
21 Some blogger-preneurs diversify their entrepreneurial activities beyond the blog to  
22  
23 generate capital. Our blogger-preneurs identify gaps surrounding the accessibility of items of  
24  
25 clothing and accessories. Taylor has her own Etsy<sup>2</sup> store where she sells items of apparel,  
26  
27 created by her own personal tailor, that mimic the out of reach expensive couture labels worn  
28  
29 by Kate:  
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33  
34 Martina: I see you have a replikate of the Paulina dress, which I thought I saw on your  
35  
36 Etsy store and now can't find. Is there one?  
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38  
39 Helga: Is the Paulina dress something you can source? [Facebook Post]  
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41  
42 Taylor demonstrates market sensitivity by responding to the interest from her followers. She  
43  
44 acts as an important intermediary that enables others with inadequate cultural capital to gain  
45  
46 access to Kate's elite couture look. Brianne's Etsy store takes this a step further as she uses her  
47  
48 own artistic design skills to create Kate inspired print images which are embossed onto items  
49  
50 such as canvas bags. Blogger-preneurs identify gaps in the fashion market and from this engage  
51  
52 in entrepreneurial ventures that best serve their followers. In this way, followers can  
53  
54 “participate in the fantasy through the mimicry of the [fashion] consumption styles of more  
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60 <sup>2</sup> Etsy is a global marketplace where people create, sell and purchase one-of-a-kind goods.

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3 expert intermediaries” (Loneragan *et al.*, 2018, p. 2069) and through effective displays of what  
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5 Heller (1984) terms evocative imitation.  
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## 10 **The cycle of passion**

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15 Emotions are crucial to the practice of blogging, yet emotions change as passions are  
16 realised in the labour of blogging. Passion is recycled and channelled into new passionate  
17 projects as bloggerpreneurs wish to continue the fulfilment and sense of purpose that they  
18 derive from blogging. Once bloggerpreneurs achieve professional, taste-maker status within  
19 the replikate blogosphere and are recognised as media contributors, they then prioritise and  
20 allocate their time and labour to other passionate projects:  
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30 “The website [blog] takes more energy, a lot more energy and I haven’t actually posted  
31 since February... I did have an Etsy store and I did make clothes for people but it just  
32 became too crazy so I just closed it. It’s still there and we’re dabbling with the idea of  
33 doing my sketches through Etsy but I’m really more focused on that being a fundraiser  
34 for my campaign.” [Brienne]  
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42 Brienne moved on from the Kate blog and selling clothing, shifting her focus from profit  
43 making to charitable donation. She developed sketches of Kate’s signature styles accompanied  
44 with a costing plan with the sales profit contributing to a charity project. Other blogger-  
45 entrepreneurs remain in the royal blogosphere and recycle their labour to prioritise blog content that  
46 they believe will capture the attention of followers. For example, Claire has teamed up with  
47 two other Kate bloggers to create a new blog which features bloggers and their children adorned  
48 in the same outfits as Kate’s children. This is also dedicated to covering various aspects of  
49 motherhood. Sarah started another blog to capture Megan’s fashion and Chantelle now  
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3 concentrates on blogging about members of the royal family from a historical perspective. Belk  
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5 *et al.*'s (2003, p. 340) cycle of desire captures how consumer desire is "a process during which  
6  
7 emotions change". Consumer desire is recycled because of a "satisfaction and the wish to repeat  
8  
9 this satisfaction" (*ibid.*). Similarly, the cycle of passion and passionate labour is recycled and  
10  
11 channelled into fulfilling activities and labours which enable these women to pursue other  
12  
13 passionate projects situated within the ideology of royalty. This recycling of labour  
14  
15 demonstrates Cooren's (2010) little passions in action: the bloggers manage and market their  
16  
17 passions to ensure they maximise capitalisation on their labour by assessing and evaluating  
18  
19 what content will most appeal within the broader cultural context. While the content itself  
20  
21 changes, the processes of passionate labour remain the same: the labour of becoming enthused  
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23 by one's passions and enthusiasms.  
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## 32 **Discussion**

### 33 *Theoretical contributions*

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38 Our contribution lies in the cultural understanding of passion as a form of labour where  
39  
40 passion has become a way of life. We build on Postigo's (2009) understanding of passionate  
41  
42 labour as a useful concept to understand co-creative work by exploring how passionate labour  
43  
44 can also manifest in the conditions of work within blogging. In exploring passionate labour  
45  
46 within the fashion blogosphere, this study offers contributions in three areas. First, we identify  
47  
48 social mimesis as a possible driver of passionate labour and its links to class distinction.  
49  
50 Second, we offer insight on how passionate labour requires the negotiation of emotion  
51  
52 alongside a disciplined and calculated understanding of market logics. Third, we advance  
53  
54 critical debate around exploitation and inequality within digital labour by demonstrating how  
55  
56 passion is unequally distributed. We elaborate below.  
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3 Our analysis reveals how passionate labour brings together elements of emotional  
4 (Hochschild, 2012), aesthetic (Warhurst *et al.*, 2000) and social (Anderson *et al.*, 2016) labour  
5 that is consistent with the extant literature. The uniqueness of our study is found in the way in  
6 which the social logic of mimesis (Girard, 1977) is central in guiding labour. This is important  
7 because although previous research has revealed that mimetic desire is initiated by emulating  
8 the consumption of others (Belk *et al.*, 2003), the integration of mimesis into the labour context  
9 has been beyond the scope of existing theorisation. With replikating as an overarching theme,  
10 we see emotional labour in the bloggers' expressions of enthusiasm that accompany social  
11 media posts, aesthetic labour in the posting of images that conform to the aesthetic standards  
12 of a royal lifestyle, and, social labour in the mobilisation of passion within strategic sociality.  
13 Together, these forms of labour merge in the creation of blogs that materialise relations with  
14 Kate Middleton, and translate her fashion into a form that can be consumable by others.  
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31 This recognition of the social and cultural nature of passion is situated within the  
32 broader ideological field of the institutional British monarchy (Balmer, 2011; Otnes and  
33 Maclaran, 2015). Passion is not only structured by a cultural practice and a social media  
34 platform (Kozinets *et al.*, 2017) but also by a distinct interest and look aimed at specific  
35 audiences which operates at a societal, structural level through the ideology of royalty.  
36 Blogger-preneurs navigate tastes that are already situated within British Royal Family taste  
37 structures and this is evidenced in their negotiation of the royal fashion rules and regalia that  
38 dictate and govern their performance of replikate and the royal lifestyle. Through the creation  
39 of what Dion and Borraz (2017) term a class model, blogger-preneurs educate consumers in  
40 the 'right' fashion and lifestyle choices. The democratisation of the labour of blogging itself  
41 becomes a vehicle for maintaining class distinction as upper-middle class fashion belief  
42 systems are imitated and reproduced through the myth of their seeming accessibility to the  
43 average woman. The blogs therefore function to shape followers' class subjectivities, or in  
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3 Dion and Borraz's (2017, p. 68) words, they make followers "behave as class subjects who  
4 have a specific understanding of their position in the social hierarchy". Blogging becomes a  
5 well-rehearsed social performance driven by status games and class distinctions which work  
6 toward the achievement of authority and symbolic power in the digital realm.  
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11  
12 Our analysis highlights the multidimensional nature of passion within passionate  
13 labour. The Do What You Love mantra depicts a labour narrative whereby it's possible to earn  
14 a living by pursuing one's passion (Duffy, 2016). This narrative reflects Cooren's (2010)  
15 suggestion that passion becomes more prevalent when it appears to be driven by just one  
16 source. In focusing on a context where several 'little passions' are evident, our findings reveal  
17 a more nuanced picture and offer insight on how passionate labour requires the negotiation and  
18 mobilisation of emotion alongside a disciplined and calculated understanding of market logics.  
19 This acknowledgement of the strategic nature of passionate labour also informs the cycle of  
20 passion. As we have revealed, blogger-preneurs will recycle passionate labour to an alternative  
21 context if this offers the promise of market success. While Duffy and Hund (2015) also  
22 recognise that aspirational labour can be entrepreneurially calculated, this is dependent on the  
23 internal aspirations of blogger-preneurs. We foreground both internal aspirations and the wider  
24 external cultural and social dimension of passions. For Cooren (2010, p. 61), little passions  
25 make one's conduct "accountable, reportable, responsive, and [...] responsible to others." This  
26 stands in contrast to the popular notion of passion as being all-consuming (Baudrillard, 1998;  
27 Belk *et al.*, 2003). These qualities required in passionate labour mean that the heat of passion  
28 is diffused (Cooren, 2010). Emotion by no means disappears, but as Illouz affirms, emotion  
29 "can be defined as the 'energy-laden' side of action, where that energy is understood to  
30 simultaneously implicate cognitions, affect, evaluation, motivation and the body" (2009, pp.  
31 382-383). Passion and displays of emotionality provide purpose and commitment, a sense of  
32 belonging and even empowerment. It has become as Arvidsson (2010, p. 308) details a "mode  
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3 of production, systematically promoted and put to work". Putting passion to work we argue  
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5 takes us to the forms of power essential to the practices of branding and marketing.  
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8 We have foregrounded passion as a marketplace sentiment (Gopaldas, 2014) that can  
9  
10 be understood as a 'structure of feeling' (Williams 1977) that serves to energise and animate  
11  
12 bloggers. Some of the passionate labourers in our study become what Scaraboto and Fischer  
13  
14 (2013) would term 'institutional entrepreneurs' due to the way in which they establish  
15  
16 themselves as media authorities and in doing so, capitalise on their labour by generating the  
17  
18 equivalent of a full-time income through click-through banner advertisements, affiliate sales,  
19  
20 luxury brand collaborations and developing online retail offerings. Yet, as Ashman *et al.* (2018,  
21  
22 p. 481) reveal, this structure of feeling can also manifest in "quiet desperation" and "self-  
23  
24 doubt." Importantly, our turn to status, authority and privilege has revealed that passion is  
25  
26 unequally distributed. This may explain why only a few bloggerpreneurs can successfully  
27  
28 transition from consumer to institutional entrepreneur. For others, cultivating the passion in  
29  
30 passionate labour never goes beyond exploitation, which we find particularly notable in the  
31  
32 infiltration of labour into one's personal time or sense of well-being. Passion operates as a  
33  
34 structure of power. Passionate labourers are seduced into serving the interests of the broader  
35  
36 system and achieve success through work that, initially, involves labouring during personal  
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38 time.  
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#### 45 *Practical implications*

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48 Our research has implications for bloggerpreneurs, luxury brands and organisations  
49  
50 beyond the blogging context. Aspiring bloggerpreneurs must recognise that passion is an  
51  
52 elusive force that only a minority can strategically mobilise to discipline their passionate  
53  
54 labour. To increase the chances of success, bloggerpreneurs should seek to professionalise and  
55  
56 legitimise blog content, for example, through strategic communication with the media and  
57  
58 adhering to the endorsement guidelines required by regulatory bodies, such as the Advertising  
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3 Standards Agency (UK). Blogger-preneurs should also continually assess and evaluate which  
4 content will most appeal within existing ideological structures so that they are able to recycle  
5 passions to remain contemporary. Passion brings a sense of purpose and inner belief thus  
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7  
8 another option for blogger-preneurs is to portray an account of mobilising passion to overcome  
9  
10 personal life challenges to make themselves more authentic and relatable.  
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15 Our findings revealed that blogger-preneurs can play an important role in educating  
16  
17 followers on class behaviour and the accessibility of fashion items. This includes offering  
18  
19 instruction on how to access luxury brands at discount prices. This raises implications for  
20  
21 luxury brands that want to protect their exclusivity. Previous research suggests that luxury  
22  
23 marketing and retail managers can use material and social cues to “manage exclusion” and  
24  
25 ensure “that only the “right people” enter the store” (Dion and Borraz, 2017, p. 81). The online  
26  
27 environment overcomes access barriers and widens accessibility of luxury brands. To avoid  
28  
29 tarnishing brand desirability, luxury brand managers should consider collaborating with  
30  
31 bloggers. Luxury brand managers can train bloggers to educate their followers on how to use  
32  
33 and wear fashion items in ways that best reflect brand values. This form of passionate labour  
34  
35 could equally be applied to other luxury market sectors.  
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41 In recognition that passionate labour can be enacted from different subject positions,  
42  
43 our implications have relevance beyond the blogging context e.g. employees and volunteers in  
44  
45 the non-profit sector, influencers, academics, creatives. For organisations seeking to capitalise  
46  
47 on passionate labour, market status and power can be established via strategic, co-creative  
48  
49 affective management of both in-person and/or digital interactions. Affective energy must be  
50  
51 nurtured in exchanges which demonstrate the importance of employees and/or followers’  
52  
53 opinions by taking seriously their ideas. Managed together passions can become a recipe for  
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55 animating passionate labour but success will depend on the organisation’s ability to implement  
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3 these. Given the risks for employee well-being, care and concern must be levelled within firms  
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5 and institutions.  
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### 10 11 **Limitations and future research directions** 12 13 14 15 16

17 Like any qualitative study, the findings in our paper are inevitably tied to Kate fashion  
18 bloggers. Our study has relevance to the gender and class inequalities made salient in blogging.  
19 Future research could build on this perspective by considering blogging with reference to racial  
20 and class inequalities. Within the British Royal Family context, there has been extensive media  
21 commentary on Meghan Markle's racial identity and a tendency to unfavourably, and  
22 sometimes hostilely, compare Meghan with Kate (e.g., McGill, 2021). Studies may consider  
23 how blogging is implicated in these racialised and class discourses of femininity.  
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34 Future research might consider how passionate labour operates beyond the blogging  
35 context. A comparative study could explore to what extent passionate labour continues to be  
36 unequally distributed across multiple market sectors (e.g. public sector, third sector,  
37 engineering, science etc.) both digital and in-person. Studies might explore to what extent  
38 individuals have made use of the COVID-19 pandemic to harness their passions and upskill.  
39 Amidst the 'Great Resignation' to what extent have individuals been successful in generating  
40 an income by mobilising their passions? We have considered an existing taste structure, the  
41 British Royal Family. Studies could consider how other structures of power, where work  
42 conditions extend beyond the working week into personal and digital life spheres, become a  
43 critical ingredient for ambition, success and failure among passionate labourers. This could  
44 take multiple forms – the capitalist marketplace or the neoliberal ethos of academia. How are  
45 the 'little passions' we identify managed strategically to animate passionate labour within these  
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3 alternative structures of power? And, do other ‘little passions’, beyond those identified,  
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5 intersect to animate passionate labour?  
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**Table I: Data collection on selected Kate Middleton inspired fashion blogs**

<b>Blog Name</b>	<b>Date Set Up</b>	<b>Twitter (T)/Facebook (F)</b>	<b>Number of Followers</b>	<b>About</b>
'What Kate Wore'	Post Royal Wedding April 2011	Both	T: 12900+ F: 22916	Updates about Kate Middleton's brand and style choices and acts as a platform for instructing individuals how to replikate.
'Repli-Kate it'	April 2011	Facebook	F: 1200	Dedicated to 'Replikating' by example through daily photos of the blog writer replikating Kate's style, jewellery, make-up and more.
'What Would Kate Do'	Early 2012	Both	T: 5858 F: 2000	Looks to Kate Middleton for fashion advice but also for lifestyle, personal inspiration and guidance.

Tatiana's Delights	April 2011	Facebook	F: 1, 221	A lifestyle blog which documents day to day interests and particular focus is given to creating Kate's middle-upper class look and helping others do the same.
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European Journal of Marketing

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Embodiment of the replikate style

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