

Victims or agents for change? Representations and self-representations of women in the social media debate surrounding sustainable fashion

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the social media debate on sustainable fashion on the basis of a multilingual dataset of Instagram posts and tweets. We focus on how women are discursively represented in terms of agentivity and how this is associated to different argumentative strategies. Our findings reveal a clear link between an argumentation denouncing the “ill” of the fashion system and women represented as victims; and between arguments proposing a “cure” to the problem and women represented either as recipients of a positive action or as agents bringing about change. Positive representation of women as agents is often made through arguments based on concrete examples, which show that change is already happening.