Performing, selling and buying love: women between commodification of intimacy and self-actualization in contemporary Japan

Fact Sheet

Project Information

Japan PSBL
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Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

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€ 0,00

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€ 266 318,40

Coordinated by
ALMA MATER STUDIORUM - UNIVERSITA DI BOLOGNA
Italy

Objective

By investigating the development of services provided by women to cater the emotional and sexual needs of women in contemporary Japan, this project addresses the relationship and the tension between the possibility for self-expression, the role of intimacy, and its intersection with the neoliberal market from a feminist perspective. This project stands at the nexus between Japanese Studies and Gender Studies and it investigates to what extent the market for female/female commodified intimacy provides women with the chance to explore alternative ways to perform femininity outside a heteronormative frame. My contention is that
occupations where female-born individuals provide emotional and/or sexual satisfaction to other women allow space for expressions of intimacy and gender performativity outside the binary male/female division for both clients and providers. When dating, meeting, or loving another woman within the frame of paid intimacy, both subjects escape the pressure generated by heteronormativity. Commodified forms of intimacy, I argue, allow women to challenge societal expectations about femininity, to obtain increased emotional satisfaction and freedom. By tackling these dimensions, I discuss the dissatisfaction of Japanese women with the dominant relational models (e.g. marriage) and provide a new understanding of the development of alternative relational models to the detriment of the traditional heteronormative family, framing these choices as a form of long-term resistance. The project fills a gap as the investigation of contexts where women are, at the same time, both clients and providers of commodified intimacy is still largely unexplored. In addition, instead of essentializing this phenomenon as a feature of Japan, this project – situated at the juncture of postindustrial consumerism and globalizing neoliberal reformation – and its findings can be applied to contemporary societies witnessing the ramifications of love on-demand.

Fields of science

social sciences > sociology > gender studies

Keywords

Japanese studies crossdressing commodification of intimacy emotional labour

Programme(s)

HORIZON.1.2 - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

Call for proposal

HORIZON-MSCA-2022-PF-01
Funding Scheme

HORIZON-TMA-MSCA-PF-GF - HORIZON TMA MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships - Global Fellowships

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€ 266 318,40

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Links
Contact the organisation  Website  Participation in EU R&I programmes  HORIZON collaboration network

Other funding
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Partners (2)

Hosei University
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Net EU contribution
€ 0,00

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Activity type
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Belgium

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€ 0,00

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Region
Vlaams Gewest > Prov. Vlaams-Brabant > Arr. Leuven

Activity type
Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

Links
Contact the organisation
Website
Participation in EU R&I programmes
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Other funding
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