

Sex and the Internet:

Understanding Female
Sexual Empowerment as it
relates to Sex Work

A Social Action Project
by Evelyn Besom

December 2, 2020



Institute for Women's Leadership

The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to *practice* leadership *through* action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women's Leadership's website at <http://iwl.rutgers.edu>.



Background

75%

Increase in “model sign-ups” on
OnlyFans in April

15%

Spike in traffic in under 24 hours after
Beyonce “Savage” remix

29.4
Million

Number of people laid off as a result of
covid as of mid-March

Research Questions

Question 1

What is the relationship between sexual empowerment and sex work?

- Is sex work an act of empowerment?
- Is sex work inherently oppressive in a patriarchal society?

Question 2

Are sites like OnlyFans gentrifying sex work?

- Are societal perceptions of sex work/female sexuality changing as a result?

Question 3

Who benefits?

- How does race, class, and sexuality affect how society perceives/accepts female sexuality?

Conceptual Frameworks:

- Third Wave Feminism/Postfeminism
- Gentrification
- Neoliberalism
- Sex Work

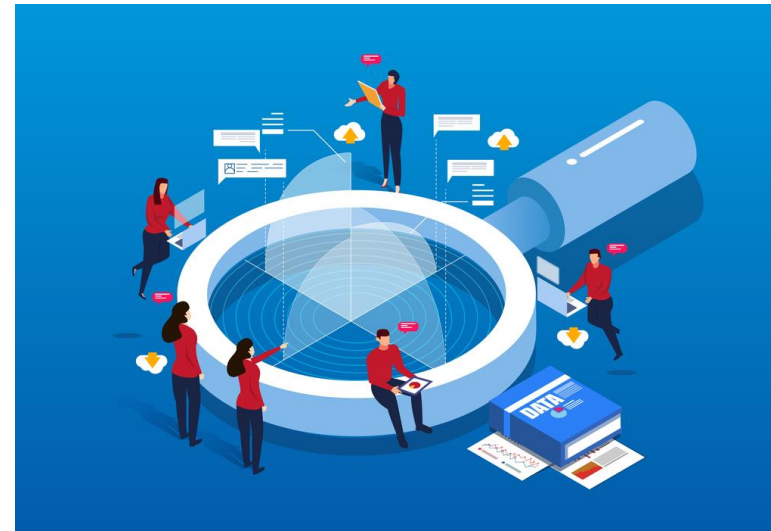


Fig. 1 Research Graphic ([Minutes](#))

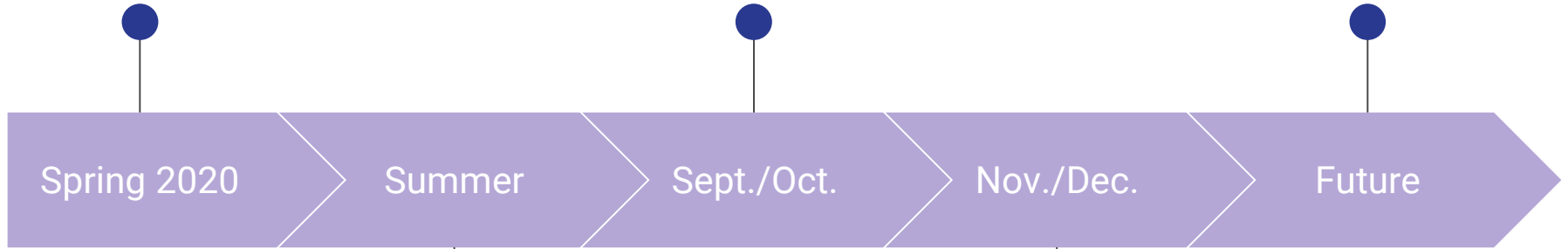


Project Implementation

Final SAP Proposal
(intersection of sex work
and sex trafficking)

More research, first
draft

Design Libere Zine
Brand development/growth
Outreach



Spring 2020

Summer

Sept./Oct.

Nov./Dec.

Future

Research & Shift in
framework away from
sex trafficking

Writing drafts and editing

Conceptualizing zine

Project Description

- Research based (unofficial SAP/thesis combo)
- Research Paper
 - Case study: social media (OnlyFans)
 - Conclusion: it's complicated!
- Audience?
- Libere Zine conceptualization



Fig. 2 OnlyFans Logo ([Pocket-Link](#))

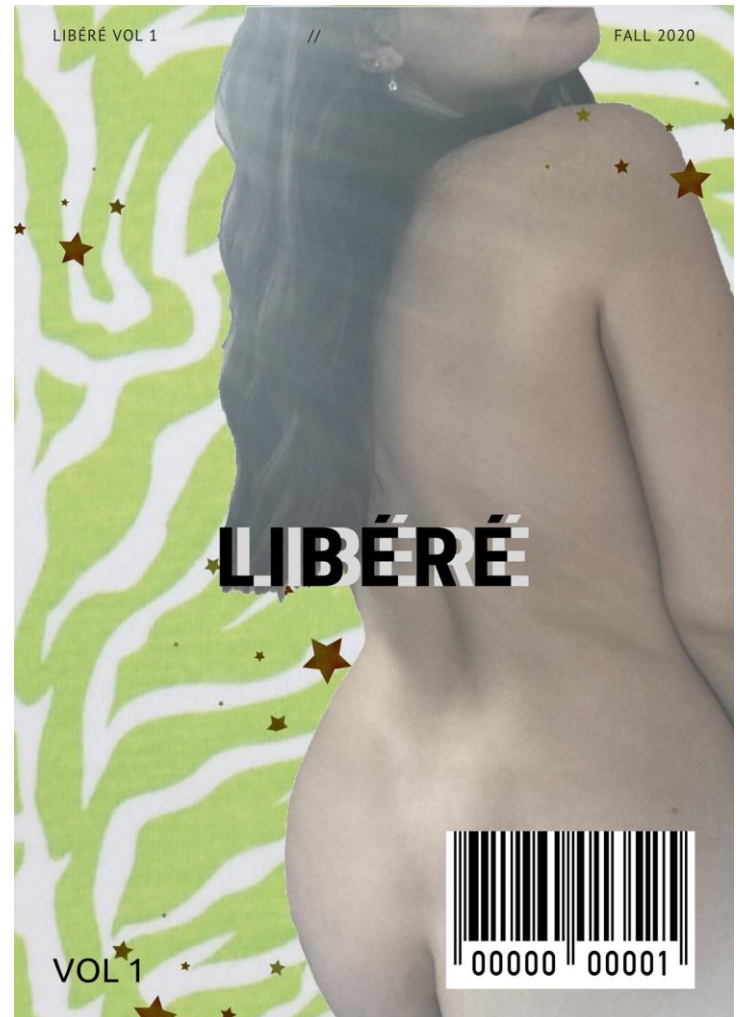


Fig 3. Dannii Harwood ([NYT](#))

LIBERE

“ We do more than resist. We create alternative texts that are not solely reactions.” Bell Hooks (128)

“The erotic has often been misnamed by men and used against women...For this reason, we have often turned away from the exploration and consideration of the eroitc as a source of power and information, confusing it with its opposite, the pornographic. “ Audre Lorde (88)



Insights

- Time management
- Perseverance
- Importance of being able to articulate and defend my ideas
- Advocating for marginalized groups

Skills Developed:

Research

Academic Writing

Analytic Thinking
Creativity

Tech Proficiency
Graphic Design

Communication

Future Plans

Personal Goals:

- Design Libere zine
- Brand Development
- Marketing and outreach
- Open for submissions

Future Scholars:

- Expand on/contribute to zine
- Additional research as this is a relatively new phenomenon

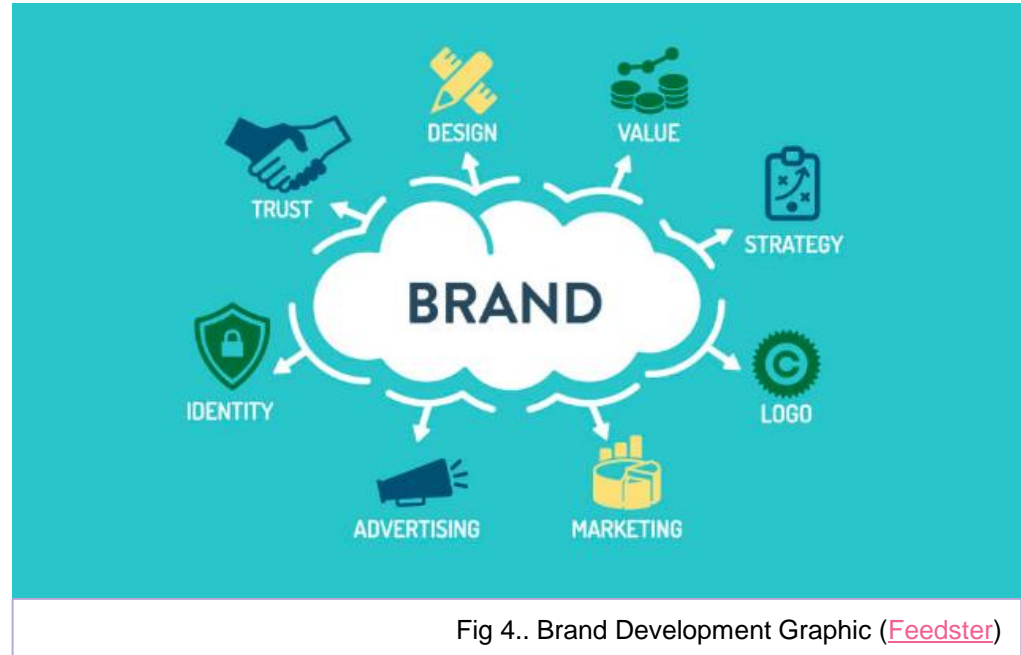
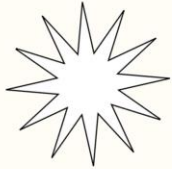


Fig 4.. Brand Development Graphic ([Feedster](#))

FOR:



the girls,
gays, and
theys



who dont always
see how perfect
they are

Lewd- crude and offensive in a sexual way

Acronym For :

- Learning
- Listening To
- Eyeing
- Wearing
- Doing



DOING



masturbate □

Get dressed up, FOR YOURSELF

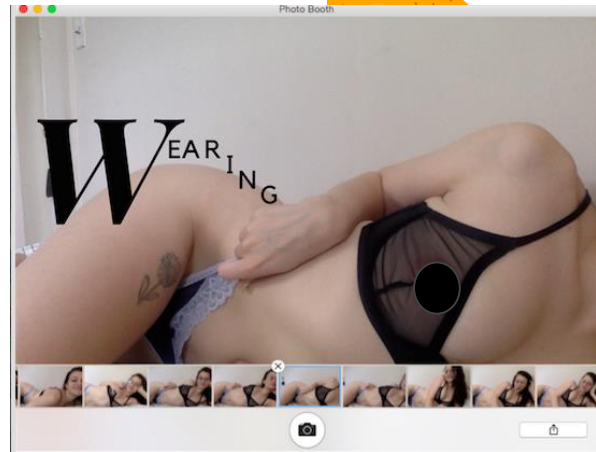
Fresh nail! □

*small, daily acts of self care**

□ have a photo shoot with your friends

putting on lotion

take yourself on a coffee date ☺



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