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How Can Academics Engage as Public Intellectuals on Social Media Platforms? A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of Social Media Guidelines

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how university policies are written to regulate the conduct of academics on social media, particularly the extent to which academics are discouraged from acting as public intellectuals on social media. Drawing on Michel Foucault, we analyze the social media guidelines developed by Canada's 15 research-intensive universities, known as the U15. Our analysis illuminates that the guidelines articulate particular power relations between academics and their universities – relations that are increasingly influenced by the corporatization of

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higher education in the era of neoliberalism. We argue that social media guidelines represent emblematic discourses that discipline academics working in highly corporatized universities. Faculty may thus be less inclined to act as public intellectuals.

Introduction

In April of 2021, Kyle Anderson, an assistant professor of biochemistry, microbiology, and immunology, was disciplined by the University of Saskatchewan for his social media conduct (Patterson, 2022). Anderson had previously been praised by his administration for his use of social media to share important public health information during the Covid-19 pandemic. A letter of discipline was issued after Anderson shared unverified misinformation on social media about the death of an education assistant resulting from a Covid-positive student. While not identified as a factor in the letter of discipline, Anderson had also been critical of the Saskatchewan premier's pandemic policies. Ultimately, an arbitrator revealed that the professor should not have been issued a letter of discipline. The letter of discipline issued to Anderson, titled, "University Standards of Conduct in Social Media," was signed by the university's president; vice-president, academic; and the dean of medicine. The text of the letter indicated that Anderson's statements and action were "being wrongly associated by the public [to] the University and are therefore, contrary to the established institutional guidelines with respect to University's approved best practices of social media usage" (University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association v University of Saskatchewan, 2022). Put plainly, Anderson was being reprimanded for the public associating his comments with the university because his employment status was included in his social media profile. In addition, while the letter referenced "established institutional guidelines," during arbitration, the communications coordinator admitted that these guidelines were not easy to locate online. Despite the institution's early embrace of Anderson's social media presence, an unnamed number of negative public responses resulted in the University of Saskatchewan asking Anderson to scrub his university affiliation from all his social media profiles. The university was comfortable with Anderson's public presence when there was no public or political pushback. Despite his earlier role as a media darling, Anderson had crossed the line

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from good academic to bad academic as soon as his actions were seen as having tarnished the university's brand.

Dr. Anderson's case is not the only example of an academic who has been caught at the centre of a social media conflagration in recent years. Our review of the scholarly literature (see below) indicates that there have been numerous incidences of university professors being criticized by their employers for their social media posts and by watch groups targeting intellectuals on social media. Nonetheless, we open with Dr. Anderson's case because it 1) reveals the lack of clarity surrounding social media policies at academic institutions; 2) raises questions about academic freedom in the social media context; 3) asks when a post made by an academic can be tied to the university; and 4) highlights inconsistencies regarding institutional support for faculty on social media. It is thus in this historic moment, when professors are increasingly using social media as platforms to engage with the public to offer their expertise in the public interest that this study sets out to examine the extent to which universities play a role in setting the parameters of possibilities and limitations on academics as public intellectuals on social media.

In this article, we focus on examining how universities in Canada attempt to normalize and discipline academics' social media practices by subjecting them to institutionalized guidelines. We analyze the guidelines developed by Canada's U15 universities – the country's 15 research-intensive universities (https://u15.ca/) – because these guidelines illustrate the tactics through which "power" is exercised at the institutional level and beyond. Our analysis focuses on how power circulates within these guidelines in the form of praise, regulation, and the disciplining of academics on social media. Indeed, universities regularly monitor their academics' behaviour on social media and may also investigate when they receive complaints (Cox, 2020), as noted above in the case of Dr. Anderson. As such, we view social media as having become a crucial site of academic surveillance. A broad aim of this study is to better understand the power dynamics between academics and their universities, especially related to academic freedoms in the academic or public domains, a perennial topic in the critical studies of higher education.

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This paper proceeds as follows. First, we briefly discuss the contemporary academic literature on the social media lives of academics to identify our study's contribution. Next, we discuss our theoretical framework based on the work of Michel Foucault. In particular, we engage with Foucault's notions of discourse, subjectivity, ethics, knowledge, and power. Following that, we outline the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis we use to investigate the social media guidelines of Canada's U15 as emerging discourses which shape the conduct of contemporary academics on various social media sites. To be clear, our analysis is focused on how the guidelines are written in ways that seek to discipline, influence, and inform conduct. This study is focused on the text of the guidelines not on their implementation. Moreover, discourse analysis does not determine cause and effect; rather, it offers an interpretation of the coercive use of language. We thus analyze the guidelines along the axes of Foucault's three concepts of ethics, knowledge, and power. As our analysis illuminates, social media guidelines articulate certain power relations between academics and their universities – relations that are increasingly influenced by the corporatization of higher education in the era of neoliberalism. As such, we argue that social media guidelines represent discourses that are emblematic and representative of the neoliberal era and that these guidelines discipline academics who work in highly corporatized universities, limiting the possibilities or potential of academics to act as and/or become public intellectuals.

It is particularly because places of higher education have become highly corporatized environments that academics have a responsibility to act as public intellectuals. In the current neoliberal context, "it is increasingly important that higher education be defended as a democratic public sphere and that academics be seen and see themselves as public intellectuals who provide an indispensable service to the nation" (Giroux, 2006, p. 63). Increased managerialism, professionalization, accountability, and micromanagement of the professoriate (Murphy & Costa, 2019), combined with the increase in assaults on critical education (Giroux, 2006), have resulted in a decline in academics who feel comfortable acting as public intellectuals. Yet, these forces of regulation make the role ever more important if universities are to continue to serve the public good over corporate and private interests.

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While our focus is on the discourse used within U15 guidelines, this study prompts academics to reflect on their own and others' engagement and experiences with social media in the neoliberal age. More importantly, we recommend that universities reflect on the way their policies might infringe on academic freedom and healthy public dialogue and discourage experts from sharing their research-informed opinions, as public intellectuals. Ultimately, we aim to contribute to a collective reimagining of social media spaces where critical thoughts and exchanges are possible.

Literature Review: Social Media, Academic Freedom, and Institutional Policies

Dr. Anderson, as discussed in the introduction, is an academic from the generation that has increasingly adopted social media as part of their social life. According to the research by Moran et al. (2011), by 2011, nearly 50 percent of faculty had posted content on social media, and over 90 percent had used social media in their professional lives. Increasingly, social media is used for scholarly communication purposes (Sugimoto et al., 2017). To some, faculty use of social media to publish personal and professional opinions "exposed a gap in university policies governing personal and professional extramural speech" (Kwestel & Milano, 2020, p.151). To others, social media policies are redundant expressions of existing laws and policies and a blatant attempt at overreach (Colson, 2014). Statements about academic freedom have been made by many institutions, but not all of them take social media into account (Diamond, 2017; Pomerantz et al., 2015). Although academic freedom is supposed to protect faculty research and speech, Kwestel and Milano's (2020) content analysis of 82 doctoral-granting research universities found that social media policies can constrain faculty speech.

In 2012, six years after Facebook and Twitter became publicly available, universities began taking action against faculty whose posts negatively impacted their institutional reputation (Kwestel & Milano, 2020). However, as of 2015, fewer than 25 percent of American institutions of higher education had accessible social media policies (Pomerantz et al., 2015). A survey of these policies found that many were remarkably similar, addressing the appropriateness of posts, representation of

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their institutions, and compliance with the law (Pomerantz et al., 2015). Like the policies of the U15 that we explore in this study, these policies often refer to additional institutional policies: "codes of conduct (23%), copyright and intellectual property policies (23%), policies regarding acceptable use of technology (21%), and privacy policies (14%)" (Pomerantz et al., 2015). In this way, universities are covering their bases by adding references to additional policies; however, this approach makes the policies less clear as it requires readers to access relevant information from these other referenced policies and to infer how they apply to specific contexts.

Institutional social media policies also focus on marketing and branding rather than teaching and learning (Erskine et al., 2014). In 2012, McNeill conducted a discourse analysis of the policy documents from 14 universities in the UK. Like Erskine et al. (2014), McNeill found the policies to be less focused on the implications and possibilities of using social media for teaching and learning, and more informed by *marketization* and *new managerialism*. In other words, universities' social media policies are developed primarily to promote and protect the university brand and institutional reputation. This focus constrains academic autonomy, inhibits risk-taking, and diminishes the possibility of innovation (McNeill, 2012). Kwestel and Milano (2020) found that although faculty are protected by academic freedom, they are simultaneously constrained by social media policies. Cox (2020) argues that "social media has changed the playing field for academic freedom, especially concerning extramural utterances" (p. 522). As the Anderson case makes clear, professors can be disciplined for their extramural speech on social media. University reputation, not academic freedom, remains the priority of many social media policies (Pomerantz et al., 2015; Kwestel & Milano, 2020). These policies are largely written by marketing departments, rather than committees that include faculty members (Kwestel & Milano, 2020).

Drawing parallels to McNeill (2012), Kwestel and Milano (2020) point out that social media policies are often written in a collegial or friendly tone, even though they are intended to control behaviour and can lead to punitive responses. Like corporate social media policies, many higher education policies employ an "invasive boundary logic" to suggest that people are always employees and

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therefore always under the jurisdiction of employee policy (Kwestel & Milano, 2020). Again, as the Anderson case demonstrates, the discipline resulted from his engagement on social media as a public intellectual offering his expert opinions and raising awareness of the importance of ensuring public health through policy interventions. In this way, social media has become an extension of the university's boundaries regardless of whether Anderson intended to post as a representative of the university. This blurring of boundaries between the personal and professional can also be fuelled by professional organizations that use similar language about holding "special positions" or "increased responsibility" based on one's profession (Cox, 2020). Yet, our review of the existing literature indicates that despite the increasing importance of social media in higher education, research on universities' social media policies is under-explored and under-theorized, particularly in Canada's higher education context, an area to which this study aims to contribute.

Thinking with Foucault

Our study seeks to expand upon the academic literature discussed in the previous section by examining how universities' social media guidelines are written to regulate and discipline academics' conduct on social media and the extent to which academics are discouraged from acting as public intellectuals. For this purpose, we draw from Michel Foucault's ideas and concepts. Foucault himself did not reflect on the exact topic of this study, although he was deeply concerned with the work of public intellectuals (see Foucault, 1980). His work provides a critical lens through which to investigate how individuals are constituted by "historically specific 'discourses' that seek to know and govern the social as a domain of thought and action" (Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 111). In drawing from Foucault's work, we are not simply theorizing universities as unitary, top-down entities in relation to academics. Rather, we view universities and academics as being entangled in complex webs of power relationships in which power circulates through various tactics and/or discourses that regulate academic conduct (Lynch, 2014). Indeed, the Anderson case discussed in the introduction illustrates how an academic's social media engagement got caught up in this complex web of power relations that extended beyond the university campus.

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Several key theories and concepts from Foucault guide our exploration. For example, discourse refers to an existing stock of knowledge and truth, how such knowledge and truth are generated in particular places and at specific times, and how knowledge and truth shape individuals as subjects (Foucault, 1980). Discourse thus means "the kind of institutional partitioning of knowledge" in specific academic subject areas such as the sciences, humanities, and so on (Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 114). Discourse also includes norms, traditions, or truths whose origins are sometimes difficult to identify but nevertheless understood and shared by social groups. Discourses shape what can be said and what is sayable and thereby create subject positions (Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2017). Further, Foucault notes that discourse encompasses techniques and practices through which ideas are formed, and thus discourse functions simultaneously as "régimes of truth" and truth-making (1980, p. 131). Foucault (1980) argues that it is not left to individuals to create truths, but rather, it is discourses, or régimes of truth, including the mechanisms, techniques, procedures, and practices, that verify what is true or false. What is important is that "in every society, the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures" (Foucault, 1972, p. 216, as cited in Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 114). Truth also shapes individuals: specifically, what is knowable or "judgeable" about individuals. We find it useful for us to consider how Foucault's notion of discourse illuminates the "institutionalized patterns of knowledge that govern the formation of subjectivity" (Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 110).

In examining how academic subjectivity or subject positions are formulated by the guidelines, we draw on three key terms – ethics, knowledge, and power – to analyze universities' social media guidelines. The concept of ethics refers to "the practices through which an individual constitutes itself as a subject" (Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 111). An analysis of ethics involves studying "the constitution of a certain mode of being of the normal subject" (Foucault, 2010, p. 3). This concept allows us to analyze how social media guidelines shape the ethics of academics. Specifically, we examine how the guidelines shape the subject positions of academics as civil, collegial, and professional.

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Foucault writes that in referring to knowledge, he is referring to more than its content. He also refers to the rules that generate knowledge in its various forms (spoken, written, and/or practised) (Foucault, 2010). In other words, knowledge is constructed and confirmed through particular traditions, disciplines, practices, or procedures. Foucault (2010) notes that ab/normal behaviours are constructed based on "a series of more or less heterogeneous forms of knowledge" (p. 3). Further, Foucault notes the "disciplinarization" of knowledge through selection and eradication of "false knowledge" (2003, p. 181, 185). We therefore draw on the concept of knowledge to analyze social media ethics, not as something that is arbitrary or independently decided through social media guidelines. Rather, knowledge is drawn from particular disciplines (e.g., laws), norms (e.g., professional codes of conduct), traditions (e.g., academic freedom), or institutions (e.g., governments). This conceptual lens can thus help us examine power beyond a single source that is positioned at the top. Looking at the issue through this lens allows us explore power as complex, dispersed, and built on multiple relationships, tactics, and technologies (Foucault, 1980; Lynch, 2014).

Power refers to "the rationalities by which one governs the conduct of others" (Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 111). Foucault focuses on the techniques of power for an "analysis of the exercise of power" because the procedures of power themselves produce norms (2010, p. 4). In other words, power is conceptualized beyond "the general or institutional forms of domination" (2010, p. 4). Hence, we draw on Foucault's complex notion of power:

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (Foucault, 1980 p. 119)

Indeed, how "one governs the conduct of others" is often achieved through a positive form of power (Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 111), that is, through a suggestion (imposition) of what is expected. Below, when analyzing the

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guidelines, we demonstrate the textual instances of academics being encouraged to participate in social media – and how this happens. Further, we examine the disciplinary power of guidelines as discourses while viewing all forms of power as omnipresent, especially in the sphere of social media, which is always "on" at any time of the day and from anywhere through a device!

A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

We apply a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) for its usefulness in analyzing how a body of institutionalized discourse, namely, social media guidelines, shapes and disciplines the conduct of individual academics. The analytical approach we develop is similar to that of Arribas-Allyon and Walkerdine (2017) in that it exposes the historical conditions of subjectivity formation by focusing on "rules, divisions and systems of a particular body of knowledge" rather than particular "language use – a piece of text, an utterance or linguistic performance" (p. 114). In other words, we use FDA to examine how social media guidelines, as discourses, constitute academic subjectivity and conduct.

Our main research question is: In what ways do universities' social media guidelines discipline academics? This question has three sub-questions:

1) What do the guidelines construct as ethical behaviours for academics in social media?
2) What knowledge, as defined above, do the guidelines draw on to outline the code of ethics for academics on social media?
3) How are academics governed by the power of universities, as specified in the social media guidelines?

We examined these questions with reference to the social media guidelines retrieved from each of the U15 institutions' main websites. The following key search terms were used: social media guidelines, social media, policies, faculty social media, and standards. The guidelines were anonymized using numbers 1 to 15, preceded by the letter "U". Twelve of the 15 universities have an institutional policy on social media use. The three institutions that do not have campus-wide

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guidelines either included some information about netiquette on their websites or had faculty-specific policies that are not applicable to the entire institution.

Some of the campus-wide guidelines are largely written for staff who run official university social media sites (U1; U3; U4; U9; U14); however, these staff guidelines often also included expectations for faculty. For example, U3 and U4 suggest that their guidelines are written for official social media channels, but include comments that extend to faculty and students. Most guidelines also included a "blurred lines" comment regarding personal and professional divides, noting that personal communications could be impacted by these guidelines. As all the guidelines offer suggestions for faculty using social media, even when they suggest they are not written for faculty audiences, they each serve as an appropriate data source to examine the current administration of academics' social media practices.

We have examined the guidelines as key discursive sites to illuminate how they operationalize power and how they are used as a technique for binding academics as employees of universities that act as corporations with concerns for their brands and reputations. Our approach to analyzing the social media guidelines followed the three axes: (1) axis of ethics, (2) axis of knowledge, and (3) axis of power (see Arribas-Allyon and Walkerdine, 2017; Foucault, 2010). With these three key concepts (which are discussed in the theory section above) in mind, we coded the guidelines. We collected examples that would fall into one of the three themes of ethics, knowledge, and power. The examples were further grouped into several sub-themes within the major themes. The sub-themes emerged from the guidelines.

Context

Recognizing the broader context within which these guidelines were written is particularly important for this study, given the significance of historicity to Foucault's scholarship. For example, neoliberal ideologies are pervasive within social and educational discourses, and as a result, they influence public understanding. Neoliberalism privileges free markets, the reduction of government support for social services, the privatization of public services, the minimization of taxation aimed at redistributing wealth, and the reorganization of human wants

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into profit opportunities (Brown, 2015). As Brown (2015) explicates, neoliberal policies position human beings as market actors only. Humans then become valued for their capital-generation potential. Indeed, "market forces are dictating what is happening in the world of higher education as never before" (Guthrie & Washburn, 2005). Faculty are service providers and students are positioned as consumers (Cannella & Koro-Ljunberg, 2017). Alongside ideological attacks, institutions of higher education are facing budget cuts (Gismondi, 2021). Some provincial governments across Canada have turned to, or are considering, Performance Based Funding, which ties university funding to labour market and economic outcomes (Spooner, 2021). Within this context, faculty are looked at with "the bottom line" in mind, with no regard for the rights of academic labour (Giroux, 2010), and professionalism is defined by what can be measured and rewarded (Ball, 2016). This focus on measurement "necessitates" increased managerialism, auditing, and surveillance of faculty (Ball, 2003; 2016; Cannella & Koro-Ljunberg, 2017; Giroux, 2013a; Smyth, 2012). Increasingly, "calculative rationalities" are used to inform policies and practices in higher education (Shore & Wright, 2015). As a result, faculty are increasingly relegated from a position of a public intellectual who informs public debate in a "democracy" to that of an individual with an academic job (Giroux, 2010). Precarity, lack of institutional support, and increased surveillance have resulted in less critical research; universities are less likely to defend professors whose findings may offend corporate sponsors (Giroux, 2010). Due to ever more auditing, surveillance, and precarity, faculty may already be less inclined to act as public intellectuals. In addition, online attacks of academics and a lack of clear policies regarding academic freedom have had a chilling effect on academics' use of social media to disseminate research or engage in public dialogue (Straumsheim, 2015). Moreover, the reliance on private companies to enable and host "public dialogue" further complicates this issue. That is, in order to participate in public discourse, academics are further regulated by corporate policies.

Analysis

Our analysis illuminates that ethics, knowledge, and power are deeply embedded in U15 universities' guidelines, which appear to exist to regulate academics' social media conduct and, thus, the extent to which professors can engage as public

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intellectuals. We are especially struck by the similarities among various universities' guidelines. These similarities are indicative of their temporal significance and their constitutive function related to academic conduct in neoliberal times. As such, and as noted in the introduction, we argue that the guidelines are emblematic discourses through which increasingly corporatized universities restrict and discipline academics.

Ethics, Pragmatics, and How to be "Good" Academics on Social Media

Drawing on Foucault's concept of ethics, we examined the ways in which social media guidelines specify how academics should behave and how often they should engage on social media. What do the guidelines say about being professional, civil, and collegial on various online platforms? They instruct (regulate) academics by providing tips on what to say, what not to say, and how to say it. These tips often appear under sub-headings such as "Benefits, Concerns and Considerations of Social Media Use" (U7). We have consolidated the suggested social media practices into the two major themes of DOs and DONOTs, each of which contain several minor themes. Through the specification of what is appropriate (DOs) and what is inappropriate (DONOTs) for online behaviour, universities are imposing the image of a "good" academic onto their faculty members.

DOs

One common theme defining what academics should do emphasizes the accuracy of content. For example, U3 writes that academics should be "…fact-checking all information to the best of [their] ability before posting and correcting any incorrect statements quickly." This theme is ubiquitous across all the guidelines; in some instances, the language is identical. Related to the theme of accuracy is the importance of paying attention to spelling and avoiding grammatical errors. Fact-checking and proofreading are considered critical and are tied to the values of personal and institutional integrity.

Another theme is communicating "in a professional, clear, and consistent manner," as noted in U1's guidelines. Under this theme, the guidelines are specific

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about the type of professional tone or language to be used, referring to academic conferences as a kind of standard that academics should follow. By using the "academic conference standard" universities are encouraging a particular tone, voice, and vocabulary, negating the dialogic potential of social media. Social media is not a presentation at a conference, but rather a space for public engagement. Alternately, some guidelines emphasize the importance of being personable in one's interactions: "[p]eople want to interact personally with real human beings on social media, not robots" (U3). Being authentic is thus identified as important, so the guidelines instruct their readers to use a voice that is "personable," "kind," "appreciative," "occasionally funny," and "written in the same way people speak" (U3). Relatedly, the guidelines even specify what type of letters to use. U8's guidelines indicate that "... on the Web, the use of capitals is equivalent to shouting and can be interpreted as aggression. A comment will be much more pleasant to read if it is written in lowercases." Indeed, being respectful in communications is encouraged across all the guidelines. For academics trying to navigate online, these expectations are both overwhelming and contradictory. For example, the guidelines suggest that academics use a professional tone, but also be personable. They also tell academics to "be authentic" and then instruct them on how to act. In addition, posting regularly is encouraged as a way to gain new followers and maintain existing ones. In other words, the guidelines specify how and how frequently academics ought to communicate on social media.

A further thread that runs through the various sets of guidelines is the importance of elevating the university's reputation by promoting academics' own or their colleagues' and students' achievements and successes. U4's guidelines provide an example: "[a]wards or kudos to people or groups in your faculty/department to celebrate your community. (Good) photography and videos are a big draw." The guidelines thus encourage posting about positive news. U6's guidelines note that "effective use of social media can help increase your influence and connect you with others working within your discipline. Social media can be a powerful way to share ideas, foster discussion, and enhance your teaching." As such, the guidelines suggest that academics build their social media presence to enhance and augment their influence and reputation, while also somehow being "authentic."

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DONOTs

In contrast to sharing success stories or inspiring people, academics are often asked not to denigrate the reputation of the university and other staff. U4's guidelines state, "[a]sk yourself: Could it in any way offend or harm the reputation of the university or members of our community? Not sure? Ask us." Similarly, U6's guidelines suggest that users "[a]void posting information that could reflect poorly on you or your colleagues." Specifically, academics are strongly discouraged from posting any comments that might come across as harassing, defamatory, or discriminatory.

Another theme is using good judgment, and thus not engaging with social media if one's judgment might be undermined under certain circumstances. U2's guidelines advise that, "During times of stress, it may be healthy to disengage from social media, ask a trusted friend to monitor social media accounts, and seek guidance from University resources. It is also advisable to disengage from social media if using alcohol or other substances." This last guideline recognizes that people are posting while not at work, but still imposes expectations on their behaviour. The guidelines impose professional expectations on personal time.

A further contrast to the DOs list is avoiding what might be considered controversial. U4's guidelines state, "What to avoid: Pushing an agenda with controversial topics." This guideline stands in notable contrast to the advice about being authentic and honest in what one posts. While this type of suggestion may apply more strictly to those who manage a university's official social media accounts, it is important to keep in mind how these guidelines establish certain institutional cultures and expectations of what is considered "normal," "acceptable," or "good" behaviours. Moreover, the guidelines do not indicate which topics are considered controversial. Of course, what is deemed controversial is subjective. Yet, including this line in the guidelines provides a catch-all for the university to determine what is controversial and discipline accordingly. However, topics that may be deemed controversial are precisely those for which we need to hear expert, research-informed opinions. These guidelines may limit expert (and public intellectual) engagement on important topics.

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Similarly, all guidelines urge faculty to clearly identify that their posts on social media are their personal views and opinions, not those of their institutions. U3 writes, "Be honest and transparent about your affiliation with the university in social interactions where you are talking about the university and reinforce that the opinions are those of you as an individual." In contrast, some universities also state that individual academics should not use the university's logo or ceremonial crest on a personal social media account. This directive indicates there is a further distinction to be made, namely, that academics are not formal representatives of their institutions, even though the guidelines impose regulations on personal (extramural) speech made by faculty.

As Foucault instructs us, ethics constitute an integral part of how individuals adopt a certain mode of being to be considered and perceived as "normal" (2010, p.3); as such, the specifics about ethical behaviours in the U15 guidelines outline and construct who is a "good" academic or "brand-worthy" academic on social media by delimiting what is sayable, exchangeable, or communicable while explicitly identifying how (not) to do it well.

Knowledge and Discourse: Laws and Business

Many of the ethics discussed above are not something that individual universities invent. The ethics are built on a broader web or network of knowledges and discourses that construct what is right or wrong, or true or false (Foucault, 2010). Hence, in addition to general tips about how to behave ethically, universities also make specific references to laws and use the language of business in supporting their statements. In fact, laws and policies are often mentioned in relation to behaviours that must be avoided because they may be illegal or unethical, while business and marketing discourses are mentioned in delineating ethical, desirable, successful, and "right" behaviours.

At the institutional level, the guidelines often list or refer to a range of policies, guidelines, and procedures, saying that faculty "should familiarize themselves with any and all applicable university policies" (U1). Some common examples include the following: Anti-Discrimination; Personal Harassment; Sexual

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Harassment; Prohibited Discrimination; Respectful Workplace; Intellectual Honesty; Scholarly Misconduct; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and others. This raises three questions: a) If all these applicable policies already exist, why are specific social media guidelines needed? b) How do universities expect to deepen understanding of how specific policies apply to social media use by listing a multitude of potentially applicable documents, unless, of course, their actual goal is to create legal cover for themselves? c) How do universities understand the contested and nuanced terms on which these policies are based? The guidelines also include contact information for various offices that can be consulted for clarification about these policies.

In the political and judicial realms, the guidelines make note of laws and regulations at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels. These are mentioned broadly as "provincial and federal laws and regulations…and municipal laws" (U2). The net is thus cast widely and the language is applied loosely and generally. It is very common to find the following advice: "[F]amiliarize yourself with any and all applicable … laws and regulations related to privacy, consent, copyright, and the collection of information" (U7). Related laws are the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and copyright laws, including statements such as "All photos, podcasts, videos, news stories or other content should be used only in compliance with copyright laws. Obtain consent, cite sources and include a link to the website, if appropriate" (U7). Furthermore, the guidelines note that social media posts will also be "bound by the terms and conditions of the social media channel provider" (U3). Noteworthy is that the list of laws and regulations accompanies a clause stating that there may be more policies and procedures that apply to address certain issues that might arise. Also, some guidelines make note of professional associations and their guidelines for professional conduct (U5). So, in addition to the copious listing of existing policies, the universities extend their coverage by throwing in professional standards and conduct that may relate to each faculty (for example, health, law, and education).

In contrast, when outlining what is the right thing to do, what counts as success is defined by the logics of marketing and business. For example, the U8 guidelines note that "[s]ome social media sites…, have built-in analytics pages that help

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measure things like site visits, engagement, video views, active users and demographic data and can tell you how visitors found your site." This discourse thus indicates that one can determine one's "success," as measured by these indicators. Most social media guidelines include links to or contact information for Marketing, Branding, and Communication offices, departments, or units. Alternatively, some guidelines include links to web-based resources to guide successful social media engagement. What these types of business analytics and marketing strategies indicate is that what is valued and ethical in social media practices is defined by the discourses of market and profit-driven interests. University administrations appear to be concerned about protecting the university brand and reputation in ways that resemble how private sector corporations operate, seeing academics as employees rather than intellectuals whose responsibility is to serve the public interest. In other words, business discourses underpin what is constructed as desirable behaviours of academics on social media.

Power and Rationalities in the Guidelines

In this section, we focus our analysis on the ways specific discourses within the social media guidelines exert the *power* that governs the conduct of academics. We also recognize that the guidelines themselves are already a *technique of power*, shaping individuals as subjects (Foucault, 2010). Hence, in analyzing the documents, we have focused on particular textual instances of power being "felt" or "exercised" in various ways. For instance, we analyze how power is exercised when universities encourage certain types of conduct, as a form of positive power. These instances are articulated in ways that generate a sense of interest convergence. Additionally, we have identified sections where there is a sense of regulation and disciplining through a more traditional form of power, especially when the guidelines make connections to laws and potential legal consequences. Finally, we analyze where power is felt everywhere and all the time – that is, when it is omnipresent (Foucault, 2010).

All the guidelines have a component of "best" practices – that is, what to do – which we discussed above. They encourage academics to have a presence on social media. Yet, they tend to influence and mold social media practices to benefit the

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university's brand or reputation, as most universities see social media as part of their "branded environments" (U14). Universities tend to focus on presenting "a consistent profile for immediate brand recognition" (U14). U5 states that social media offers "exciting tools for sharing knowledge, engaging with the community, promoting programs and events, expressing creativity, collaborating and connecting with others." U1 notes that "Social media is an effective way to advance the values and reputation of [U1]." Further, U9 writes, "There is strength in [U9's] brand - so use it to your advantage!" While it is not entirely clear what "advantage" means in this context, what is notable is that social media is considered a marketized space where everyone who is connected to the university can affect the university's reputation and/or its market value.

At the same time, the guidelines exert regulative and disciplinary power. U5's social media guidelines are illustrative: "We encourage you to explore ways in which social media can help you do your job. Even when you are personally engaging on social media, an affiliation with the University on your profile has the ability to affect the university as a whole" (U5). U1's guidelines note that "you are the university." This statement reflects a kind of corporate rationality while also encouraging academics to bear the institution in mind while engaging on social media. The following statement by U1 illustrates the limiting of academics' social media activities and posts: "Be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you or the university." These excerpts from the guidelines indicate that universities exert regulative power to maintain and boost their market positions. Universities appear to be more focused on economic, political, financial, and social gains and their reputations rather than on faculty expressing and exchanging views or attempting to raise critical consciousness on social media.

In fact, only five of the universities' social media guidelines included any reference to academic freedom or freedom of expression (either explicitly or in the additional references included in the guidelines). In one of these cases, the guidelines indicated that these matters are difficult to determine: "It can be challenging to evaluate a post within the framework of academic freedom and freedom of speech" (U15). In contrast to the references to laws, guidelines, and procedures mentioned above, few documents noted the importance of academic freedom and how it can be

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exercised and protected in social media, especially for academics who wish to engage agonistically to infuse research-informed ideas or to promote democratic exchanges as public intellectuals.

The regulative form of power is traceable in the ways some universities have specialized marketing units that govern social media activities. For example, U3 notes, "If you want to create an institutional [U3] channel on a new social media network, stop first and contact the social media strategist on the Digital Experience team in University Relations" (U3). This passage indicates how universities have begun to centrally manage social media activities.

Taking a step further, almost all the universities' statements indicate what would happen if the guidelines are overlooked. For example, U15's guidelines say clearly: "We make all attempts to allow open discussions without interference; however, we reserve the right to moderate any posts and remove comments that don't adhere to our guidelines and will block repeat violators." As such, disciplinary and repressive power is exercised when certain behaviours are regulated by using language such as "allowing" posts and "removing" others when deemed necessary by the institution. Another example from U12 further illustrates this repressive power: "Should there be reason to suspect that laws or university policies have been or are being violated, and the university may suffer reputational, financial or other harm as a result of non-compliance, this may constitute grounds for disciplinary or legal action in accordance with any applicable agreements, contracts, collective agreements, regulations or policies, legislation or common law principles." In other words, universities can decide what to do about academics' posts as they see fit even if the posts were meant to promote discussion and assert "truths" that may be inconvenient (may lower wealthy individuals' donations to universities).

What is especially chilling about the power relations established by these various guidelines is that there is no limit to them. Power is omnipresent. Whatever one says on social media will be subject to evaluation from anywhere, at any time. For example, U2 indicates that "'off-duty' conduct can sometimes lead to reports of harassment, discrimination, or other concerning behavior, including from other

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members of the University community." The Anderson case in the introduction is a fitting illustration of how an academic's promotion of public health ends up being subject to the power web of various stakeholders within and outside his university.

Discussion

Throughout this study, we have used Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) to put the subtleties of institutional regulation on display. That is, we have considered how social media guidelines construct, impose, and confine the ethical behaviours of a "good" academic. This article raises questions about the ways these guidelines unsettlingly conflate the personal and professional; offer contradictory information; prioritize the university brand; and rely on a list of policies that obfuscate understanding. Further, in this study, we ask a broader question about the implications of these guidelines, especially about the extent to which academic staff would be willing to engage as public intellectuals on social media. When universities instruct academics on the topics they "should" post about and the tone and frequency with which they should post, these academics may ultimately decide not to engage. When a personal post made on a weekend while sipping a beverage could be considered a professional violation, academics may retreat from social media entirely. When offering a research-informed opinion on a "controversial topic" could result in discipline, academics may choose to say nothing. Yet, these are precisely the voices that we need engaging in controversial topics, especially topics connected to an academic's own research and scholarship. As a society, we all lose when experts in a field do not feel comfortable engaging in public dialogue. We also lose when dialogue is regulated and confined by corporations. A healthy democracy requires that citizens and academics continually engage in dialogue and deliberation in public spaces, such as social media.

The social media guidelines risk redefining professionalism through DOs and DONOTs. Many academics value their role as public intellectuals. This often involves speaking up about issues regarding human rights, injustice, and public safety, which are all topics that risk being deemed controversial under the social media guidelines. Following Dr. Cindy Blackstock, "Academia and activism should co-exist. Academic freedom provides us with a space to stand in the wings of discrimination in a way that's not available to other people" (as cited in Rynor,

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2023, para. 2). Yet, these guidelines draw on university policies and practices in order to mandate a particular civility, one that does not contradict the image being projected by the university's brand. Rather than centring the language of academic freedom, the guidelines reference professional standards, confidentiality, privacy, and copyright/proprietary information. These are undoubtedly relevant; however, by prioritizing this knowledge, university guidelines warn faculty away from participation rather than encouraging it as experts and public intellectuals.

Moreover, by discouraging faculty engagement with (undefined) controversial topics, university guidelines contribute to the silencing of some academics over others; in the current moment, would that make anything spoken by critical race or gender theorists controversial? What is lost when we do not make space for these voices? For whom does their absence from social media make space?

When academics recognize that the guidelines are more concerned about the university brand than they are about academic freedom, they may get the message that their employer will not protect them from harassment or support them in the case of a public complaint. They may also come to see the university as first and foremost a business. However, as Giroux (2013b) importantly asserts, "the university is nothing if it is not a public trust and social good; that is, a critical institution infused with the promise of cultivating intellectual insight, the imagination, inquisitiveness, risk-taking, social responsibility, and the struggle for justice" (para. 2). When the preservation of a brand supplants criticality and dialogue, we are left with nothing, or worse than nothing, as the space will be filled by individuals who have little expertise and are not putting public interests at the centre of what they do. Universities need to consider their role as public institutions and to contribute to creating spaces of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization.

Conclusion

Social media is a common way for professors to act as public intellectuals. Unlike the gatekeeping that exists within traditional media, social media is accessible, ubiquitous, and operates on the principles of openness and sharing (Murphy & Costa, 2019). In contrast, traditional media requires that academics be invited to

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speak on select research topics. These appearances involve specific questions and subsequent edits curated by a corporate broadcaster. In some cases, academics' appearances on radio and television are arranged directly through their university. In this way, there are gatekeepers of traditional media at both the (corporate) broadcaster and university levels. Public intellectuals who hold views that do not align with those of the mainstream media are not given platforms to share their critical views (Giroux, 2013). Social media, on the other hand, allows professors to post and comment without these traditional constraints. Hence, this study's contribution to the field of higher education, especially in Canada, is to raise awareness of social media platforms as important sites of struggle for academics to speak the truth and expose lies (Chomsky, 2017). This study's contribution is to illuminate the extent to which academics' ability to act as everyday public intellectuals is being marred by the institutionalized social media guidelines that advance the interests of power rather than the public. Given the importance of this topic, we hope future research will further examine how academics interpret these guidelines and how these guidelines shape academics' engagement with social media, especially in the context of Canadian higher education, where more research is much needed.

We thus argue that a different kind of "social" media culture – or "public" media – is possible. This requires that faculty engagement on social media is not beholden to the regulatory policies of universities. When academics are using social media to share their research and scholarship, they need to know that their academic freedom is prioritized by their employer and supported through their faculty unions. Academic freedom should be the anchor of any set of social media guidelines. This can be done by placing it at the top of the guidelines document and granting it much more space throughout. In addition, faculty unions and the Canadian Association of University Teachers need to challenge university overreach of extramural speech and ensure academic freedom is centred in all policies. This involves deleting any language that suggests that personal social media must comply with university and professional standards. The "blurred lines" statements included in many U15 social media guidelines impose professional expectations on personal time and speech. People are not employees all the time. Similarly, universities need to ensure that these guidelines remain focused on their intended

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target audience. Many of the guidelines begin by suggesting they are written for people who are employed to manage social media accounts for or within faculties. However, these guidelines often include statements that apply to all faculty. Universities may need to write one set of guidelines for staff that operate the university's official social media accounts, and a separate set of guidelines for faculty who are posting on social media – provided existing policies do not already address these issues. Guidelines written for faculty who are posting about their research online should be written in a way that recognizes their professionalism and expertise. These guidelines, rather than policing tone or engaging in infantilization and distrust, can be revised in ways that help academics understand how to use various platforms to share their work. Universities should consider how their efforts to preserve their corporate brand have resulted in a loss of reputation to universities overall. Instead, university guidelines should further advance equity, diversity, and inclusion. As one of many possible examples, they should also assist faculty in creating accessible posts, ones that include alt text, image or video descriptors, and accessible formats and fonts. The guidelines should encourage rather than discourage faculty engagement as intellectuals who can advance the public interest.

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