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**Re-thinking Social Media as a Cultural Policy**

**ABSTRACT**

New internet age is the period of time during which interpersonal relations and sense-making practices have been undergoing a rapid change. Comments, blogs, articles, pictures, videos, maxims, slogans etc., shared in social media are mostly related to needs rather than values. Here, consumption culture disguises itself as a value by means of various codes to create needs. At this point, Youtube channels as a means of social media provide content to people according to their needs and tastes. In addition, people might feel themselves somewhat obliged to make a choice between their needs and values. The future of social networks and the sphere of influence precede the domain itself. How would it be possible in the open-ended comprehension and interpretation domain of social networks to maintain how much and what children need during their socialization process as ardent users of the Internet, what is valuable and how the values as principles leading to ethical existence can be adopted? As one of the instruments of socialisation, which influences culture policy, social media shapes the value judgments of children as well. Therefore, the contents of Youtube channels as a means of social media particularly towards children should be critically studied with regard to the use of social values, because such social media and the Internet contents not only influence, but also change and transform the current cultural policies. In this regard, the purpose of this study is to analyse the cultural discourses transforming socialisation and value formation with respect to the Youtube channels that children watch the most in Turkey.

Keywords: Social media, social networks, culture policy, internet celebrities, Youtube.

## **Introduction**

New internet age is the period of time during which interpersonal relations and sense-making practices have been undergoing a rapid change. During this age, defined as post-humanitarian, people tend to move away from the act of thinking and gradually abandon their individuality by wending their way to what is 'ready' and 'convenient.' They seem to have already given up asking questions and trying to change things. There happens to be a transformation from the human model that creates, protects and transfers values to a new asocial human type that sees historicity as a burden and abstract thinking as an area of expertise and also contents oneself just by satisfying his or her needs. At this point, social media users can feel themselves belonging to a group, geographical location or a place where they have never been apart from various intellectual fronts, wings and ideologies just with a click in current technological instrumentalism. Hence, it may not be wrong to suggest that social media is asocial. Some philosophers, such as Francis Bacon and Bertrand Russel, who put forth that knowledge is power considered the relationship between knowledge and power with respect to the purposive use of knowledge, not instrumental. There is a difference between positioning knowledge as a power to pave the way to wisdom as well as a value to be virtuous and; on the other hand, considering it as an instrument to maintain hegemony and monopoly. Today culture policy does not completely need a cultural logic. Instead, our social reality is based upon economic reasons. Individuals' ability to express themselves, form a communicative network with the others and realizing themselves accordingly are basically economic activities apart from the cultural ones.

Comments, weblogs, articles, photographs, videos, maxims, slogans etc., shared in social media are mainly linked to needs rather compared to values. Here, usage culture disguises itself as a value by ways of different codes to produce desires. At this stage, Youtube channels as a means of content is provided by social media to individuals based on their tastes and needs. Additionally, individuals might think themselves somewhat obliged to create a choice between their values and needs. The future of the sphere and social networks of the domain is preceded by influence itself. Exactly how would it be feasible in the open ended comprehension as well as interpretation domain of social networking sites to keep exactly how a lot and what kids require during their socialization activity as ardent owners of the Internet, what's valuable and the way the values as concepts leading to ethical existence may be followed? As among the instruments of socialisation, that influences culture policy, social media shapes the value judgments of kids too. Thus, the contents of Youtube channels as a means of social media especially towards kids must be significantly studied with regard to the usage of societal values, because such social networking and also the Internet contents not simply influence, but likewise change the present cultural policies. With this regard, the objective of this study is to evaluate the cultural discourses transforming socialisation as well as word formations with respect to the Youtube channels that kids view

the most. Thus, three top Youtube channels of the Internet celebrities, namely Enes Batur, Orkun Işıtmak and Berkcan Güven, have been studied.

## Literature Review

It is an undeniable fact that online networking has already turned into an essential piece of social life. It influences not only the convictions, qualities, and attitudes of individuals, but also their expectations and practices. Moreover, online networking empowers governments and associations to connect with individuals. In this respect, changing over online networking content into data, key ideas, and topics is essential for creating learning and figuring systems.

Being the largest platform for community growth as well as information exchange, YouTube appears as a natural prospect for researchers to learn subjects of interest using the diversity of data it provides.

As the Internet increases in size, mode, and diversity, exploring web content, particularly social media, and transforming such content into concepts have become a challenge to electronic commerce researchers, business practitioners, and policymakers.

Parallel to the development of the Internet with respect to size, mode, and assorted variety, investigating web content, especially online networking, and changing such substance into ideas have unavoidably drawn the interest of policymakers, electronic trade specialists and business professionals.

It seems quite obvious that in the last decade social media has attracted much attention from scholar and researches. The literature on cultural policy presents a variety of approaches. Digitally enabled social media sites, encompassing social networking applications such as for instance wikis, social networking sites and blogs, have the possibility to significantly change organizational culture by creating communities, promoting fostering collaboration and information sharing.<sup>1</sup>

As Heaselgrave and Simmons<sup>2</sup> propound, Social media are already valued in the local government communication landscape. There were some instances where Web 2.0 affordances were being used to enhance transparency and open communication, and where the dialogic risk associated with uncontrolled communication had been accepted. But in the main, social media are used and valued because they are a fast and cheap way to reach large numbers of people. They mitigate the limitations of time and space in communication, and in some instances they help local government to communicate with difficult to reach communities. Social media are mostly valued for their contributions to

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<sup>1</sup>Hope Koch, Dorothy E. Leidner & Ester S. Gonzalez 2013. Digitally enabling social networks: resolving IT–culture conflict, Wiley Publishing Ltd, Information Systems Journal 23, 501–523, doi: 10.1111/isj.12020

<sup>2</sup>Fae Heaselgrave, Peter Simmons, (2016) "Culture, competency and policy: Why social media dialogue is limited in Australian local government", Journal of Communication Management, Vol. 20 Issue: 2, pp.133-147, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-07-2015-0059>, p. 144.

information, promotion and reputation. Bouvier<sup>3</sup> claims that the wider field of discourse studies is still only beginning to turn its attention to social media despite a number of notable scholarly works.

Offering an ever growing, rich and unique source of information which presents new challenges and opportunities for information discovery and analysis, YouTube is inarguably the one of the hottest social networking platforms utilized by millions throughout the world. It is important to explore and understand a subject via YouTube content to find out information that is interesting about public sentiments and opinions. Exponential growth of social media content is an important contributor to so called “Big Data”. The existence of rapidly and increasingly growing social media content has been challenged by several researchers in ongoing debates. Thus, in recent literature, a study conducted by Ahmad et al.<sup>4</sup> focus on a new approach to Youtube social media content analysis. Suggesting “a system for *Harvesting* and *Visualization* based analysis (HarVis) for the YouTube textual content analysis of Youtube, Ahmad et. al., note four main components of it:

“(i) What is the significance of content with respect to certain happening, event or topic in real world? (ii) What is the magnitude and constituency of a topic?, (iii) What vocabulary people use to express their opinion about the topic? (iv) What are community dynamics and interaction patterns gearing the content creation and spread?” (p. 25).

They also point out that YouTube provides personalized views which properly persuade the drivers to continue watching and sharing much more content. Nevertheless, for topic analysis objective, such sights have severe limitations rather, occasionally, they distract people to various other things. For example, it is not easy to calculate the magnitude, growth and impact of information associated with a certain subject by just watching YouTube video clips.

Andrews et. al.<sup>5</sup> discuss that an understanding of policy like a cultural manufacturing representing certain ideological outlooks proposes that cultural policy studies must encompass a wide assortment of policies. The experiments in that matter begin by an understanding of policy which plays up the mutual constitution of its of and also because of culture and always reject the idea that culture as well as policy exist or perhaps operate independently of one another.

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<sup>3</sup>Gwen Bouvier, What is a discourse approach to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other social media: connecting with other academic fields? *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 2015, Vol. 10, No. 2, 149–162, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2015.1042381>

<sup>4</sup>Uzair Ahmad, Anam Zahid, Muhammad Shoaib, Atif AlAmri. *HarVis: An integrated social media content analysis framework for YouTube platform Information Systems*, Volume 69, September 2017, Pages 25-39, Elsevier.

<sup>5</sup>Sean Johnson Andrews, Janice Peck, Gilbert B. Rodman, Fan Yang, *Media: Culture: Policy, or What we talk about when we talk about (cultural) policy*, October 2017, communication +1, DOI 10.7275/R5HQ3X33

Having made a notable contribution to the popularization of the notion of participatory means of life, Jenkins<sup>6</sup> (2006), considers press participation as opportunities to take part in creative expression, the exchange of information and ideas, as well as the model as well as distribution of info. Jenkins additionally emphasizes that the respective scenarios allow men to change company society into folk culture, so as to advocate as well as negotiate the interests of theirs with media producers better, and to be able to broaden the encounters of theirs with cultural participation in order to political involvement. While participation increases users' power and influence with regard to media makers, this power is completely casual, and subscribers must chat with press producers from a still fairly powerless place.

One method to understand youth culture is actually through media. Buckingham<sup>7</sup> alludes to the "electronic generation" when examining the utilization of the web by kids as well as teens, but that phrase is actually by all accounts likewise material to both new and customary media utilize because of the huge steps of press expended day by day by current day youth. Media are actually used more than 6.5 hours a day, and launch is substantially greater on the grounds that youngsters & adolescents have a tendency to use in excess of one medium in the meantime (i.e., they might tune in to CDs while playing computer games). A 2003-2004 searching of kids' and teens' media propensities led for the Kaiser Family Foundation discovered that more than ninety five % have televisions, VCRs, and CD players, 80 % have digital TV as well as video games, and more than seventy % strategy the web at home. The media community is actually developing with the presentation of gadgets, for instance, unique video recorders (Versatile DVD and tivo) players, Internet access via computer game consoles, downloadable ring tones for cellular phones, and video content on iPods and PDAs.

The web is a significant portion of youth culture. Adolescents, tweens, and youngsters have grown up with the web and therefore are used to making use of it for excitement and information and also talking with companions. They make content on the web and also expend subject material created by others. Unique landing pages are able to mirror the proprietor's identity as well as interests with photographs of motion picture stars and most liked bands, along with ballads and stories as well as log sections composed by the proprietors. The site page may be improved as regularly as proprietors choose to reflect changing interests or perhaps as they have to alter the components of the character of theirs that they talk about with other people.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Lai and To<sup>8</sup> suggest a practical and realistic theoretical approach that encompasses "(i) defining the goal and scope

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<sup>6</sup>Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

<sup>7</sup>Buckingham (2002) qtd in *Encyclopedia of children, adolescents, and the media*/[edited by] Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, printed in the United States of America Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data. p. cm. Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN 1-4129-0530-3 or 978-1-4129-0530-5, p. 881.

<sup>8</sup>Linda S.L. Lai, W.M. To. 2015. Social Media Content Analysis: A Grounded Approach *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, VOL 16, NO 2,

of a study; (ii) logically and systematically identifying social media sources, total sample size, and the sample size of every source category; (iii) employing computer-aided lexical analysis with statistical and graphical methods to identify the key dimensions of the topic while minimizing human errors, as well as coding and categorization biases; and (iv) interpreting the findings of the study” (p. 138).

Using web based technologies along with Internet, social media transform transmitted media monologues into social media dialogues. Loyalty as well as information exchange is crucial ingredients of decision making. Particularly, social network websites, internet forums, instant messaging services, and mobile wise platforms have grown exponentially, resulting in the prevalent use of social networking. With this regard, social media has turned into an effective force of democratization.

Examining media involvement in the domain of consumer policies, Stein<sup>9</sup> employs Arnstein's typology (1999/1969 qtd. in Stein) of participation as a tool for recognizing particular participatory styles and also the amounts of power they afford. Using this particular device to PC user policy documents spotlights an important dimension of just how social networking platforms position user participation as well as the typical policy mechanisms structuring and delimiting involvement online. According to the findings, while YouTube and Facebook policies provide little participation over website articles as well as governance, maximum involvement is provided by Wikipedia. Additionally, realizing the terms of involvement inscribed in pc user policies facilitates both considerably more informed choices regarding pc user involvement in internet platforms as well as advocacy for much more equitable use terms in policy, law, and training.

According to Park et. al.<sup>10</sup> access to Video-sharing social media to varied cultural products from all over the world is provided by YouTube. Thus, it can be easy to evaluate theories which the Web helps with worldwide cultural convergence.

Jung and Lee<sup>11</sup> indicate that since first showing up in 2005, YouTube has turned into the world's greatest and most pervasive video-sharing site. A report from the Pew Internet and American Life Project (Madden, 2009 qtd in Jung & Lee, 2015) demonstrates that 90% of 18– 24 year olds utilize YouTube and comparative video-sharing destinations, 36% of whom sit in front of the TV appears, motion pictures, instructive recordings, and different clasps regularly.

The new types of communication are combined into more extensive examples of transforming cultural values about types of social structure, learning itself and the sorts of issues that tend to shape our independently civic circles.

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<sup>9</sup>Laura Stein, Policy and Participation on Social Media: The Cases of YouTube, Facebook, and Wikipedia, *Communication, Culture & Critique* 6 (2013) 353–371, ISSN 1753-9129 doi:10.1111/cccr.12026

<sup>10</sup>Park M, Park J, Baek YM, MacyM (2017) Cultural values and cross-cultural video consumption on YouTube. *PLoS ONE* 12(5): e0177865. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0177865>

<sup>11</sup>Insung Jung and Yekyung Lee, YouTube acceptance by university educators and students: a cross-cultural perspective, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 2015, Vol. 52, No. 3, 243–253, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2013.805986>

Aiming to present a hypothetical approach and cases of computerized stages, which support the thought of getting to culture, and depicting how social arrangement can add to raising such stages, Valtysson<sup>12</sup> (2010) focuses on the question on how social policy makers can utilize the participatory, independently publishing attributes of Web 2.0 with a specific end goal to make open advanced social open circles, Valtysson also applies Jürgen Habermas, Manuel Castells and Lawrence Lessig's hypotheses to exhibit how advanced correspondence and new media stages improve social cooperation and how social strategy influences the social conduct of clients who deliver and are purchasers in a computerized union culture. Valtysson also points out that due to “the high level of interaction and immediate distribution on the Internet,” the refinement amongst generation and utilization is a long way from clear, which influences imperative ideas of social approach, for example, “copyright, cultural governance and identity” (p. 200). As discussed by Valtysson, culture encoded in computerized shape has its clearest indication in the World Wide Web with its epic database of writings, illustrations, photos, video, sound, outline designs in addition to programming codes, where each and every component is free and accessible for person intercession by its clients. Besides, this digitalisation of culture not just makes new social structures, however reclassifies more seasoned structures like photography, film, radio and TV.

Computerized culture speaks to the emancipative access edge of the social coin. The physical exercise in mindful command of societal technique might prove to be helpful here. Thus, it's particularly crucial that the makers of potential cultural strategy know about the computerized public open circles streaming throughout the hubs of the method society, and respond the same.

Establishing digital platforms, or maybe meta worlds, requires manufacturers of cultural policy to recognize the fact the outcome is extremely unpredictable. Being a result, the emphasis of cultural policy shouldn't be on the particular effect of the meta world, but on the making of the planet itself, e.g. the structure of its, access in phrases of bandwidth and server space, terms of use (for example, by using Creative Commons), ethical conduct, digital formats, worldwide availability, etc. (ibid. p. 212).

With regard to Youtube, Chau<sup>13</sup> (2010) defines the participatory culture framework in five characteristics:

- Relatively low barriers to artistic expression and
- Civic engagement
- Strong support for creating and sharing one's projects
- Informal mentorship
- A belief that contributions matter
- A sense of social connection (pp. 67-72)

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<sup>12</sup>Bjarki Valtysson, Access culture: Web 2.0 and cultural participation, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 16, No. 2, May 2010, 200–214 .

<sup>13</sup>Clement Chau, YouTube as a participatory culture, *New Directions for Youth Development*, No. 128, Winter 2010 © Wiley Periodicals, Inc. Published online in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com) • DOI: 10.1002/yd.376



Thus, by looking at the YouTube universe through the five attributes that depict a culture, Chau enlightens the different social standards, practices, and specialized highlights that bear the cost of chances to interface, team up, make, and course unique media manifestations. Accordingly, the degree to which YouTube gives a sociotechnical stage to help a participatory culture among young YouTubers is exhibited. Stressing that ever-growing youth subscription to YouTube is evidence of the pertinence and relevance of this kind of medium in their lives, Chau (2010) explains the reason why young people are pulled into YouTube in such a way that the boundaries for them to take an interest are low, their creation is effortlessly flowed and shared, casual mentorship and guidelines encourage their creating personality, their levels of commitment matter, and they feel socially associated with peers inside the group. Thus, it is vital to consider how new spaces can use Web 2.0 advances to make a sociotechnical participatory culture in which individuals feel enabled to connect with and take an interest.

## Methodology

Having in mind that social media and the Internet contents not only influence, but also change and transform the current cultural policies, the contents of selected Youtube channels as a means of social media particularly towards children were examined with regard to the use of social values.

It should initially be noted that being the most widely used platform for media consumption on the Internet, Youtube has been chosen as the universe in this study. With regard to the objective of this study that is to evaluate the cultural discourses transforming socialisation as well as word formations with respect to the Youtube channels that kids view the most, three top Youtube channels of the Internet celebrities, namely Enes Batur, Orkun İşitmak and Berkcan Güven, have been studied with content analysis method.

For the analysis, the systematic methodology suggested by Lai and To<sup>14</sup> “to convert text files from social media to concepts that are repeatable, easily interpretable, and visible with a concept map” has been adopted to examine the content of the Youtube channels determined as the sampling.

The grounded theory approach indicates that aside from collecting relevant data for analysis, we also need to allow concepts and themes to emerge from the ground up. User-generated content, such as word-of-mouth, can be systematically monitored to understand the beliefs, values, attitudes, perceptions, intentions, and behaviours of users.

As for data collection, the content of the respective channels were recorded and transcribed for a week, then analysed with *DataBasic*<sup>15</sup> tool. As a result, bigram and trigram counts (two and three-word combinations) were obtained and studied with content analysis method.

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<sup>14</sup>Linda S.L. Lai, W.M. To. 2015. Social Media Content Analysis: A Grounded Approach Journal of Electronic Commerce Research, VOL 16, NO 2, (pp. 148-149).

<sup>15</sup><https://databasic.io/en/>

## Findings and Discussion

On the Youtube channels that children view the most, there appears to be no specific content let alone an educative one. As these channels are managed by the internet celebrities within this study, the informal expressions and slangs that they use extensively are easily adopted by children. In other words, children associate themselves with the discourses used by those internet celebrities.

Moreover, the content of the respective Youtube videos is mostly entertainment based and it is purposeless and nugatory. As a result, there is hardly any discourse pertaining to enable children to make a distinction between good and bad or correct and incorrect. In the same way, there seems to be no concern about value transfer to children. The discourses are usually around competition and winning.

Minatory and imperative sentences are frequently used. There is a continual challenge; thus, winning and receiving a reward are very important. Although there is no overt implication towards any kinds of violence, there is always encouragement for competition. Giving certain tasks, rewarding those who can and punishing those who cannot with derision, contempt and ridicule is observed. Children are given tasks that are difficult and unpleasant to perform in public. These tasks are likely to cause disturbance in social life and distort values. At this point, there seems to be virtual arena for children, where winning is imperative. Internet celebrities somewhat present spectacles. Referring to the Roman arena, Cowles<sup>16</sup> points out that spectacles of death provided not merely gladiatorial combats but additionally ritualized executions and also animal hunts. These spectacles of death fulfilled various purposes like most predominantly entertainment, though they were also utilized for the developing of punishments, advertising interacts between the rulers as well as the ruled and providing meals for all the individuals of Roman society.

Likewise, the overall content, especially the games are presented as rituals by the Internet celebrities and children get involved in them for fun and excitement. The most common themes are entertainment, punishment, fear, taking risks, winning and losing. There is also a covert threat for those who cannot dare to meet peremptory challenges.

All in all, the content of the Youtube channels viewed the most by children is mainly vulgar, full of slang and swear words. The values such as love, respect, tolerance, patience, understanding are not given at all.

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<sup>16</sup>Lauren E. Cowles. 2011. Constructing the Past, The Spectacle of Bloodshed in Roman Society Volume 12 | Issue 1 Article 10 Illinois Wesleyan University, lcowles@iwu.edu, <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com.tr/&httpsredir=1&article=1146&context=constructing>

## **Conclusion**

It is an undeniable fact that through the development of new media, cultural, economic and social codes have started to be produced on the Internet channels. On the Youtube channels which kids view the most, there seems to be no certain content not to mention an educative one. As these channels are handled by way of the web celebrities, the casual expressions as well as slangs they use thoroughly are very easily used by kids. Put simply, kids connect themselves with the discourses utilized by those internet celebrities.

Providing particular tasks, rewarding people who could and punishing individuals who can't with derision, contempt as well as ridicule is noticed. Even though there's no overt inference towards any violence types, there's usually encouragement for competition. Imperative sentences and minatory expressions are extensively used. Moreover, continuous challenge is usually observed; consequently, receiving and winning a reward are really necessary.

Entertainment is like an umbrella covering the whole content which is eviscerated, unqualified, meaningless and disregarding social codes and conduct and values. In fact, they are a part of the entertainment market in post-modernity.

The interactivity between kids as well as Youtube celebrities together with the content of the videos of theirs might effortlessly result in the legitimatisation of completely wrong community values. As a result, it influences as well as transforms not just the way kids perceive the occurrences in the social environments of theirs, but additionally the ways of theirs of interpretation, in time, which, have an effect on their behaviours and attitudes. For example, their interpersonal and domestic relations in addition to methods of discourse are unavoidably impacted.

In fact, due to the significant clout of the Internet, popular video sharing channels could be used very effectively for the formation of social values starting from childhood. However, the content of the Youtube channels viewed the most by children along with the internet celebrities who manage them is quite far from maintaining a contribution to the value formation for children

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- Encyclopedia of children, adolescents, and the media/[edited by] Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, printed in the United States of America Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data. p. cm. Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN 1-4129-0530-3 or 978-1-4129-0530-5, p. 881.
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